

Georgia Civil Society 2.0

Phase 2 report

Christine Prefontaine
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SUMMARY

How are Georgian civil society organizations using civic media to engage citizens, spark change, and shift public policy? Georgia Civil Society 2.0 was an action research project that assessed needs and practices, delivered training and resources, and wove networks. The project focused specifically on data visualization, information design, and mapping to advance policy analysis and advocacy. This report summarizes the second phase of this two-part project. TASCHA partnered with Jumpstart Georgia to lead a mentoring team, develop the CivicMedia.info resource kit, organize a Civic Media Festival, and conduct a training on data visualization for advocacy. Participants received opportunities to advance skills related to planning and executing a data-driven advocacy campaign, as well as facilitating unconferences to share knowledge and innovations, while creating connections between advocates.

KEYWORDS

Georgia, civil society, civic media, civic engagement, public policy, open space technology, advocacy, data visualization, social media, digital activism, information design, mapping, unconference

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Executive summary

How are Georgian civil society organizations using civic media to engage citizens, spark change, and shift public policy? *Georgia Civil Society 2.0* was an action research project that assessed needs and practices, delivered training and resources, and wove networks. The project focused specifically on using data visualization, information design, and mapping to advance policy analysis and advocacy.

The project was implemented in two phases. This report summarizes the activities accomplished in Phase 2, where TASCHA partnered with Jumpstart Georgia to connect participating civil society organizations (CSOs) more closely to a high-quality resource that would be available after the project ended. (For an overview of Phase 1 activities see Appendix 2: Phase 1 activities.)

Activities

CSO representatives who engaged in all Phase 2 activities gained an increased awareness of the organizational and strategic aspects of integrating social media into their work; experience using open space technology (the unconference format) to connect, share knowledge, and strengthen networks; and a basic understanding of how to plan and execute a data-driven advocacy campaign — including hands-on experience creating maps and visualizations. Phase 2 was organized around four activities, detailed below.

1. Mentoring team

Each of the nine CSOs who participated in the Phase 1 assessment nominated a representative for the mentoring team. Participating organizations agreed to engage in a range of remote (online) capacity development activities over two months, and a week-long in-person civic media festival and data visualization training. Six mentoring sessions were co-led by TASCHA and JumpStart Georgia. Overall the remote mentoring succeeded in conveying key concepts and creating a foundation for learning. However, for a range of reasons (primarily work commitments and busy schedules), many of the CSO representatives were unable to devote sufficient effort to these sessions.

2. Online resource kit: *CivicMedia.info*

TASCHA created and curated resources for the members of the mentoring team. All resources are publicly available at *CivicMedia.info*. The kit highlights good planning, essential tools, and examples. It also includes *Planning a Data-Driven Advocacy Campaign*, a guide prepared specifically for this project by adapting Spitfire Strategies' *Just Enough Planning Guide*.

3. Civic Media Festival

TASCHA and JumpStart organized a one-day unconference to explore ideas, projects, and technologies that foster dialogue, advocacy, and political action. Of special interest was the use of data, mapping, and visualizations. Thirty-eight people attended and feedback indicates that the festival was a success. Sessions included:

- How can we help Tbilisi City Hall become open and transparent?
- Social media for conflict resolution
- #GVote, SMS, and Twitter
- Oxfam's "Female Food Hero" project in Georgia
- Design thinking for advocacy
- How can government websites facilitate participation?
- How would you use parliament/MP voting record data?
- Putting Georgia's open data to use
- Social media for older citizens
- Local budget and civic journalism
- Reaching citizens in remote areas
- Cybersecurity and privacy
- Who owns that business?
- Data visualization and effective design processes

4. Training: Data visualization for advocacy

JumpStart Georgia led a two-day training on creating data-driven visualizations to advance public policy analysis and advocacy. The training built on the readings and resources covered during the mentoring sessions. Participants entered the training with a good understanding of what they wanted to gain, and eager to start working with data and put concepts into practice. JumpStart did an excellent job at mixing overviews with practical exercises, and the participants were engaged and enthusiastic.

Recommendations

TASCHA recommends the following to further advance the goals *Georgia Civil Society 2.0* and build on the project's learning and successes:

1. **Provide more core funding (as opposed to project funding) for CSOs** — Core funding would better allow CSOs to develop long-term strategies, retain critical staff, analyze public policy issues, and incorporate both best-practice and innovative uses of ICTs to effect change.
2. **Invest in innovation spaces** — The in-person festival and training created a temporary environment for people to share, learn, and innovate. A permanent space for the CSO community — including both coworking/co-location and event space — will foster ongoing development, innovation, and strategic thinking while offering cost savings.
3. **Invest in advancing data visualization skills** — Continued training on data visualizations for advocacy, as well as support for one-on-one consultations delivered by JumpStart Georgia, is strongly recommended.
4. **Continue promoting unconferences** — The unconference format worked well in Georgia. It is an inexpensive way to gather peers, share knowledge, and diffuse innovations.

About Georgia Civil Society 2.0

How are Georgian civil society organizations using civic media to engage citizens, spark change, and shift public policy? *Georgia Civil Society 2.0* was an action research project that assessed needs and practices, delivered training and resources, and wove networks. The project focused specifically on using data visualization, information design, and mapping to advance policy analysis and advocacy.

Implemented between May 2012 and June 2013 with a budget of \$74,000, *Georgia Civil Society 2.0* was a small component of the East West Management Institute (EWMI) *Policy, Advocacy, and Civil Society Development in Georgia* (G-PAC) project — a four-year initiative (2010–2014) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to strengthen civil society’s role in advocating for, influencing the development and implementation of, and monitoring effective public policy reforms in Georgia.

Goals

Georgia Civil Society 2.0 was designed to advance G-PAC’s objective of “improved public policy discourse, research, and analysis to strengthen policy formation” and to bolster G-PAC’s array of other skill-building programs. Specific goals were to:

- Help civic leaders move beyond “friending” and “tweeting” to harness the organizational and analytical power of social media for advocacy and public policy reform
- Increase the professionalism of CSOs to support transparency and facilitate democratic change
- Accelerate and amplify messages and networks

The initial project concept included a significant focus on ICT development for CSOs involved in monitoring, mapping, and participation issues in elections, with an eye toward the 2013 presidential elections. However, after assessing CSO needs, the focus shifted toward advancing campaign planning, data visualization, information design, and mapping skills (without specifying a particular issue, such as elections). The team also expanded from “social media” to “civic media” — an umbrella term that encompasses the practices, technologies, and forms of communication that advance political dialogue and action, strengthen social bonds, and create a strong sense of civic engagement.

Activities

TASCHA was asked to assess civil society needs, design strategies, and deliver trainings and technical assistance to support CSOs' use of social media in the policy process.

Three deliverables were defined:

- A rapid assessment to assess needs for advanced social media and ICT tools
- Training to selected CSOs in the strategic use of social media and ICT tools for dissemination and advocacy
- Technical assistance to selected CSOs in program areas identified during the assessment phase

After conducting the assessment, the organizing of a Civic Media Festival was added as a deliverable.

The project was divided into two phases. The remainder of this report is devoted to Phase 2 activities. (A full report of Phase 1 activities is available at <http://tascha.uw.edu/publications/georgia-civil-society-assessment/>.)

Phase 2 activities and reflections

Based on the Phase 1 assessment, TASCHA proposed the following activities. During this phase TASCHA partnered with Jumpstart Georgia to support — *and learn from* — a local organization, as well as connect participating CSOs more closely to a high-quality resource that would be available after the project ended. (Almost all of the CSOs were already aware of Jumpstart; many had already worked with them.)

Phase 2 project activities were designed to:

- Introduce new ideas, resources, and ways of working and organizing
- Promote strategic thinking and planning
- Strengthen connections between CSOs, with the aim of creating an informal network of people interested in these issues and methods
- Practice distilling organizational messages on key topics and creating “edible evidence” to promote CSO aims and advance data-driven debate (versus discourse driven by rumors)
- Create tangible, useful output(s) while building skills

Nine CSOs were invited to join participate in these activities. In addition to the CSOs, EWMI-GPAC’s communication specialist also elected to join in Phase 2. Her questions and level of engagement improved both the festival and the training.

Mentoring team

Each of the nine CSOs who participated in the assessment were invited to select a representative for the mentoring team. Participating organizations agreed to:

- Allocate to their representative a minimum of 10 days over three months, in addition to ensuring their participation at the Civic Media Festival and 2-day training
- Actively support their representative so that they have the time and space to attend all mentoring sessions, review materials, and practice working with new technologies
- Establish a simple process to review what the team member is learning, with the goal of ensuring knowledge skills/transfer to the broader organization, and linking mentoring content to organizational goals

- Promote the Civic Media Festival
- Provide feedback on learning and remaining gaps

Six mentoring sessions were co-led by TASCHA and JumpStart Georgia (see Appendix 1: Mentoring sessions). Between sessions, members had the opportunity to connect via Skype or a private Google Group.

Overall the remote mentoring succeeded in conveying key concepts and creating a foundation for learning. However, there were challenges. TASCHA and Jumpstart made an effort to tailor the mentoring sessions to CSO interests and priorities, and each organization committed to giving their representatives time to attend and practice. But participants were mostly silent when it came to suggesting mentoring topics (although this could have been because they were satisfied with them). More challenging was the fact that the facilitators had the sense that most participants did not complete their readings or exercises, which meant that concepts remained abstract, and in-depth observations and discussions were limited. Factors for this may have included:

- Time constraints (this was specifically cited by most as the reason)
- Language challenges
- No face-to-face time to connect and create group cohesion
- Distance format and video/audio glitches
- Participants ability (perceived or actual) to suggest strategic shifts or changes within their respective organizations

Three factors likely would have made the mentoring process more fruitful:

1. **Time to connect face-to-face *beforehand*** to co-create the session topics and build personal relationships, which would have resulted in a sense of ownership and group cohesion that could have energized the remote sessions.
2. **Some type of process or mechanism to ensure that each participant *actually* had the time and the space to work on mentoring topics**, rather than having them compete with work tasks. Likely this would have meant more engagement with higher-level CSO representatives — they are the ones who have to balance giving up valuable staff work time for the promise of acquiring new skills, knowledge, and connections for their respective organizations.
3. **More and better time**: working with CSOs over a longer period of time — and in synch with their strategic planning cycle — to integrate new concepts and approaches into their work.

Online resource kit: CivicMedia.info

TASCHA created and curated resources for the members of the mentoring team. All resources are publicly available at CivicMedia.info. The kit highlights good planning, essential tools, and examples. It also includes *Planning a Data-Driven Advocacy Campaign*, a guide adapted from Spitfire Strategies' *Just Enough Planning Guide* specifically for this project.

TASCHA plans to maintain this resource in partnership with FacilitatingChange.org.

Civic Media Festival

TASCHA and JumpStart organized a one-day unconference, drawing inspiration from the annual Mozilla Festival. Mirian Jurgheli, one of the participants in the Phase 1 Training-of-Trainers sessions, was invited to co-facilitate. Members of the mentoring team were invited to participate in the planning and framing of the event, and encouraged to lead sessions. Session ideas were solicited in advance to inspire other participants, and materials were prepared that provided an overview of the unconference format. Eventbrite was used for ticketing, and the conference was promoted and documented using Lanyrd, a social conference tool. See <http://lanyrd.com/2013/civika2013/>.

A detailed account of the Civic Media Festival is included in the next section of this report.

Training: Data visualization for advocacy

JumpStart Georgia led a two-day training on creating data-driven visualizations to advance public policy analysis and advocacy. The training built on the readings and resources covered during the mentoring sessions. With the hope of tailoring training to each organization's needs, participants were encouraged to select an existing issue or project and focus on developing a campaign and acquiring/analyzing/visualizing data using that lens. Participants preferred, however, to use "dummy data" provided by JumpStart.

The training was a success, and JumpStart and TASCHA realized that even though the remote mentoring sessions were challenging, they had succeeded in conveying key concepts and creating a foundation for learning. Participants entered the training with a good understanding of what they wanted to achieve, and eager to start working with data and put ideas into practice. JumpStart did an excellent job at mixing overviews

with practical exercises, and the participants were engaged and enthusiastic — asking questions and focusing on working through all of the tasks.

An outline of the training content, as well as detailed notes, is available at civicmedia.info/ideas/workshop-communicating-data-effectively-with-visualizations/.

RECOMMENDATION

Invest in advancing data visualization skills

Continued training on data visualizations for advocacy, as well as support for one-on-one consultations delivered by JumpStart Georgia, is strongly recommended.

Supporting these skills will contribute to the goal of helping civic leaders move beyond “friending” and “tweeting” to harness the organizational and analytical power of social media for advocacy and public policy reform — because when done well, creating visualizations is the end result of a [strategic planning](#) process and discourse based more on evidence, and less on rumor or ideology.

Reflections

Those civil society organization (CSO) representatives who engaged in all Phase 2 activities gained an increased awareness of the organizational and strategic aspects of integrating social media into their work; experience using open space technology (the unconference format) to connect, share knowledge, and strengthen networks; and a basic understanding of how to plan and execute a data-driven advocacy campaign — including hands-on experience creating maps and visualizations.

Phase 2 activities successfully contributed to the project’s goals. Participating CSOs were particularly interested more unconferences and data visualization training, and JumpStart Georgia proved to be an excellent partner — committed to creating connections, developing skills in this area, and providing practical support.

Phase 2, however, also revealed the limitations of this type of short-term technical assistance. TASCHA suspects that there is limited domestic support for civil society organizations, that a large portion of their budgets comes from foreign donors, and that most support (domestic or foreign) is project-based. When a project ends CSOs may need to let staff go, losing institutional knowledge and skills. More critically, it places CSOs in the position of *responding* to donor priorities and agendas, rather than

formulating and focusing their own agenda. In the best cases, there is an overlap between these two — but project-based support means that any overlap is temporary.

In this context, it becomes frustrating to talk about strategic planning and processes in relation to social media, civic media, and other innovative technologies. Therefore donor investment in **creating an environment where strategic planning is possible** — with the use of ICTs *embedded into that strategic process* — will advance CSOs' professionalism and capacity to analyze public policy issues and effect change. Shifting from project to core funding mechanisms, as well as investing in innovation spaces (physical coworking or co-location spaces), are two ways that this environment can be created.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide more core funding (as opposed to project funding) for CSOs

Core funding would contribute to advancing professionalism and enhance CSOs' ability to develop long-term strategies, retain critical staff, analyze public policy issues, and incorporate both best-practice and innovative uses of ICTs. As part of this shift to core funding, more clarity and an open discussion about the sources and nature of CSO funding could raise awareness about civic engagement and help USAID and other donors understand how the broader environment contributes to CSOs' ability to strategically leverage social media, civic media, and other innovative technologies.

Invest in innovation spaces

The in-person festival and training created a temporary environment for people to share, learn, and innovate. A permanent space for the CSO community — including both coworking/co-location and event space — would contribute ongoing innovation and strategic thinking while offering cost savings. TASCHA can provide specific examples and models to assist in this effort.

Civic Media Festival

Held on Friday, April 19, 2013, the Tbilisi Civic Media Festival explored ideas, projects, and technologies that foster dialogue, advocacy, and political action. Of special interest was the use of data, mapping, and visualizations.

The festival was facilitated in English, with many sessions held in Georgian. Mirian Jurcheli, one of the participants in the Phase 1 Training-of-Trainers activity, acted as a co-facilitator. The G-MEDIA project (funded by USAID and implemented by IREX) provided the Multimedia Education Center venue at no cost; so the only expenses were office supplies and light refreshments).

“Civic media” is umbrella term that encompasses the practices, technologies, and forms of communication that advance political dialogue and action, strengthen social bonds, and create a strong sense of civic engagement.

(Adapted from <http://civic.mit.edu/about>.)

The festival was not just about the content. It was produced so that Georgian CSOs and activists could connect with each other while **acquiring experience organizing participatory, low-cost events**. The unconference format *requires* engagement to be successful. Attendees create the agenda and help to report out afterwards. They are in control of what gets discussed and whether or not people participate. The idea was not just to talk about engagement, but to *do* it.

To prepare, TASCHA and Jumpstart created [online summaries](#) and handouts in [English](#) and [Georgian](#) to explain the unconference format. Although there have been a few unconferences in Georgia (the earliest was in 2008), most people had never heard of an unconference. This is not unusual in most countries outside of the technology and social change communities.

TASCHA and Jumpstart Georgia received feedback that the festival was considered a success. Sixty-three people registered and 38 attended. Visit <http://lanyrd.com/2013/civika2013/> for an overview of the speakers, the schedule, and to view [additional coverage](#). Documentation includes:

- [EWMI-GPAC](#) photos on Flickr
- [Multimedia Education Center](#) photos on Facebook

- [Christine Prefontaine](#)'s photos on Flickr (some photos from IREX/MEC)
- [Video overview](#), from Mirian Jugheli of *The Tbilisi Hangout*
- [An interactive display of all tweets](#) about the event

RECOMMENDATION

Keep promoting unconferences

The unconference format worked well in Georgia. It is an inexpensive way to gather peers, share knowledge, and diffuse innovations. TASCHA recommends that USAID continue to support periodic unconferences, taking care to frame and facilitate them in a way that more junior or shy participants can take the lead and be heard.

Promoting unconferences could be as simple as leading by example (organizing high-profile events using open space technology), letting CSO partners know that there is space available for these types of events, and promoting and translating “how-to” guides, such as the one already prepared by TASCHA at civicmedia.info/resources/unconferences/.

Summary of festival sessions

How can we help Tbilisi City Hall become open and transparent?

NANO ZAZANASHVILI, TIFLIS HAMKARI & DOCOMOMO GEORGIA

As cities around the world start opening up and sharing their data (see Open Montreal's list of cities with open data policies), this session focused on ways to help Tbilisi City Hall do the same.

This issue is important because many organizations — Tiflis Hamkari, for example — depend on access to information about procurement and decision-making processes.

Participants discussed the need to raise awareness about this issue, and to engage citizens to call for more transparency.

Strengthening international contacts was proposed as an idea, starting with Tbilisi's sister cities and sharing experiences. For example, Atlanta has an open data movement, and so does Amsterdam.

In terms of next steps, participants suggested that a series of public meetings about municipal transparency generally, and Tbilisi City Hall specifically, would be a good way to start.

Social media for conflict resolution

TEONA MACHARASHVILI, NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE (NDI)

This session focused on the role of social media in conflict resolution, looking specifically at Georgians and Ossetians. While there are significant obstacles in getting people from both sides of a conflict to meet physically, the internet provides a space without borders or restrictions, and potentially facilitates interactions — especially between young people.

Because it is free and accessible, social media can help create positive ties among young people, and can lay the groundwork for dispute resolution. Currently, the potential of social media is not fully utilized for these purposes, mainly because majority of Ossetian youth use Odnoklassniki while Georgian youth prefer Facebook.

One solution might be to create a shared platform: a web portal. Content and features would be developed according to youth needs and interests, avoiding direct reference to dispute resolution or figuring out what happened in the past. Instead the focus would be on career and education opportunities, entertainment, and sports. Users could create profiles, upload local news, contribute blog posts, propose projects, and engage in discussions on simple issues of daily concern. Resources (such as project templates) and features (like the ability to upload a CV and add information about interests and experiences) can spark online interaction and ideas for joint projects and activities.

Everyone agreed that dispute resolution is only possible with real interaction, and that this is easier when there is a shared need or goal. The group discussed incentives that would promote joint cultural, educational, career, or business projects. An example would be to offer tax credits to businesses that are managed jointly by Ossetian and Georgian youth. The importance of starting with small-scale pilots and realistic, doable chunks was emphasized, along with looking for places where geography and infrastructure favor physical interaction.

Next steps might include:

- Lobbying to reach an agreement with the government to introduce incentives for Ossetian and Georgian youth to study together at state universities
- Reaching an agreement with the authorities on permitting a small-scale travel between villages that straddle the administrative border (for social services, visiting markets, etc.)

- Designing sample cultural, educational, or business projects — youth could adapt project templates, and consultants could help refine and implement
- Creating the portal described above

#GVote, SMS, and Twitter

EKA ROSTOMASHVILI, TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL GEORGIA

The group was interested in ways to monitor the government, so the discussion started with an overview of MyParliament.ge — TI Georgia’s parliamentary monitoring website, which will launch in May 2013. Eka explained how the site works and talked about the reactions from Georgia’s Facebook community to the preliminary launch (the site was first launched as ShenMartav.ge in August 2012).

Participants then discussed online tools that help citizens hold the government accountable. There was criticism of the wider public’s lack of engagement, as well as the failure of government institutions to respond to citizen’s initiatives.

ISFED’s Mikheil Benidze discussed ElectionsPortal.ge and identified some of the weaknesses of the project. Mirian Jugheli then brought up a point that the efforts of CSOs like TI Georgia and individual citizens have proven to be somewhat effective in recent past:

- The #GVote Twitter hashtag put forward and promoted by TI Georgia was extremely popular throughout Georgia’s 2012 parliamentary elections — although likely mostly used by foreign journalists and pundits, it was still laid the groundwork for two-way social media communication in Georgia
- ChemiKucha.ge, where citizens report problems and the City Hall has to fix them
- Some Facebook campaigns that have successfully mobilized people

The group concluded that CSOs should continue promoting online activism, and perhaps more efforts are needed in that direction. They noted that active citizenship is hard to achieve — many people are apathetic — but providing individual examples is a good way to start.

Oxfam’s Female Food Hero Project in Georgia

ANA SIDAMONIDZE, BLOGGER & SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER FOR OXFAM GEORGIA

Oxfam’s GROW campaign aims to grow food more fairly and sustainably by investing in a new future for agriculture, transforming food chain management and distribution, and rethinking business practices and notions of prosperity.

“Female Food Hero” is a component of GROW that aims to highlight the essential roles that women play as food producers, and boost their participation in the campaign. Oxfam affiliates around the world are nominating and promoting the work of local female food heroes.

In Georgia, the team focused on raising awareness about the role and challenges faced by rural women — they are often excluded from participating as active campaigners due to lower levels of engagement in the public sphere, lack of time to participate, and cultural stereotypes.

Ana provided an overview of the campaign’s activities in Georgia. Participants provided feedback, pointing out that the project’s goals needed to be better defined, and suggesting potential tactics and ways to better communicate about the project. Ana will be incorporating the group’s feedback into her work with Oxfam Georgia’s Female Food Hero project.

Design thinking for advocacy

CHRISTINE PREFONTAINE, TASCHA/FACILITATINGCHANGE.ORG

A deep understanding of context and empathy for audience(s)/user(s) is key to developing successful data-driven advocacy campaigns (<http://civicmedia.info/guide/>).

This session provided an overview of design thinking, looking at frameworks proposed by IDEO, Stanford’s D*SCHOOL, and Peer Insight, and then digging into specific tools such as journey maps, personas, and guerrilla ethnography. Empathy, human-centered design, prototyping, iterating, and co-creation were emphasized.

Participants also had a chance to take a look at a deck of “Envisioning Cards”, produced by the University of Washington’s Value Sensitive Design Research Lab (<http://www.envisioningcards.com/>).

How can government websites facilitate participation?

SALOME CHUKHUA, IDFI

IDFI is working on a project to improve the way that government agencies communicate with citizens via their websites. They conducted an extensive survey of agency websites, and are developing a set of criteria and best practices. Implementing these will make it easier for citizens to monitor activities, contact representatives, comment, and receive services.

During this session, participants suggested key criteria and features, including:

- Top-notch information architecture (IA), user experience (UX), and design

- Compliant with W3C web standards (<http://www.w3.org/standards/>)
- Design that is responsive (for mobile devices) and accessible for people with disabilities (screen readers)
- Machine-readable data (no PDFs!)
- Ability to subscribe to an RSS feed for updates and events
- A robust search function
- Properly tested and de-bugged (no technical faults)

In terms of content and features, participants suggested:

- Agency organizational structure and contact information
- Ability to make comments and ask questions, to see what others have said and asked, and to receive acknowledgement of question/comment receipt
- A representative available via chat
- Integration with social networks
- NOT including frivolous content like impromptu polls and surveys (weak methodology)

The issue of government representatives' *ability* to make changes to their websites was also raised. Is it easy or hard to make changes? Is there capacity to make improvements? Empathizing with and helping government agencies to implement these changes is key.

How would you use parliament/MP voting record data?

ERIC BARRETT, JUMPSTART GEORGIA

During this session, participants highlighted:

- There is a new parliament tender for a voting system; it has several issues
- Inadequacies of the current system
- How civil society organizations might use this data

Next steps would be to:

- Draft a letter to civil society organizations to raise awareness about the tender and get their support to amend it
- Submit comments directly to the e-tender system outlining concerns; the tender will then be halted while the comments are reviewed (JumpStart will do this the week of 22 April 2013)
- Advocate for compliance between tenders and needs

Putting Georgia's open data to use

MATHIAS HUTER & CHRIS BELL, TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL GEORGIA

How can repackaging and connecting public records can help find and fight corruption? Participants noted that:

- A broad range of government databases are available online
- Georgia has a transparent e-procurement system, but the data is not put to use to hold the government accountable
- The challenge is to find and connect data from huge databases

There is a need to connect data sources to turn transparency into accountability. At the same time, it is important to increase awareness of the existence of this data, and to train reporters to use it.

Social media for older citizens

TAMAR BORTSVADZE, PUBLIC OUTREACH COORDINATOR WITH EWMI/G-PAC
URSULA KACZMAREK, PROGRAM OFFICER, INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE (IRI)

This session focused on promoting social media among people who grew up before the era of computers. Participants agreed that:

- Computer literacy is the first step: making computers less scary and demonstrating their utility (most people see the value).
- This is not a high-priority for government agencies. They do not consider their social media presence to be important, so why would older users care?
- If there is a young person in the household it's much more likely that older people will get help from them to use social media.

Potential next steps might include implementing public information and education efforts, especially in the regions; government agency trainings and seminars; and community service projects to educate older users and overcome digital illiteracy.

Local budget and civic journalism

TAMAR MZHAVANADZE, JOURNALIST, RADIO MARNEULI & COORDINATOR, DEMOCRAT WOMEN OF MARNEULI (SDWM)

Tamar is interested in monitoring the budgets of local self-government bodies. She has also just established a new organization — The Resource Center for Equal Participation — that will work on the advancing quality journalism as a way to strengthen Georgian civil society.

Participants in this session discussed:

- Participation in the budgeting process
- How to both teach and learn civic skills, especially the ability to monitor government bodies
- Ways to get bloggers interested in this topic and utilize social networks to increase transparency and control

Next steps might include the creation of a civic activists group made up of municipal representatives; providing them with master classes on budgeting, monitoring, and civic reporting; and then encouraging the activists to start utilizing local media and social networks.

Reaching citizens in remote areas

JONNE CATSHOEK, ELVA

This session focused on ways to reach citizens in remote areas, specifically looking at getting their voice heard in decision-making processes. Participants discussed:

- Best ways to connect with communities to identify local issues. These included community meetings (birzhas, to build trust), regional TV (to engage the public), and SMS questionnaires (to collect info).
- Best ways to facilitate and ensure government response, such as publicly releasing information on the government's response (naming, praising, shaming), person-to-person contact, and social pressure.
- How to keep citizens engaged, such as demonstrating how their input is benefitting the community, managing expectations, and providing financial or information incentives.

Participants suggested several topics that might be interesting to investigate further. Based on community meetings, priorities for resolving needs can be set. Subsequently, periodic SMS questionnaires can provide more in-depth insights. Priorities and community-driven data can then be shared with local decision-makers, who can respond in turn.

Cybersecurity and privacy

ANA VACHADZE, INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE (IRI)

Participants discussed issues surrounding publicizing personal data on social networks (especially Facebook); government and corporate access to personal data; and feelings around trust and how "safe" and "secure" people feel when sharing their information (or not). The need to be aware of risks and threats was emphasized, as well as ways to stay safe.

Who owns that business?

MATHIAS HUTER & DEREK DOHLER, TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL GEORGIA

Scraping and using public records can shed light on opaque company ownership, which can surface instances of public and private corruption.

Participants discussed how companies should be held accountable. In Georgia, for example, there is a need for a strong consumer protection organization. The state is not fulfilling this function. The importance of food safety was highlighted: there is no information on where food comes from or how it was produced.

Next steps would include the creation of a consumer-protection NGO.

Data visualization and effective design processes

MARIAM KOBULADZE, JUMPSTART GEORGIA

This session focused on the practical aspects of using data visualization to tell stories and advocate for change. Mariam gave an overview of the typical design process and participants discussed issues surrounding expectations, communication, and the role of the designer (hint: you lose if you think they're just people who make your data "pretty").

A design perspective is key to producing effective visualizations, especially when dealing with large or complex datasets. The importance of bringing on designers early on in the process, and linking visualizations to overall goals and strategy, was emphasized. Finally, there was a call to involve a broader range of organizations in advancing data journalism in Georgia.

Appendix 1: Mentoring sessions

SESSION 1 — INTRODUCTION

- + Phase 1 and the assessment report
- + Phase 2 project goals
- + What to expect from us
- + What we'll expect from you (and your organizations)
- + Civic Media Festival: April 19
- + Two-day training: April 23 & 24
- + Tech tools overview

REVIEW:

- + Chapter 1 of [The Networked Nonprofit](#)
- + Skim [measurement metrics](#)

PREPARE:

- + Post your issue or topic to the spreadsheet by March 14
- + Provide feedback on high-priority topics (based on review of assessment report)
- + Prepare questions or reactions to *The Networked Nonprofit* reading
- + Make sure all of your info in the spreadsheet is complete (including title and phone number)

SESSION 2 — SOCIAL NETWORKS + DATA-DRIVEN ADVOCACY

- + Housekeeping
- + *The Networked Nonprofit*
- + Defining [advocacy](#)
- + What is data-driven advocacy?
- + Selecting your topic
- + To do for next week

REVIEW:

- + [Planning a Data-Driven Advocacy Campaign](#)

PREPARE:

- + Questions or reactions to *The Networked Nonprofit* or the planning guide
- + Your SMART goal (Step 2)
- + Chart your course (Step 3)

SESSION 3 — THE FOUNDATION: CAMPAIGN PLANNING

THE NETWORKED NONPROFIT

- + What did you think of the *Networked Nonprofit* model?
- + Could your organization be structured or have practices like this? Why or why not?
- + How might we use these ideas to advance advocacy goals?

PLANNING GUIDE

- + Can you envision your organization adopting a planning process like this?
- + Where might data visualizations fit into the planning process?

Discussion

- + SMART goals
- + Chart your course (steps)
- + Gathering and analyzing data (context, target audiences)
- + Prioritizing target audiences

REVIEW:

- + [Planning a Data-Driven Advocacy Campaign](#) (especially the updated parts on [Georgian data sources](#) and [generating your own data](#))
- + [David McCandless: The beauty of data visualization](#) (video, 18 minutes)
- + [Geoff McGhee: Journalism in the Age of Data](#) (video, 54 minutes)
- + [ScraperWiki in 3 minutes](#) (video)

PREPARE:

- + Complete Steps 2 through 6 of the Planning Tool
- + Start making list of possible data sources and visualizations (including rationale and sources)

SESSION 4 — DATA ACQUISITION + THE CIVIC MEDIA FESTIVAL

DATA VISUALIZATION: 3 STEPS

- + Acquisition
- + Analysis
- + Storytelling

EXISTING DATA

- + [Georgian data sources — in the Planning Guide](#)

GENERATE YOUR OWN DATA

- + [How to generate your own data — in the Planning Guide](#)

- + Screen scraping
- + Surveys

DATA ACQUISITION TOOLS

- + ScaperWiki
- + Ruby or Python coding skills

REVIEW:

- + [Stephen Few’s Chapter on Data Design Concepts](#)
- + [Essential data visualization tools](#)
- + [Overview of OpenRefine](#) (3 videos)
- + Unconference overview and planning materials sent via the Google Group

PREPARE:

- + Finalize Campaign Planning Tool
- + Identify datasets

SESSION 5 — DATA ANALYSIS & STORYTELLING

- + Hiring a professional best; but you still need to know enough to manage your vendor and assess quality
- + If you’ve fully engaged in the planning process then it may be possible to “do it yourself”

TOOLS

- + [Essential data visualization tools](#)

REVIEW:

- + [Unconference Lanyrd page](#)

PREPARE:

Be prepared to suggest a session that you’d like to facilitate. Christine will be leading a discussion on “Design Thinking for Advocacy”

SESSION 6 — PREPARING FOR THE CIVIC MEDIA FESTIVAL + DATA VISUALIZATION TRAINING

- + The Civic Media Festival, and facilitating an unconference session
- + What you need to have ready to fully participate in the training
- + Questions and feedback?

Appendix 2: Phase 1 activities

A full report of Phase 1 activities is available at <http://tascha.uw.edu/publications/georgia-civil-society-assessment/>.

Rapid assessment

TASCHA conducted a rapid assessment of nine CSOs to determine their use of, and needs for, advanced social media and ICT tools to achieve specific goals (e.g., election monitoring). From May 14–22, 2012, the assessment team reviewed each CSOs' online presence and scheduled individual interviews to:

- Get acquainted with research and advocacy programs
- Understand how strategies/campaigns are developed and implemented (listening/research practices, theory of change, project management)
- Get a sense of typical campaign activities and outputs
- Determine how ICT tools like social media, cloud services, and civic technologies are used, looking at advocacy but also at coordination or administration
- Understand concerns and practices (if any) around privacy and security
- Surface needs and interest for further training, technical assistance, or ICT implementation
- Get a sense of each organization's culture (in terms of social-media readiness), as well as individual information-seeking and ICT practices

Desk research

To complement the interviews, TASCHA conducted a desk review, looking at:

- Attitudes and behaviors related to NGOs and civic participation
- The Georgian media environment, blogosphere, and public access landscape
- Other organizations and donors working in the Georgian ICT, new media, and civic technology spaces, including research groups and projects (both current and past, Georgian and international)
- The latest digital advocacy literature

Training of Trainers

TASCHA delivered a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop for IREX/G-MEDIA project bloggers and journalists. The training included a three-hour participatory planning session and a full-day workshop. Curriculum development, teaching methods, upcoming trends, experiences using multimedia content-creation tools, mapping, web development, and developing social media strategy emerged as priorities during the planning session. A summary of the session is available for download.

Social media training for regional CSOs

At the request of G-PAC, TASCHA added an informal, half-day training for regional CSOs to the project deliverables. The training was conducted in English with consecutive translation.