



# The Situation of Youth Organizations in Georgia

## Research Report

The research has been prepared within the framework of the project of “Youth Matters” of the National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia. The project has been financed by LEPL the Youth Agency towards II thematic direction of grant competition of Million Foundation.

Conclusions presented in this report are the research results and do not reflect the official position of donors or clients.

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## Basic Findings

The research revealed the challenges and the problems to which youth organizations in the field have faced constantly, namely, they are:

- **Sustainability of youth organizations;**
- **Challenges related to financial resources;**
- **Challenges related to human resources;**
- **Lack of competencies;**
- **Organizational development;**
- **Problem with working spaces;**
- **youth policy and its related challenges;**
- **recognition of youth work and to have youth workers as a profession;**
- **Lower level of awareness of the society about youth field and activities.**

Majority of youth organizations depend on funds received from donor organizations. Therefore, there are cases, when organizations meet the requirements of specific sources of funding. According to 22% of the organizations interviewed in the research, they carry out activities and programs that do not correspond to the objectives foreseen by the provisions. At the same time, newly established organizations get into difficulty while trying to receive funding, they often have obstacles to satisfy standards and requirements determined by donors. In addition, the part of the respondents highlights insufficient number of local funds for youth and need to strengthen support from the side of local government. It is of increased importance to expand assistance from the side of local government for youth organizations and initiative groups to give them opportunity to participate actively in implementation process of youth policy.

One significant challenge for the youth organizations is to ensure development of organizational possibilities and sustainability. Youth organizations have lack of the possibilities for organizational and administrative development, because donors' support, which is essential for such organizations, mainly involves project financing. This issue to some extent restricts organizations to make investment in development of own capacity. Consequently, in most cases, organizations implement single projects that have a less impact on their long-term results and sustainable development. As the part of respondents has stated, one of the ways to solve problem is to strengthen umbrella organizations, whose objectives are

to reveal needs of organizations and provide assistance for their development. Besides, one of the ways to tackle problems is to allocate administrative grants.

Frequent leakage of human resources represents a major challenge for youth organizations, which is connected with financial instability. Due to absence of finances, organizations do not ensure stable employment of youth, after a while, young people start to seek paid jobs. This issue is a problem from a perspective that no knowledge and experience is collected and used for development of the sphere.

One of the significant challenges for youth organizations are working space also related to absence of finances. Organizations often do not have sufficient financial resources to hire offices or purchase and renew office inventory. Majority of the organizations (66%) participated in the quantitative research declare that they do not have own office areas. Non-existence of space impedes development of organizations and their stable operations. The problem with some space is a serious challenge for new organizations. It is important that the state help them to ensure access to space and assist their development in that way.

One of the significant challenges is acknowledgment of informal education and youth's activities and low level of awareness in this direction, among them in the state bodies. Constant variability of the state managerial bodies in youth issues and at the same time, reduction of the state budget underlines the fact that youth field is less prioritized. This issue is a problem at the regional level too, where youth work is bind to other sectors and not considered as an independent direction. The problem also involves scarcity of amounts allocated for youth work from the side of the state, which are not sufficient for long-term projects and only cover single activities.

It is worth noting that youth organizations have less influence on the agenda of youth policy. According to majority of the organizations interviewed (57%) they have certain skills to participate in the discussions related to youth policy and sometimes they are invited to participate in consideration of local youth policy issues. 21% of the organizations mention that they do not have the possibilities to have influence on the agenda of youth policy.

There is no opportunity to acquire formal education in youth work in the country, which is another challenge for young people and organizations. Besides, the society has recognized less importance and role of youth organizations.

Sustainability of youth organizations, in line with other factors, depends on their institutional development and the working system. As the research has shown during daily activities of organizations, structures set forth under their charters have nature that is more official and are

unlikely used into the practice. Proceeding from the fact that very few persons are employed in these organizations, their functions are not clearly separated.

One of the significant components of sustainable development for the organizations is strategy and action plan. According to 24% of the organizations interviewed, they do not have strategic plans, and 25% declare that they have informal ideas for strategic development of their organizations, which are not officially approved. If organizations have strategic plans, majority of them states that strategic plans defined by the state and/or international organizations operating in the youth field are foreseen, but specific actions are not written. 43% of the organizations declare that informal ideas on annual action plan are elaborated in the organizations that are not official.

With regard to mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation, the organizations do not have mechanisms for systemic monitoring and evaluation. The organizations often carry out monitoring and evaluation, when donor requires within the frame of a specific project, in other situation, their activities are assessed, within the organization. However, it does not have systemic nature. 34% of the organizations interviewed mention that the basic analysis for monitoring and evaluation data is made for donors, but it is unlikely used for intraorganizational strengthening.

Financial sustainability is one of the key important factors for youth organizations. However, organizations depend on funds received from various projects, 37% of the organizations interviewed state that they do not have persons responsible to seek grants. The main part of the organizations does not have grant managers or employers, who work for grant applications, but there is a group of people, who cover these functions in addition of other obligations.

## Introduction

Youth organizations play important roles in the development process of young people as well as the whole society.

Youth organizations create efficient platform to advocate significant issues for youth, assist development of key skills in young people, distribution of information, active citizenship and participation, and ensure providing youth work and non-formal educational services. Through the youth organizations, young people have the opportunities to establish wide and diverse social connections, partnership relations with various organizations and groups, which ultimately help development and welfare of young people.

Youth organizations face different challenges with regard to the problems related to financing as well as the issues of organizational development and sustainability. These problems dramatically hinder development of youth organizations, creates obstacles to enhancement of civil motivation in young people and involvement of youth in organizational groups.

On the basis that the youth organizations have important roles and functions, it is necessary to examine the possibilities for the youth organizations and their needs. For this purpose, based on the initiative of the National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia, within the project, “Youth Matters” financed by the Youth Agency, survey of the conditions for the registered youth organizations is being conducted, the focus of which are:

- Survey of the resources, the structures and the working systems of the registered youth organizations in Georgia;
- Identification of the challenges and the needs of the registered youth organizations in Georgia;

The research results will help stakeholders to analyze the existing situation, to identify challenges and problems and to create better environment for the future, where youth organizations will have the sustainable systems and support for further development.

## Methodology

The research applies qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The goal of quantitative research is to study the structures and the working systems, the existing resources and the challenges of youth organizations. In consideration of the existing situation-Covid-19 pandemic, online interview was performed. Within the frame of the research, the representatives of 76 youth organizations have been interviewed.

Within the qualitative research, the method of depth interview has been used. Depth interviews have been performed with the representatives of the youth organizations that gave the possibility to examine the research issues more deeply. 15 depth interviews were undertaken.

### ***Target group of the research***

- The target group of the research are the youth organizations registered in Georgia.

### ***Research tools***

The research tools have been prepared based on the close cooperation of the National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia and consultations with the organizations' teams.

Online interview has been undertaken via preliminary-developed questionnaires. In addition to general questions, for determination strong and weak points of youth organizations, as well as for identification of challenges and needs, a self-assessment tool for organizational possibilities have been applied in the research. Resulting from online interview specificity, duration of interview was approximately 20-30 minutes.

Depth interview has been performed by preliminarily prepared guidebook. Duration of depth interview was one hour on average.

### ***Selection of respondents***

The quantitative research has been conducted with the organizations registered in Georgia.

Within the frame of selection process, organizational characteristics have been taken into account:

- main target groups for organizations are young people;
- minimum one project related to youth issues should have been implemented by organizations during the last two years

### **Data collection and analysis**

Interviews for the representatives of the youth organizations were undertaken from 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 to 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, depth interviews were carried out in October and November.

It should be noted that collection of the quantitative data was carried out with the support of the National Council of Youth Organizations of Georgia.

Before initiation of data analysis, quantitative database was cleaned up, but data was analyzed via SPSS 26. Qualitative data was analyzed via content analysis.

### **Research restrictions**

As online interview method has been used to collect quantitative data, restrictions accompanied to online interviewing, apply to previous researches too, these restrictions are:

- interview is expanded in time;
- Researcher does not control circumstances for completion of questionnaire.

## **Research results**

### **Youth organizations participated in the quantitative research**

76 youth organizations have taken part in the quantitative research, most of them have not had the history with more than 5-year operation period, namely, 21 organizations (28%) have been operating for 6-10 years, 26 (34%)-for more than 10 years. 6 organizations (8%) have been working for up to one year and 23 (30%) organizations –for 1-6 years. 44% of the organizations interviewed are registered in Tbilisi and 56% -in different regions, among them, 13%-in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, and 9%-Kvemo Qartli. Other regions were rarely named.

47% of the youth organizations interviewed have been working with young people for up to six years, 26% has been active in youth issues for 6-10 years, and 26%-for more than 10 years.

13% of the organizations interviewed have involved up to 50 beneficiaries into their projects implemented for the last 3 years, 10% of the organizations involved from 51-to 100 beneficiaries in their activities for the same period, 30% -up to 500 beneficiaries for the past 3 years, 15%-up to 1000 beneficiaries and 32%-more than 1000 beneficiaries. It is noteworthy

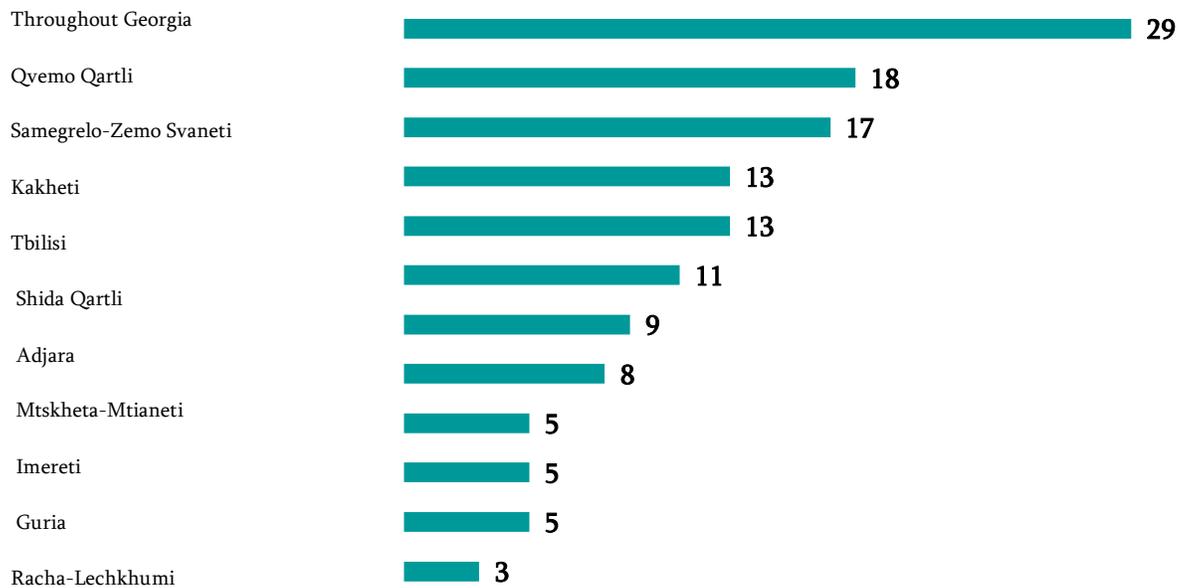
that organizations who involved up to 50 beneficiaries in their activities were relatively newly established ones and their age of activities was up to 6 years.

With regard to current projects/programs on youth issues, 16% of the organizations interviewed do not have youth activities or projects now, 70% have been implementing 1-6 youth projects, 12% -6-10 projects, 3% -more than 10 projects.

Regarding the action fields for the organizations, where main parts of the projects have been implemented for the last 2 years, 29% covered whole Georgia, 18%-Qvemo Qartli, 17%-Samegreli-Zemo Svaneti, 13%-Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kakheti, and 11%- Tbilisi. Other regions were more rarely named (see diagram 1).

**Diagram 1**

**Action area for organizations, where main parts of projects were implemented for the last 2 years (%)**



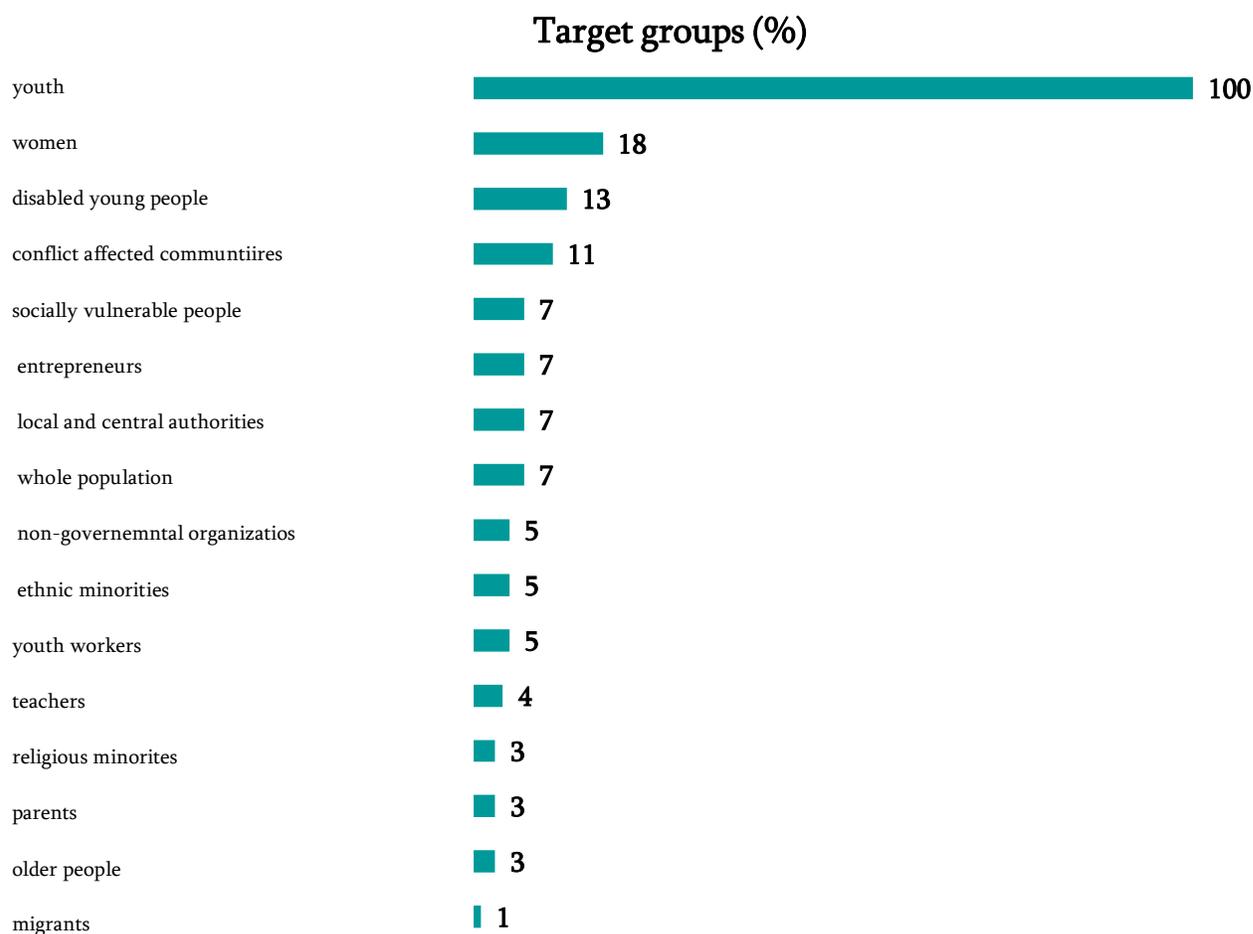
**Remark:** the respondents were able to name several versions; consequently, responses cannot be sum up to 100%.

Within the frame of the research, the scale of the projects implemented by the youth organizations for the last 3 years has been studied. As it appeared, the organizations most often have implemented their projects at the municipal level (65%), also, more than half ones (53%)

have carried out national-level projects, and half of them (50%)-international projects. Relatively seldom, activities carried out at city/village level have been named.

It worth to attention for the research to what target groups the youth organizations have worked. According to the results, organizations except youth ones mostly have worked with women (18%), disabled persons (13%) and the population damaged because of conflicts (11%). Other answers were rarely named (see diagram 2.).

**Diagram 2**



**Remark:** the respondents were able to name several versions; consequently, responses cannot be sum up to 100%.

## Organizational structures and working systems

More than half of the organizations (54%) participated in the quantitative research have been established on membership principle, 46%-not. 68% of those organizations, which are founded on membership, have up to 50 members, 12%-51-100 members and 20% of the organizations have more than 100 members. 96% of the organizations interviewed have boards.

It has been of particular interest, to what extent the organizations have followed the structures set forth by their provisions. 40% of the organizations state that they have the structures determined by the provisions in line with well-defined units, calculation lines and supervisory relations applied on regular and sequential basis. However, one third of the organizations (33%) declared that the structures defined by the provisions have not been considered regularly and sequentially. In more than the fourth of the organizations (28%) the structures defined by the provisions exist, but in daily activities calculation lines and supervisory relations are not clear and accountability lies on several persons.

32% of the organizations interviewed state that there are officially defined roles and responsibilities for some positions, however, sometimes shift of those standards have taken place. According to 28% of them, there are official written job descriptions implying roles and responsibilities for all employees. Employees are aware of their and other roles, responsibilities and job descriptions and constantly follow them. The fourth of the organizations (25%) declare that they have employees of different profiles, parts of them manage/lead organizations, but the roles are not officially defined.

According to the basic part of the respondents participated in the qualitative research, the structure foreseen by the charter have more formal nature and is used less in the practice. As they mention, proceeding from the fact that mainly small number of persons are employed in the organizations, functions are not clearly separated. Besides, the managerial systems are less structured.

*“To say the truth, we do not have the written statement that the board is to be convened in some months and carry out some activities, we do not have in the practice. May be terms are indicated, but we gather, when there is a need. However, we try to the extent possible convene a meeting once a month”.*

It has been of special interest for the research, to what extent the organizations can carry out their activities in accordance with the provisions. 62% of the organizations interviewed in the quantitative research state that all employees are well aware of objectives, visions and missions

defined by the provisions and they execute their activities taking into consideration of this knowledge. However, 22% declare that organizations implement such programs and activities, which are consistent with the objectives defined by the provisions.

With regard to accountability and transparency of activities, 42% of the organizations interviewed state that an informal process operates for informing employees about significant decisions and results. More than half of the organizations (53%) declare that stakeholders are informed about important decisions and results via forums or annual meetings.

## Planning programs/activities

It has been of particular interest for the research to examine to what extent the organizations plan their activities based on evidence and needs. The representatives of the organizations participated in the qualitative research state that they plan projects based on their experience. Besides, they get introduced previous researches, according to some respondents; they on their won do interviews about needs. The part of the respondents states that projects are planned based on topics announced for grant competition and an organization itself performs survey works.

*“We do not always conduct researches, but plan activities based on those studies, which already exist, however, such studies are very few. We rely on the country’s realities about which get information with our experience”.*

*“Our organization works in this way-some capability appear and we try to use them. We are not proactive organizations, just reactive are, we do this, if we have a project, within its frame, not preliminarily”.*

*“In reality, it is different, when some announce a grant competition, you try to the maximum to adjust to it”.*

## Strategy and an action plan

The main part of the organizations participated in the qualitative research has strategy and action plan, which is subject to periodic upgrade. Majority of the respondents states that the members of the organizations prepare those documents. According to them, due to scarce financial resources, the organizations do not have the possibility to hire external experts while elaboration of strategies.

24% of the organizations participated in the qualitative research declare that they do not have strategic plans, and for 25% of them, they have informal ideas of organizations' strategic directions which are not officially approved. 38% of the organizations state that there are constantly updated strategic plans, in accordance of which, all programs and activities are made.

On the question to what extent organizations' strategic plans response to strategic objectives defined by state and/or international organizations working on youth issues, 43% of the organizations state that in their strategic plans involve strategic objectives defined by state and/or international organizations working in youth field, but specific activities are not written and determined. However, according to 28%, their strategic plans cover strategic objectives defined by state and/or international organizations and accordingly, specific activities are written.

43% of the organizations mention that informal idea on annual action plan exists in their organizations, but it is unofficial, and for 33% of them, annual action plans and individual programs are elaborated that correspond to their strategy and budget.

## Mechanisms for monitoring and assessment

According to the respondents taken part in the qualitative research, the organizations do not have mechanisms for systemic monitoring and assessment. The respondent talk that they conduct monitoring and assessment, when donor requires within the frame of specific project, in other case, their activities are evaluated within organizations, but this does not have systemic nature. According to the respondents, assessment of organizational activities is not mainly carried out as it is related to financial resources. Part of the respondents states that efficiency of their activities is conditioned by success of their beneficiaries, estimation of young people's parents involved in projects and popularity of their social pages.

*“Large projects are evaluated at the end, as donor requires, however, invitation of expert is an expensive luxury. We have them in projects, not in organizations.”*

*“Donors never give finances for evaluation, monitoring and audit, that’s why it is very difficult, when second donor asks to send recent year’s audit conclusion, never send it. To allocate finances to do audit of whole year, we do not afford it and it is very regrettable. Generally, monitoring and evaluation system is contained in the project, then donor checks, evaluation of projects is performed not organizations.”*

With regard to the organizations taken part in the quantitative research, 33% of them state that they have several main tools for monitoring and assessment and collect data, if donor requires to do so. 26% of them declare that they have standard monitoring and assessment tools, which are applied for data collection to satisfy donor’s requirements and internal usage. 17% of the organizations mention that data for monitoring and assessment are not collected.

34% of the organizations state that basic analysis for monitoring and assessment data is done for donors, but it is less used for objectives of intraorganizational enhancement. 22% of them mention that organizations have employee(s), who use data analysis competently and prepare timely and precise reports. Those reports are applied in relations with stakeholders as well as for intraorganizational strengthening.

## **Mechanisms for information distribution**

The representatives of the organizations participated in the qualitative research state that they mainly distribute information on their activities via social networks. According to them, information is published on facebook pages of organizations, as well as in various groups. Besides, according to several respondents, for information distribution they cooperate with schools, resource centers of the Ministry of Education and municipalities. At the same time, the respondents mention that an effective way to disseminate information is personal contacts and beneficiaries of organizations. The respondents declare that first of all, information is shared with organizations’ members and volunteers. Some respondents mention that information is provided via leaflets and posters. In addition, presentations on projects are held in schools and universities. The respondents spoke about issues related to providing information to vulnerable groups. In their opinion, in this case they use personal contacts also referring to other non-governmental organizations, whose vulnerable groups are young people.

Concerning selection of participants for projects, the respondents state that participants are selected via online application. In case of necessity, interviews are done.

*„we have benefited from active social network, e-mails, too many volunteers are registered in our database and we have communications with them via e-mails, as well as social network and telephone communications. In addition, we share it with partner organizations, if we have such possibility and announce always publicly. Social network is very comfortable for us because it does not need large resources from us and often use it“.*

## Human resources

For the research, it has been of interest to study human resources of the youth organizations. As the respondents participated in the qualitative research mention, organizations mainly depend on revenue obtained from financed project within a specific grant; consequently, human resources of organizations are bound to specific projects. Only small part of the respondent's state that there are employees in the organizations having monthly payment, irrespective of existence and number of projects in organizations. It should be noted that number of those employees are too few-one or two persons.

*“Yes, there are persons, who get salaries on regular basis, however, those salaries come from projects, but if there is a break-down between projects and such things happen, those persons receive minimum payments, when organizations do not have projects. However, amount of salary varies based on number of projects. This is minimum, but if there is the possibility to have more from projects, they receive them.*

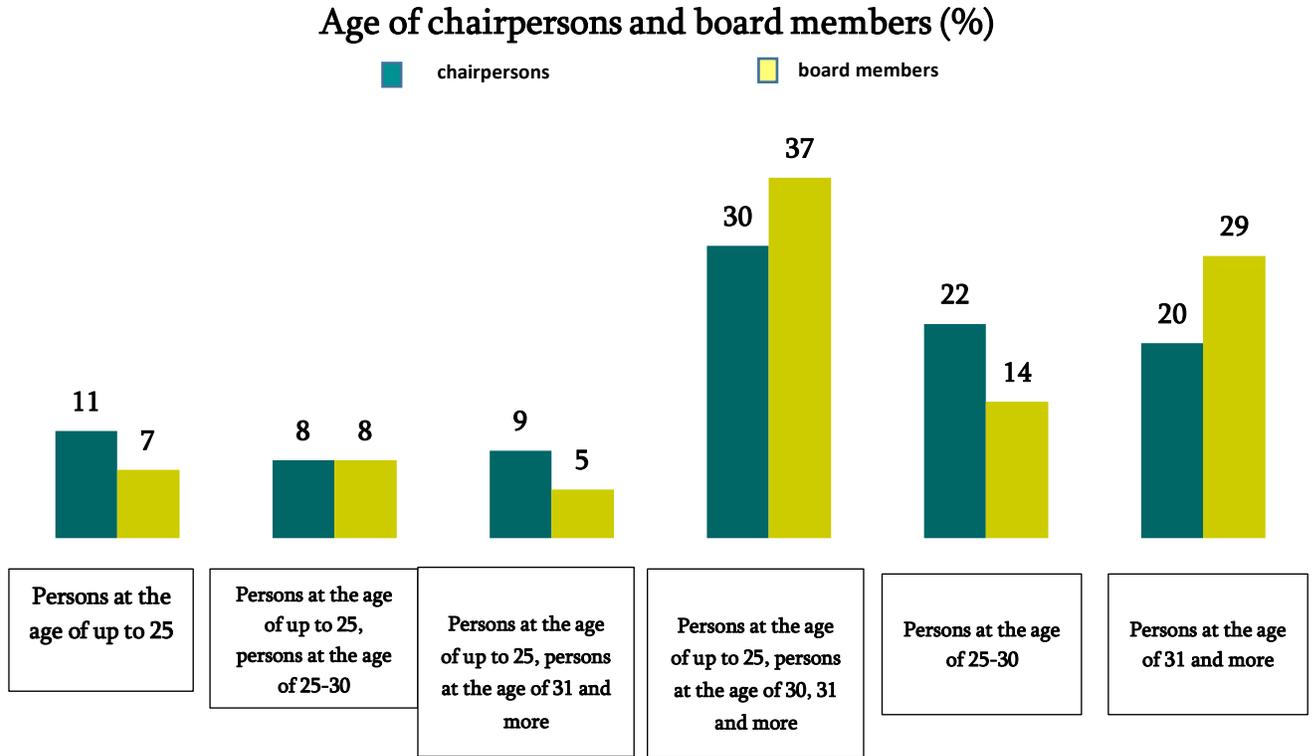
With regard to the organizations taken part in the quantitative research, 36% of them have less than 5 employees to implement projects/programs, 45%-5-10 persons, an 20%-more than 11 employees.

In addition, for the research it was interesting the age of persons managing youth organizations. In most cases of the organizations interviewed, age of managers are 31 and more (see diagram 3).

With regard to age of board members of the organizations, if they have boards (96%), in 7% of the organizations, boards members are persons at the age of up to 25, in 8% of cases-persons at the age up to 25 and 25-30, in 14% -persons at the age of 25-30, in 5%-persons at the age of

up to 25 and 31 and more, in 37% of cases- board members are persons of all three age categories, and in 29% of cases- persons at the age of 31 and more (see diagram 3).

**Diagram 3**



**Remark:** As percentage values provided in the diagram are rounded figures, it is possible not to be sum up to 100%.

36% of the organizations interviewed state that they have informal procedures for hiring staff that are not documented, according to 28%, they have official documented procedures for staffing, which are transparent and always followed.

As it has been noted from the research results, employees in the organizations are assessed infrequently. 45% of the organizations interviewed state that employees' activities are assessed informally.

## Volunteers

22% of the organizations participated in the quantitative research do not have volunteers, 28% of them have up to 10 volunteers, and 50%-more than 10 volunteers. The fifth of the organizations (20%) state that within the frame of Erasmus plus, they have volunteers for long-term period (EVS or ESC). Those organizations that have volunteers for long-term period within the frame of Erasmus Plus, declare that most frequently, they have volunteers from Poland (47%), Germany (40%), France (33%), the Czech Republic (33%), Lietuva (20%), Italy (20%), Latvia (20%) and Portugal (20%). Other countries have been rarely named.

The main part of the organizations participated in the qualitative research has local as well as foreign volunteers. Small part of the respondents mentions that for foreign volunteers the minimum requirement, which organization has to meet is to have office area. Due to non-existence of working space, the organizations are unable frequently to have volunteers.

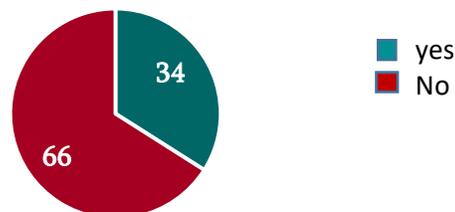
*“In general, if we want to invite volunteers, we must have area, at least office. Basically, this happens in that way, as we do not have area, consequently, we do not have volunteers”.*

## Working space

Majority of the organizations taken part in the quantitative research (66%) declare that they do not have stable office area, the third of the organizations (34%) have (see diagram 4).

**Diagram 4**

**Does your organization has own office area/working space? (%)**



**Remark:** as percentage values given on the diagram are rounded figures, it is possible not to be sum up to 100%.

According to the respondents taken part in the qualitative research, one of the challenges for the organizations is a working space and office inventory. Proceeding from the fact that organizations depend on revenue received from various projects, often they do not have sufficient financial resources to hire office area and purchase and update inventory. According to the respondents, this factor impedes sustainability and stable operation of the organizations.

*“Organizations in Georgia are not stable because they do not have spaces. Initiative groups, friends start good, but meetings in cafes are not so productive”.*

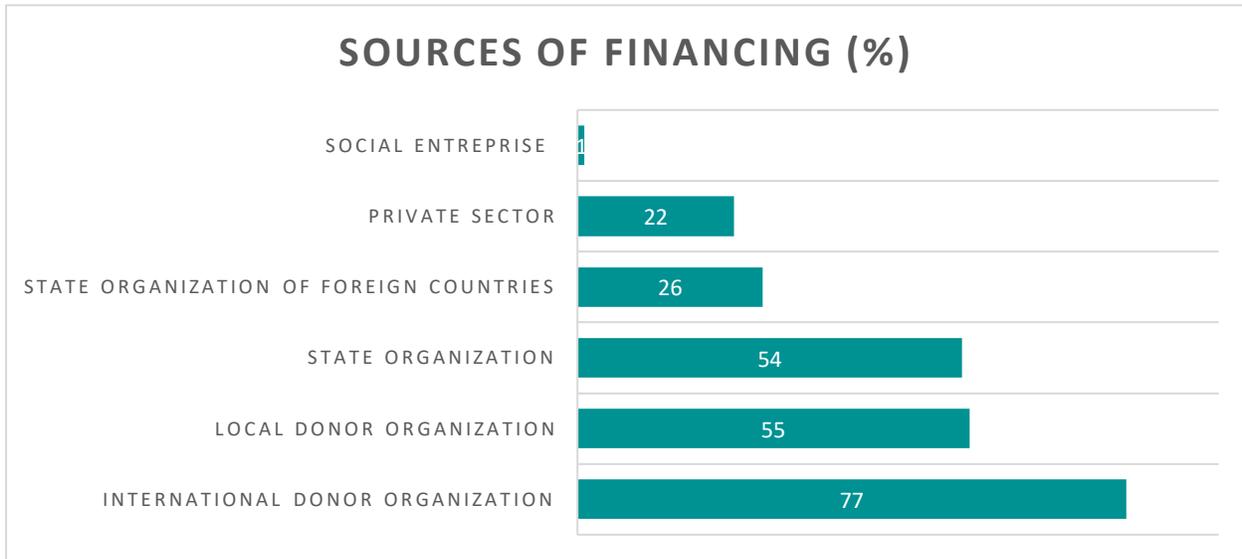
*“Unfortunately, our organization has not had an office during a year, however, for specific projects we try to find something, but for us it is really hard to work in that way”.*

## Financial resources

91% of the youth organizations participated in the quantitative research do not receive financing for implementation of projects. For those organizations that received financing, most often financing was from international donor organizations (77%), local donor organizations (55%), state organizations (54%), foreign country's state organizations (26%) and private sector (22%). Also, in one case the source for financing was social enterprise (1%) (see diagram 5).

## Diagram

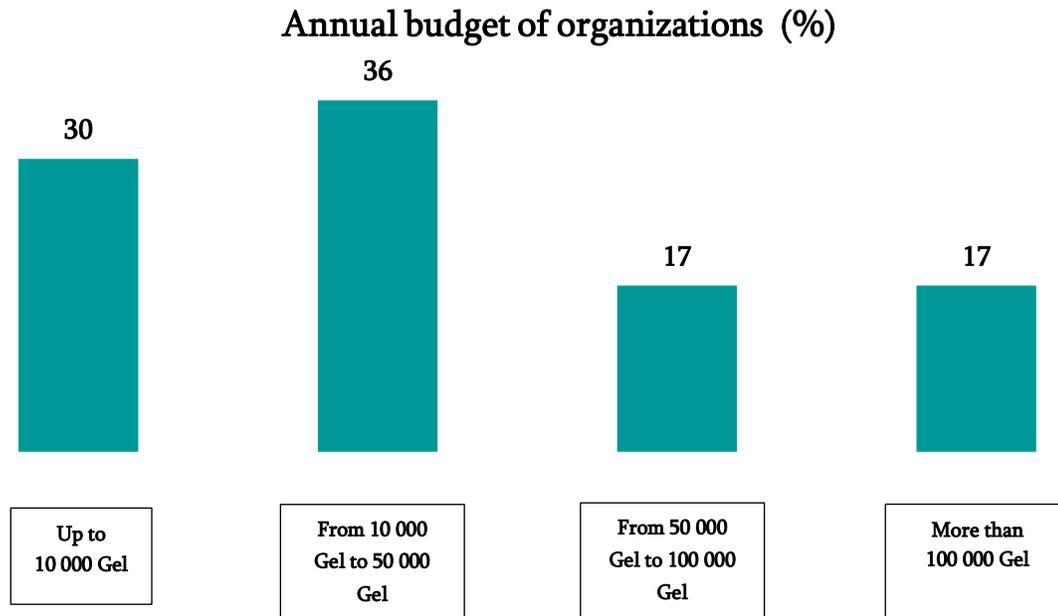
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**Remark:** the respondents could name several versions; consequently, answers are not sum up to 100%.

It has been of particular interest for the research what is annual budget of youth organizations. Annual budget of 30% of the organizations interviewed amount to 10 000 Gel, 36% of them have from 10 000 to 50 000 Gel on average and 17% from 50 000 to 100 00 Gel, 17% has more than 100 000 Gel on average (see diagram 6).

Diagram 6



**Remark:** the respondents could name several versions; consequently, answers are not sum up to 100%.

46% of the organizations interviewed mostly depend on different types of financing and/or financing from several donor organizations, 30% state that they depend on financing from several donor organizations and/or one type financing, and 24% of them –mostly financing from one donor organization.

37% of the organizations declare that they do not have a person responsible for getting grants. In 32% of cases, organizations have grant officers with certain experience. Only 32% of organizations state that they have qualified grant managers with several-year experience.

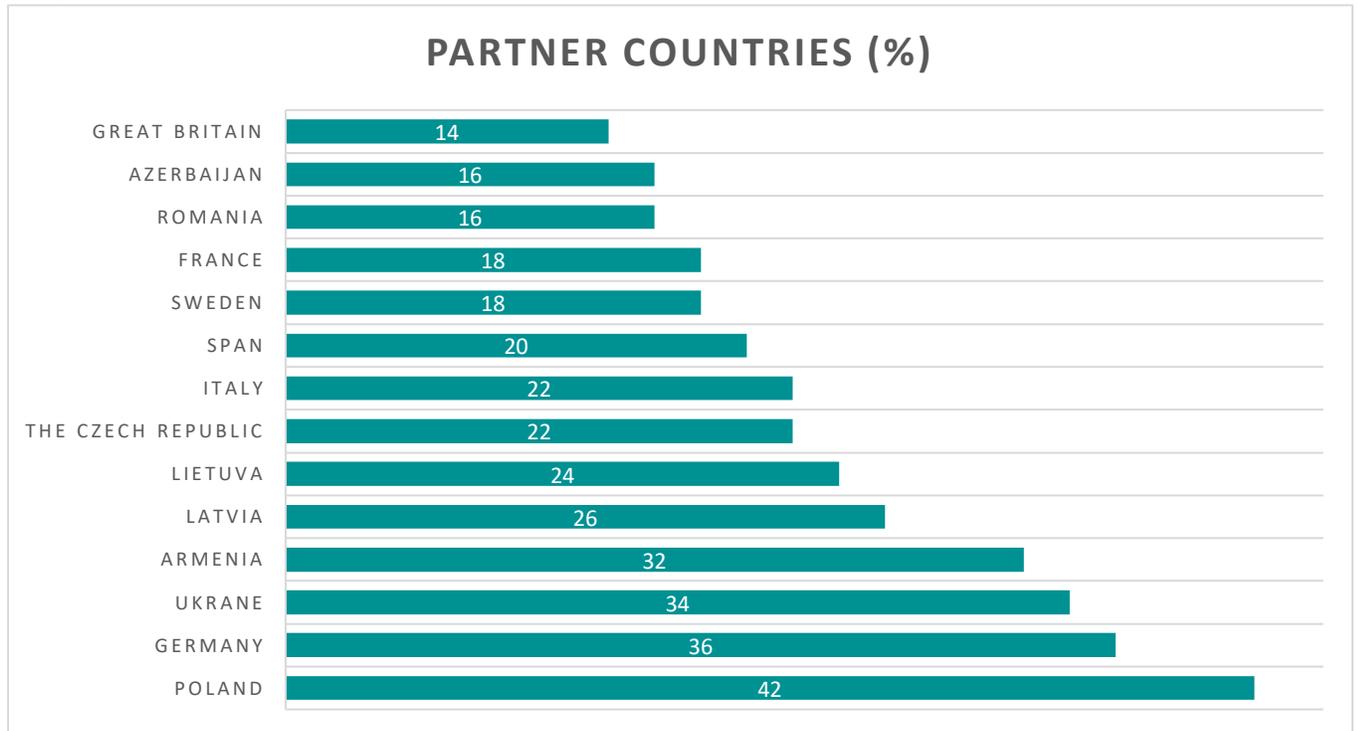
The main part of the respondents taken part in the qualitative research state that they participate in grant competitions to get grants. They find information on grant competitions on various platforms. Major part of organizations participant in the research does not have grants managers or employess working only for grant applications, however, according to the respondents, there are a group of people in organizations that combines that function in line with other responsibilities.

*“Mainly, our financing comes from the European Union and we cooperate with other donors, basically with international ones, quite seldom there are Georgian donors, there have been cases, but infrequently”.*

## Local and international partners

66% of the organizations interviewed in the quantitative research have partners in other countries, and 34%- do not. Those organizations having partners in other countries, state that mostly they cooperate with organizations of the following countries-Poland (42%), Germany (36%), Ukraine (34%) and Armenia (32%). Organizations with other countries have been named on rare occasions (see diagram 7).

**Diagram 7**



**Remark:** the respondents could name several versions; consequently, answers are not sum up to 100%.

More than half of the organizations questioned (53%) state that they are knowable in the environment, where they are operating and the results of the organizational activities are well-known, and 41% declare that they are more and less are knowable in the environment, where they are operating. They are known, but not their functions and activities.

According to 43% of the organizations, they have appropriate information on their activities and/or strategy of other local organisations and during planning stage of own activities and programs, organizations are actively cooperating with each other. also, organizations are members of the relevant umbrella organization. According to 26%, organizations have limited information on activities and/or strategy of other local organizations. At the same time,

organizations have certain relations with umbrella organization. 25% state that they have complete information on activities and/or strategy of other local organizations. While planning own activities and programs, organizations have close relations with others and stakeholders. Organizations are members of relevant umbrella organization and at least one running program is implemented together with other partners/stakeholders.

## Impact on the agenda of youth policy and cooperation with state bodies

For the research it has been of particular interest how the youth organisations assess their impact on the agenda of youth policy, majority of the organizations (57%) mention that they have been acquired with certain skills to participate in the discussions of youth policy and sometimes they are invited to take part in consideration of local policy, according to the assessment of 22%, they have influence on development of youth policy at the local and other levels and frequently they are provided with the opportunity to take active parts in policy determination, implementation, monitoring and assessment of policy. According to 21%, they do not have the possibilities to have an impact on the agenda of youth policy.

The basic part of the respondents participated in the qualitative research considers that they more or less have influence on the agenda of youth policy. Some of them have been involved in elaboration of policy documents for youth policy. The part of the respondents states that it is important to have closer cooperation with decision-making bodies, which depends on state approaches as well as the organizations themselves.

*“We think that we have influence, but I wish to say more loudly, we can do more”.*

The part of the respondents participated in the qualitative research declare that they cooperate with state bodies, among them with municipalities and have projects financed by municipalities. However, some representatives of the non- governmental organizations mention that they refrain from relations with state bodies, as they do not want to be involved in the political processes.

*“We do not want to get into politics. If you decide to cooperate at certain level, you should be ready for some events, then they offer you to cooperate to the political direction, we do not want it and for years, we have maintained interim positions and have been trying that our young people have been far from political actions as well activities.*

## Challenges facing by youth organizations

One of the objectives of the research has been identification of challenges youth organizations have faced with for years. The respondents of the qualitative research mention those problems and challenges the youth organizations have encountered in this sphere, namely:

- maintaining sustainability of youth organisations;
- challenges related to financial resources;
- challenges related to maintaining human resources;
- lack of competency in youth organizations;
- organizational, administrative development;
- problem with working spaces;
- youth policy and its related challenges;
- recognition of youth work and to have youth workers as a profession;
- Lower level of awareness of the society about youth field and activities.

## Sustainability of youth organizations

The large part of the respondents agrees that one of the significant challenges in the youth field is sustainability of organizations caused by different factors, such as; challenges related to financing, constant leakage of human resources, problem with working space and other problems. Those factors jointly create unstable environment jeopardizing sustainability of organizations

According to the respondents, organizational sustainability and stable activities have obstacles as the youth organizations become active upon financing specific project, and with completion of financing, organizations cease active operations. In addition, the respondents mention that there are cases, when the organizations suit the requirements of sources for specific financing and projects financing is not made based on needs revealed from the side of the organizations.

*“the serious problem is sustainability of youth organizations. Majority of the organizations are active in case of financing of specific projects, which means that if I am awarded with grant, or win tender or competition, my organization starts operations, but it does not mean that we are working in daily regimen, and implement activities in this way. Majority of the youth organizations work the same way”.*

*As the resources are limited, the organizations make adjust to the requirements of the existing resources, conditions, criteria and they do not offer what projects should be implemented and where resources should be spent. Such opportunities are low, when an initiative comes from organizations, their experience, and evidence”.*

## Challenges related to financial resources

From the participants’ points of view, one of the significant challenges is an issue related to financing, which dramatically defines stability of organizations. According to their statements, the organizations depend on revenue received from grant competitions, and in the absence of financial resources the organizations cannot continue their functioning.

According to the respondents’ statements, the problem with receipt of financing is particularly acute for newly established organizations, as they carry out activities as volunteers, and international funds give prevalence to the experienced organizations having long-term expertise in organizing/implementing projects.

*“Most of the organizations are new. In order to get grants, they need organizational history and experience and many donors do not give grants for start-ups and to new organizations. So, it is the big challenge”.*

The part of the respondents talks about small number of local funds and they think that it is a problem. According to their statements, it is of vital importance to finance youth organizations and initiative groups from the side of local government.

One of the respondents mention that in the Georgian reality, the relationship with local self-governmental bodies carries political nature, which to some extent affects the organizations’ reputation. Therefore, according to the respondents’ statements, frequently, organizations refrain from receipt of such financing and seek it from international or local funds.

*“In other countries, organizations cooperate successfully with the government and make programs based on their requests; these are camps or different activities related to youth problems. In our reality, relationship with the government is always perceived as you lose the status of non-governmental organization. On the other hand, financial resources received from the government have been constantly associated with some issues. Only do work, which is under the interests of the government as well as the organizations, unfortunately, never happens. So, all the organizations try to get financing beyond the country or from international organizations operating in this country”.*

## Challenges related to human resources

According to the respondents' statements, the important challenge for the youth organizations is frequent leakage and change of human resources connected with financial stability. As the respondents mention, due to lack of financial resources, the organizations do not ensure employment of young people, after a while, those people start to seek other paid jobs. As the respondents state, this is the problem in terms of accumulation of the knowledge and the experience and development of this sphere.

*“Human resources are the key problem, because it is not daily stable work. Majority of employed persons work in these organizations part-time or additionally, they have other jobs. You may do something here, but, anyway, it is secondary work and many of them are involved in that way. So, large leakage of persons occur, because, as soon as they find stable job, leave the organizations and this is very bad that the experience is lost. New persons come, start learning and then leave again”.*

*“The main problem is that these persons start looking for paid jobs and unfortunately, we cannot offer such opportunities, and anyway they leave.*

## Lack of competency

The part of the respondents underlines the issue of competency of persons involved in youth work. According to their statements, one of the causative factors is that there is no possibility to get formal education in youth field in this country. Some respondents talk about newly introduced certification courses for youth workers and positively assess them, however, the respondents state that such courses are not sufficient for development of this sphere.

*“Youth organizations lack of competence. When we implement projects, what we rely on while working with young persons, if they have appropriate competences. Organizations consider very seldom that they must review own competency to work with young people. Unfortunately, in Georgia, it is not considered that specific knowledge is required to work with your persons”.*

*“We, unfortunately, do not have any retraining programs in Georgia. Our youth workers, persons employed in this sphere do not have programs, for example, Bachelor's or Master's programmes, or short-term retraining programs and informal different trainings-seminars, which can be organized from the side of the state bodies”.*

## Organizational development

The part of the respondents mention that the youth organizations have lack of possibilities for organizational development. Those organizations do not receive proper support from different stakeholders, among them from donor organizations. The respondents declare that amount of grant is directed towards financing main projects and consider less needs for institutional developments. As the respondents mention, renewal of inventory and incur daily costs represents the problem for the organizations. Besides, retraining of human resources is the important issue for organizational development, in most cases, the organizations are unable to perform it. Accordingly, mostly, the organizations implement single projects that have less impact on long-term results and sustainable development of the organizations.

*“Also, the challenge is the fact that grant is mainly allocated for implementation of projects and project activities, it does not cover administrative costs to do something. This is the problem for sustainability and stability of organizations, as if you do not have amount for organizations, you cannot take part in many grant competitions, you are dying as organization. You are not able to pay electricity and internet costs, you must close offices, dismiss employees”.*

*„Donors do not think to put some amounts in projects for organizational development. Employees need trainings, upgrade qualification. They do not consider the fact that when you have computers, they are seven years old, or tables are 20 years old and all of them need to be changed. This is the problem not only for new organizations, but for old and experienced organizations too”.*

From the respondents' points of view, it is important to strengthen umbrella organizations; their goal is to reveal needs of organizations and to strengthen such organizations. In parallel, one of the respondents states that the way to arrange the problem is to introduce administrative grant system, which ensures organizational development and implementation of more efficient projects.

*“It is of paramount importance for the organizations to continue stable operations, so-called administrative grants. This is a very widespread practice in Europe. Based on current models, organizations write specific projects, activities what and how they will do and receive financing for them. In case of administrative grant, organizations receive financing not for specific projects, but for coverage of administrative management and logistics costs, for example, office, accountant, technique, utility costs, and salaries that is very important for organizations”.*

## Probles with working space

The part of the respondents talks about the problem related to working space for youth organizations. They mention that working space is a problem mostly for new organizations. According to them, absence of working space impedes development of organizations and their stable functioning; besides, it has negative influence on quality of organizational activities.

The respondents mention that the government institutions must give some spaces to youth organizations. According to their statements, the discussions of that topic has long-term history, but effective steps have not been taken yet.

*“No space exists for the youth organizations to use them permanently. You look for office space constantly and have the feeling of instability, especially in case of newly established organizations. When you depend on financing from donor organizations and projects are main sources for the organizations, this is very important issue and has influence on efficiency of projects, when you always think about infrastructure”.*

*“Young people should have some space to meet, talk, exchange their opinions, plan different activities. Despite the fact that on the premises of the Youth Agency, the Youth Service of the Tbilisi City Hall and the Youth Services of various municipalities and the Youth Culture Houses, providing specific spaces to the youth organizations in the capital city as well as in the regions has remained unmanageable during many years.*

## Youth policy and its related challenges

The respondents underline the problem with recognition of youth work and low level of awareness in this direction, among them in the state bodies. According to the respondents, youth policy is less prioritized at the state level, which is a problem. As they mention the example involves constant change of the state managerial body working on youth issues and in parallel, reduction of the state budget for them. It is of key issue to admit the importance of youth policy at the national level. Also, it is significant to strengthen the managerial body working in this direction. As the respondents state, state should provide more assistance in youth field, it is necessary to focus on the results and deepen joint cooperation.

*“Institutionalization of this sphere is delayed, reforms have been carried out for a long time and they are running now. Institutions responsible for youth have been structurized and re-structurized many times. Movement on one place lasts long, and*

*finally there are not results. Document, strategy and action plan of youth policy were elaborated in 2014 then they were changed in the same year and very little has been put into practice”.*

*“I think, more coordinations is required, feeling of less competition from the side of the state. No effect of “pillow drawing off” should take place, more honest relationships and results-oriented process is needed taking into account each other’ opinions and needs”*

*“First of all, political will must be in the country. It is regrettable that the body of youth policy, which at first was the Ministry of Youth, then the Youth Department has reduced budget during the years, which means that we have not obtained the luxury to admit importance of youth policy at the national and the governmental levels. What occurs in Tbilisi, automatically happens in the regions. For example, when in 2018 the Ministry of Sport and Youth was abolished, the municipalities considered that this topic was not important, most of them also abolished youth departments, and only one person was left as a specialist. Since the Youth Agency was established, this topic became actual again and in some municipalities some finances were allocated. It must be declared at the central level, at the prime minister and the head of parliament levels that youth policy is important and young people have not be recalled on those cases, when something bad is committed or done”.*

According to the respondents, less prioritization of youth field is a problem at the regional level. Youth work frequently are bound to other sectors and they are not considered as independent directions. Besides, the issue of competence in local self-government bodies represents another problem too. At the same time, as the respondents state, amount of money allocated from the state for youth work and youth projects is the challenge, it is not sufficient for long-term projects and used only for single projects.

*“I have met the persons employed in the state bodies, who are heads of culture, education, sport, youth service and draw attention to sport, culture, sport and youth. Only seventy thousand Gel is allocated for these issues. Therefore, it is not clear what should be done precisely and what kind of relations this event has with youth work.*

*“Local self-government bodies do not consider seriously development of this sphere, put resources in this direction. That is the reason why only 50 thousand Gel is allocated from the budget with five or ten million Gel for youth work and youth projects and finally, allocated amount is not spent for the target group.*

*“Municipalities have some amounts allocated for youth projects, but they are very few, single activity may be carried out and nothing can be done in long-term perspective“.*

## Low level of awareness of the society

The part of the respondents considers one of the challenges towards youth organizations low level of awareness from the side of the society. According to their statements, the society and the young people do not recognize the importance of youth organizations. One of the respondents talks about stereotypic attitude to non-governmental organizations from the side of the society and thinks that is one of the challenges for the organizations.

*“In general, publicity of this sphere is a problem, the people, the government and the young generation do not understand that youth activity is a sphere, which exists separately and consequently, the youth organizations operate in this sphere and they must be strong and basic players. Therefore, there is no popularity towards youth organizations and nobody knows who they are, what and why they do, what results are obtained after those activities and so on.*

*“Generally, the problem is the attitude of the society, non-governmental sector and organizations working on grants are demonized somehow, that they receive one hundred Gel and spent ten Gel, rest 90 Gel go to their pocket. Such stereotypes exist in many places, unfortunately. This can be considered as one of the challenges.*

The respondents talk about the importance of strengthening relationship between the sectors. According to their statements, it is significant, on the one hand, enhancement of cooperation between the youth organizations and on the other hand, with the state bodies, the representatives of business and media and raise the level of awareness of youth field in the society.

*“intrasectoral relationship must be developed, more important is to involve not only the state representatives, but also business and media, which ensures raising awareness of youth work to the extent possible.*

Resulting from the problems named, on the question to what directions the organizations need to develop, the answers have been assigned as follows- search of resources (72%), strategic development of organizations (57%), administrative management (45%), enhancement of human resources (43%), project management (38%), financial management (37%) and advocating (26%)

Diagram 8



**Remark:** the respondents could name several versions; consequently, answers are not sum up to 100%.

## Conclusions

Therefore, the results of the interviews have shown that more than half of the organizations participated in the quantitative research are registered in different regions, 44%-in Tbilisi. More than the fourth of the organizations implement their programs throughout Georgia. At the same time, within the research, the volume of projects implemented by the youth organizations for the last 3 years has been studied. As it turned out, the organizations most frequently implement projects at the municipal level, also more than half of them have carried out national projects and half-international ones. City/village activities have been named relatively rarely. It has been interesting for the research to what target groups the youth organizations have been working. According to the research results, besides young people, the organizations most frequently work with women, disabled persons and the population damaged because of conflicts.

One of the issues for the research is to study the structures and the working system of the organizations. More than half of the organizations participated in the research are based on membership and majority of them has up to 50 members.

It has been of particular interest, to what extent the organizations have followed the structures set forth by their provisions. The basic part of the organizations participated in the qualitative research state that the structure defined by the charter is characterized with more formal nature and they are less applied in the practice. The third of the organizations participated in the quantitative research state that the structures defined by the provisions have not been considered regularly and sequentially. More than the fourth of the organizations declare that the calculation lines and supervisory relations determined by provisions in daily activities are not clear and accountability lies on several persons. The third of the organizations interviewed mention that official roles and responsibilities for certain positions exist in the organizations, however, sometimes shift from those standards takes place. The fourth of the organizations state that they have employees with different profiles, part of which manages/leads the organizations, but roles are not officially defined.

It has been of specific interest to the research to what extent the organizations carry out their activities in accordance with the provisions. Majority of the organizations interviewed in the quantitative research state that all employees are aware of the goal, the view and the mission defined by the provisions and they carry out their activities in consideration of this information, however, more than the fifth of the organizations mention that they implement

such programs and activities, which do not correspond to the goals determined by the provisions.

The research has examined the issues related to strategies and action plans of the organizations. The basic part of the organizations participated in the qualitative research has strategy and action plan, which is updated periodically. Most of the respondents state that those documents are prepared by their members. Involvement of external expert in this process is related to financial resources that organizations do not have.

Approximately the fourth of the organizations taken part in the quantitative research states that they do not have strategic plan. In case of the fourth of the organizations, informal ideas for strategic direction of the organizations exist, which are not officially approved.

38% state that they have constantly upgraded strategic plans, based on which all programs and activities are made. If the organizations have strategic plan, majority of the declares that in their strategic plans, strategic objectives defined by the state and/or international organizations operating in the youth field are foreseen, but specific actions are not written. 43% of the organizations declare that informal ideas on annual action plan are elaborated in the organizations that are not official.

Main part of the organizations participated in the research does not have mechanisms for systemic monitoring and evaluation. According the respondents, the organizations often carry out monitoring and evaluation, when donor requires within the frame of a specific project, in other situation, their activities are assessed internally, but it does not have systemic nature.

The third of the organizations taken part in the quantitative research state that they have several main tools for monitoring and assessment, if donor requires. More than the fourth mentions that the organizations have standard monitoring and assessment tools to be used for data collection to satisfy donors' requirements and internal usage. 17% of the organizations mention that collection of monitoring and assessment data are not carried out. More than the third of the organizations states basic analysis for monitoring and evaluation data is done for donors, but it is unlikely used for intraorganizational strengthening.

It has been interesting for the research what mechanism are applied by the organizations to distribute information on their activities. As it turned out

The representatives of the organizations participated in the qualitative research state that they mainly distribute information on their activities via social networks. According to them, information is published on facebook pages of organizations, as well as in various groups. Besides, according to several respondents, for information distribution they cooperate with

schools, resource centers of the Ministry of Education and municipalities. At the same time, the respondents mention that an effective way to disseminate information is personal contacts and beneficiaries of organizations. The respondents declare that first of all, information is shared with organizations' members and volunteers. Some respondents mention that information is provided via leaflets and posters. In addition, presentations on projects are held in schools and universities. The respondents spoke about issues related to providing information to vulnerable groups. In their opinion, in this case they use personal contacts also referring to other non-governmental organizations, whose vulnerable groups are young people.

For the research, it has been of interest to study human resources of the youth organizations. As the respondents participated in the qualitative research mention, organizations mainly depend on revenue obtained from financed project within a specific grant; consequently, human resources of organizations are bound to specific projects. Only small part of the respondents' state that there are employees in the organizations having monthly payment, irrespective of existence and number of projects in organizations. It should be noted that number of those employees are too few-one or two persons.

With regard to the organizations participated in the quantitative research, the basic part of them has 5-10 employees for implementation of projects/programs, more than the third of the organizations-less than 5 and the fifth of them more than 10. Also, it has been of interest to the research age of persons managing youth organizations. In the case of the significant part of the organizations, age of managers are 31 and more. Besides, persons of the same age are members of boards. In few cases, age of head of organizations and board members are persons up to 25 years old.

More than the third of the organizations interviewed state that organizations have informal procedures, which are not documented. Besides, according to the research results, employees' activities are less assessed in organizations. 45% of the organizations interviewed declare that sometimes activities of employees are assessed informally.

Majority of the organizations taken part in the quantitative research does not have volunteers. The fifth of the organizations think that state that within the frame of Erasmus plus, they have volunteers for long-term period (EVS or ESC). Those organizations that have volunteers for long-term period within the frame of Erasmus Plus, declare that most frequently, they have volunteers from Poland, Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Italy, Latvia and Portugal. The part of the organizations participated in the qualitative research mentions that for foreign volunteers the minimum requirement, which organization has to meet is to have

office area. Due to non-existence of working space, the organizations are frequently unable to have volunteers.

Majority of the organizations often do not have office area. According to the respondents on of the challenges is working space and office inventory. As the organizations depend on revenue received from various projects, frequently they do not have sufficient financial resources to hire offices, purchase and renew office inventory. Non-existence of space impedes development of organizations and their stable operations.

For the research, it has been of interest to study sources of financing for the youth organizations. Vast majority of the organizations participated in the quantitative research have obtained financing for project implementation. From those organizations that received financing, in most cases, such financing was from international and local donor organizations and the state organizations. For the research, it was interesting amount of the annual budget of the youth organizations. For less than the third of the organizations interviewed, annual budget is 10 000 Gel, for more than the third of the organizations –annual budget is from 10 000 Gel to 50 000 Gel on average.

46% of the organizations interviewed mostly depend on different types of financing and/or financing from several donor organizations, less than the third of them state that they depend on financing from several donor organizations and/or one type financing, and the fourth of the organizations –mostly financing from one donor organization. More than the third of the organizations declare that they do not have a person responsible for getting grants. In 32% of cases, organizations have grant officers with certain experience. Only 32% of organizations state that they have qualified grant managers with several-year experience. Major part of organizations participant in the qualitative research does not have grants managers or employess working only for grant applications, however, according to the respondents, there are a group of people in organizations that combines that function in line with other responsibilities.

For the research, it has been interesting to study the issues related to local and international cooperation. More than half of the organizations interviewed state that they are knowable in the environment, where they are operating and results of the organizations activities are well known. In addition, 43 of the organizations declare that they have appropriate information on the activities and/or strategies of the local organizations and while planning own activities and programs, those organizations active cooperate with other organizations. Majority of the organizations participated in quantitative research does not have partners in other countries.

Those countries, who have partners in other countries, state that mostly they cooperate with the organizations of the following countries-Poland, Germany, Ukraine and Armenia.

For the reseacr it has been of interest, how the youth organisations assess their impact on the agenda of youth policy, majority of the organizations mention that they have been acquired with certain skills to participate in the discussions of youth policy and sometimes they are invited to take part in consideration of local policy, the fifth part of the organizations states that they have influence on the agenda of the youth policy. However, it should be mentioned that participation takes more like facade nature. One of the main directions of any democratic state is youth and any decisions related to young people is to be made together with them. The youth organizations and young people should be provided with the opportunity to participate in decision-making process and have regular consultations with them. This should apply to any level of the state body.

One of the objectives of the research has been to identify the challenges the youth organizations have while implementing their activities. The respondents participated in the qualitative research talk about those problems and challenges that exist before the youth organizations in this sphere, namely: sustainability of youth organizations, challenges related to financial resouces, challenges related to human resources, lack of competency, organizational development, problem with working space, youth polict and its related challenges, acknwoldegent of youth activity and profession, low level fo awareness of the society towards youth work.

The large part of the respondents agrees that one of the significant challenges in the youth field is sustainability of organizations caused by different factors, such as; challenges related to financing, constant leakage of human resources, problem with working space and other problems. Those factors jointly create unstable environment jeopardizing sustainability of organizations. The youth organizations should support new-generation organizations to be involved in managerial bodies and participated in decision-making process at the organizational level.

According to the respondents' statement, sustainability and stability of the organizations is hindered by the fact that the youth organizations are active during financing a specific project, and with completion of this financing, the organizations stop their functioning. According to the respondents' statements, the problem with receipt of financing is particularly acute for newly established organizations. Applicable donor organizations give prevalence to the experienced organizations or the organizations with whom they cooperated in the past. Quite a wide distrust exists towards newly established organizations, causing them lack of motivation

and after a while, they stop their functioning. It is important that the new organizations and young people that have motivation and the initiative should be supported to implement their ideas and projects, because new organizations with new ideas and innovation approaches have appeared in the youth field.

The part of the respondents talks about little amount of local funds for the youth field and considers it as the problem. According to them, it is important to provide an assistance in financing of projects for the youth organizations and initiative groups from the side of the local government.

Frequent leakage and change of human resources represents a major challenge for youth organizations, which is connected with financial instability. According to the respondents, this issue is the problem obtained knowledge and experience is not accumulated and used for the development of the sphere. The part of the respondents talk about the issue of competency of persons involved in the youth work and considers it as the problem. One of the causative factors is that there is no possibility to receive official education in youth field in the country.

The part of the respondents mention that the youth organizations have lack of possibilities for organizational development. Those organizations do not receive proper support from different interested groups, among them from donor organizations. The respondents declare that amount of grant is directed towards financing main projects and consider less needs for institutional and administrative developments. As the respondents mention, renewal of inventory and incur daily costs represents the problem for the organizations. Taking this into consideration, the recommendation is to consider needs of the youth organizations from the side of the state and international donors to obtain long-term and sustainable results from projects implemented by them.

The part of the respondents mention that the youth organizations have lack of the possibilities for organizational development, because donors' support, which is essential for such organizations, mainly involves project financing. This issue to some extent restricts organizations to make investment in development of own capacity. Consequently, in most cases, organizations implement single projects that have a less impact on their long-term results and sustainable development. As the part of respondents has stated, one of the ways to solve problem is to strengthen umbrella organizations, whose objectives are to reveal needs of organizations and provide assistance for their development. Besides, one of the ways to tackle problems is to allocate administrative grants.

The part of the respondents talk about the problem related to working space for youth organizations. They mention that working space is a problem mostly for new organizations. According to them, absence of working space impedes development of organizations and their stable functioning; besides, it has negative influence on the quality of organizational activities. Consequently, it is important that the local government and the state bodies responsible for youth support activities of the youth organizations and their working processes.

The respondents talk about the problem related to acknowledgment of youth work and low level of awareness in this direction among them in the state bodies. For respondents at the state level youth policy is less prioritized. As they mention the example is

The respondents talk about the problem related to acknowledgment of youth work and low level of awareness in this direction among them in the state bodies. For respondents at the state level youth policy is less prioritized. As they mention, the clear example is constant variability of the state managerial bodies in youth issues and at the same time, reduction of the state budget. The respondents state that less prioritization is the problem at the regional level too. In most cases, youth work is bound to other sectors and not considered as an independent direction. The problem also involves scarcity of amounts allocated for youth work from the side of the state, which are not sufficient for long-term projects and only cover single activities.

The part of the respondents has named the low level of awareness towards the youth organizations from the side of the society as one of the challenges. The respondents talk about the importance of strengthening relationship between the sectors. According to their statements, it is significant, on the one hand, enhancement of cooperation between the youth organizations and on the other hand, with the state bodies, the representatives of business and media and raise the level of awareness of youth field in the society.

Based on the problems named, majority of the organizations participated in the quantitative research wants to upgrade competency in terms of search of resources and strategic development of organization. Besides, administrative management, strengthening of human resources, project management and financial management has been named frequently.

