Progress Report

Baseline Assessment of Social Service Gaps

InPankisi Gorge

Preparatory Phase

May 2014

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# Executive Summary

The Georgian Association of Social Workers (GASW) is one of the implementing partners of the Project titled “Facilitating Civil Society Organizations involvement in municipal reform processes in Kakheti region and Pankisi Valley through the promotion of public-private social partnerships.” I April 2014, during the preparatory phase of the project GASW has commissioned the baseline needs assessment of the locals residing in Pankisi Gorge aiming to inform certain activities of the project. An assessment instrument of the study was developed by GASW in the close collaboration with Arbeiter- Samariter- Bund Georgia (ASB) and Kakheti Regional Development Foundation (KRDF) (Appendixes 1-7) and Akhmeta Social Service Agency (SSA) social workers. GASW professionals, in collaboration with Akhmeta SSA social workers conducted 14 focus groups during the period of 11-13 April, 2014.

Thebaseline assessment was provided to define the most important social service needs of the Pankisi community for the development of necessary social services. This study also aimed to find out the local capacity of the community in terms of material-technical and human resources and existing services that are funded by the municipality, SSA and the nongovernmental sector.

Judgment Sampling was used to select focus group participants. “Representative” villages were chosen for the study. The villages recommended by the local representativesare Duisi, Jokolo, Birkiani, Dumasturi, Koreti, Omalo, Sakobiano, Kvareltskali, Khalatsani.

All ethnic groups (Kisti, Chechen, Georgians, Eco-migrants, Ossetians) of Pankisi participated in the study (in total 158 persons in 14 focus groups). The groups were designed by gender and age considerations. To be culturally sensitive the groups for men and women were provided separately for almost all ethnic groups. For Chechens focus groups were provided in Russian Language.

The study revealed that the most crucial social problem for the region is high unemployment.Almost all respondents in different villages mentioned the need for small business development which will be a possible way to reduce the problem of unemployment. In addition, this study provides more precise information about the most preferable services identified by the locals residing in Pankisi Gorge. Among many other services listed in the below report, three most commonly identified services are:**day care center** for children with disabilitiesand other vulnerable children, **homecare** for elderly and persons with disabilities and **day nursery** for children 0 to 3 years of age.

# Introduction – Description of Pankisi Community

The Pankisi Gorge (*Pankisis Kheoba*) is a valley region in Georgia, in the northeastern corner of the country, bordering with the Chechnyan Republic of the Russian Federation. Administratively, it is included in the Akmeta Municipality of the Kakheti region. An ethnic group called [Kists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kist_people) of [Chechen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chechen_people) roots form the majority (75%) in the area. However, there are other ethnic groups residing in Pankisi Gorge. These groups are Osetians and Georgians. Among this latter are also eco migrants from Adjara.

The first villages in the gorge are inhabited by Georgian highlanders (Pshavs) and small groups of Ossetians. These villages are: Bakilovani, Koreti, Sakobiano, Tsinubaniand Kvareltskali.A distinctive feature between the Pshav-Ossetian part of the gorge and the one resided by the Kists is a water dam and a bridge crossing the Alazani River. On the left side of Alazani begins Duisi, a central Kist village. Duisi is the biggest village and an administrative centre of Pankisi. Duisi slides into other Kist villages - Jokolo, Birkiani and Dzibakhevi running, along the Alazani River.

On the right side of Alazani there are villages inhabited mostly by the Kists. Only a few Ossetian families still live in the first four villages - Kvemo Khalatsani, Shua Khalatsani, Zemo Khalatsaniand Dumasturi, even though these places are dominated by the Kists. Kvemo Khalatsanileads northwards to Dumasturi.

In addition, Pankisi became a homeland for many refugees from the Russian Federation who have sought asylum in Georgia since the resumption of the Chechen conflict in 1999. According to the March 2005 figures compiled by the Georgian Ministry of Refugees and Placement, there were 2,548 registered refugees from the Russian Federation living in Georgia, of whom 2,515 were inPankisi Gorge and another 33 in Tbilisi. Thus, most of the refugees chose to settle in Pankisi Gorge because some of the ethnic Kists already residing there, were their family relatives. In addition, a condition of remaining in Georgia was that the refugees live in sites approved by the Georgian Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation. The Ministry selected Pankisi Gorge as the principal site for the settlement of refugees from Chechnya. Kists and Chechens both speak Chechen. Because of their enduring connection toGeorgia, Kists often speak Georgian and identify with Georgian culture. In contrast, Chechen refugees generally do not know Georgian and would consider themselves politically and culturally distinct from Georgians (The human rights information and documentation center, 2007).

# Purpose

This is a needs assessment study to define the most important social service needs of the Pankisi community for the development of further social services there. In addition, it aims to find out the local capacity of the community in terms of material-technical and human resources and existing services that are funded by the municipality, Social Service Agency and the nongovernmental sector.

# Research Objectives

1. To identify possible social services for Pankisi population which are considered as most important by the Local Municipality;

To define gaps in social service delivery, in detail, the gap between available and demanded social services in the region;

To gain a deeper understanding of Pankisi community. In particular, to uncover not underlying culture and social structure that will help in understanding how to address the community's needs and utilize its resources;

1. To encourage community members to prioritize the most important social needs and facilitate addressing these needs by using their own resources;
2. To assess existing local resources or assets of the community that can be used to improve the quality of life of the community members.

# Methodology and Procedures

## Sampling, instructions, research ethics

Non-randomized sampling method, in particular, judgment sampling was used to select focus group participants. “Representative” villages were chosen for the study. These villages were recommended by the local representatives, namely, the Head of the Kakheti Regional Development Foundationand the Head and social workers of the Social Service Agency Akhmeta Office. These villages are Duisi, Jokolo, Birkiani, Dumasturi, Koreti; Omalo, Sakobiano, Kvareltskali, Khalatsani, Kutsakhta. All ethnic groups (Kisti, Chechen, Georgians, Eco-migrants, Ossetians) of Pankisi participated in the study. Each focus group consisted of younger and older locals. In general, the age range was from 17 to 86. In almost all villages focus groups were conducted for men and women separately. (see table 1). For Chechens focus groups were provided in Russian Language. The members of the local community were informedabout the purpose of the needs assessment by the local partners and social workers. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants could choose to withdraw from the study at any time or choose not to answer any question they would prefer not to answer. There were no drop outs during the focus groups, which were conducted by GASW professionals. In total, 14 focus groups were conductedin April, 2014.

***Table 1: Respondents distributions by Location, Gender and Age***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | # | Focus Groups | Number of Participants | Age |
| Duisi (4542 households) | 1 | Duisi Chechen Men | 2 | Max: 53  Min: 45 |
| 2 | Duisi Chechen Women/Kisti Women | 12 | Max: 55  Min: 17 |
| 3 | Duisi Kisti Women | 12 | Max: 65  Min: 24 |
| Mixed Group Duisi, Jokolo and Birkiani | 4 | Kisti Men | 10 | Max: 85  Min: 34 |
| Jokolo (1500 households) | 5 | Women (Kisti, Chechen and Georgian) | 11 | Max: 65  Min: 22 |
| Mixed Group Dumasturi and Khalatsani | 6 | Kisti and Osetian Women | 12 | Max: 48  Min: 18 |
| Khalatsani(479 households) | 7 | Kisti Men | 8 | Max: 74  Min: 19 |
| Mixed Group: Sakobiano, Kvareltskaliand Kutsakhta | 8 | Georgian Men and Women | 23 (8 Women, 15 Men) | Max: 22  Min: 70 |
| Omalo (937 household) | 9 | Omalo Kisti Women | 14 (1 Chechen, 13 Kists ) | Max: 75  Min: 19 |
| 10 | Omalo Kisti Men | 12 | Max: 74  Min: 27 |
| Koreti (128 households) | 11 | Koreti Kisti Men | 7 | Max: 50  Min: 21 |
| 12 | Koreti Kisti and Osetian Women | 10 | Max: 55  Min: 33 |
| 13 | Koreti Eko Migrant Women | 12 | Max: 60  Min: 18 |
| 14 | Koreti Eko Migrant Men | 13 | Max: 86  Min: 18 |
| Total number of households visited villages |  |  | 7586 |  |
| Total number of households in Pankisi Gorge |  |  | Over 10,000 |  |

## Methods

Community-based participatory research methodology was used for this study. This approach is designed to further involve community members and increase community capacity. It gives community members the opportunity to voice their opinions, hopes, and fears about their community. In particular, focus groups were employed to define community needs. In addition, structured interviews were designed for the municipality, Social Service Agency and the local NGO (Kakheti Regional Development Foundation” - KRDF) to enrich and add to focus group data.

# Results

## General Description of Problems

The study revealed that the most critical problem for the region is high unemployment. In general,it should be mentioned that majority of rural population is considered to be “self-employed” by the state. Locals always say they are “unemployed” because they have no waged jobs, but given the rural settlements their assessment of the employment status and expectations are questionable. Thus, actual problem is that farming cannot guarantee their normal living standard. In this region women are mostly busy with household chores, dairy farming and agriculture. While men are mostly engaged in cattle-breeding and sheep-breeding, in some cases, also, with apiculture. Respondents mentioned that they need to get support from the local government and NGO sector to be able to maintain traditional activities – cultivation, cattle-breeding, shepherd, etc. One problem that was indicated by locals was lack of pastures, as they are in ownership of private agricultural companythat operates the nut business.

Almost all respondents in different villages mentioned that development of small businesses will be a possible way to reduce the problem of unemployment. Pankisi Gorge population has a very eminent culture that can be used as resource for addressing their social needs. Almost all respondents mentioned apiculture, cattle and sheep breeding, shepherd, dairy farming, cultivation, wool industry, green house, etc. Old generations are skilled in the knitting of socks and carpets (especially Georgians), sewing of thick felt and felt cloaks (Chechen and Kist), etc. Locals would like to transfer their knowledge to younger generations to continue traditions. Also, being a joiner, awelder or a construction worker is very popular among Kists and Ossetians.

Most of employable locals are ready to be self-employed in small businesses such as wool industry, sewing workshop, dress making, cookery, confectioner’s shop, dairy farming, cattle-breeding, apiculture, furniture enterprise, etc.

In many villages respondents mentioned that many internationally funded small businesses (for instance, a bakery, wood shop, blocks manufacturing factory, etc.) have stopped operations due to the completion of the pilot projects. Obviously, sustainability of these projects were not considered adequately. They evaluated these pilot projects as very rewarding and expressed the need for continuation.

The study revealed that locals are also concerned with discrimination that according to many respondents is widely practiced by the private companies and the local government. In particular, locals feel oppressedbecause one private company (“Dorani”) does not ensure equal employment rights. Georgian and Kist claim that only Ossetians are employed at the company as the manager is Ossetian. It causes disempowerment and sense of inequality among many locals. Moreover, respondents of Kist ethnicity are concerned that they are not employed in governmental jobs. In particular, they claim that only ethnic Georgians are trained for employment in the Justice House that is under construction. Kists think that they are enough qualified for be employment, at least, as construction workers.

Georgian respondents also consider to be discriminated minority in the region. According to them, many local and international organizations only work with Chechens and Kists and to not ensure equal access of all locals to the provided services or resources.

This region is also distinguished by ethnic conflicts, especially betweenlocal eco-migrants and Ossetians and Kists, local Kists/Chechens and Georgians. Mostly conflicts happen between young people and women of above mentioned ethnical groups.

Most of the kindergartens and schools in the region need renovation and infrastructure development. Only Omalo and Jokolo have renovated and comfortable schools. However, the roads to schools are mostly inadequate. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) provides transportation for children.

The whole region haspoor and limited public transportation (no transportation exists in Zemo and Shua Khalatsani). Roads and water-piping need renovation.There is no natural gas provided in the region. Local populations are restricted from cutting down the forest which causes problems in heating their houses, especially, in the absence of natural gas. Electricity problems exist during bad weather. The village Kutsakhta has a drinking water problem. The entire region does not have internet access.

Ambulatory and emergency services are not developed adequately in the region. Most of the villages in the region are without the drug-store either (Omalo has the pharmacy and medical center, Jokolo has medical center, Sakobiano has pharmacy).

There are no big stores or markets in most villages in the region. There are only small stores that sell few products. There are no garbage cans or street lights in most of the villages. Residents’ are not able to buy new journals and newspapers in small villages. In general, Duisi has more resources than any other village in Pankisi Gorge.

One of the critical problems identified by all ethnic groups is high migration rate. Chechens and Kists feel themselves less competitive compared to local Georgians to be employed in governmental jobs. At the same time, respondents mentioned, that international travel is very restricted and complicated for Kists and Chechens (a fear of terrorism).

In addition, respondents are concerned with the possibility of floods, as the Alazani River shore protection work needs to be done adequately. There is no solid bridge on the Alazani River.

Many times the local habitants are attacked by wolf and bear (i.e. in Jokolo).

## Village-specific Findings

### Omalo

Description

According to the focus group participants, the village needs a day nursery for children under 3. The kindergarten infrastructure needs renovation to meet minimum standards of care. Participants are very concerned that public school does not provide extended classes. Some of the participants mentioned thatschool children need to be involved in the extracurricular activities. In particular, they need sport-educational-art study groups for school children and youth.Participants mentioned that there is no sport stadium in the village.

The village has ambulatory that provides services for not only the village habitants but also for neighboring villages, but respondents are concerned that this ambulatory needs renovation to meet minimum standards of medical care. Respondents indicated that getting Subsistence Allowance (Social Assistance) is very complicated due to inadequate assessment criteria.

See below table #2***Perceived needs as described by respondents in Omalo***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | Multiple children families | Elderly | Disabled and mentally ill | Pre school children | School children | Youth | Adults | Other |
| Omalo | Day Center;  Medicines;  Health insurance;  Bill payment | Home care (W[[1]](#footnote-2));  Medicines | Day Center (W);  Home care (M) | Bedroom in kindergarten/infrastructure | After school care, sport and art groups, day centers,  Inclusive education for special needs children | Vocational trainings (welder, construction, dress- making, thick felt and felt cloak making); internet café, computer; foreign language courses; sport clubs; art center;  Employment | Vocational training; Small business development;  wool manufacturing; bazaar; confectioner production; Guest House; sewing workshop; chicken farm; dairy farming. | Road repair; drinking water; veterinary |

Summary

Social service needs expressed by focus group participants as most needed are: a Day Care Center for children with disabilities and other vulnerable children (about 21 children), homecare services for elderly and persons with disabilities, who do not have a caregiver (About 10 people), a Cultural – Sport - Educational Center (foreign languages, computer courses, tutoring, sport activities) for school children and youth , vocational trainings (workmanship, dress-making, veterinary courses) for young people and adults.

### Duisi

Description

**Chechens**

Chechen respondents identified the most critical problems as language barriers, barriers to education, accommodation (Refugee’s compensation money 2,500 GEL by local municipality is not enough to buy house), less access to social programs because of a lack of information due to language barriers. After naturalization of refugees, there is less interest from NGO-s and international and governmental organizations to support newly naturalized people in the reintegration process.

There are two schools[[2]](#footnote-3) (one works in two shifts) in Duisi, but it is still not enough to meet educational needs of this huge village. There are Russian and Georgian Sectors in the secondary school of Duisi. In each class there are various levels of students who undergo the same program. There are no extended classes available in school; however, there is a Day Center in Duisi, where children are provided with different services, including Georgian Language study. This Day Center is funded and organized by the NGO sector. Though some free resources are available for Chechen children to study language, they still have difficulties with continuing on to high school (after 9th grade) and professional education because of the lack of Georgian language skills.

Children with disabilities have no services in Duisi. Respondents were unaware about the state inclusive education and individual programs for disabled children. The Day Center also does not have any services for disabled children. However, there are disabled children identified in the region who would appreciate reintegration within the school if an adaptive environment can be provided.

The kindergarten serves preschool children up to 3 years old. There is no day nursery for children under 3yaers old. However, there is no need expressed by respondents as most of them are unemployed and they take care of their children.

The most critical problems are reintegration, assistance in reducing language barriers, and services for children and adults with disabilities.

**Kists**

Inclusive education is very problematic. There is neither adaptive environment nor individual program for people with disabilities. However, some children with disabilities attend Duisi Secondary School.

The most painful problem is related to social assistance - Subsistence Allowance, which is the main resource for most of the population of Duisi. They are afraid to start employment (which is mostly unstable), as this may become a reason for losing social assistance. Locals are very critical towards social agents as they assess families’ property rather than their income. They are concerned about the existing criteria of defining the status of the socially unprotected. Respondents think that each child should be able to receive monetary assistance from the government approx. amount 60 GEL. It will make social assistance more valid and stable.

See below table # 3***Perceived needs as described by respondents in Duisi (Chechens and Kists)***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | Multiple children families | Elderly | Disabled and mentally ill | Pre school children | School children | Youth | Adults | Other |
| Duisi - Chechens |  | Medicines | Inclusive education for disabled children, home care, day center |  |  | Employment,  Small business development, extension | Employment,  Small business development, extension |  |
| Duisi Kists | Child nutrition | Homecare, medicine | Mostly family takes care of them. Also, they know that one International organization is planning to open day center for disabled.Homecare, medical services (M).  Inclusive education, homecare, day center (F) | day nursery for children 0-3; | After school services, extended classes,  Sport center, sport stadium | Vocational trainings, employment | Vocational education, employment | To put garbage cans |

Summary

Social service needs expressed by focus group participants are as follows: a Day Care Center for children and youth with disabilities and healthy children, free Georgian Language courses for adults (Chechens). Duisi Kists mentioned the need of a Day Nursery for children age 0-3 and homecare services for elderly and persons with disabilities, and vocational trainings and professional education to be offered for youth and adults.

### Koreti

Description

**Kists**

The village offers only primary education, upper class students go to the neighboring village of Sakobiano. Transportation is provided by MoES. The Elementary School building needs renovation as it interferes with normal study process. There are no sport and art related groups in the village. The kindergarten is located in a privately owned house, because it does not have its own building. The village has no ambulatory, nor pharmacy (it is in neighboring Sakobiano). Emergency services are very slow. Households in Koreti are in very poor physical conditions, especially, families with multiple children live in severe conditions.

**Koreti eco-migrants**

Eco migrant families are very concerned with the problem of getting ownership of the houses where they currently live (legal registration problem). These houses are on the balance of the Ministry of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. There was a case when one family was removed from the house, as its real owner (An Ossetian family) returned. Many houses are in very critical physical condition, but eco-migrants cannot renovate these houses as they are not the legal owners of them. They are very dissatisfied with the social assistance program as monetary assistance is not enough and mostly inadequately assigned. They think that households are not assessed adequately by the social agents.

See below table # 4 ***Perceived needs as described by respondents in Koreti (Kists and Eco-migrants)***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | Multiple children families | Elderly | Disabled and mentally ill | Pre school children | School children | Youth | Adults | Other |
| Koreti – kists and Osetians, eco migrants | Day center | Medicines  Homecare (only eco-migrants) | Homecare | To Renovate the kindergarten building, play ground | To Renovate the school building, extended classes, sport and art groups | Vocational trainings, Internet, computer and language courses, employment | Small business, farm development (apiculture, cattle-breeding, sheep-breeding;), dairy farming – (eco migrants), employment | Public transportation, road rehabilitation, ambulatory, pharmacy |

Summary

Koreti respondents (indigenous people as well eco-migrants ) are very interested in a Day Care Center for children with disabilities and for healthy children, with different sport and art groups. Also they need a Medical Center – Ambulatory in the village. Eco migrants also highlighted need for extended classes for school children.

### Jokolo

Description

The respondents identified the main problems. First of all this is inadequate criteria that defines candidates for a social assistance program. The person’s employability should not influence the score for getting Subsistence Allowance as there are no jobs in the region – Pankisi Gorge.

A few years ago the village had musical school with piano direction. Also teachers taught “panduri” (a Georgian national instrument); however, nowadays the musical school does not exist. There is a folk musical group “Pankisi” in Jokolo; members of “Pankisi” still continue to work hard but they do not have a building (musical center), where they can have rehearsals on a regular basis. All rehearsals are done at private houses.

Respondents are concerned that there is no cultural house/center, dress making courses, or cookery courses in the village. There is only medical center, but there is no pharmacy.

The main financial resource for the families is social assistance. Employment equals the loss of Subsistence Allowance, “which is not right” according to respondents. Salaries are very low and most of the families are economically disadvantaged. Jokolo has a secondary school (1 to 12 grade), that was renovated by an international organization (Norwegian Refugee Council), however the road to school needs renovation. Teaching is offered in Georgian language. There are no extended classes, computer or language courses. There are no sport or art study groups. The village needs a sport stadium. The school does not have infrastructure that will answer the above mentioned needs. Inclusive education is not available. The kindergarten is for older children, there is no day nursery in the village.

There is a state library that is currently used for teaching Russian and English for tutoring purpose.

See below table # 5 ***Perceived needs as described by respondents in Jokolo***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | Multiple children families | Elderly | Disabled and mentally ill | Pre school  children | School children | Youth | Adults | Other |
| Birkiani  Jokolo |  |  |  | day nursery (0-3) - Jokolo | Day center, sport hall, sport stadium | Vocational training (dress making, language courses, tutoring, fitness center)  Employment | Small business development, Professional education, employment | Road to school (Jokolo) |

Summary

Respondents mentioned social needs as follows: a Day Care Center, an Educational Center (with language, computers, tutoring, and dress making courses) for school children and youth and a Sport Center (Fitness Center) for girls and boys separately. Women in Jokolo expressed their interest in opening a fitness club so they can get physical therapy as they are concerned with their health issues, in particular, back pain because of exaggerate physical work. Respondents need a day nursery for children under 3. Adults and youth need vocational trainings (dress making courses, cookery courses, etc.)

### Sakobiano, Kvareltskaliand Kutsakhta

Description

Georgian populations think that the most focus is given to Kist populations by the NGO sector and no services are developed for local Georgians in the region.

There is high rate of migration as there is no employment opportunities in the village. People who live in the above mentioned villages are very poor and get social assistance. If someone works, he loses his social assistance. This is a real barrier for employment.

Village Sakobiano has the secondary school (1-12) and Kvareltskali has the basic school (1-9 grades). Sakobiano’s secondary school unifies students from Sakobiano itself, Kvareltskali, Kutsakhta and Koreti (it has only elementary school). Sakobiano school is multicultural as it includes Georgian, as well as Kist and Ossetian children. Transportation is provided by MoES. There are no extended classes, computer courses, language courses; sport and art clubs for these children. There is only paid dance and fight sport groups in the village. After completion of the secondary school of Sakobiano, school children continue higher education (last year 6 become students). Boys mostly get professional education (after 9th grade) in Kachreti and Telavi professional schools.

Adults travel to Duisi for free of charge computer courses; however they are reluctant to send their children, as many times Georgian children are insulted by Chechen children.

There is a kindergarten (3-5) in Sakobiano and in Kvareltskali, however there is no day nursery. The kindergarten in Kvareltskali needs renovation and extension.

See below table # 6 ***Perceived needs as described by respondents from Sakobiano, Kvareltskali Kutsakhta***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | Multiple children families | Elderly | Disabled and mentally ill | Pre school children | School children | Youth | Adults | Other |
| Sakobiano  Kvareltskali Kutsakhta | multiple children families should get privileges. E.g. less charge for courses | Homecare, medicines | Inclusive education for disabled children | day nursery (0-3) | Day center, computer courses, dress-making courses, teaching carpet knitting; music lessons, sport clubs, tutoring | Vocational trainings, computer courses, dress-making courses, knitting, carpet knitting, employment, internet | Vocational training  Employment |  |

Summary

Sakobiano, Kvareltskali Kutsakhta populations are interested in opening a Day Care /Educational Center – (computer, foreign languages, traditional sock, carpet knitting, vocational trainings – dairy farming) for school children and youth and a Day Nursery for children under 3.

### Dumasturi and Khalatsani

Description

The main financial resource for the families is social assistance. Many large families live in very severe conditions. There is no ambulatory, pharmacy (only Omalo has the pharmacy and medical center). Respondents mentioned that emergency comes from Akhmeta and is very slow. Only middle (shua) Khalatsaniand Omalo have kindergartens. Children from the other neighboring villages (Kvemo Khalatsani, Zemo Khalatsani, etc.) are alsoattending the kindergarten in Omalo and Khalatsani. However, these villages are not very close to each other and it causes problems for parents who bring their children to kindergarten by foot. It should be noted that the kindergarten in middle (shua) Khalatsanineeds renovation and unable to provide standard of care.

Shua Khalatsanihas only an elementary school (which needs renovation), children from upper classes go to the neighboring Dumasturi’s basic school, and 10-12 graders go to Omalo secondary school. Transportation is provided by MoES. There are no sport stadiums, sport and art clubs, etc. in the village.

See below table # 7 ***Perceived needs as described by respondents from Dumasturi and Khalatsani***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Location | Multiple children families | Elderly | Disabled and mentally ill | Pre school children | School children | Youth | Adults | Other |
| Dumasturi and Khalatsani | Day center\_ computer courses, dress-making courses, sport clubs, tutoring | Medicines | Medicines  Homecare | To renovate the kindergarten (Khalatsani) | To renovate the school, computer courses, tutoring, different clubs – sport, dress-making | Computer courses, entertaining /sport center, vocational training. | Small business development, employment |  |
| Khalatsani | Day center | Medicines | Homecare | To renovate the kindergarten, play ground | To renovate the school, extended classes, sport and art groups | Vocational training, sport stadium | Farm development: cattle-breeding, Poultry farm, green house. | Public transportation, rehabilitated road, ambulatory, electricity, bridge. |

Summary

Respondents from Khalatsani and Dumasturi are interested in the opening of an Ambulatory/Medical Center and Day Care /Educational Center – computer courses, tutoring, dress-making, sport activities for school children, youth and adults, and vocational trainings (farming – green houses, etc.) and computer skill development trainings. Khalatsani respondents mentioned the importance of opening of a local kindergarten for preschool children.

## Available Services Provided by the Governmental and the Nongovernmental Sector

The local population is involved in the state programs such as subsistence allowance, state health insurance, state pension, social package, pension for people with disabilities, and refugee allowance.However, not all state programs have beneficiaries in Pankisi. For example, food vouchers provided for children 0-18 month of age to prevent child abandonment and several other child care services are not offered to the locals. At the same time, it’s worth mentioning, that geographical access to these services is limited to the large cities nationwide.

***Table #8: Services provided by the State Government (Official Statistics provided by SSA)- Official Statistics for April 2014***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Services*** | ***Akhmeta Municipality*** | ***Pankisi Gorge*** |
| Subsistence Allowance (family ) | ***2,816*** | ***615*** |
| Subsistence Allowance (persons) | ***8,310*** | ***2,436*** |
| State Health Insurance Program (persons) | ***17,282*** | ***4,085*** |
| Food Voucher (persons) | ***1*** | ***-*** |
| Small Group Homes (persons) | ***8*** | ***-*** |
| Foster Care (persons) | ***7*** | ***-*** |
| Reintegration Assistance (persons) | ***14*** | ***6*** |
| Child Rehabilitation Program (persons) | ***1*** | ***-*** |
| State Pension (persons) | ***6,511*** | ***933*** |
| State Compensation (persons) | ***58*** | ***4*** |
| Household Subsidy (persons) | ***208*** | ***15*** |
| Social package (persons) | ***1,693*** | ***327*** |
| Reimbursement of leave for maternity and childcare, as well as for adoption of a new-born child (persons) – January-April | ***15*** | ***-*** |
| Pension for disabled people (persons) | ***1,293*** | ***228*** |
| IDP Allowance (persons) | ***28*** | ***5*** |
| Refugee Allowance (persons) | ***257*** | ***257*** |

This table shows though there are 228 persons with disabilities officially registered in Pankisi region, however no one receives supporting equipment, community based or other services. There are no day centers for children or adults, or early intervention services available in Pankisi. In fact, the majority of respondents had no information about inclusive education opportunities that are already initiated by MoES, but have not yet been implemented in the region. Therefore, children with disabilities mostly are not integrated in public schools, kindergerdens or the community in general. According the table, there are no reported cases of any forms of violence against children or elderly, or domestic violence.

Local municipality provided information about available services. Range of services provided the State and Municipality is quite limited. Municipal services only include Kindergarten. See table below.

***Table #9: Services provided by the Municipality (Official Statistics)***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Services | Akhmeta | Pankisi |
| Kindergarten | 37  1558 children | 10  357 children |
| Day nursery | n/a | n/a |
| Housing | n/a | n/a |

As for the services provided by the State and Local Government, below table lists the ones mentioned by the respondents.

***Table#10: Services provided by the State Government and Municipality as described by respondents***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Village | Governmental Sector | Satisfaction | Comments |
| Omalo  Duisi  Jokolo  Birkiani  Koreti  Sakobiano  Kvareltskali Kutsakhta  Dumasturi  Khalatsani | State Monetary Assistance for Disabled (Social package) |  |  |
| Subsistence Allowance and other related services (health insurance) | Almost all respondents expressed dissatisfaction. | Social agents assess house conditions, not income of the family. |
| State Kindergarten (3 to 5) | no day nursery for 0-3 children in this region at all. Most of the state kindergartens need renovation. Children do not have beds. | No Kindergarten in Khalatsani(Zemo & Kvemo).  Koreti’s kindergarten is in someone’s private house, because it does not have its own building |
| State School | Only Omalo and Jokolo Schools are in a good condition, others need renovation. Mostly elementary and basic schools. A various level of students sit in one class (so called complex classes). No adaptive environment nor individual programs or disabled children. No extended classes. | Koreti has Elementary School then children go to the neighboring village Sakobiano.  Elementary School in Khalatsanineeds renovation  Basic School in Dumasturi. Needs renovation |
| School books are free |  |  |
| 15 places for full coverage to study at higher institutions as for high mountain region habitants who gains the state grant |  |  |
| State pension for retired people |  |  |
| Social Package for children without bread-winner |  |  |
| One time monetary assistance by Municipality |  |  |
| State Health Insurance Program |  |  |
| One time assistance for large families by municipality |  |  |
| One time assistance for single disabled and old people by municipality |  |  |
| One time assistance for poor families with medicines or other type of assistance for special purpose by municipality |  |  |
| Duisi | State School Russian Sector. |  |  |
| State monetary assistance (48 GEL) for refugees from Russian Federation |  |  |
| Free electricity for refugees from Russian Federation living in communal centers |  |  |
| Jokolo | State library used as an infrastructure for tutoring, teaching languages |  |  |
|  | Jokolo needs Russian sector in school. |  |  |

Special questionnaire asked “Kakheti Regional Development Foundation” (KRDF) about the services they provide to the local community of Pankisi Gorge. According to KRDF, there are **248** Chechen refugees and 502 naturalizedChechensin the region. The NGO works with refugees and naturalized Chechens as well as Kists to ease their integration into the mainstream society. The services provided for refugees living in Duisi, Jokolo, Birkiani, Tsinubani, Omalo, Chalacani, Koreti, Kvareldzchaliare as follows: free judicial consultation, naturalization, accommodation and assistance, women clubs organization, educational and professional (vocational) courses. Services for Kists living in Duisi, Jokolo, Birkiani, Tsinubani, Omalo, Chalacani, Koreti, Kvareldzchali Sakobiano, Dzibakheviand already naturalized citizens are free legalconsultation, women clubs organization, educational and professional (vocational) courses.

Locals also were asked about services that are provided by non-governmental sector. Responses show that in the past there were many small business development projects funded by international donors, but as they mentioned, most of them are not operating nowadays. It should be highlighted that locals assessedsmall business projects very highly and expressed their interest in participating in such opportunities in the future. Respondents also mentioned about the lack of collaboration between NGO and local government. Respondents from Georgian villages are very unhappy that NGO sector does not work with Georgian population. Table below describes services provided by non-governmental sector as described by locals.

***Table #11: Services provided by the Non-Governmental Sector as described by respondents***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Non-governmental Sector / | Satisfaction | Comments |
| Omalo | UN funded small business development projects (apiculture, cattle-breeding, wood processing shop, etc.) | Most of these projects do not work today |  |
| KRDF funded 12 young men’s vocational training for electricians profession | Some of these people are employed |  |
| UNHCR bought Houses for refugees |  |  |
| Turkish NGO renovated village club. | This donor is willing to do more things, but local government is resistant. | Lack of collaboration between the local government and Turkish NGO. |
| Private donor funded local teachers for 2 years. |  |  |
| Duisi | UN funded small business projects - joiner’s shop; apiculture; sausage making department. | Most of these projects do not work today | Mostly Arab private investors want to open human rights center (In Jokolo), computer center, English language center, etc. but the local Georgian government does not give permission. They think one reason is religious factor. |
| Company “Aversi” gives one time financial support for large families for fifth and following children | This company gives 900Gel products (pampers, etc.), but families do not need these products. “Things are useless” they would prefer money. |  |
| Day center for youth funded by KRDF | High satisfaction |  |
| Chechen refugees receive products and are involved in small business projects (buying caws) by support of UNHCR. |  |  |
| KRDF offers several services for refugees and local populations: free courses: thick felt, computers, languages – Russian, English, tutoring courses for school children who study upper classes, | Some of these courses are not offered any more | Some courses (such as joinery, welder, hairdresser, bookkeeping and dress-making courses) are cancelled. |
| Koreti | KRDF provides computer courses | Not enough support from NGOs |  |
|  | 3 years ago International Organization bought caws for local eco-migrants. |  |  |
| Jokolo | UNHCR works with refugees, helps with products and small business projects. It provides monthly assistance (10 GEL for one family member) for people who have not become Georgian citizens yet. |  |  |
| NRC renovated the local school | High satisfaction | The road to school needs renovation |
| GCRT provides psychological assistance for refuges. | High satisfaction |  |
| TAG provides technical assistance. |  |  |
| DRC renovated the ambulatory |  |  |
| Women information center worked with refugee women on gender issues |  |  |
| KRDF funded small business development projects (apiculture, cattle-breeding, block making department, joiner’s shop; etc.) | High satisfaction |  |
| KRDF founded elderly women council (15 members) which participates in decision making (family conflict, family violence, divorce, inherit,) along with elderly men council. |  |  |
| KRDF provides legal consultations to local community |  |  |
| Language courses – Russian, English for school children to prepare for entrance exams |  |  |
| Sakobiano, Kvareltskali  Kutsakhta | Eurasia Foundation and local government – “school project” |  |  |
|  | Less interest from NGOs and the Governmental organizations, as the main target groups for social interventions are Chechens and Kists not local Georgians | Georgians feel oppressed. Adults travel to Duisi for computer courses. They are afraid to send children. Ethnic conflicts. |

## Perceived Needs by the Municipality

According to the local Municipality, Pankisi Gorge needs the following services to be developed: sport stadiums equipped with sport inventory, adequate buildings for kindergartens (kindergartens in Dumasturi, Tsinubani, Koreti and Shua Khalatsaniare located in the rented buildings) and adequate equipment for kindergarten (furniture, modern teaching visual materials, etc.), day nursery. In addition, the region needs rehabilitation of the drinking water system, road rehabilitation and gasification. The local Municipality is interested in financing housing, kindergarten and day nursery from the local budget for Pankisi region.

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## Culturally Sensitive Services

A lot of respondents mentioned the importance of developing day nurseries, day care centers, extended school classes, and tutoring services for their children. However, there are some sensitive services for children that should be avoided for some cultural groups. In particular, Kists in Duisi and Jokolo mentioned, that 90 % of population would refuse to bring children to dancing or singing clubs, as it is prohibited by their religion (Vahabizm). It is also important to offer any kind of services for women/girls and men/boys separately.

Some respondents mentioned about a critical need to get services from the government such as a day care center for children with disabilities and adults, home care services for elderly and persons with disabilities and inclusive education – special individual educational programs/plans for children with disabilities so they can be included and reintegrated into the mainstream public schools and can develop self-service/life skills enabling them to become more independent. However, there are some sensitive cultural approaches towards the types of care that can be offered and developed for these groups (persons with disabilities and elderly) in this region. In particular, Kists in Omalo, Duisi and Jokolo are reluctant towards 24 hour services for elderly; Koreti’s Kists and Ossetians and Kists in Khalatsani even mentioned about the inappropriateness of offering homecare for older persons. Kists in Jokolo are reluctant to have day care services for elderly.

## Available Material Resources Provided by the Municipality

Municipality provided information about available inventory and material resources that they are willing to provide for the development of community services in the region:

***Table # 12: Available Material Resources in the Region***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Inventory | Quantity | Form of Assignation | Condition |
| Cultural House Building in Duisi | 1 | Free of Charge | Old |
| Cultural House Building in kvemo Chalacani | 1 | Free of Charge | Old |
| Cultural House Building in Jokolo | 1 | Free of Charge | Partially renovated |
| Ambulatory Building in Duisi | 1 | Free of Charge | Renovated |
| Ambulatory Building in Jokolo | 1 | Free of Charge | Renovated |
| Ambulatory Building in Omalo | 1 | Free of Charge | Old |
| Territorial Unity Building in Duisi | 1 | Free of Charge | Old |
| Territorial Unity Building in Jokolo | 1 | Free of Charge | Old |
| Territorial Unity Building in Chalacani | 1 | Free of Charge | Renovated |

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## Available Human Resources at the Municipality

According to the local Municipality, there are 29 localsemployed in the different social programs of the Municipality. Available staff can support development of new social services. The local municipality was also asked to provide information about people from Panksi Gorge villages who can work for the child care field. Few individuals have been identified as having the capacity to work in child care and other soil services. Their contact information will be provided to ASB upon the request.

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# Discussion and Recommendations

The study revealed that the region is impoverished and the only financial resource for living is available for most of the residents is the State Subsistence Allowance (Duisi, Jokolo, Omalo, Khalatsani, etc.). Especially, families with many children and extended families are in severe conditions. Many respondents mentioned that social agents do not make adequate judgments about family’s social status and available resources. Their decision is based on physical conditions of the house, property and employability skills, rather than on the actual income of the family. Locals are afraid to start employment as this may become a reason for losing social assistance.

Many respondents think that each child should be able to receive monetary assistance from the government. They have mentioned that municipality provides one-time monetary and other assistance for large families, elderly and persons with disabilities, but this assistance is not enough to fight against the poverty and social problems accumulated in this community.

As mentioned above, according to the official statistics provided by Akhmeta SSA Office, there are 228 persons with disabilities in Pankisi region, however, no one receives special services such as supporting equipment, home care, community based services, etc. There are no day centers for children and adults with disabilities or early intervention services for young children available locally, Inclusive education is not implemented in the public schools of the region. Thus, it is very critical to develop services for persons with disabilities to facilitate their social inclusion.

According to the Municipality, most of the kindergartens in the region need renovation to meet the minimum standards. Similar to the schools, kindergardens don’t offer inclusive education, to ensure early stimulation and development of children with disabilities and ease their access to schools. There is also a need identified by the local municipality to develop day nurseries for children aged 0-3 in this region.

Ambulatory, pharmacy and emergency services are not developed adequately in the region and therefore, it is of the high importance to improve this situation by infrastructure development and allocating the appropriate human and material resources.

The local municipality identified material resources (buildings) that can be used for the development of some social services (see table # 12). The local municipality also identified some human resourcescapable to work in social services. The municipality expresses an interest to finance or co-finance such services as kindergarten, day nursery and housing.

It is notable that local population has many social needs that the local municipality can hardly identify and therefore, it is complicated to meet these needs. This study will help all interested parties to gain a deeper understanding of the Pankisi community, to define and consequently, fill the gap between the existing and needed quality of social services, by utilizing existing material and human resources.

Locals need to get support from the local government and NGO sector to be able to maintain traditional activities – cultivation, shepherd,apiculture, cattle-breeding, sheep-breeding, dairy farming, poultry farm, etc.Support is also necessary to adopt modern and enterprise and farmingdevelopments – green houses, new technologies, berry and fruit processing enterprise - sweetbrier, chamomile, lime-tree, etc. Locals need vocational training and education for youth and employable adults to equip them with solid entrepreneurship, management, farming, computer and language skills. Vocational education will also empower locals to become self-employed in farming, small businesses, self-managed enterprises and not to be dependent on the Subsistence Allowance. In addition, it should be highlighted that the lack of Georgian language skills interferes with non-Georgian ethnic groups’ opportunity to be fully integrated into the local community and to be employed in the Governmental jobs, where the knowledge of Georgian language is required.

This study provides more precise information about identified preferable social services that can be offered for locals residing in Pankisi Gorge. Below are listed the most important social services that can be developed for the local villages in this region:

* **Day Care Center** for children with disabilities and other vulnerable children (for some communities for girls and boys separately – Jokolo, Duisi);
* **Cultural-Sport-Educational Center**for school children and youth to offer courses in Georgian (for Chechens) and foreign languages, computer, tutoring, sports activities, dress making, traditional sock and carpet knitting, vocational trainings, etc. (for some communities for girls and boys separately – Jokolo, Duisi);
* **Home Care** for elderly and persons with disabilities (this service was assessed as not acceptable by Kists in Koreti and Khalatsani, Ossetians in Koreti);
* **Day Nursery** for children 0-3 years of age, to allow parents to work and support good feeding and development for children;
* **After school services** – extended classes for school children, to allow parents to work and support good feeding and extracurricular support for children;
* **Vocational education and training** for youth and adults (workmanship, veterinary, cookery courses, dress-making courses,etc.);
* **Kindergarten**  - for children 3-5 years of age in Khalatsani; in other villages improvement of the existing kindergarden infrastructure;

In general, it can be concluded that three most commonly requested services are: **day care center** for children with disabilities and other vulnerable children, **homecare** for elderly and persons with disabilities and **day nursery** for children 0 to 3 years of age.

In order to facilitate development of these services in the frames of this project, a number of steps has to be taken by ASB and partners. It is critical to collaborate with the local municipality and local village ‘rtsmunebuli’ and ensure commitment to provide the most adequate building and funding for the established services. Experience from other municipalities show, that engaging the local government in designing a service and recruitment of the staff (based on the project criteria and using agreed approaches) builds the ownership of the authorities and increases funding opportunities. Co-funding of the newly established service from the very start or taking over of its funding after the first year of its functioning will ensure sustainability of the service provision.

The quality of service is another important aspect of service provision, linked with the governmental funding. During last years the Government of Georgia has adopted Service Quality Standards which are relevant for the services identified by the locals in Pankisi as most needed. These standards are the Day Center Standards for Persons with Disabilities, Child Care Standards and Early Education Standards developed by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA) and the Ministry of Education and Science respectively. Home Care Standards are being developed by the NGO Home Care Coalition, and are not yet approved by MoLHSA. Adhesion to the existing standards during the development of services and from the start of their functioning, will ensure better quality and increase funding opportunities by the government.

Selected services and availability of quality standards will define staffing requirements. Qualification and previous experience of the pre-selected group will largely define training and supervision needs of the service team. In general, only short-term trainings foreseen by the project cannot guarantee high quality of service provision. Visits to the more developed services, discussions with existing service providers, ongoing in-service trainings and supervision should partially be able to cover the knowledge and qualification gaps.

As discussed, local communities are not accustomed to receiving social services for any vulnerable groups. Hence, awareness-raising of locals about the benefits of offered services will enhance their understanding, build the trust and create demand for utilizing offered services.

1. W – expressed by women, M- expressed by men [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. One is the secondary school and one is an elementary school [↑](#footnote-ref-3)