



Inside IRIS Georgia

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Inside IRIS Georgia is a monthly newsletter published by IRIS Georgia, a USAID contractor implementing the Rule of Law Program in Georgia. IRIS Georgia is a satellite office of the IRIS Center at the University of Maryland. IRIS is an internationally-recognized source of research and advisory expertise for addressing economic growth and governance issues in transition and developing countries. See the Web site at <http://www.iris.umd.edu> for more information.

Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union Conducts Training for Teachers



On the 4th - 6th of March, Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union hosted a three-day training for trainers. The event was supported by IRIS and was designed to provide information to secondary school teachers from four cities and 24 villages on possible methods of teaching the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Training participants underlined the importance of civic education in raising students to be good citizens. Participants also noted that difficult subjects such as the Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be taught in an interactive way to help children grasp the main concepts of these documents. A sample lesson was conducted at the training during which participants worked in groups to complete a practical exercise. They were asked to match paintings of everyday life with the Declaration and Convention Articles. At the end of the session, each group presented their work. The goal of the sample lesson was to introduce an interactive method of teaching to the participants.

The second day of the training was dedicated to several issues. Different topics (e.g., "the happiest minute of my life," "an example of when you performed your civic duty," "I am, I have, I can," "when am I free") were discussed in order to allow the training participants to gain a better understanding of the concepts of human rights and obligations.



The trainers also emphasized a history of a regard for human rights in Georgian culture. As evidence of this, they cited and discussed the article *What is Freedom*, which was written by the famous Georgian poet Vazha Pshavela.

At the end of the training, different publications were distributed to the participants. Feedback from the training was that the participants found it challenging but very useful for improving their human rights teaching skills. The long-term goal of the training is to create a network of teachers that can share their practical experiences and exchange ideas for teaching human rights.

GYLA Goes to Regions With Its Anti-trafficking Awareness Campaign



From February 23rd to March 2nd, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), with funding from IRIS, organized several anti-Trafficking in Persons (TIP) events in the regions. The aim of the events was to prevent trafficking by raising awareness of the TIP in villages. GYLA lawyers conducted their events in two regions of east Georgia – Dusheti and Mtskheta (9 villages), and they met with 307 people, including

local students, teachers and the general public.

During the meetings, GYLA attorneys discussed the definition of trafficking, the crime's historical development, preventative measures, traffickers' techniques and methods and other TIP-related issues.



People asked questions and received legal aid from GYLA lawyers. GYLA will continue to work on anti-TIP awareness issues.



Anti-TIP related literature and materials were disseminated to meeting attendees.

Anti-trafficking
FREE legal aid
HOTLINE
!!! 99 50 76 !!!

Liberty Institute launched litigation on FOI related issues

Gori: Liberty Institute's regional Ombudsman in Gori, Giorgi Gotsiridze, and investigative journalist for the TV program *60 Minutes*, Nana Biganishvili, filed a lawsuit against the office of Shida Kartli Governor Mikheil Kareli. The Governor's administration refused to provide them with access to information concerning the original sources and spending of GEL 466,000 from the Governor's special funds.



The lawsuit is based on the provisions of Chapter III of the General Administrative Code of Georgia, which guarantees access to public information for every citizen of Georgia.

"The Governor's foundation provided information about the origins of only 53 thousand GEL (after the established time limits), while information on the remaining 400 thousand GEL is still missing. Based on information we've received from other sources, some businessmen and former officials are forced to make monetary contributions to the foundation," said Ms. Biganishvili who is currently

conducting a journalistic investigation of corruption and violations of the law.

The head financial division of the Governor's foundation, Nika Adikadze, justified refusal to issue the requested documents by classifying the data as a "commercial secret." *Khalkhis Gazeti* (People's Newspaper) journalists requested the same information from the Governor's foundation in 2004, but their request was also refused. The newspaper filed a FOI lawsuit, which was rejected by Gori Court.

Giorgi Gotsiridze and Nana Biganishvili's lawsuit is currently pending before the court.



Licensing Guides from AYEG

Association of Young Economists of Georgia (AYEG) completed work on their *Licensing Guides*. The guides cover most types of licenses and permits as defined by Georgian legislation. They provide information about the types of licenses/permits, fees and the contact information of state agencies responsible for issuing licenses/permits.



Five different guides on import/export permits, food licensing, construction permits, transportation sector permits and a universal reference guide on Georgian legislation are currently being distributed throughout Georgia.

On February 22nd and March 10th, two training sessions were conducted for businessmen engaged in

the public transportation sector. More than 40 entrepreneurs and business association representatives attended the meeting.

Project experts discussed current rules for obtaining transportation permits. Entrepreneurs discussed their concerns and suggestions about the existing permit system. Project experts cited poor quality of passenger services and the regulation fee (which is in violation of the law) as the most significant problems in the public transportation sector.

“The regulation fee represents a strict and unfair barrier,” said entrepreneur Anzor Lobjanidze, from the transportation company Phalavani Ltd.

AYEG is planning on preparing desk researched on targeted sectors of construction, export-import, food manufacturing and transportation. The researches are intended to

expose sector-related problems and to present recommendations for solving them. The first desk research on the construction permit system has recently been published. It includes a historical review of sector regulations, analysis of the current situation and specific recommendations for further improvements.

The first research report findings were presented at the conference held on March 12th. State officials, business association representatives, unions, large construction companies and mass-media attended the event. Participants supported the AYEG initiative to create the Construction Code, which will incorporate various articles about the construction sector. This type of Code will significantly decrease the burden of administrative barriers and will be a good catalyst for business development in the sector.

Article 42 Legal Aid Case

P.S. Further information about licensing guides and desktop researches can be obtained at the licensing hotline at: 93 64 75.



Isani-Samgori Regional Court had sentenced LP* to 12.6 years of imprisonment for burglary, multiple theft and illegal possession of a firearm.

After learning about the case, Article 42, a provider of free legal aid, discovered that much of the investigation was conducted illegally. Search of LP’s property was not witnessed by citizens. Instead it was witnessed only by the officers of the investigative unit, who are not impartial. Exhibits

seized from LP’s flat could not be considered reliable.

Following the motion filed by Article 42, Tbilisi District Court dismissed most of the evidence as inadmissible. The District Court reduced the charges against LP to 3 charges (from 8) and consequently reduced his sentence to a maximum of 8.6 years of imprisonment.

The main testimony against LP was his confession. “The confession was made after beating, torturing and blackmailing him,” said Lasha Chincharauli, his Article 42 attorney.

The court neglected to consider the provision of the law which states that a confession alone cannot serve as the grounds for punishment and indictment of a person.

The case was further appealed to the Supreme Court of Georgia. The Supreme Court has since canceled one charge against LP, held him liable for committing two crimes and sentenced him to serve 4.8 years in prison.

“With our help LP will serve the sentence of 4.8 years instead of 12.6 years,” said his attorney.

* LP are created initials for the recipient of legal aid, whose name is secured in the legal aid clinic.

Introducing an IRIS Grantee Staff Person

Marine Meskhi—Rule of Law Program Director at GYLA



Marine Meskhi

Marine Meskhi has been with GYLA since 1998.

In December 2004, Ms. Meskhi became the Rule of Law Program Director at GYLA. Her tasks include managing implementation of activities and funds for the IRIS Rule of Law Program. She also is in charge of the anti-trafficking in

persons component of the Rule of Law Program.

Ms. Meskhi holds a Law Degree from Tbilisi State University.

She has worked on various positions at GYLA as well as at the Legal Department of Parliament. Ms. Meskhi speaks fluent English and Russian languages.

Schedule of April events:

Date	Events
Apr 5	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union: lecture-seminar for children, parents and teachers of the union on reintegration of disabled children into society;
Apr 10	Liberty Institute: presentation of general concepts of citizens charter (internal regulations) to the targeted state institutions in Tbilisi (through April 20);
Apr 15	AYEG: training for businessmen engaged in food products manufacturing sector; Liberty Institute: working sessions with state institutions in regions to present general concept and elaboration strategy of citizens charter (internal regulations) (through April 25);
Apr 16	GYLA: workshop in Tbilisi for representatives of administrative agencies on administrative procedures (through April 17);
Apr 20	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union: presentation of a documentary dedicated to Article 23 (right of disables children) of the <i>Convention on the rights of the Child</i> ;
Apr 25	Liberty Institute: Press Club session on the registration of religious organizations;
Apr 27	Liberty Institute: workshop for journalists and legal professionals on the law on freedom of expression and press;
Apr 29	AYEG: conference for the state agency staff issuing permits for the transportation sector.

Editorial Policy

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