

MASTER'S DEGREE

FINAL PROJECT

“VOICES OF ABKHAZIA: GENDERED PERSPECTIVES”

**A PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION FOR IDP WOMEN FROM THE WAR IN
ABKHAZIA: UTILIZING PHOTOGRAPHY, INTERVIEWS & STORY-
TELLING AS A FORM OF DOCUMENTATION OF THE CONFLICT 30
YEARS LATER IN ZUGDIDI, THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA.**

Student: Kathryn Nino Lamana

Tutor: Annemie Vermaelen

Castellón de la Plana, June 2023

Abstract:

Thousands of Georgians and Abkhazians were displaced during the War in Abkhazia (1992-1993), and many people still live as IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). This project utilizes methods of photography, interviews, and story-telling as a form of documentation of the war and post-conflict experience and situation from women's perspectives. Through these methodologies, we have the ability to document important aspects of conflict through a gendered lens. This project creates a platform where women may feel empowered in sharing their stories, as they hold agency over how they are represented. Portraits of IDP women and audio recordings of their stories are displayed at a three-day-long photo exhibition titled *Voices of Abkhazia: Gendered Perspectives* in Zugdidi, The Republic of Georgia.

Keywords:

Women's Empowerment

Gendered Perspectives

Photography Exhibition

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) & Women

Documentation

Post-Conflict

Agency & Representation

Story-Telling

Table of Contents

I.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
II.	MOTIVATIONS	5
III.	JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROJECT.....	6
IV.	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	8
V.	METHODOLOGY.....	10
VI.	PROJECT DEVELOPMENT VOICES OF ABKHAZIA: GENDERED PERSPECTIVES... 12	
i.	OBJECTIVES	12
ii.	SCHEDULE & TIMING	13
iii.	RECIPIENTS.....	13
iv.	ACTIVITIES	14
i.	PHOTOGRAPHY & STORY TELLING.....	14
ii.	INTERVIEWS	50
iii.	FINAL GROUP MEETING.....	60
v.	ASSESSMENT	61
VII.	DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	61
VIII.	CONCLUSIONS	62
IX.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	65
X.	ANNEX	67
i.	SCHEDULE & TIMING	67
ii.	ASSESSMENT	71
iii.	PRE-SURVEY	76
iv.	POST-SURVEY	77
v.	PHOTO EXHIBITION POSTER.....	79
vi.	INDIVIDUAL MEETING SCHEDULE.....	80
vii.	MY INFORMATION FORM	80
viii.	CONTACT FORM	81
ix.	CONSENT FORM.....	82
x.	TALKING POINTS FORM.....	84
xi.	INTERVIEW PACKET	85
xii.	PHOTO EXHIBITION ABSTRACT.....	92

I. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance and contributions towards the project. It was through their help that this project was enriched and made possible. *Mamuka Saparidze* for helping with cultural insight, as well as Georgian translation. *Tamta Karchava* for help in networking, photographing group meetings, and Georgian translation. *Camryn Vaughn* for help in networking and gallery set up. Local organization, *American Corner Zugdidi*, for offering a group meeting space. Local organization *Imedi Association*, for assisting in finding project participants. *Sophia Kvaratskelia* for helping translate audio recordings and interviews for accuracy. *Zugdidi Art Gallery* for hosting the photo exhibition in their space.

The following women for their gracious and whole-hearted participation, of which this project would not exist without them: *Khatuna, Esma, Tsitsino, Ana, Ekaterine, Nargiza, Nestan, Iruza, Tsisana, Jana, Manana, and Marine.*

II. Motivations

My personal motivation for this project stems from my roots, background, and history. I myself was originally born in Tbilisi, Georgia during the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990's. I was adopted during this wartime by an American couple and went to the United States at a very young age. Growing up in the US, people would always ask me where I was from. However, when I answered Georgia, people assumed I was referring to the state; unaware that there is also a country by the name of Georgia. With this being said, I was somehow made to feel like an outsider by both of my cultures; Georgian and American—I was never 100% of either. The internal struggle of feeling stuck in-between; comfortable in both of my cultures, yet being “othered” constantly. This is what attracted me to refugee/IDP stories and experiences. Since returning to my homeland of Georgia (circa 2019), learning the culture and language, I have become passionate about stories from this region, which ultimately led me to this specific topic.

I believe that conflict is rarely viewed with a gendered lens throughout all processes and levels of war. When we fail to do this, we overlook entire populations of people. Their perspectives, feelings, and opinions become drowned out by the needs of what is seen as the “collective group” (Weber 2018, 422). This fails many people in meeting their specified needs, wants, and priorities. Not taking gender into account, we do women a great disservice, as we are not acknowledging that the experiences, they have at all stages of conflict differs greatly from that of other genders.

With this being said, I noticed it was hard to gain access to IDP stories, especially from women from the Abkhazian war, as well as their thoughts or feelings in today's post-conflict setting (as the Abkhazian war ended 30 years ago). Additionally, research/projects lack creativity and the acknowledgement of existent power dynamics between the subject and researcher (allowing the IDP

to hold agency over their own narrative and representation). There are many different ways in which we can attempt to document conflict and war. As I hold a Bachelor's degree in Photography, I felt it was important to bring this skillset into my project to utilize creativity to the documentation process and in hosting this photo exhibition for IDP women from the Abkhazian war.

III. Justification of the Project

Many times, we have great ideas for projects but during implementation things will change based on cultural factors, unforeseen restrictions, or various obstacles. This could even change the concept of an entire project. I remain realistic about my abilities and limitations when it comes to drastically changing anybody's life through this photo exhibition. I am realistic in my understanding and self-awareness of the fact that there will always be a power dynamic in some form, no matter how hard I try to eliminate it. What I am able to offer through this project, is a platform from IDP women to speak freely and tell their stories. I strive to use my privilege without contributing to harmful and unequal power dynamics, and rather utilize available resources and knowledge for this project, and simply act as their microphone. The entire project is based on these women's stories and lives; therefore, they are the project itself. They are more than numbers, data, statistics, or research—they are humans. They deserve to be heard, and if this project makes them feel seen and heard, I would consider that very successful.

The interview questions and audio recordings of their stories uncover how these IDP women feel and think about their lives and conflict. I have chosen the questions carefully as to avoid retraumatization (Weber 2018, 425). Generally, women in conflict research only show up as statistics based on how many were raped or sexually assaulted during war. These quantitative factors are branded as “gendered”, when in fact this may tell us very little about the women's true lived

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

experience during and post-conflict. Once we reduce women to stereotypes, we further fuel the silencing of them and push false narratives that sexual assault acts as the equivalent to a “gendered perspective”. Women are more than the sexual suffering in which they may be forced to endure during war. With this being said, my exhibition begs intriguing questions such as: *What does home mean to you? What are you proud of? What do you think of when you hear the word Abkhazia?* Additionally, asking women to tell a story from the Abkhazian war that is significant for them, as well as how they want to be portrayed in the photographs, gives IDP’s more agency over their own narrative and representation.

Since Georgia is a patriarchal country, woman may feel uncomfortable in mixed spaces to voice their concerns, especially as IDP’s have already been through so much and many are still living in a state of displacement even 30 years after the Abkhazian war officially ended. My hopes for this project, while I remain optimistic and realistic simultaneously, are that the women become more comfortable stating their wants, needs, priorities, feelings, and opinions through telling their stories and seeing people’s interest in them. I hope this confidence gradually comes over time and that they feel empowered to speak up in all parts of their lives. In the distant future, this could even lead to them making positive changes, continuing being active in the IDP community, or even starting their own NGOs.

Another aspect is the physical documentation of IDP women’s stories and experiences, which will be made available in English and Georgian through this project in order to be more accessible. It is crucial that we document their memories from the Abkhazian war and current experiences today, as we will not have access to these women’s thoughts forever, so documentation is important in this post conflict space.

IV. Theoretical Framework

Using the various methodologies (as detailed in the following section *V. Methodology*) we are searching to document the war in Abkhazia and the current situation for IDP women in Zugdidi, The Republic of Georgia. It is through this documentation of stories that we may uncover feelings and thoughts through gendered perspectives. It is about story-telling for women's empowerment and gaining agency over their own representation. Asking IDP women: *Do people show interest in listening to your stories and experiences from the war in Abkhazia? How is your current situation typically portrayed by the media/government/society? As an IDP woman, what do people most commonly assume about you/your situation?* I am a firm believer that no one magically becomes empowered. We don't hand women empowerment, as if we are mailing a package. Women must come to the realization that they held the abilities to self-empower the whole time. It is through their own realization, thought process, and understanding that they always held this ability, that they truly become empowered. Empowerment is internal, not 100% external in nature.

We are searching for information that does not include the stereotype of sexual trauma as "gendered", therefore gaining more insight into how these women see themselves and the world. For example, one of the main activities for the women is to tell a story about a significant experience they had during the war; something that was important to them personally that has stood out to them all these years. This allows space for interpretation and for IDP women to share only what they are comfortable with (giving more agency). We are also looking for information as to what their current situation is like 30 years after war; asking if they are still living in a state of displacement, how they feel about their current situation, and their hopes for the future. The crisis did not end when the war



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



did in 1993. As Nargiza Arjevanidze mentions in her research on Georgian IDP women, they live in uncertainty which is “an experience of continuous crisis” (Arjevanidze 2017, 21).

When I first came up with this project idea, I looked at similar works. Therefore, my general theoretical framework was somehow guided by participatory visual research with IDPs that was conducted by Weber in Colombia (Weber 2018, 417-435). Their project helped me gain a heightened understanding of how to work with women IDPs in the context of story-telling and photography, and how to learn from Weber’s trials and errors (Weber 2018, 417-435). Throughout Weber’s work, they mention the importance in avoiding retraumatization, self-acknowledgement of existent unequal power dynamics between researcher and subject, and avoiding stereotyping of IDP women’s vulnerability (Weber 2018, 417-435). Through this, I began rewording and reprioritizing which questions to ask the women, as well as thinking more deeply about ways in which to conduct their photographs and interviews that could possibly narrow the gap between existent power dynamics.

To emphasize the importance of gendered perspectives I will shortly discuss other who worked on the topic. As examined in a paper about masculinities, IDP women from Abkhazia had taken on the breadwinner role, which caused men to be demasculated (Kabachnik 2013, 773-793). The paper also reveals gendered perspectives through interviews to see how IDP men and women both understand gender norms and masculinity (Kabachnik 2013, 773-793). Ramil Zamanov discusses the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through emphasizing intersectional viewpoints, allowing us to listen to the perspectives of Azerbaijani and Armenian IDP women and queer communities, as through this inclusion we may achieve empowerment (Zamanov 2021, 1-5). Another author also researched perspectives of transgender IDP women in Pakistan, to reveal specified discriminations which this particular group face as IDPs in regards to family dynamics, employment, education, etc. (Munir 2019, 49-69). My project is a part of a larger body of work and this discussion regarding IDP’s and gender.



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



V. Methodology

The methodologies for this project consist of utilizing photography, story-telling, and interviews and creating a photo exhibition in Zugdidi for 3 days with this information. Story-telling is documented through the use of audio recordings, which are made available at the photo exhibition for the public to listen to, via QR codes which are next to each women’s portrait available to scan and listen to in the translated English version or the original in Georgian. I inform each participant before recording, that the audio recordings will not be anonymous. Additionally, I tell them that they are able to tell any story in which they chose; a story in which they wish the public to hear and that they are most comfortable with telling—something of significance to them. I created talking points to help keep recordings organized. The first is tell a story from during the Abkhazian war, second is their current situation and thoughts, and third is their hopes for the future.

I saw the importance of story-telling for this project through various books written by refugees and IDP’s that I have read over the years. More specifically, I was inspired by the book “We Are Displaced”, which is a collection of refugees and IDP stories, organized by Malala (Yousafzai 2019). Malala mentions, “Often times when we hear about refugees, we hear about them in figures and numbers. We hear *about* them, but we never hear *from* them. We never hear what they want to say; what their dreams are, what their aspirations are” (CBS 2019). When we only hear about IDPs when they show up in statistics, we become disconnected from the individual experiences people endure. This is exactly why story-telling is a powerful and necessary tool for IDPs around the world and why it is crucial to this project. Storytelling is a tool that can be used across multiple contexts. For example, in the Philippines, Fuertes’ work discusses how transformative storytelling is to healing communities and creating resilience (Fuertes 2012, 333-348). In a storytelling project by Anyeko and Hoffmann in Northern Uganda, they noticed it helped women from war gain agency and to better understand their

own experiences from conflict (Anyeko & Hoffmann, 2019, 235-251). Additionally, they found that telling stories gave women a space to express themselves, thus giving them confidence to contribute positively in the community (Anyeko & Hoffmann, 2019, 235-251).

The interviews are conducted through a written interview packet, consisting of 15 open-ended questions in total. It is up to the participants how they want to answer, or if they even want to answer the questions at all. If they do not wish to answer a particular question, it is not required. Additionally, if they want to answer in just one word, a few sentences, or with a longer answer, this is also up to each participant. They have every right, as it is their choice completely. The answers are then anonymously put into a hanging installation that is in the middle of the art gallery.

The portraits are taken in their homes, or a location of their choosing. During the process of taking their portraits I make sure the background is where they prefer. They also know we are taking portraits beforehand so they each are individually able to ensure they are clothed how they see fit, etc. During the photoshoot, I show them the photos every minute or two so that they can see how they look, and adjust accordingly if they should choose. Photographers, such as Robin Hammond, consider themselves storytellers, as pairing photographs with a person's story can touch many lives deeply. One of Hammonds photo series is titled *A Women's War*, in which he pairs photographs with the individual women's stories from various conflicts around the world (Hammond 2017).

For the project itself, I have created a pre and post survey using the Likert scale in order to track any changes in their answers from the pre to the post survey. The anonymous responses are then created into pie charts, so that you may visualize these results more easily and tangibly (in the *v. Assessment*, and *ii. Assessment* sections of this dissertation).



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



VI. Project Development | *Voices of Abkhazia: Gendered*

Perspectives

i. Objectives

There are 5 main objective markers for this project. Firstly, documenting IDP women's stories from during the Abkhazian war, as well as their thoughts in this post-conflict space. Secondly, creating a platform IDP women may feel empowered, proud, and confident to tell their stories. Thirdly, assisting IDP women in holding agency over their own representation and narratives. Fourthly, utilizing photography, interviews, surveys, and story-telling as a form of documentation of the war and post-conflict situation from women's perspectives, thus aiding in showing the power in visual and hands-on research/projects. Lastly, providing all information in English in order to reach a wider audience, thus raising awareness on IDP women from the Abkhazian war via accessibility. There is a hope that this empowerment in expressing themselves will lead them to becoming more comfortable voicing their wants/needs/concerns as IDP women in patriarchal/mixed spaces in everyday life in the future.

These objectives seek to fill gaps. IDP women are not typically given resources to create spaces for expression, or hold agency over how they are represented to the world. Information about the Abkhazian war can easily be found on the internet or in books. However, personal experiences and stories from the women whom endured this conflict are not common, nor available in English. Georgia is a small nation, therefore there is seldom information about the various wars which have taken place here, as well as a general lack of knowledge and documentation. Additionally, people overlook the power of photography and its ability to empower, as it is often considered a *softer* skill or tool for research and empowerment. Utilizing photography, audio recording stories, and QR code



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



technology, we begin to understand the differing experiences and feelings of IDP women in an interactive way, connecting to the public.

As far as expectations, I would hope that the women are satisfied when they see the final photo exhibition, with their portraits at the gallery, the installation, and the public interacting by listening to their stories. I expect the concept of an interactive photo exhibition to be something new in Zugdidi, as it is a small town, unfamiliar with such events. I also assume older people entering the gallery may be confused by the QR code technology. However, I am at the gallery all 3 days to observe and help anyone who is confused. I hope non-Georgian speakers attend and learn about the Abkhazian war and IDP women, as everything will be available in English. I am not expecting the pre and post surveys to yield immediate significant positive results on empowerment from the participating women, as that may take time to build. This is not something easily achieved or predicated, and will only show once all participants complete the post surveys.

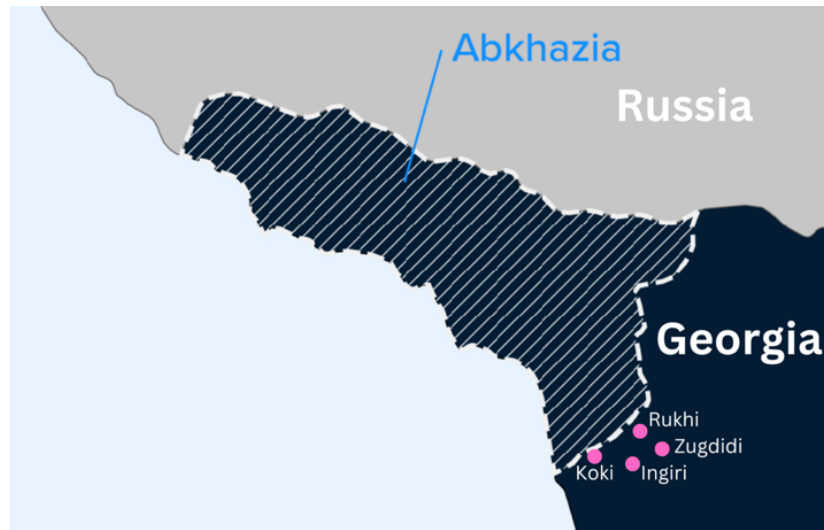
ii. Schedule & Timing

The outline showing the project schedule and timing in great detail is listed in the *Annex, i. Schedule & Timing* part of this dissertation. This outline is color coordinated and helps organize all networks and self-made deadlines for the project.

iii. Recipients

The project has a total of 12 participants. 11 are internally displaced women, and one woman married into an internally displaced family. The women range in age from mid 30's—mid 60's. The following map shows the locations in which I traveled to conduct all interviews, portraits, and audio recordings.

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



(Lomsadze, 2018) Map from *Eurasia Net*, with additional edits by Kathryn Nino Lamana

iv. Activities

i. Photographs & Story Telling

The following are the women's photographs, followed by their individual stories and a QR code. These activities were conducted during 3 hour long individual meetings at each of their homes. Below each photography and story is a QR code, which you may scan if you prefer to listen to their stories instead of reading them. The QR code will send you to a website link where the original audio is available in Georgian, as well as the translated English version. However, if you would like access to navigating all photographs and stories from one webpage, please scan the QR code that says *scan me* directly next to this paragraph.





War is a terrible thing. I personally find death and war as one in the same. I think that I am deeply sure that there shouldn't be wars in this world, as it destroys everything including people's future. I as an IDP woman from Abkhazia had the greatest trauma because I was 17 years old when the war started in Abkhazia. This was a war between brothers because Abkhazian and Georgian people lived together well for centuries. And I think it shouldn't have happened but it did, and thousands of people were hurt—especially mixed families. I myself represent a mixed family, and I speak through my



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



experience, my father's side is Georgian and my mother's side is Abkhazian. I could not choose a side during this war. For me all deaths and wins were important from both Georgian and Abkhazian people. Losses from both parties were also painful for me. So, there were lots of people, like, me, who also represented these mixed families. I will never forget the day when we fled our houses when we escaped from the bombs and missiles, and it was very difficult for my mother to abandon her home and that is a terrible thing for me to remember this process. Mom had to decide whether or not to leave everything and be with her children or to stay with her sisters in Abkhazia. So, if mom would stay in Abkhazia, we would be in danger. It is so painful for me to know that my mother had to face such hardships, and I don't even want to recall this painful moment when my mother had to make that decision, either to go with us to Georgia or stay with her Abkhazian siblings. She decided to leave Abkhazia and come to Georgia. Many other families had these situations. 30 years later, nothing has changed. I am not so called "sided" even today after all these years. I want peace and for Georgia to be united, and to return back to Abkhazia. It was unimaginable pain, and so I don't want any generation to take weapons and our children to have to go through war and the same difficulties as we did. People have to come to conclusions and reconcile. I am a child of war and I don't want the next generation, my children, or any generation to undergo these same difficulties as I did. We can see there is again another war now with Ukraine and I could not imagine that 30 years later we could find ourselves in this same situation. I am very sorry for Ukrainians because I know what war is like and I am reminded of the Abkhazian war. Russia is an occupant and because of them I am no longer living in my home in Abkhazia. I identify the Russian-Ukrainian war as the Abkhazian war, because we know what it means to be at war with Russia. This is close to our hearts. We are in a difficult period now and I am internally displaced within my own country. Because Russia is an occupier, now our country receives refugees from Ukraine. Of course, that should have come to an end. It is the 21st



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



century and people deserve to live in peace and to live without war. If the Russian occupation doesn't end, I doubt that I can hope for the future; there is no perspective for a better future, and the same war might happen again. Russian occupation is a threat to everyone, until the world defeats Russia. The world should stop Russia so that we have a chance of living in peace. When the Russian occupation will be finished, we can hope for a bright future. Up until now, the war still continues for me because this was between brother started in 1992. I would say that for me and my family, this war was repeated in 2003, 10 years later. We were crossing the Enguri bridge and there were soldiers checking documents. I was with my 7th month old daughter at the time, my husband, and I was pregnant. When we approached the border, these 5-armed Russian soldiers whom were so-called "peacemakers" attacked us. Someone who was walking in front of us was shot immediately on spot, along with my husband. He did not die there but his health deteriorated and he received intensive treatment for 17-18 years, but never fully healed. But it was a miracle that he survived. However, he developed sepsis, it spread, and eventually caused his death at the young age of 50. He was very healthy but died because of Russian soldiers whom were so-called "peace-makers", and they were hurting people. Can you imagine? They were peace-makers, and you can judge how they defended peace? This is my example and you can see how Russia is maintaining "peace". I want many people to learn about this fact, maybe it is not a tragedy that we were damaged but lots of people got hurt. Of course, there are dozens of families who have been hurt by these situations, and no one was responsible for these losses.





From the very first day the war started, I was with my family in Gagra, except my husband. The war started at the very gate of my house. We were living on the highway, at the entrance of Gagra, and the first attack between Georgian and Abkhazian people happened at the gate of my house. We were waiting for death for two days. The whole family was in the cellar. We had been in the cellar of our home for two days, together with five families (whom were our neighbors) and children. We were hiding and didn't know how or when we would escape. These five families were Georgian. For a month and a half, we were in Gagra. We heard that Abkhazians will come to slaughter us and we started thinking from which way we could escape, and we thought about using the sea. We had terrible and heavy days during this month and a half, but thanks to God when we were fleeing Gagra we survived and could stay alive. The last date I was in my home was on the 27th of September. I have



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



not been to my home since this time, and my one dream before my death is to see my home once again if it is still there. After that war, we have traveled a lot, we changed cities, villages, and countries. My children changed 7-8 schools. We were changing our living places according to offered living accommodations. At last, we ended up in Zugdidi. Then I received a job in a hospital and during this job I undergone another war, because Sokhumi fell a year after in 1993. In the hospital, we received wounded people and soldiers. In this period there was no electricity, no gas, no water, and hunger. There was no bread, but thanks to God we were able to endure these hardships. My children have grown up and they are already adults, they finished their studies and now they have their own families, and they live their own lives.





They say that experience opens the way to a better life. They say that experience challenges you to be successful and makes you stronger. Now I would like to retell the experience that I underwent during the war in Abkhazia. But the experience that I went through, even if it makes you successful, I don't wish it upon anyone. A lot of IDP go through these experiences and they have a lot of painful stories to tell. There a lot of painful stories that I will take with me to my grave. I would like to share with you a sensitive moment that I thought of just now. When the war started, I was a young teacher. I was teaching in Narinjovani's secondary school. It was one of the best secondary schools in that region in that time. I graduated from that school and I became a teacher there when the war started. It was the beginning of the new school year and the halls were decorated and I was head teacher of the 10th grade class. It was Saturday and the school classrooms were ready, and on Monday we would start learning.



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



At that time Sokhumi was already in the war, and Sokhumi streets were like a battlefield. In Gali they wanted to start school, as long as the war in Sokhumi would allow them to do so. On this same Saturday we heard stress signals. I was living in a beautiful place in the center of Gali near a sports base that was important internationally as many competitions were held there for canoeing. Lots of international people visited Gali in this period. I would like to point out that this place was important because the majority of international and local people gathered in this place and exactly at 8 o'clock in the evening there were stress signals which came from a central office. This was the first time I ever heard a stress signal. Dogs were howling and signals from the radio station. We were so confused and scared and women started shouting and children starting crying. That was such a heavy and difficult thing to recall. We started getting in the cars without any belongings, we didn't bring anything with us because many people were packing into cars to fit as many people as possible and we began fleeing. The cars were trying to flee this territory faster. Within my region without one hour everybody left, about 5,000 people. People started fleeing from the other villages as well. It was 10 minutes to drive to the border at Enguri in a normal situation but that day there was a traffic jam, roads were blocked, there were lots of pregnant people too. Many people were just dropping there belonging and leaving them behind as it was overcrowded. They began trying to cross the border by foot. I would like to tell you about Bidzina Ortkhozoria, who was the director of my school at that time. He helped me a lot and always supported me, and if I am a successful person, it is because of him. He was a great and kind man to everyone, and he refused to leave his homeland. He also conducted lectures at Sokhumi university. He couldn't imagine his Abkhazian colleagues and students ever doing any harm to Georgians. He ever encouraged them to stay in their homeland and not to flee their homes, saying, "don't worry, they won't do anything bad to ordinary people. Let's stay here, let's meet them here", and he stayed there with his wife. Bidzina had a meeting together and he made a speech at the District



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace



INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Committee, together with Georgian and Abkhazian authorities and said “we are brothers, what are you doing? How can we do this to each other?”, and he encouraged people to stop the war against each other. On this night we found out that his home was destroyed and burned and they disappeared without a trace. I am so sorry for Bidzina because he really did love his country. I loved him as if he was my own father and I am always worrying about this. He loved and appreciated Abkhazian people. I am telling this story because I can’t imagine that there would be so many people who were heroes, like Bidzina, whom were killed. I am sure that Abkhazian people couldn’t have done it, I believe Russian people did this to him. Bidzina was mercilessly killed. At that period, they said it was Abkhazian-Georgian war, but now we know they were Russians. Today we know it was a Russian-Georgian war. Today for me, the most important thing is my memories and these memories are sometimes sweet, sometimes bitter. These are memories about my past life and my friends, our jobs, daily lives. The pain I have suffered from up until now are my colorful dreams that could never come true. I had lots of dreams and I wasn’t able to make them come true. If normal people can’t make their dreams come true...if there is no war and you live in normal conditions and you still can’t make your dreams come true, then you have no one else to blame but yourself. Now I blame Russian aggression, for my not being able to make my dreams come true. If there was no war in Abkhazia, I would live a different life. I would be living happily in my homeland with my friends, with my colleagues, I would achieve more success. Even family members were scattered and I lost some. I had to undergo and face many different challenges and hardships and this kept me from realizing my dreams. My brothers died and this loss caused many obstacles. The older I get, the more all these things hurt me. Maybe I don’t have financial problems, but even our country’s social, political and economic problems can be blamed on Russia. I am not able to visit the graves of my parents and brothers in Abkhazia. My brothers passed away in different Russian cities but they are buried in Abkhazia and the funeral was



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



in Gali. We wanted to bury the bodies in our homeland but we were not allowed to go to Abkhazia, so we had to carry these dead bodies in coffins from Zugdidi to Gali through the forests. Their last wish was to be buried in Gali and we walked 11 km through Pichouri forest. There were swamps and we had to go through these swamps on foot. My son was little and I didn't have a husband and he wanted to support me because he saw me in tears. At only 15 years old he was putting his own life in danger. Yes, today I live like a normal person in normal conditions. I won't say that now I am living under this stress today, but I visited a psychologist to heal from all of this. Now I am participating in many projects because I want to be a strong woman and to pursue my goals and achieve something good. I want to heal and help other people who are in need. Every day I remember Abkhazia, even if it's for a short time. It doesn't matter how happy I am today, there are moments that always remind me of Abkhazia. And still today, I live in pain and constant longing and nostalgia. I am an optimistic person and after 30 years, still I hope one day I will live in Abkhazia and that this Russian occupation will finish and I am sure that one day Russia will give in. I am sure that this Russian empire will be destroyed, maybe the word empire is not correct, but for me and Georgian people Russia is an empire and it will end one day and we will have a possibility that Georgian and Abkhazian people will hug each other and live in peace and one day rebuild and reconstruct this heaven. Abkhazia is heaven because it is one of the most beautiful places in the world. I really want to join the EU, and this union could make it possible to have Abkhazia returned. I wish Georgia has the possibility to develop with European countries and the USA. I am involved in different project and I know how the European countries and the US try to support Georgia to further progress and develop and they support us. They support us to be a stronger more united country. Together with European countries and the US we can overcome our difficulties and to get back our lost territories.





My story cannot be so different from others. Everybody has their own personal stories. My personal story is connected to my family. The atmosphere where we were raised, where we were living every day, and how we feel with our society, start with our families. My family is not very different, but they are special for me, of course, because they always give me the power and strength to be better, to have an education, to have motivation, to do whatever I want and to go where I want. It was in this time very difficult to understand people, and to understand how important your family's support is. In Georgia it's difficult to be without family, and here it is so rare to see people without family. People who have family are not often getting together and changing their emotions, feelings, and sharing these things with each other. I am very lucky to always have a family that supports me. After 30 years of war, I am living in Zugdidi, I am working and I passed through a lot of bad things, but I still believe

I can be a person whom motivates others. I think our wellbeing depends on ourselves, and if people support one another, we can be more successful. I have a lot of hopes, which are connected to my dreams as well. My dream is to live in Abkhazia in Ochamchire and Ilori. It was a special place for me, because it was by the seaside and I had the possibility to go to the sea every day, and to be a very happy child. And nowadays I would like to live with my future kids in Abkhazia. I think that the most important and biggest challenges we are faced with today, is to understand and motive each other, because no one will do this, and to support each other. I think everyone will understand this point, and what I mean, because without loving each other we cannot live in this world.





The experience of war is anything but good. This experience always includes pain. It always gives us negativity, related to loss. War usually implies physical, material loss and when you lose your loved ones. For me, speaking and retelling about the war is sad and difficult, and a lot of responsibility. When the war began in Sokhumi, I was not in Sokhumi. I was together with university students from Sokhumi university in an exchange program and I was in Vilnius, Lithuania. Some students of high



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME·I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



academic standing were waiting to visit Sokhumi University. We were planning to return to Sokhumi and we were happy and discussing the Lithuanian students visit to Sokhumi. But when they heard about the war, they were shocked and of course these plans of visiting were canceled. Of course, we were so confused when we learned about the war, because we weren't ready for this situation. We really couldn't think of what to do. I was not a student from Sokhumi university, I accompanied the group of students as a doctor, and I was older than the students. The university in Vilnius offered for the Sokhumi university students to stay there and take shelter in Lithuania, but everyone wanted to go back to their homes, their relatives, their homeland. So, we all agreed, as a group, to go back to Sokhumi. Yes, there is war there, but we want to go back to our homes and to our parents. Within the first 13 days that I stayed in Sokhumi, and I didn't have any desire to leave. No one could convince me to leave my beloved Sokhumi because I was totally sure that nothing bad or tragic would happen in this city that could harm me or my relatives. I could not believe that we could lose Sokhumi. I can tell lots of different stories about that terrible time, but as I have said about the beginning of the war, now I would like to tell you about the last day of the war. It is September 26th, 1993. The attack on Sokhumi was very intense that day. The mountains of Sokhumi were surrounded by snipers, and they were hunting down different groups of people in all due actions. I could hear the sound of bullets shooting, through the walls of my house. One of my friends who was involved in this battle, he was visiting and checking up on us to make sure we were all alive and that our home was ok, and then he left to continue fighting in the battle. He was checking up on us after every bombing, then returning to battle. On the last day of this war, he came and was very sad and low mood. We were getting ready for dinner and he announced that we had to leave the place and go to Agudzera. We didn't want to leave Sokhumi for Agudzera but he insisted and we realized that something very serious was happening here. Of course, he was a soldier and fighting in that war so he knew the situation quite



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



well, so he insisted for us to leave our house and he said “don’t worry, in 2 or 3 days you can come back to your home”. My father decided that my mom, sister, and I had to leave the houses (just the women). So, we were taken to Agudzera, the countryside of Sokhumi, but it was safer than Sokhumi. We took our documents with us, some food, but we didn’t take any clothes, only the clothes on our backs. That’s all. That evening, in Agudzera, I stayed on the first floor so I could watch and see what was happening in Sokhumi. The next day on September 27th, the day when Sokhumi fell, my friend came again and said we have to leave Agudzera and go to Svaneti through Kodori valley. People were fleeing towards Kodori valley, and we joined them. But I insisted to see my father. He gave me different excuses because he didn’t want me to go see my father, and when I insisted, he became angry and left me where I was and went back to Sokhumi. Near the house where we stayed was a military hospital and lots of wounded soldiers and dead soldiers were brought to this hospital. On the harbor there were Ukrainian military ships, and they were evacuating people from this Agudzera military hospital. I went to the military hospital yard and I thought I was in the battlefield of WWII because there were so many dead bodies lying everywhere. And so many wounded and dead people lying on stretchers, I felt like I was in a WWII movie, it was a terrible picture. Some soldiers were conscious, and some were unconscious. Some of them had just been operated on. And the dead soldiers were covered in special cloths. Despite the fact that I am a doctor, and I deal with sick people but this terrible situation in the hospital yard was so strange that I couldn’t even imagine I was there in real life. I felt like I was watching everything from the screens. Then I saw huge smoke of something burning from far away, from the last floor of the house we were staying in. we realized that something exploded but we were trying to guess what it might be, but we didn’t know. In the evening the hospital yard was emptied and our hosts offered to go to the sea because there might be some boats or ships that we could flee on. We were thinking of all kinds of possibilities but these military ships were so



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



crowded. People were using all possibilities to evacuate the area. When we got to the Agudzera shore, a cargo ship came full of flour. The captain of the ship helped us get on and we fled on this ship with the flour, so it didn't have any safety measures because this ship was usually for cargo and not people. The ship captain was a kind man and he helped other people and their pets. From the ship, on the sea, we could see the government building in Sokhumi was burning. The farther we sailed and the farther we moved away from the sea the more I froze emotionally. I mean due to my profession in extreme situations I always used to be very active and did my job, as you know I am a doctor and in this particular situation, I was not able to do anything—this was so stressful for me. We were sitting with so many people on the cargo ship, and no one said anything. We were all in silence and the ship sailed out to the middle of the sea. When it got dark, Ukrainian war ships started circling around us. These Ukrainian military ships were ensuring our safe travel. When it got dark, you know ships have lights, and we noticed different colored lights and could hear signals from military ships. We realized that these signals were kind of warnings and the situation was not really peaceful. Our ship captain baked bread on the ship, as you remember there was a lot of flour on the cargo ship. And he gave away bread to everyone. There were some women with little kids. Some people in the ship cooked different foods from the flour, and children were fed this. I want to point out the kindness and generosity of the captain. He really took great care of us. That time this assistance seemed very simple to us, or ordinary, but later we realized how kindly and generously that captain treated us—he was our hero. Later we heard a noise from a captain's cabin. It turned out that according to the agreement between the Ukrainian fleet and Abkhazian government, the Ukrainian fleet had to withdraw some of its ships or vessels. And our cargo ship, that's name was Gatsrelia, also some other boats were not included in the agreement list. So, the Abkhazian military authorities demanded to withdraw all ships and boats which were not on this list. That meant that all the ships and boats that were not in the list would be



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



sunk, submerged. The Ukrainian head of the fleet refused to accept this order. He said that all the ships and boats would be used for people's transportation and they were not going to leave any of them and would continue to sail. The Abkhazian side didn't like this refuse from the Ukrainian Fleet. Soon we saw helicopters above us. But the Ukrainian fleet reacted very quickly to this and said to Abkhazian military: "Don't think that we are the Georgian army, as soon as your helicopters approach us, we will open fire on you". So, this bravery of the Ukrainian captain saved hundreds of people's lives on that day. Very early the next morning we arrived safely in Poti. In this troublesome situation it took us longer to cover the distance from Sukhumi to Poti. So, this was how I spent the last day of the war, on the cargo ship. On September 28, 1993 we arrived in Zugdidi from Poti. Zugdidi is my hometown on my mom's side. I stayed with my aunt, my mom's sister. My aunt didn't have any information about us, so she didn't know if we were dead or alive. So, we had a very emotional meeting. I stayed in Zugdidi, and my mom and sister went to Tbilisi. This year on September 28, it will be 30 years since I have been living in Zugdidi. Very soon I started working as a doctor in Zugdidi Hospital. I worked there for 15 years. Within these 30 years there has been a lot of changes. We lived during that time expecting that we would return home soon. I arrived in Zugdidi with the feeling that I would return soon back to Sukhumi. But this never happened. Soon I made friends here in Zugdidi. I worked with different organizations in my profession, and changed my workplace many times. I could build my career. And when I reached an older age, when people normally don't change their lives, I decided to change my life and I got married. And this was a new stage, new step in my life after my Abkhazian life. 5 years later I again decided to face a new challenge. I quit my job, my profession, and started a small business. Then I again changed my work, and finally 4 years ago I started a job that was for me a fun, pleasurable, and relaxing and at the same time it became a source of income for me. Today people know me as "Ms. Kope Shoni". Maybe they don't know my full name



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



but they know the name "Kope Shoni", that is the name of the company which I founded. My company produces non- standard products. I produce different types of sweets from vegetables. These 30 years of my life have been very diverse: full of various emotions, experiences, gaining new knowledge, so I can say that I spent these years more or less interestingly. The last years of my life are especially interesting when I started a new career. I have made new friends, relations, connections, and new possibilities have opened in front of me. Today at my age I am a student, and am attending a college and studying a profession that I need to run my business. I hope that soon we will have a better future, and we will live in a better country. Most importantly I do hope that I will definitely return back to my home. Two houses are waiting for me in Abkhazia—my parents' house in Sukhumi, where I was born and grew up, and my husband's house in Gagra. My husband's house was destroyed—it was burnt. I am sure we will return to Abkhazia with dignity and we will live friendly with Abkhazians, and with old friends, whom I spent a lot of years.





I am from Abkhazia. I live in the village of Saberio, in Gali region. We have areas of land and a house in the village. Of course, we still visit our village and benefit from the harvest we have there. In 1993, when the war started, like all the other local residents, we left our house, and fled from the territory of Abkhazia and started living here. Now we live in the village of Rukhi, in the Zugdidi region. My kids were born and grew up here. They graduated from school here. These years, I mean the years of displacement, were not easy and they are not easy even now. We tried to overcome many difficulties. We were trying to earn a living and survive somehow. We had to feed and take care of our kids. Just

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

for that purpose, despite the fact that there was a war, it was risky and dangerous to cross the border and visit and stay in Abkhazia. But we still decided to go back to our village in Abkhazia. This was not really an easy decision, but we had to take care of our kids and somehow earn a living, so we went back to our village in Gali. There I had to start my living from scratch all over again. We started cattle breeding and agricultural work and farming again. So, this is how we worked and supported ourselves for years. From the point of view of ethnic origin, our relations with the Abkhazian people was completely normal. Despite the tense and complicated situation in Gali due to the war and occupation (and the fact that we needed an Abkhazian passport and other documents to get to our own houses) the relationship between us and the Abkhazian people is not hostile. I will not get involved in politics and political issues because I believe that one should be aware of politics in a different way. However, I think the government should pay more attention to Internally Displaced Persons. We need more support from the government both economically and psychologically. I would say that since IDPs had to go through great traumas and economic hardships for 30 years, support from a psychological point of view is very important for us. We are very hardworking people—we are not lazy. We love labor, and always work hard. Maybe this helped us to overcome these great and terrible challenges. Because of this hard work, my family was able to face these challenges and we were able to survive. Abkhazia is Georgia. It was, and will always be a part of Georgia, so it is our eternal heartache. I believe that we will return to Abkhazia with dignity. It is true that I often visit my home in Gali. I have a hazelnut plantation there and I harvest every year and I gain income from it. However, I do not consider it worthy, as my house, my region, and our territory are occupied so we are not full-fledged citizens there. We don't have any rights there. Our rights are not protected there. We must ask other nations to allow us to enter our land, our homes, and farm and harvest crops. That is not fair. There have been a lot of discussions about the issues of returning back to Abkhazia since then. We dream of going



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



back to Abkhazia and I hope that this wish comes true for all IDPs and all families whom left Abkhazia. Despite how comfortably we live here and how comfortable our homes are here, we still prefer our land, our own houses, and we still want this. We want to live in our houses and go back to our hometowns where our loved one’s graves are—where our ancestors are buried. This graveyard is so valuable and precious for all IDP families. Even just a small piece of land of this graveyard is so precious and invaluable for us. I want the ability to return back to our beloved Abkhazia that we miss so much, with dignity. I hope it will happen soon and that all the IDP families whom fled Abkhazia, may truly return.





I am from Abkhazia. My parents passed away when I was 16 years old. I was left with two little brothers, and my brothers and I crossed the borders and arrived in Zugdidi. Of course, we underwent a very difficult time. Now, I am trying to recall what steps I undertook, how difficult that period was. I know what it means to be hungry. I know what it means to be an orphan. I know what it means to be homeless. I realized that the first thing I had to do was to still continue life. As I was a very young girl and I had to take care of my younger brothers. First of all, what I thought and what came to my mind, was that I had to educate myself and get an education. At the age of 30 I continued my studies, then I got married, and I had 2 children. Despite these difficulties, I got involved in different projects and programs with NGOs. Through this participation with NGOs, I developed more and became a strong woman. I was able to evaluate myself and become more confident in myself. I got educated



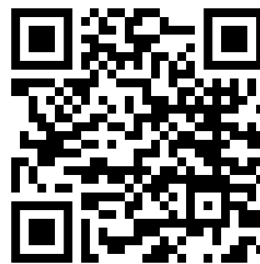
UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



and I experienced, and little-by-little, life went on. Today, I am a member of Sakhrebulo in Zugdidi's municipality for third time now. I help myself, my own family, society, and other IDPs a lot. I try to support them to protect and defend their rights. I try to support them to get involved in different projects and programs. I especially help young women and girls to further develop themselves, get a proper education and to not be dependent on other people. the most important thing is a woman's independence, their financial independence—her own money and income, to take care of herself and her family, and also a woman should support society. In spite of this poverty problems, and obstacles—I am so happy that today I am a strong woman, mother, and grandmother. All this experience came from my hardships that I had to go through. This experience comes from the Russian-Abkhazian and Georgian war. My hopes for the future are to return to Abkhazia. I want to return to my home, and my family whom I miss so much. I particularly miss my young parent's graves. I haven't seen their graves for ages. My main dream is that Georgian people will be able to go back to Abkhazia. Some IDPs are immigrants, and their life isn't easy—it's quite complicated. I wish that they were able to continue the rest of their lives in their warm hearths. I highlight that Abkhazia is Georgia. Our Abkhazia is a very beautiful and wonderful part of Georgia—is, was, and will be Georgia. Abkhazia is Georgia.





There are so many things to remember about the war, I really don't know which one to tell you. First of all, it was unbelievable for when neighbors started informing each other, "you know the war has started between the Georgians and Abkhazians". I couldn't believe that that was the truth. It was unreal. At first, I didn't think it was a reality, but then I noticed people were moving and fleeing by cars. People were carrying bags, and some people were even taking furniture. People were carrying whatever they could and fleeing their homes. The next day, I didn't want to leave my house, but



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



Abkhazian people came to our village and lit the houses on fire and they were shooting. When we saw the houses burning, we knew we had to leave our homes. My brother arrived to Zugdidi by car, and together with my neighbors we packed only essential things and left our house. We had to cross the river, and as we were, the water rose and we thought we wouldn't be able to cross, and we found ourselves in the middle of the river. Then we saw a tractor moving in our direction., and it also wasn't able to cross the river. Then the tractor was able to help us drag our car out of the river, and after this we also helped other cars too. Then we reached the other side of the river. Of course, this was the Enguri river and it was rising, and we were scared that we would drown there. We were also afraid of Abkhazians too because they were shooting and opening fire behind us. While crossing this river, and running away, I could see the river carrying different people's things that may have accidentally been dropped. This was one of the most painful things for me to see. I noticed something that looked like a sponge—maybe from a piece of furniture, so I took it and put it in my car, and the other people said, “Are you crazy? Why do you need this?”. I worked in the kindergarten, so I took this because I thought that when I return to Abkhazia, I could make a toy or something out of this sponge. My relative told me, “Woman, what are you doing? Are you out of your mind? It's time for this now?”. And he took it from me and threw it back into the river. And this I still remember even today. When we were on the other side of the Enguri river, we often visited the banks of this river and from there we could see how all the houses were burning in Abkhazia. Our father was killed there. He was shot. My brother-in-law was able to hide. He escaped to a field, but when he came back home, he saw that the father was lying on the floor. My father's dead body was transferred to Zugdidi secretly. So, this was one sad story about my family, but if I start telling you stories about my relatives, my neighbors—it is so sad to remember them now—they went through more difficult situations. In the village of Nabakebi, in our neighbor's house they killed 3 kids. I don't even was to remember this now because it was such



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



a tragedy and many people were killed in this war. I'm very nervous, and worrying about the fact that you can't go back to your home, to your family, and when I remember the past and their difficulties and troubles, emotionally it makes me feel very heavy. The most important thing for me is that we are able to return back to our native land. I hope that it is temporary, everything will be ok, the problem will be solved and that we will be able to return to Abkhazia soon. We must forgive each other for this war—Georgian and Abkhazian people. Unfortunately, both parties made mistakes, but we should fix it, forgive each other for the mistakes, and reconcile. Unfortunately, so many bad things happened in Abkhazia—I understand these kinds of things are normal during war. When Georgian, Abkhazian, and Megrelian people lived in one community they should always value one another and respect each other because they grew up together. If there were any offenses in the past, it should be forgotten and if we are able to go back to our native Abkhazia, we should be able to live again in peace and friendship. We must work hard to work for the welfare of ourselves and our country.



Jana's Story



The first day when the attacks started between Georgian and Abkhazian people, I was a kid in school and this was such a weird thing for me. I didn't even know what the war was. I couldn't dream that such strange things could ever happen. When you live with your parents in your house peacefully, and when suddenly one day everything changes, it is difficult. At that time, I was 18 years old and enrolled in university but hadn't gone yet. I was very happy when I enrolled in university because you know that being a student is supposed to be one of the happiest moments in someone's life and I was getting ready to go to university. So that period started very badly for me and for everyone who was living in Abkhazia. Everything changed in one day when we crossed the borders. We, displaced people, started living in families unfamiliar to us. For example, I personally lived in my father's sister's house as an IDP, and she was a very close relative and took care of me, still it was very difficult for me to live in



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace



**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

someone else's house. Just living with a different family was difficult for me because I lost everything, like material things. I lost property that my parents have worked their entire lives for. I would repeat one thing, that I would never imagine that I would have to leave my own house, continue life after fleeing my home, and living in a different family. It was unimaginable for me. Compared to your own family, living in your own relatives' houses is still not easy. I started a new life, but it was very difficult as the country was also in a difficult situation politically, economically, and the war had just ended so the country was down. There was no electricity and you had to stand on queues just for bread. Not only IDP people underwent these hardships, but also local people because of the difficult conditions that had been created after the war in the country. Especially the first year of displacement was very difficult, and I was not able to go to Tbilisi. I was a student but I couldn't manage to go to Tbilisi and continue my studies there. That was a great stress for me. It was so painful for me that I wasn't able to continue my studies in Tbilisi, despite the problems I had lost everything, still it was a hope for me to get an education—at least one positive thing. There was no electricity and we were unable to watch tv programs, I wasn't really into tv series and soap operas but we could watch some movies as a form of escapism during this period, but because there wasn't any electricity, we couldn't even do this. When we moved from our aunt's house, we were given accommodation to live for some time, free of charge, and I was always thinking "Where am I living? Whose house is this?". The home owners of this house were absolutely and totally unfamiliar to us. The owners passed away and their daughters were married and so we lived in their house for 17 years. Even during this time everyone had financial hardships, and still their parents helped us and I was able to go to Tbilisi to study. Student years are always related to financial hardships, and students are usually short on money, but still my years as a student were some of the happiest days of my life, despite my bad social background. I regret that I spent my most valuable years in the village where I had less opportunities or self-develop. My father



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



always wanted me to live in the village and I did that, but I had less opportunities to develop myself.

I wasn't able to do anything good there in the village. The best years are when you are 20 or 25 years old, and these years were lost on me in the village. Years later, I was able to move to the city and develop into a more active citizen, and thanks to God I got a job and for everything that I have now. I think I could start improving myself at an earlier age but my father pushed me to stay in the village so I started it later. Because of my father's suggestion to stay there, I lost these young years of my life. I am a very hopeful person. I hope that everything will be fine. I am an Orthodox Christian and religious person. I believe in God, and that everything will be fine or as it should be. Everything will go so that life is better for me. Unfortunately, Georgia hasn't only lost Abkhazia, but also Ossetia. I hope Georgia will be able to unify its territories, and we will be a stronger nation, and we will love each other stronger. Of course, Russian politics is absolutely not acceptable for me, because what I have gone through is the result of Russian politics, and so any people in the world are in bad situations because of them. But these politics don't refer to ordinary people, but I am not really into the hostile relationship between any nations. All nations should live in peace and friendship, because loving each other will save our nations. I wish for a better future, and I believe that we will have one. Thank you, Kathryn for bringing these emotions to me in these interviews, I really retold the real situation. I couldn't make up anything. Thanks for everything. I am so happy that I met such a nice girl.





When the war started, I was very young with two kids. At first, we thought that the war would end soon. My husband stayed there in our house. We, the rest of the family, left Abkhazia. We hoped that this nightmare was temporary, and that it would finish soon and we would be able to go back to our house again. However, 30 years have passed in this waiting. The first thing what I remember is that together with my two kids, I took a photo album of my family. With these photos I wanted my children to remember the history of our family, to have their childhood memories which was related to our life in Abkhazia. This album is all I have left from my burnt house, and I still keep this album. We have



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



been waiting to return to Abkhazia, to our house for more than 30 years. Up to this day we have to fight for life. We struggle with hope that we will be able to return to our native homes soon. However, the difference is that we are no longer children, and more than half of our lives were spent in displacement. This period was full of nervousness, tension, fear, hardwork to avoid starvation, and starting life from the scratch, and this constant expectation of returning home. I keep thinking about my beautiful corner—my Abkhazia—my burnt house. But despite the years that have passed, I believe the day will come when we will return back. We were 4 in our family when we left Abkhazia and if we are blessed enough and will be able to return, we will go back with large family. Now we are 10 in our family, so it will be the biggest celebration for us. I believe that we will all live happily together as before. With our efforts, our Abkhazia will become even more beautiful when we return there. Burnt houses will be rebuilt, empty houses will be filled, the infrastructure will be reconstructed, and most importantly we will speak in Georgian in Abkhazia again. I do believe in this, and I expect that day to come soon. Thank you for this opportunity.





Personally, I am not an IDP. I am the daughter-in-law of a displaced family, so the sad stories of the displaced people are well known to me. During the war, my family went through a very difficult period. Of course, it was very upsetting for them when they had to flee from their native home—they crossed the border and arrived in a unfamiliar place. Of course, this place was also their homeland where they arrived, but leaving their own house, their own region and neighborhood appeared too difficult for them. It was very hard for me as a local person to witness all this, we were also worrying so much about this complicated situation and were doing our best to somehow help them. We offered them an apartment to live in at least temporarily and we tried to help these people economically and psychologically as well. However, the situation in Georgia was so tense then. Sure, this support was not enough for them. After 30 years the situation has improved a little, but there are still many things



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



to be solved. They have an accommodation problem, and there are problems from a health and economic point of view as well. Moreover, internally displaced people nowadays have to go abroad and get jobs there. That means that again they have to leave their newly purchased houses and seek jobs in other countries, as unemployment is still a big problem in Georgia. We hope we will return back to Abkhazia very soon—this beautiful wonderful part will be again ours. I wish my children were able to live there in Abkhazia. I wish they were able to achieve success and use the achieved success for the benefit and welfare of their country. Finally, I will say that we will definitely return to Abkhazia. This is the dream of all IDPs, and we hope that their dream will come true soon.





I want to tell you about my family, which has gone through a great tragedy. The head of our family died; he exploded on a mine. After this tragedy, my mother-in-law who lived with us became ill. Her nervous system deteriorated so she developed some mental problems. She stayed and lived in Abkhazia, and because of that we had to go back and forth between Georgia and Abkhazia. Sometimes we had to cross the border every day to provide her with food. Our kids and the rest of the family were in the territory of Georgia, and at the same time we had to take care of the children and the family here. There were cases when I was crossing the river Enguri, and fell into the water and I was on the verge of drowning. We were living under such difficulties for years. Then my mother-in-law's health worsened, and she died. We found ourselves in a very, very bad, difficult situation. Then years passed. I have been living in the territory of Georgia for more than 30 years now. However, there were years



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



when I had relations with Abkhazian people as I worked with them. I want to say that despite this war and tense situation, I worked with Abkhazians and no one treated me badly. Moreover, there were several cases when Abkhaz people supported and helped me. I have Abkhazian relatives and we still have good relationships. So, this tense situation between Abkhazian and Georgian people should be resolved peacefully. We need assistance to be able to get to Abkhazia freely without a passport and other complicated documents. My children long to go to Abkhazia, to visit our house there but they cannot cross the border because they do not have proper passports or other necessary documents. I really hope that this tense situation will be resolved. I believe in the future; it will bring good things. We will return back to Abkhazia and will continue living in peace. This war hurt both sides—Abkhazians and Georgians. I think the damages, losses, and other bad things that happened during the war are enough. We, Georgians and Abkhazians, must reconcile and live in peace. I see the future of Abkhazia this way. Finally, I want there to be peace throughout the world and for us all to live in peace. I also want to thank Kathryn for her positivity and for this possibility. We are happy to welcome you again. We wish you success and all the best in all your future endeavors.



ii. Interviews

The interviews were also conducted during our individual 3-hour long meetings at the participants homes. Their answers are anonymous, and the interview was conducted as written, not orally like their stories were. Quotes from these interviews were displayed in a hanging installation at the photo exhibition. The questions were carefully chosen in order to avoid retraumatization or stereotyping of IDP women.

When I hear the word “Abkhazia” I think about...

- My house that’s waiting for me—heaven on earth.
- My house, my city, my past life, and friends I lost during the war.
- Heartache, very precious, nostalgia, and the most pleasant word.
- My country, my beautiful homeland that’s occupied by Russia. We have great hope that we’ll return and continue life in our country—in our Georgia.
- My childhood and my sweet memories. I miss it so much. There is a different warmth in Abkhazia. Even the sky is a different color.
- I will definitely return. Abkhazia is an integral part of Georgia and should be an inseparable, full-fledged part of it, together with Ossetia.
- I think about my beautiful and unique homeland, and my eyes fill with sadness. In my heart, I ask myself shall we ever go back?
- The part of my homeland and the unity of my country.
- When I hear the word "Abkhazia", I think that all Abkhazians, including my family, have experienced great pain. During this war a member of my family exploded on a mine and died.
- Abkhazia is our pain and our house that today is abandoned and destroyed. My heart hurts a lot. I hope Abkhazia will return to us and will be Georgia again.
- I think about a happier time, when our displacement is over and we will be able to return to our places.
- My family, and the graves of my parents and brothers. My lost friends, and the friends whom I haven’t seen in ages, as they’re scattered throughout different parts of the world. I think about war, peace, happiness, past, and present. In short, everything.

What does home mean for you?



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



- A place where my family members are, and this is my comfort zone.
- For me the word ‘home’ means Sokhumi.
- The best place where I feel the most comfortable.
- Home is a place where you feel safe, where you were born and grew up by your parents. Nothing can replace home, there is only one—irreplaceable.
- Home is the most lovely, comfortable place. A house is not just a building for me. It is associated with my family, the most precious people. I miss every corner of my house in Abkhazia.
- People should be valued properly, as they are society. People need the opportunity to live in peace without war, conflicts, and fear. Georgian people lack this, because Russia has occupied Georgian territories.
- My home means everything to me. It’s where I can caress my family, hug them, relax, and create a cozy environment—which I still manage to do today. But my home is in Abkhazia, and it’s waiting for me.
- My world, peace, stability, and safety.
- The house—my hearth is my heaven.
- Home is a place where you are always waited for. Your hearth, where your children and grandchildren grow up.
- Your native home, where you spent your whole life with relatives and friends. Where we lived together and shared in each other’s good and bad times. After my displacement, I love Abkhazia and miss these relationships even more. We long to see our people there; our house, a street, a building, a tree, or a bush. I caress all of them and hold them in my heart. Even thinking about this is overwhelming.
- Happiness, coziness, warmth, security, joy, nostalgia, unbearable, and deep longing.

Do people show interest in listening to your stories and experiences from the war in Abkhazia?

- I think in Georgia people get tired of hearing IDP’s difficult stories.
- When I tell these stories, I choose an audience that will listen to me carefully, and receive new information and experiences along with the emotions.
- No, people don’t show interest in listening to my stories and experiences.
- Many foreigners, journalists, and tourists were interested in my stories and experiences.
- In the years following the end of the war, there was more interest. Now there is less. Difficult economic and social conditions are the cause of hardship for both displaced and host communities.
- Georgian people love to show support to one another. Due to the fact that 20% of the country’s territory is occupied, it has plenty of IDP’s, so stories are diverse. All the stories are sad and tragic. But at the same time, there are stories of Georgians and Abkhazians protecting each other.



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I



INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

- They are interested in how we crossed the borders, what we did after, and how we are doing today. But unfortunately, the number of such people is small.
- Some people are interested in listening to such stories and others are not.
- At gatherings and meetings, organized and held at NGO's, I spoke about us.
- When the war started, everyone was interested in our lives, and relationships with the Abkhazians.
- Georgians are generally sensitive people. When my children, employees, neighbors, and friends meet me, they greet me warmly and make warm genuine comments about me when I'm on social media.

During the Abkhazian war what role did you take on?

- I was child, but I remember everything. I felt like I was one more person that my family had to take responsibility of.
- I am a doctor and had a relevant role. I helped people.
- I worked as a nurse in a hospital. I was unconditionally at the service of people during the whole war.
- I was 16 years old and was effected by the troubles, suffering, and pain that happened then.
- My role wasn't very important and I wasn't involved in this war. But my heartache and great sadness was my role as an ordinary person from Abkhazia.
- I was a student during the war in Abkhazia. I was an 18-year-old girl and tried not to be sided because I represent both sides. I am Georgian on my father's side and his nationality, and Abkhazian by my mother and blood.
- I was a 21 years old. I was with my husband, our two kids, and my husband's mother who had mental problems and she didn't feel well. I had to take care of my family and raise my children. Of course, my husband was also there so we helped each other. In that period, we had such a terrible life that a man could hardly handle the issues, so I had to take care of everyone. And I was able to. Both my children graduated from university, I became stronger, and so did my family. Now everyone is doing their own thing and we are a strong, complete family.
- I am not an IDP, but I am the daughter-in-law of an IDP family. Hence this fact is very familiar to me. In Zugdidi we did our best to provide the IDPs with economical and psychological assistance.
- Our family was honest and hardworking. My family did not intervene in this terrible war.
- I am an IDP so I have relationships with people living in Abkhazia. I usually visit there.
- During the war in Abkhazia, before we left Gali, I worked as a kindergarten teacher in Nabakevi and was also a manager. We were in Zugdidi for a while, then we moved to Sochi. Sochi was also taken by Russia, now it's a part of Russia, called Socha. I hope this is temporary and Georgia will be able to get Sochi back



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace



**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

along with Abkhazia. The neutral countries support is very important for us. Their help will enable us to unify our country.

- I was a very young teacher full of hopes and dreams. I was living peacefully, and had no idea about the terrible things the war was going to bring.

Do you hope to one day return to your land? If so, what would be your hopes and dreams once returning?

- I wish to have hope for this. I want my house to be renovated and to enjoy life by the sea.
- Hope dies last. I have a great desire to return to my land and continue my work there.
- Hope dies last. Of course, I hope I will return.
- I have great hope that I will return to my homeland. My dream is to caress the grave of my parents, that I haven't seen for more than 20 years. I wish my brother who lives abroad could return to his homeland. I will continue to work to strengthen my country and support the population.
- I've never lost hope of returning back. I believe there will be a day when my homeland is unified. Our beautiful Abkhazia will return to Georgia. I believe in God that everything will be fine. I also hope that there are a lot of smart people who will do their best to unify Georgia.
- We will definitely return back to our own land and homes where we will continue living with our Abkhazian and Ossetian people in peace, as our parents and older generations did. We will create a better future, because that experience showed us that we don't need any "hand twisting" for a happy and friendly life. The land belongs to all of us and we will share it. The main thing is to live together peacefully.
- Have you heard that hope dies last? I also think the same. I hope one day we will return to our Abkhazia. We will rebuild our burnt houses. Abandoned and empty houses will be full again. The infrastructure will be restored, and most importantly, we will be in our beautiful Abkhazia speaking Georgian.
- I really hope to return. My dream is for my family to be able to live there in peace and safety.
- Hope dies last. We definitely must return to our homeland. I was born there, I grew up there, and I have to be buried there.
- Despite the situation, I do not lose hope that one day we will return to Abkhazia on our land, and water. This is my dream.
- I hope that with God's help it will happen. It will be the happiest return. There will be a cry of joy if we manage to return to Abkhazia, followed by the restoration and strengthening of the country.
- We will definitely return. I believe it. We will definitely restore our friendship and harmony with Abkhaz people.



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



How is your current situation typically portrayed by the media/government/society?

- IDP's who integrated are living in a new environment.
- I will honestly say that the media, government, and society perceive the issue of Abkhazia like a campaign. When they need the issue of Abkhazia for their campaigns, then they remember Abkhazia, its people, heroes, and its stories. The topic of Abkhazia isn't a priority today.
- I work for the development and welfare of the displaced population, to protect their rights, and help them become involved in various programs and projects. Society knows me as an active, strong defender of women's rights.
- Unfortunately, as time passes, the word "Abkhazia" is heard less and less. I think more projects and events should be held so the next generation doesn't lose the desire to return to Abkhazia. As for the government, it should do more to solve this problem.
- No platform can adequately portray the lives of IDPs. The government hasn't been able to satisfy them with housing until now, which is very bad. IDPs need more attention and spaces to be able to lead the future and towards a normal way of life.
- It is portrayed painfully because IDPs are still facing many problems and challenges.
- All media work in their own way. They operate however they see fit.
- You probably mean the life of an internally displaced woman when you ask about my current life. Society considers us a vulnerable group of people. I might not like this, but we can't avoid it as it's a real fact. The media and government are always focused on helping this vulnerable group.

How do you wish your situation had been portrayed differently? How do you want your situation to be portrayed now?

- I don't want to have an IDP status, I wish to live in my village.
- It would be best if I gave this interview in Sokhumi now. I wish IDPs were portrayed not only as homeless and vulnerable people, but also for their problems to be solved fairly. IDPs shouldn't be insulted or humiliated.
- I had a lot of meetings and interviews with NGOs, foreign media, public broadcasting, tourists, students.
- A lot of false information is spread or broadcasted. They should broadcast correct information about displaced people. Of course, like any other person, I would like to live in better conditions. But all of this is nothing compared to the joy of returning home to my birthplace.
- Not enough attention is paid to the displaced, which is also caused by the fact that media puts emphasis and more focus on politics. That is necessary, but the issue of refugees shouldn't be put aside. Until IDPs face bigger challenges, neither politics nor other important issues can be solved.



INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

- I would like the issue of Abkhazia to be discussed more wherever possible. The voices of IDPs should be heard in the media more often. I don't complain about my situation. I stand firmly on my two feet and do so with my work. This doesn't mean that all IDPs are the same and everything is fine. IDPs are in trouble, and more attention should be paid to them.
- It would be good to consider the problems of all families individually—especially in compactly populated facilities. I wish I had a cozy environment, a private house, and a beautiful yard.
- I don't want any broadcasting or portrayals. I just want to be quiet, without politics and live in peace. I wish my children were able to go their homes without any obstacles.
- I really want the daily life of displaced people to be more transparent economically and psychologically, and I want to be economically stronger.
- I didn't even think about the how my situation is portrayed. I'm the director of a kindergarten, where the loveliest and cutest kids go. They're not many in numbers because the population was emptied after the war and now many have immigrated with their children. I want there to be such good conditions that they'll want to return to Georgia.
- They have to broadcast the reality. There is no other option. We had to forcibly flee from our homes and territory, and the media and government do what they think is right. They try to help us in different ways. My wish is to live in Abkhazia and to no longer be vulnerable. I wish I lived in a united and independent country.

In what ways do you feel that the complexities of your situation are misunderstood/misrepresented?

- They don't know what we had to go through; how we lived and how we survived. We even had to sell the last items we had from Abkhazia.
- The government and media don't react properly. The resources from the government, which were supposed to be used for IDPs, haven't been used until now.
- I think it's difficult for anyone to fully understand the complexity of someone else's life. There is a part of society whom understand everything correctly and are aware of the fate of severe displacement. But still a small part make wrong judgments and draw absolutely wrong conclusions.
- The difficulties for IDPs in the country aren't properly assessed because not enough work is done in this field. However, there are several NGOs who really do a lot of good work for refugees. Among them is the NGO *My Abkhazia*, which was created by me in 1997 to support IDP women and youth, and is still actively working to help those who are in need of support.



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace



**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

- I don't think it's misunderstood, but we need more attention. After so much stress, fear, and struggle for survival, more support is needed for IDPs. We need everyone's support in order to return to Abkhazia.
- They don't know how people in IDP settlements undergo psychological and economic problems.
- I wouldn't say it's misunderstood, but no one really seems to care.
- I don't think the complexity of my situation within my country has been misunderstood and misrepresented.

As a IDP woman, what do people most commonly assume about you/your situation?

- They think, 'she is still an IDP, she is fighting with fate, she could be successful'.
- I can't tell you exactly what they think, but they appreciate my past background, determination, goals, positivity, and interest in learning new things. I think they respect me.
- At this point, so many decades have passed that when I mention I'm an IDP, it doesn't even make any sense.
- They think I've overcome all barriers and problems and now I'm a strong woman who helps and supports her family and the part of society that needs help.
- In the first years of displacement, there was this attitude that if a man from the host community married a displaced woman, then the whole family wouldn't like it. Also, if a woman married an IDP, the judgement would be the same. A "refugee" with nothing—homeless. Fortunately, this attitude has completely changed.
- If one hasn't undergone or experienced the same struggles economically and morally, it's really difficult to imagine or explain displaced women's conditions.
- The main thing is that I do my job for myself and for IDPs. So far, I manage to do all of this, and resting isn't important to me.
- I am not an IDP, but different attitudes towards IDPs are often heard. Unfortunately, IDP women are not appointed into leadership positions.
- The first time I became an IDP, I missed my home very much. When I saw a woman cleaning her yard, I imagined my abandoned house and cried. Now I've gotten used to it.
- They think, 'she is the strong one who was not afraid of this life'.
- You should probably ask others what they think about me. I feel compassion and respect from people. They think I'm an active woman who managed to achieve success despite difficulties and challenges. "You are unchangeable", is how they usually address me. Times change, but my feelings don't.
- In many cases they feel sorry for me and show empathy towards my situation.

Are your perspectives as a woman, overshadowed by more general IDP community concerns?



- They have often said that ‘she is a woman and what she says has no power’, but I prove through my work that women can do more.
- Not by the IDP community, but it’s overshadowed because of the inaction and disinterest of the so-called Abkhazian government of the IDPs.
- IDP society is not widely known to the public in general. Some individuals know about us.
- My perspectives as a woman are not overshadowed by the IDP community.
- I don’t think or feel that my perspectives are overshadowed. I’m an active citizen and do everything to help IDPs living in our community, and to solve problems as much as possible. A large part of the population of our community express gratitude, but unfortunately, there are some ungrateful people too.
- Pursuing their goals and self-development is difficult for internally displaced women. However, I am lucky as I am not facing this. Fortunately, there are many strong IDP women whose support raises the issues of the IDP community, and that’s really very important.
- IDPs try to support each other.
- I have a fighting spirit. I’ve never been jealous of others, or wished for anything. My husband and I worked very hard and raised our kids in that way. I’ve never been under a shadow. If something was disputed somewhere, I always tried to prove my truth.
- The displaced community still cares about us.
- I often take part in meetings for displaced women with NGO’s in the municipality, and have contact with many women. We encourage each other, try to cheer each other up, give advice, and this gives us hope for tomorrow. I wish we had more womens meetings outside of the city as well, as it would have a better reflection in a woman's life.

What issues do you feel are left unaddressed?

- It’s very important to have access to education, especially for girls and women. They don’t have motivation, and they don’t know how to utilize education to achieve success.
- The most important issue is returning to Abkhazia. This is the most important thing. In terms of temporary needs, the issue of providing IDPs with living space and accommodation. I still think that having IDP status is stigmatizing and degrading in your own country.
- First and foremost, the problem is returning to Abkhazia. The main issue is that IDP women are not in decision-making positions.
- The most important unresolved issue is going back. But there are problems and challenges faced by the displaced population. The complete resettlement of the displaced population hasn’t yet been completed.



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I



**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

There is a problem with host community integration. Certainly not as much as there was in the first years of displacement. It would be better if there were more employment programs and projects for IDPs.

- The involvement of internally displaced women might be crucial in new spaces where peace issues are discussed. As well as the inclusion of more displaced people in local self-government.
- So far, accommodation, and most importantly unemployment issues are not solved.
- There are lots of issues unsolved, including employment, housing, and education.
- A solution must be found, and the issue of returning to Abkhazia resolved peacefully.
- People are still IDPs and that is the biggest problem. It's true that the government helped the displaced population settle into rural and urban areas. Some IDPs were given houses, and blocks of flats were built. However, returning to Abkhazia still remains unsolved. Everyone should return to their roots. There are still many displaced people who don't have a house or living place.
- Our return to Abkhazia remains unresolved. Housing, accommodation, and employment issues still remain unresolved.

What are your main concerns/needs/priorities? This can be social, political, economic, etc.

- Education and health care access for everyone (IDPs), spreading information about state social programs.
- Returning to Abkhazia with dignity, and maintaining goodwill towards Abkhazians. Economic strengthening and getting stronger.
- My request is to be provided with proper accommodation that belongs to me by law.
- My main concern is that many IDPs have become immigrants. I wish they were able to return to their homeland and continue the rest of their lives there.
- My main concern is my family, mother, and brother. I try to cope with the challenges in every possible way. I would happily be involved in projects with other Georgian and Abkhazian women. I am very interested in their mindset today, whether something has changed in their views. My main concern is my children who give me a lot of love and positive emotions. I am a kindergarten teacher and my other main concern are these children—our future generation.
- Providing IDPs with housing and accommodation quicker. Also, social projects and arranging spaces for displaced women where they may share their problems with each other and develop ways to find solutions.
- My concern is my family and IDPs, until we return to Abkhazia. The main thing is to feel good in our current places we live now, do the things we are good at, and not fall behind in life. Someday we will return to our beautiful homeland Abkhazia.
- I pay great attention to education, because an educated and informed person will be able to overcome any problem.



INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

- My main concern is my family, children, and grandchildren. I'm older now but still try to help them as much as I can.
- For me the highest priority is social status and worthy membership in society.
- The most important thing is the prosperity, strength, and welfare of the country. Then families will also be strengthened, and conditions will improve. I live in Khurcha; it's a small island. It is located across Enguri and is surrounded by the river. This small island is almost empty. I want the State to take more care of it as it's a conflict zone. Proper conditions should be created in this village for IDPs and locals, so that my kindergarten children would be happier. I want the whole world to know Khurcha as a bridge of peace between Samegrelo (a region of Georgia) and Abkhazia. I want our country to be socially, economically and politically healthy.
- My main priority is taking care of my family and the community I live in today.

In your daily life, what are some things you consider to be obstacles which are in the way of you having a better life?

- Financial resources, and the unstable situation of the country.
- Low pay.
- The main thing is to be willing to work hard. Work hard and have a relationship with society. In my mind everything depends on you and your goals. How will you use the knowledge, experience, relationships and your love of people gained in life.
- Of course, finances. When you are financially strong, you can overcome many obstacles. I think that children are a great source of happiness. Unfortunately, I am deprived of this happiness, and it pains me, but I don't like complaining. I am grateful to the Lord for everything. I try to make my life beautiful; I couldn't tell you whether it works or not.
- From a social point of view almost all displaced persons have banks loans. That is a big obstacle to creating a better future. Without restoring territorial integrity.
- Personally, there is no obstacle for me. If I set a goal, I fulfill it, no matter what it costs me.
- Despite the fact that I'm employed, the salaries are so low that a person can hardly make ends meet. I's not even mentioning other things like economic situations.
- There were many obstacles in my life, but I overcame them. Every up comes with downs, so we should try to solve problems peacefully.
- Unemployment and economic situation.
- The economic and political situation of the country are the main obstacles for creating a better future.



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



In your daily life, what are some things you are proud of?

- My ability to self-motivate.
- I am proud I've kept my dignity. I didn't lose the joy of life, the desire to learn new things, or to learn and develop constantly. I like to communicate with people, share my knowledge and experiences with them, and always learn new things.
- I'm proud to be from Abkhazia. I'm a strong woman, a strong mother, and a strong grandmother.
- I am proud of being a sincere, pure-hearted, and conscientious person. Many people have said that I'm too naive, but I believe naive people are sincere and kind, like children. I can be proud of the fact that I'll never harm another person. I'll never betray their trust. It's true that people like me often end up heartbroken, but there isn't much you can do about that. I always hope for better.
- Despite the fact that I'm twice affected by the conflict, I don't consider myself as sided about the outcome of the war. One good thing I learned from the very first day of my displacement is that I should support people with special needs no matter how difficult it might be. I have been trying to create ways for IDP's well-being.
- I am proud of my family and the fact that I was born in wonderful Abkhazia.
- I am proud of my family. I have a wonderful husband and an amazing child. I would like to live happily together with my family. I want my son to succeed and of course return to Abkhazia.
- I am proud of my family, children, and grandchildren. I am proud of my generosity.
- My family.
- I'm proud of being a woman, mother, employee, and a friend.
- I'm proud of my work and motherhood.

iii. Final Group Meeting

Each participant completed the post survey and partook in a certificate ceremony for their participation. Additionally, each participant received their portraits as a thank you gift (additional photos and information listed in the *Annex, xvi. Final Group Meeting*).



v. Assessment

The assessment of the project is measured using Likert Scale pre and post surveys. The participants answered the same questions for both surveys. Pie charts were generated in order to visualize any changes which happened from before the project, to afterwards. This essentially allows us to track changes that may have happened from before the project started till after the project ended. The results of this assessment are discussed in more detail in the following section, *VII. Discussion of Results*. You may view the pie charts in the *Annex, ii. Assessment*. The left column are results from the pre survey, and the right column are results from the post survey.

VII. Discussion of Results

I am pleasantly surprised by how quickly the results were positive from the pre to the post surveys. We can really see how the women's perspectives changed on particular questions from before the project started, until the after the project had ended. I remember as the photo exhibition was going on for three days, many of the women came on multiple days and took photographs in every corner of the gallery with their family members and friends. A few women from the project created videos of the event and posted them on their Facebook page. I will never forget one of the women whom participated in this project wrote a very heartfelt Facebook post that said, "It's so wonderful to be able to do the best you can and be given the opportunity to be properly appreciated. This is why it makes sense to continue living. This is another modest step toward some measure of success. Just when you think you've given up on this life and the thought of continuing life has ended, that's when a path appears that we must continue walking. I thank the Lord that I didn't get lost, and found myself where I should be again" (anonymous).

I will briefly describe the results from the survey pie charts. The women's sense of community has increased. In addition, the number of women who felt that their opinions and thoughts are taken seriously as IDP women has significantly increased as well. In general, the women whom participated in this project noticed an increase in being motivated about their futures. More specifically, for the following statement, *I feel like I have control over how I'm represented as an IDP woman in Georgia*, went from 33% of women disagreeing to only 8%. We also saw 42% of women agreeing with this statement growing to 84% of women in agreement with even some saying the strongly agreed with this statement. Another statement is, *as an IDP women I feel that there are spaces for me to express myself*, in which we see a change from 25% of women disagreeing/strongly disagreeing, to none disagreeing and an increase in those whom agree.

As we can see from these results, every single statement from the surveys saw a positive increase. With this being said, the project was quite successful and we could even see this project being implemented across multiple and varying contexts for IDP women from differing conflicts around the world; in the hopes that it would yield similar positive results and impacts. This photo exhibition project could be a method that is repeated in other spaces/cultures/countries in order to document other IDP stories and experiences—empowering communities of all kinds.

VIII. Conclusions

I believe projects like this force people to face their own subconscious biases and stereotypes of what an IDP or a refugee looks like. Non-Georgian speakers told me that they were surprised by how the women portrayed themselves in the photographs, and in the ways, they articulated their own narratives and experiences in the audio recordings. Taking a step back to realize that the lack of opportunities or education due to conflict does not equate levels of unintelligence. For example, from

the written interview packets, the women mention that there are not IDP women put into positions of power or leadership in the community. Additionally, many of the women value and see education, especially for women and girls, as a crucial tool for aiding in this development and success.

Non-Georgian speakers were able to listen to the stories and learn. An English teacher living in Zugdidi mentioned that after listening to the stories in English, she felt she was able to better connect and understand her own students who come from Abkhazia. Students from the university attended the photo exhibition and said that some of the stories inspired them, or reminded them of their own family's stories from the war, but they had never seen them displayed in an exhibition with photographs before. I believe this showed the power in photography and story-telling.

I believe the main objectives of this project have been achieved. Their stories have been documented using photography, interviews, surveys, and story-telling and displayed at the photo exhibition. The diversity in their stories, and what they remember as significant is absolutely fascinating; a doctor who felt she was watching herself in a WWII film, a woman who cried as she saw people's belongings floating down the river, a woman who hid in a cellar for days during the violence, a woman who carried her family member's coffin for miles through swamp, to a woman who felt she lost the best years of her life because her father told her to stay in the village. These women told the stories they wanted the world to hear, and I simply acted as a microphone. Another objective was for the women to feel empowered, and having agency over their narratives and representation. I measure this as successful by how the women interacted at the photo exhibition, their demeanor during our final group meeting, and from the survey results.

Through this photo exhibition, IDP women understand that their story is not yet over. It did not end when they fled Abkhazia. There is always hope for a brighter and even more beautiful future. I acknowledge that I was the one whom organized the photo exhibition, but without these IDP

women's openness and willingness to participate, there would be no project. People would be unable to access these crucial stories. As a part of a longer-term objective, I hope in the future they feel motivated to make changes in their communities, thus filling those leadership roles themselves, and confident in expressing their perspectives in all spaces. Lastly, as they so beautifully expressed, hope dies last.

IX. Bibliography

Anyeko, Ketty & Tamara Shaya Hoffmann. 2019. “*Storytelling and Peacebuilding: Lessons from Northern Uganda*”. *Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies: Peacebuilding and the Arts*, 235-251.

Arjevanidze, Nargiza. 2017. “*Experiences of Protracted Displacement in Narratives of Internally Displaced Women from Abkhazia*”. *Materials of the V International Gender Workshop*, 21.

CBS Mornings. 2019. “*Malala Yousafzai Amplifies Voices of Refugee Girls in "We Are Displaced"*”. YouTube, <https://youtu.be/2afKvjMc5lw>, June 5th, 2023.

Fuertes, Al. 2012. “*Storytelling and it's Transformative Impact in the Philippines*”. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 29(3): 333-348.

Hammond, Robin. 2017. “*A Women's War*”. IDRC: Panos Pictures, https://library.panos.co.uk/features/stories/a-woman-s-war.html#0_00254806, June 10th, 2023.

Kabachnik, Peter, Magdalena Grabowska, Joanna Regulska, Beth Mitchneck & Olga V. Mayorova. 2013. “*Traumatic Masculinities: The Gendered Geographies of Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia*”. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 20(6): 773-793.

Lomsadze, Giorgi. 2018. “*Georgia: A Solitary Peacekeeping Mission on the Edge of Europe*”. *Eurasia Net*, <https://eurasianet.org/georgia-a-solitary-peacekeeping-mission-on-the-edge-of-europe>, May 23rd, 2023.

Munir, Laine P. 2019. “*Fleeing Gender: Reasons for Displacement in Pakistan’s Transgender Community*”. LGBTI Asylum Seekers and Refugees from a Legal and Political Perspective, In: Guler, A., Shevtsova, M., Venturi, D, (eds.). Springer, Cham, 49-69.

Weber, Sanne. 2018. “*Participatory Visual Research with Displaced Persons: Listening to Post-Conflict Experiences Through the Visual*”. Journal of Refugee Studies, 32(3): 417-435.

Yousafzai, Malala. 2019. *We Are Displaced: My Journey & Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Zamanov, Ramil. 2021. “*Rethinking Peacebuilding in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict from an Intersectional Perspective*”. Academia Letters, Article 1023, 1-5.

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

X. Annex

i. Schedule & Timing: Detailed outline of project.

Photography Exhibition, Voices of Abkhazia: Gendered Perspectives		CoLoz Code:	Project Prep	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Printing	Translation
TASKS / ACTIVITIES	START DATE	DUE DATE	% COMPLETE	NOTES				
Create the material for the pre and post questionnaire/survey	March 23th	March 25th	100%	Write all pre/post survey questions in a microsoft document. Questions should be on a scale (strongly disagree/agree). The same survey will be given for pre/post in order to record any changes that may have happened during their participation in the project. <i>Each survey is in English and Georgian, so translation isn't required later. Mamuka confirms translation is correct.</i>				
Create the material for the interview packets	March 28th	April 1st	100%	Write all interview questions in a microsoft document. Mamuka confirms translation is correct.				
Create talking points for the audio recordings	March 28th	April 1st	100%	Bring some basic talking points to help guide each participant in story telling for the recordings. Mamuka confirms translation is correct.				
Create consent & contact form	March 28th	April 1st	100%	Each participant given a contact form. Read the consent form to the group for oral consent. Mamuka confirms translation is correct. (Consider conducting this consent orally, as to not scare participants with required signing; based on cultural & educational factors).				
Read article(s) about IDP women and photography and write theoretical framework	April 10st	April 17st	100%	Read other researchers work to help shape project theoretical framework & add to the methodology(ies).				



TASKS ACTIVITIES	START DATE	DUE DATE	% COMPLETE	NOTES
Meet & receive assistance from local IDP NGO(s) in finding 15-20 participants	April 20th at 2:30	April 20th at 2:30	100%	Meet with <i>Imedi Association</i> to assist in finding 15 women to participate in the project. Can help call women to tell them about the 1st group meeting at American Corner space on Saturday. Plan 1st meeting day/time with Sophia
Conduct pre-survey & oral consent MEETING 1	April 22nd at 2:00	April 22nd at 2:00	100%	Explain project in detail, and women orally consent to participate in the project. Give them a pre-survey to fill out, contact forms etc. <i>Look to Meeting Agenda document.</i>
Schedule individual meetings with women MEETING 1	April 22nd at 2:00	April 22nd at 2:00	100%	Schedule all individual meetings in a calendar. Hand out week-long schedule for women to choose day/time for their individual home meetings. Should take up to 1 week in total to complete all individual home meetings.
Record audios MEETING 2	April 23rd	April 30th	100%	Meet with the IDP women individually at their homes to record their stories (use talking points).
Photograph IDP women MEETING 2	April 23rd	April 30th	100%	Meet with the IDP women individually at their homes to photograph them for the gallery show. <i>Asking how they want to be represented.</i> Reschedule with Tsitsino Biblala
Women answer written interview questions MEETING 2	April 23rd	April 30th	100%	Women write down answers to interview questions in a small packet. Think about printing the answers and making them anonymous and at the photo-exhibition for people to read.

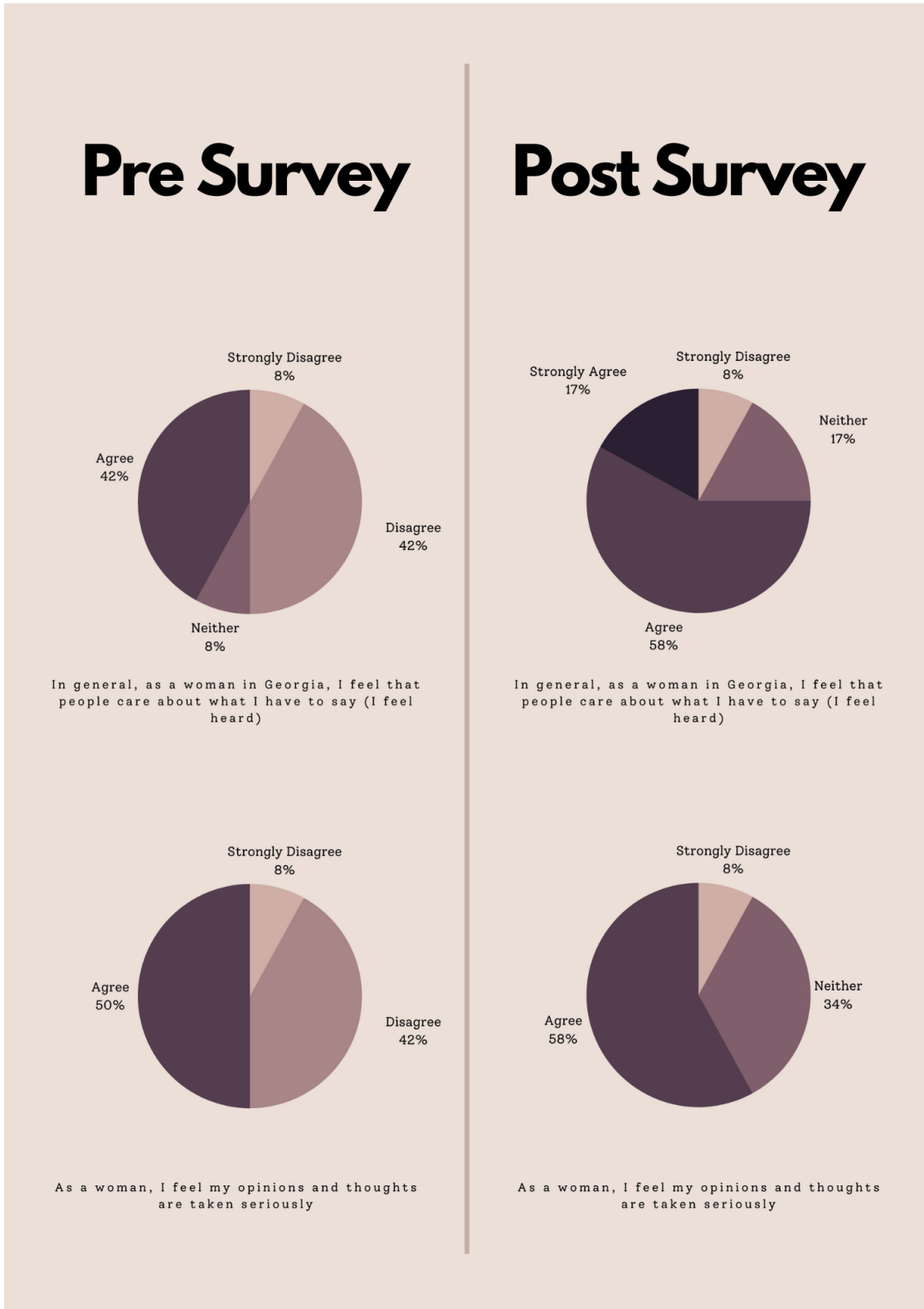
Once all information has been collected, proceed with the following lists of t:

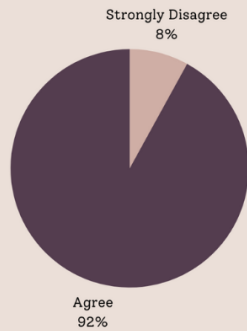


TASKS ACTIVITIES	START DATE	DUE DATE	% COMPLETE	NOTES
Type & translate written interview packets (into English)	April 24th	May 10th	100%	Help from Georgian local (Sophia Kavartskelia) to type interview packets to English.
Type & translate audio recordings (into English)	April 24th	May 10th	100%	Help from Georgian local (Sophia Kavartskelia) to translate audio recordings to English. While she says outloud, type the English in order to work more efficiently.
Generate QR codes for audios	May 10th	May 10th	100%	Convert voice memos from iphone into mp3s online. Then create a QR code with the link to their audios in both English and Georgian
Search and meet with gallery space	Continuous task	May 8th	100%	Schedule meeting with gallery director and email your photo exhibition abstract with photographs and poster.
Get portrait photographs printed	May 5th	May 5th	100%	Print all images inkjet, size 40X60 cm.
Frame photographs	May 8th	May 13th	100%	Frame all images in white poster board (image sizes are 40X60 cm).
Print interview answers anonymously	May 8th	May 12th	100%	Display interview answers in both English and Georgian at the photo exhibition in an installation (taped to strings hanging from the ceiling). People read and walk around them. They are anonymous.
Print QR codes, and photograph titles	May 8th	May 12th	100%	Hang QR codes next to the women's images with titles (photograph titles are the women's first names. For ex: "Ana").

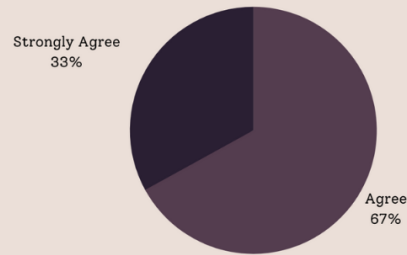


TASKS ACTIVITIES	START DATE	DUE DATE	% COMPLETE	NOTES
Create poster for the photo exhibition, print, and post around town	May 8th	May 12th	100%	Create a photo exhibition poster (English & Georgian). Send to the mayor, American corner, megabar, and radio atianati to post on their accounts. Print the posters to put around town. Print 1 large version to put in the gallery window.
Set up everything in the gallery space	May 22nd after 11:00AM	May 22nd after 11:00AM	100%	Hang poster in gallery window. Hand portraits with their QR codes, titles. Hang installation with their interview answers. Hang photo exhibition description. Bring photographs, frames, chairs, QR codes, portrait titles, photo exhibition annotation, large poster in window, string, tape, and interview statements
Gallery show day!	May 23-25th	May 23-25th	100%	Title of photo exhibition: "Voices of Abkhazia: Gendered Perspectives"
Group Meeting in American Corner MEETING 3	May 27th 1:00PM	May 27th 1:00PM	100%	FINAL meeting to thank everyone and ask how they feel about the project now that is completed. Hand out consent forms, post survey, certificates, and gift them their portraits from the exhibition as a thank you.
Create pie charts	May 28th	May 28th	100%	Based on pre/post surveys, create pie charts/graphs, showing any results or impacts the project had on the participants.
Results & Reflection Phase	BEFORE June 20th	BEFORE June 20th	100%	Based on the interviews and stories conducted, take note of your experiences throughout the project activities.

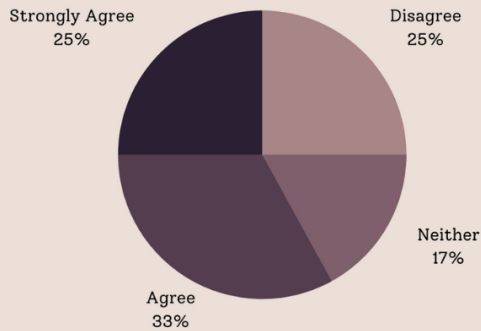




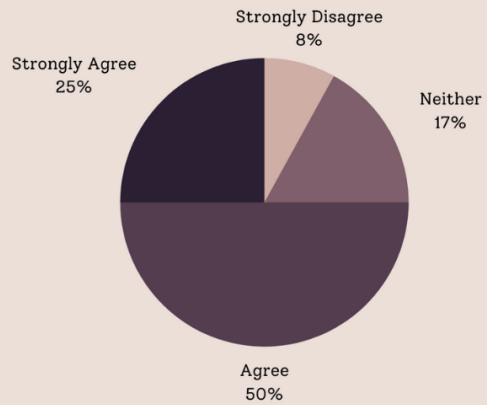
I feel motivated about my future



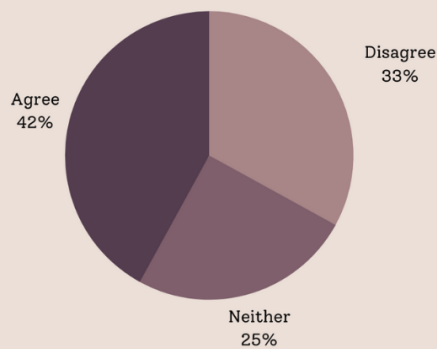
I feel motivated about my future



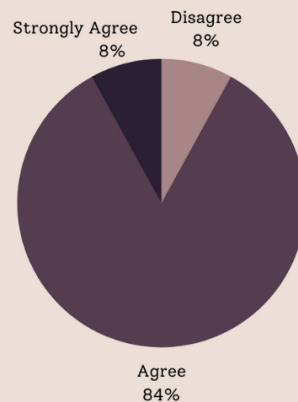
I am excited when I think about my future



I am excited when I think about my future



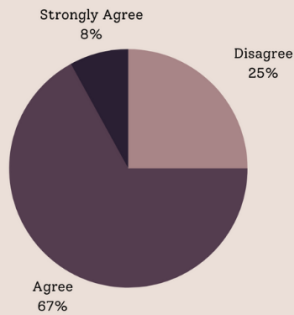
I feel like I have control over how I am represented as an IDP woman in Georgia



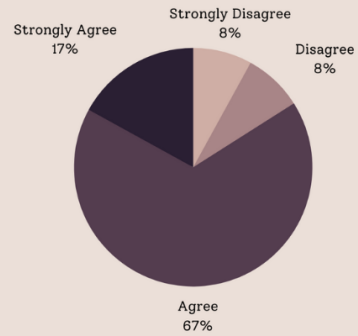
I feel like I have control over how I am represented as an IDP woman in Georgia



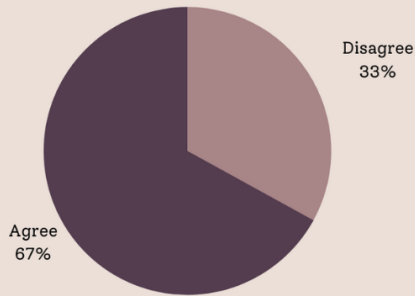
INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



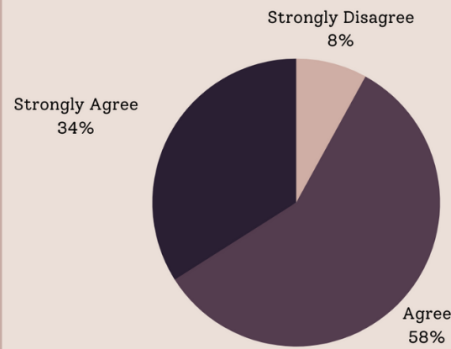
As a woman in Georgia, I feel like I have choices in my life



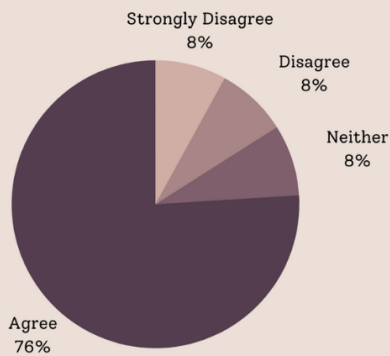
As a woman in Georgia, I feel like I have choices in my life



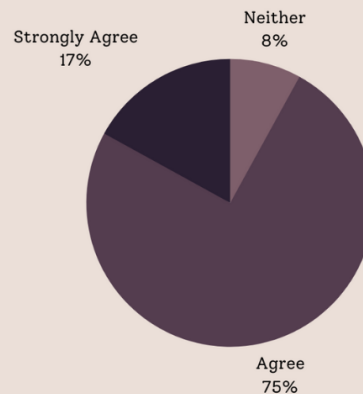
I feel like I am a valued member of society, as a IDP woman in Georgia



I feel like I am a valued member of society, as a IDP woman in Georgia



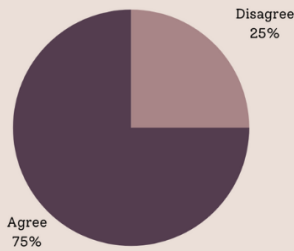
I feel comfortable expressing myself as a woman



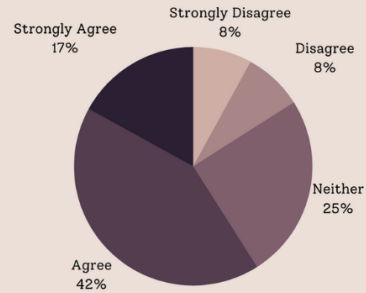
I feel comfortable expressing myself as a woman



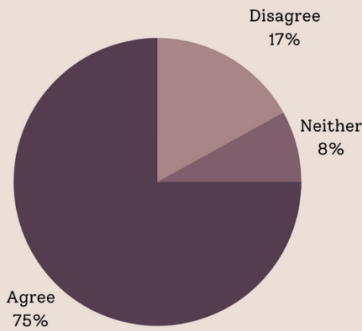
INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



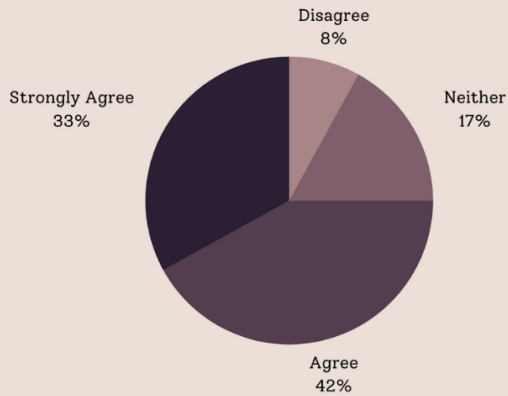
I feel like my experiences are valued, and well-received by the community



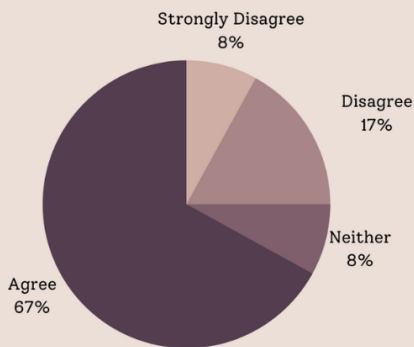
I feel like my experiences are valued, and well-received by the community



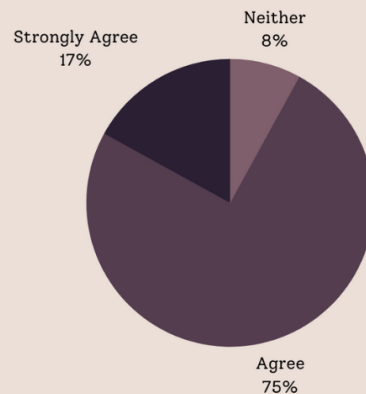
As a woman, I understand that my voice can make a positive impact and/or difference



As a woman, I understand that my voice can make a positive impact and/or difference



As an IDP woman, I feel like there are spaces for me to express myself

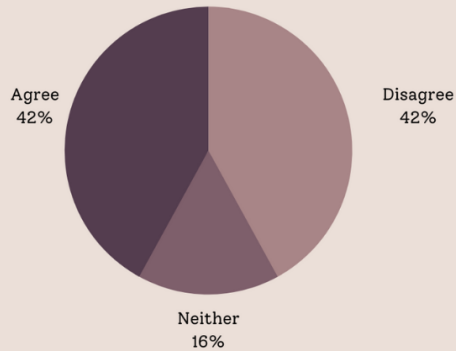


As an IDP woman, I feel like there are spaces for me to express myself

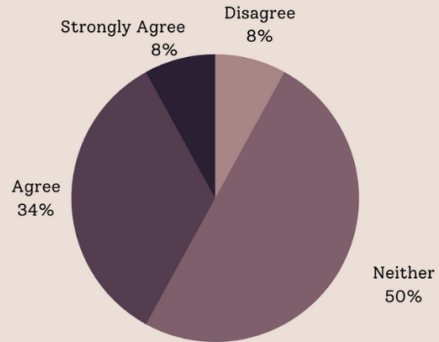




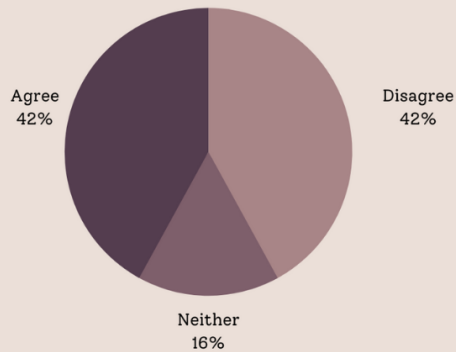
INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



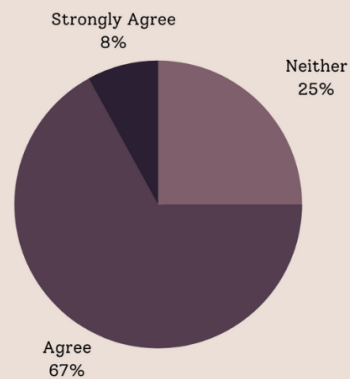
As an IDP woman, I feel that there are spaces allowing me to heal from past traumas



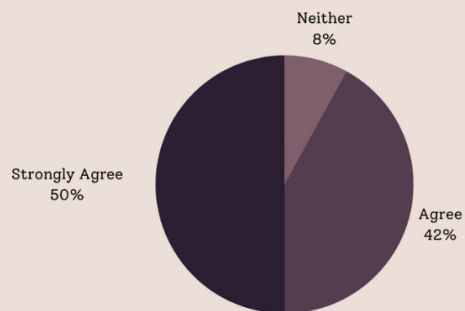
As an IDP woman, I feel that there are spaces allowing me to heal from past traumas



In my current situation as an IDP woman, there is a sense of community among us



In my current situation as an IDP woman, there is a sense of community among us



I enjoyed participating in this project

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

iii. Pre-Survey. Completed by each participant at first group meeting.

წინა გამოკითხვა | Pre Survey

გმადლობთ ამ პროექტში მონაწილეობისთვის! გთხოვთ უპასუხოთ ამ სწრაფ გამოკითხვას, რადგან ის საშუალებას მძლევს გავაანალიზო პროექტის ზემოქმედება. არ უპასუხოთ კითხვებს იმის მიხედვით, თუ რას ფიქრობთ სწორი პასუხი; უპასუხეთ თქვენი მოსაზრებების საფუძველზე და აზრები. მონიშნეთ ყუთი, რომელიც საუკეთესოდ შეესაბამება თქვენს აზრს. სულ არის 13 კითხვა და გამოკითხვები ანონიმური.

Thank you for your participation in this project! Please answer this quick survey, as it allows me to analyze the impacts of the project. Please do not answer the questions based on what you think is the correct answer; answer based on your opinions. Tick the box that best fits your opinion. There are 13 questions in total and the surveys are anonymous.

		ძლიერად არ ვეთანხმები (Strongly disagree)	არ ვეთანხმები (Disagree)	არც ვეთანხმები და არც ვეთანხმები (Neither disagree nor agree)	ვეთანხმები (Agree)	ძლიერად ვეთანხმები (Strongly agree)
In general, as a woman in Georgia, I feel that people care about what I have to say (I feel heard).	ვეფიქრობ, რომ ჩემი, როგორც ქალის სათქმელი და ნააზრვეი სხვებს აინტერესებს, სხვები ყოველთვის მისმენენ და ესმით ჩემი.					
As a woman, I feel my opinions and thoughts are taken seriously.	ვეფიქრობ, რომ ჩემს მოსაზრებებსა და ფიქრებს სერიოზულად უდგებიან.					
I feel motivated about my future.	მომავალს მოტივაციით შევყურებ.					

I am excited when I think about my future.	ვეგრძნობ სიხარულს, როცა ჩემს მომავალზე ვფიქრობ.					
I feel like I have control over how I am represented as an IDP woman in Georgia.	ვეფიქრობ, რომ ჩემზე დამოკიდებული თუ როგორი სახით ვიქნები საზოგადოებისთვის წარმოჩენილი, როგორც დევნილი ქალი საქართველოში.					
As a woman in Georgia, I feel like I have choices in my life.	ვეფიქრობ, რომ ესარგებლობ არჩევანის თავისუფლების უფლებით.					
I feel like I am a valued member of society, as a IDP woman in Georgia.	ვეფიქრობ, როგორც დევნილი ქალი, საზოგადოების სრულუფლებიან წევრად ვითვლები.					
I feel comfortable expressing myself as a woman.	ჩემთვის კომფორტულია გამოვხატო საკუთარი თავი, როგორც ქალმა.					
I feel like my experiences are valued, and well-received by the community.	ვეფიქრობ, რომ ჩემი ცხოვრებისული გამოცდილებები დაფასებულია და პატივცემული საზოგადოების მიერ.					
As a woman, I understand that my voice can make a positive	როგორც ქალს, მგონია, რომ ჩემს ხმას შეუძლია					

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

impact and/or difference.	დადებითი ცვლილებებისა და შედეგების მოტანა.					
As an IDP woman, I feel like there are spaces for me to express myself.	როგორც დევნილი ქალი, ვფიქრობ, რომ არსებობს საშუალებები და სივრცეები, რომელიც მაძლევს საშუალებას გამოვხატო ჩემი თავი და სათქმელი.					
As an IDP woman, I feel that there are spaces allowing me to heal from past traumas.	როგორც დევნილი ქალი, ვფიქრობ, არსებობს სერვისები და სივრცეები, რომლებიც მეხმარება გავუმკლავდე ჩემს წარსულ ტკივილებს, ტრავმებს.					
In my current situation as an IDP woman, there is a sense of community among us.	ჩემს ამჟამინდელ საცხოვრებელ გარემოში, ვფიქრობ, დევნილი ქალები ერთგვარ საზოგადოებას, ერთობას ვქმნით.					

iv. Post-Survey. Completed by each participant at final group meeting.

პოსტ გამოკითხვა | Post Survey

მადლობას გიხდით მოცემულ პროექტში მონაწილეობისთვის! გთხოვთ, შეავსეთ ეს ანკეტა, რომელიც თავის მხრივ მე მომცემს საშუალებას, ზუსტად შევაფასო ჩემი პროექტის გავლენა და შედეგები. უპასუხეთ შეკითხვებს გულწრფელად და არ იფიქროთ, რომ არსებობს სწორი პასუხი. თქვენი ნებისმიერი პასუხი მისაღებია. მონიშნეთ ის ველი, რომელიც შეესაბამება თქვენს მოსაზრებას. ჯამში 15 შეკითხვაა და გამოკითხვა ანონიმურია

Thank you for your participation in this project! Please answer this quick survey, as it allows me to analyze the impacts of the project. Please do not answer the questions based on what you think is the correct answer; answer based on your opinions. Tick the box that best fits your opinion. There are 15 questions in total and the surveys are anonymous.

		აბსოლუტურად არ ვეთანხმები (Strongly disagree)	არ ვეთანხმები (Disagree)	არც ვეთანხმები და არც უარყოფ ამ მოსაზრებას (Neither disagree nor agree)	ვეთანხმები (Agree)	აბსოლუტურად ვეთანხმები (Strongly agree)
In general, as a woman in Georgia, I feel that people care about what I have to say (I feel heard).	ვფიქრობ, რომ ჩემი, როგორც ქალის სათქმელი და ნააზრევი სხვებს აინტერესებს, სხვები ყოველთვის მისმენენ და ესმით ჩემი.					
As a woman, I feel my opinions and thoughts are taken seriously.	ვფიქრობ, რომ ჩემს მოსაზრებებსა და ფიქრებს სერიოზულად უღებიათ.					
I feel motivated about my future.	მომავალს მოტივაციით შევყურებ.					

**INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

I am excited when I think about my future.	ვგრძობ სიხარულს, როცა ჩემს მომავალზე ვფიქრობ.					
I feel like I have control over how I am represented as an IDP woman in Georgia.	ვფიქრობ, რომ ჩემზეა დამოკიდებული თუ როგორი სახით ვიქნები საზოგადოებისთვის წარმოჩენილი, როგორც დევნილი ქალი საქართველოში.					
As a woman in Georgia, I feel like I have choices in my life.	ვფიქრობ, რომ ვსარგებლობ არჩევანის თავისუფლების უფლებით.					
I feel like I am a valued member of society, as a IDP woman in Georgia.	ვფიქრობ, როგორც დევნილი ქალი, საზოგადოების სრულუფლებიან წევრად ვითვლები.					
I feel comfortable expressing myself as a woman.	ჩემთვის კომფორტულია გამოვხატო საკუთარი თავი, როგორც ქალმა.					
I feel like my experiences are valued, and well-received by the community.	ვფიქრობ, რომ ჩემი ცხოვრებისული გამოცდილებები დაფასებულია და პატივცემული საზოგადოების მიერ.					
As a woman, I understand that my voice can make a positive	როგორც ქალს, მგონია, რომ ჩემს ხმას შეუძლია					

impact and/or difference.	დადებითი ცვლილებებისა და შედეგების მოტანა.					
As an IDP woman, I feel like there are spaces for me to express myself.	როგორც დევნილი ქალი, ვფიქრობ, რომ არსებობს საშუალებები და სივრცეები, რომელიც მამლევს საშუალებს გამოვხატო ჩემი თავი და სათქმელი.					
As an IDP woman, I feel that there are spaces allowing me to heal from past traumas.	როგორც დევნილი ქალი, ვფიქრობ, არსებობს სერვისები და სივრცეები, რომლებიც მეხმარება გაუმკლავდე ჩემს წარსულ ტკივილებს, ტრავმებს.					
In my current situation as an IDP woman, there is a sense of community among us.	ჩემს ამჟამინდელ საცხოვრებელ გარემოში, ვფიქრობ, დევნილი ქალები ერთგვარ საზოგადოებას, ერთობას ვქმნით.					
I enjoyed participating in this project.	მე მომეწონა ამ პროექტში მონაწილეობა.					

გაქვთ დამატებითი კომენტარები/მოსაზრება იმის თაობაზე თუ როგორ შეიძლება ჩემი პროექტი უფრო გაუმჯობესდეს?
(Additional comment/thoughts about the project and/or how it could improve)

v. Photo Exhibition Poster. Displayed in gallery window, in Zugdidi, and
online.



VOICES OF ABKHAZIA: GENDERED PERSPECTIVES
აფხაზეთის ხმები: გენდერული
პერსპექტივები

ინტერაქტიული
ფოტო
გამოფენა
AN INTERACTIVE
PHOTO EXHIBITION

სად: ზუგდიდის სამხატვრო გალერეა
როდის: მაისი 23, 24, 25
უფასო შესვლა!
ფოტო გამოფენა ხელმისაწვდომ
ინგლისურად და ქართულად

WHERE: ZUGDIDI ART GALLERY
WHEN: MAY 23, 24, 25
FREE ENTRY!
PHOTO EXHIBITION AVAILABLE IN BOTH ENGLISH & GEORGIAN

PHOTOGRAPHY & RESEARCH BY KATHRYN NINO LAMANA | ფოტოგრაფია და კვლევა ქეტრინ ნინო ლამანას მიერ

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

vi. Individual Meeting Schedule. Filled out by participants at first group meeting.

ინდივიდუალური შეხვედრების განრიგი | Individual Meetings Schedule

დაწერეთ თქვენი სახელი იმ დღის/დროისთვის, რომელიც თქვენთვის მუშაობს. თითოეული ინდივიდუალური შეხვედრა იქნება მაქსიმუმ 2 საათი. მხოლოდ 1 სახელი თითო ყუთში.

Write your name for the day/time that works for you. Each individual meeting will be a maximum of 2 hours. **Only 1 name per box.**

აპრილი	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
10:00 ზე								
13:00 ზე								
15:00 ზე								

vii. My Information Form. Given to participants at first group meeting.

ჩემი ინფორმაცია | My Information

ჩემი სახელი | My Name:

ქეტრინ ნინო ლამანა (Kathryn Nino Lamana)

ჩემი ტელეფონის ნომერი | My Telephone Number:

ჯგუფის შეხვედრის ადგილი | Group Meeting Place:

ამერიკული კუთხე ზუდიდი. მდებარეობა ზუგდიდის ცენტრალურ ბიბლიოთეკაში, სართული 2. (American Corner Zugdidi. Located in the Zugdidi Central Library, Floor 2).

viii. Contact Form. Filled out by participants at first group meeting.

საკონტაქტო ფორმა | Contact Form

გთხოვთ მომაწოდოთ თქვენი საკონტაქტო ინფორმაცია (Please provide me with your contact information)

სრული სახელი და ასაკი | Full Name & Age

ტელეფონის ნომერი | Telephone Number:

მისამართი (რომელიც საუკეთესოა ჩვენი შეხვედრისთვის, რათა გადავიღოთ ფოტოები და ჩავწეროთ აუდიოები პროექტისთვის) | Address (which is best for our meeting in order to take the photographs and record the audios for the project):

ix. Consent Form. Signed by participants at first group meeting.

პროექტის თანხმობის ფორმა | Project Consent Form

მე მესმის, რომ უნდა დავასრულო წინა და შემდგომი გამოკითხვები.

წინასწარი/პოსტ გამოკითხვები იქნება ანონიმური.

I understand that I must complete the pre and post project surveys. The pre/post surveys will be anonymous.

მესმის, რომ უნდა შევავსო ინტერვიუს პაკეტი.

I understand that I must complete the interview packet.

მესმის, რომ გადამიღებენ და ეს ფოტოები გამოყენებული იქნება ფოტოგამოფენაზე.

I understand that I will be photographed, and these photographs will be used in the photography exhibition.

მე მესმის, რომ ჩანერილი იქნება ჩემი გამოცდილების შესახებ

ისტორიების მოყოლა. მე მესმის, რომ ეს აუდიოჩანაწერები

ხელმისაწვდომი იქნება ხალხის მოსასმენად ფოტოგამოფენაზე.

I understand that I will be recorded telling stories about my experiences. I understand that these audio recordings will be available for people to listen to at the photography exhibition.

პროექტი დეტალურად ამიხსნა. მე მესმის, რომ ქეტრინ ლამანა ზუგდიდში

იმყოფება სამაგისტრო დისერტაციის დასკვნითი პროექტისთვის კვლევის

ჩასატარებლად და მე კომფორტულად ვაძლევ თანხმობას ამ პროექტში

მონაწილეობაზე. მე მესმის, რომ მისმა უნივერსიტეტმა (ჯაუმე ი

უნივერსიტეტი კასტელიონ დე ლა პლანაში, ესპანეთი) შეიძლება ჰკითხოს

მას ამ პროექტის გამოქვეყნება (მისი ნებართვით).

The project has been explained to me in detail. I understand that Kathryn Lamana is in Zugdidi

to conduct research for her Master's Dissertation Final Project, and I am comfortable giving my

consent to participate in this project. I understand that her university (Jaume I University in Castellon de la Plana, Spain) may ask to publish this project (with her permission).

***დამატებითი შენიშვნა:** თუ ამ პროექტის დროს არაკომფორტულად განუხებთ კონკრეტული შეკითხვა (თუმცა ეს შეიძლება იყოს მნიშვნელოვანი პროექტისთვის და კვლევისთვის), ჩემთვის უფრო მნიშვნელოვანია, რომ ყველა მონაწილემ სიამოვნება მიიღოს ამ პროცესით და თავი კომფორტულად იგრძნოს.

***Additional Note:** If you are uncomfortable with a particular question during this project (although it may be important for the project and research), it is more important to me that all participants enjoy this process and feel comfortable.

ხელმოწერა | Signature

თარიღი | Date

- x. Talking Points Form. Given to participants at individual meetings. Used to organize the flow of their stories for the audio recordings.

საუბრის წერტილები აუდიო ჩანაწერებისთვის | Talking Points for Audio Recordings

1. მოუყევი ისტორია ომის დროს შენთვის მნიშვნელოვანი გამოცდილების შესახებ (რაღაც მნიშვნელოვანი პირადად შენთვის. რაღაც, რაც გამოირჩეოდა შენთვის მთელი ამ წლების განმავლობაში).
(Tell a story about a significant experience you had during the war; something important to you personally. Something that has stood out to you all these years).
2. როგორია თქვენი დღევანდელი მდგომარეობა ომიდან 30 წლის შემდეგ? ისევ დევნილობაში ცხოვრობ? როგორ გრძნობთ თქვენს ამჟამინდელ მდგომარეობას?
(What is your current situation like, 30 years after the war? Are you still living in a state of displacement? How do you feel about your current situation).
3. რა იმედები გაქვთ (შენი) მომავლის მიმართ?
(What are your hopes for (your) the future).
4. თუ კიდევ არის რაიმე, რისი თქმაც გსურთ...
If there is anything else you would like to say

- xi. Interview Packet. 15 questions, of which participants wrote their answers.

ინტერვიუს პაკეტი | Interview Packet

1. სახელი, ასაკი, დაბადების ადგილი.
(Name, Age, Birthplace).

2. როცა სიტყვა „აფხაზეთი“ მესმის, ვფიქრობ...
(When I hear the word “Abkhazia” I think about...)

3. რას ნიშნავს შენთვის სიტყვა „სახლი“?
(What does home mean for you?)

4. იჩენს თუ არა ხალხი ინტერესს აფხაზეთის ომიდან თქვენი ისტორიებისა და გამოცდილების მოსმენით?

(Do people show interest in listening to your stories and experiences from the war in Abkhazia)

5. რა როლი გქონდათ აფხაზეთის ომის დროს?

(During the Abkhazian war what role did you take on).

6. გაქვთ იმედი, რომ ერთ დღეს დაბრუნდებით თქვენს მიწაზე? თუ ასეა, რა იქნება თქვენი იმედები და ოცნებები დაბრუნების შემდეგ?

(Do you hope to one day return to your land? If so, what would be your hopes and dreams once returning).

7. როგორ ასახავს თქვენს ამჟამინდელ მდგომარეობას, როგორც წესი, მედია/მთავრობა/საზოგადოება?

(How is your current situation typically portrayed by the media/government/society).

8. როგორ გინდოდათ, რომ თქვენი მდგომარეობა სხვაგვარად გაეშუქებინათ?
როგორ გინდა, რომ შენი მდგომარეობა იყოს ახლა?
(How do you wish your situation had been portrayed differently? How do you want your
situation to be portrayed now).

9. როგორ ფიქრობთ, თქვენი სიტუაციის სირთულე არასწორად არის გაგებული/
წარმოდგენილი?
(In what ways do you feel that the complexities of your situation are
misunderstood/misrepresented).

10. როგორც დევნილი ქალი, რას ფიქრობენ ადამიანები ყველაზე ხშირად თქვენზე/თქვენს მდგომარეობაზე?
(As a IDP woman, what do people most commonly assume about you/your situation).

11. თქვენი, როგორც ქალის პერსპექტივა ჩრდილქვეშაა დაყენებული თვითონ დევნილთა საზოგადოების მიერ?
(Are your perspectives as a woman, overshadowed by more general IDP community concerns).

12. როგორ ფიქრობთ, რა საკითხები დარჩა გადაუჭრელი?

(What issues do you feel are left unaddressed).

13. რა არის შენი მთავარი საზრუნავი/მოთხოვნილებები/პრიორიტეტები.? ეს

შეიძლება იყოს სოციალური, პოლიტიკური, ეკონომიკური და ა.შ.

(What are your main concerns/needs/priorities? This can be social, political, economic, etc.)

14. თქვენს ყოველდღიურ ცხოვრებაში, რა არის ის, რაც თქვენ მიგაჩნიათ დაბრკოლებად, რაც ხელს გიშლით უკეთესი ცხოვრების გზაზე?
(In your daily life, what are some things you consider to be obstacles which are in the way of you having a better life).

15. თქვენს ყოველდღიურ ცხოვრებაში, რითი ამაყობთ?
(In your daily life, what are some things you are proud of).

xii. Photo Exhibition Abstract. Displayed at the photo exhibition.

“Voices of Abkhazia: Gendered Perspectives”

The Abkhazian war was 30 years ago, and many post-conflict settings are rarely analyzed with a gendered lens. When we fail to do this, we overlook entire populations of people—their perspectives, feelings, and opinions. Information about the Abkhazian war can easily be accessed on the internet and in books, however we cannot easily access the real-life stories from women who endured this conflict. This photo exhibition utilizes methodologies of photojournalism, interviews, and story-telling as a form of documentation of the war and post-conflict setting from women’s perspectives. It is through these various methodologies that we are able to document important aspects of conflict through women who experienced it. This photo exhibition is a platform for women to feel empowered in sharing their stories, as they hold agency over how they are represented, and their own narratives.

At this photo exhibition, you have the ability to hear each women’s story from the Abkhazian war, their current situations, and hopes for the future. We encourage you to use your phones to scan the QR codes, found at each portrait, in order to listen to each of the women’s stories. Each story is available in both English and Georgian. *(In order for the QR codes to work, you must use Wi-Fi or your phone’s internet data).*

In the middle of the room, there is an installation that includes the women’s thoughts and perspectives from interviews. We encourage you to walk through and read these statements. They are available in both English and Georgian for you to read. *(Please do not touch or pull on the installation).*

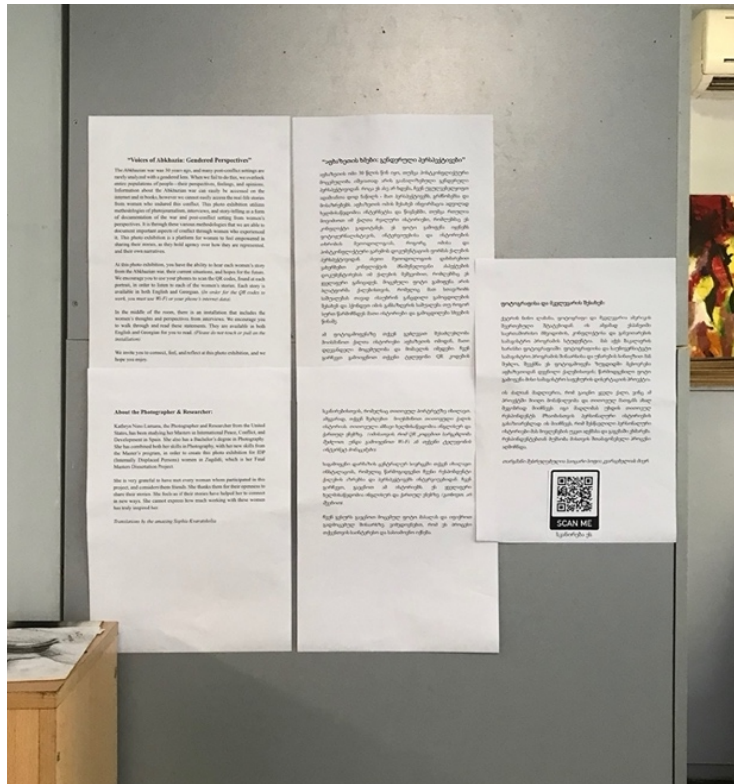
We invite you to connect, feel, and reflect at this photo exhibition, and we hope you enjoy.

About the Photographer & Researcher:

Kathryn Nino Lamana, the Photographer and Researcher from the United States, has been studying her Masters in International Peace, Conflict, and Development in Spain. She also has a Bachelor's degree in Photography. She has combined both her skills in Photography, with her new skills from the Master's program, in order to create this photo exhibition for IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) women in Zugdidi; which is her Final Masters Dissertation Project.

She is very grateful to have met every woman whom participated in this project, and considers them friends. She thanks them for their openness to share their stories. She feels as if their stories have helped her to connect in new ways. She cannot express how much working with these women has truly inspired her.

Translations by the amazing Sophia Kvaratskelia.



“აფხაზეთის ხმები: გენდერული პერსპექტივები”

აფხაზეთის ომი 30 წლის წინ იყო, თუმცა პოსტკონფლიქტური მოცემულობა იშვიათად არის გაანალიზებული გენდერული პერსპექტივიდან. როცა ეს ასე არ ხდება, ჩვენ უგულვებელყოფთ ადამიანთა დიდ ნაწილს - მათ პერსპექტივებს, გრძნობებსა და მოსაზრებებს. აფხაზეთის ომის შესახებ ინფორმაცია ადვილად ხელმისაწვდომია ინტერნეტსა და წიგნებში, თუმცა რთულია მოვიძიოთ იმ ქალთა რეალური ისტორიები, რომლებმაც ეს კონფლიქტი გადაიტანეს. ეს ფოტო გამოფენა იყენებს ფოტოჟურნალისტიკის, ინტერვიუებისა და ისტორიების თხრობის მეთოდოლოგიას, როგორც ომისა და პოსტკონფლიქტური გარემოს დოკუმენტაციის ფორმას ქალების პერსპექტივიდან. ასეთი მეთოდოლოგიის დახმარებით ვახერხებთ კონფლიქტის მნიშვნელოვანი ასპექტების დოკუმენტირებას იმ ქალების მეშვეობით, რომლებმაც ეს ყველაფერი განიცადეს. მოცემული ფოტო გამოფენა არის პლატფორმა ქალებისთვის, რომელიც მათ სთავაზობს საშუალებას თავად ისაუბრონ განცდილი გამოცდილების შესახებ და ჰქონდეთ იმის განსაზღვრის საშუალება თუ როგორ სურთ წარმოჩნდეს მათი ისტორიები და გამოცდილება სხვების წინაშე.

ამ ფოტოგამოფენაზე თქვენ გეძლევათ შესაძლებლობა მოისმინოთ ქალთა ისტორიები აფხაზეთის ომიდან, მათი დღევანდელი მოცემულობა და მომავლის იმედები. ჩვენ გირჩევთ გამოიყენოთ თქვენი ტელეფონი QR კოდების

სკანირებისთვის, რომელსაც თითოეულ პორტრეტზე იხილავთ. ამგვარად, თქვენ შეძლებთ მოუსმინოთ თითოეული ქალის ისტორიას. თითოეული ამბავი ხელმისაწვდომია ინგლისურ და ქართულ ენებზე. *(იმისათვის, რომ QR კოდებით სარგებლობა შეძლოთ, უნდა გამოიყენოთ Wi-Fi ან თქვენი ტელეფონის ინტერნეტ მონაცემები).*

საგამოფენო დარბაზის ცენტრალურ სივრცეში თქვენ იხილავთ ინსტალაციას, რომელიც წარმოგიდგენთ ჩვენი რესპონდენტი ქალების აზრებსა და პერსპექტივებს ინტერვიუებიდან. ჩვენ გირჩევთ, გაეცნოთ ამ ისტორიებს. ეს ყველაფერი ხელმისაწვდომია ინგლისურ და ქართულ ენებზე. *(გთხოვთ, არ შეეხოთ).*

ჩვენ გვსურს გაეცნოთ მოცემულ ფოტო მასალას და იფიქროთ გადმოცემულ შინაარსზე. ვიმედოვნებთ, რომ ეს პროცესი თქვენთვის საინტერესო და სასიამოვნო იქნება.

ფოტოგრაფისა და მკვლევარის შესახებ:

ქეტრინ ნინო ლამანა, ფოტოგრაფი და მკვლევარია ამერიკის შეერთებული შტატებიდან. ის ამჟამად ესპანეთში საერთაშორისო მშვიდობის, კონფლიქტისა და განვითარების სამაგისტრო პროგრამის სტუდენტია. მას აქვს ბაკალავრის ხარისხი ფოტოგრაფიაში. ფოტოგრაფიისა და საუნივერსიტეტო სამაგისტრო პროგრამის შინაარსისა და უნარების სინთეზით მან შეძლო, შეექმნა ეს ფოტოგამოფენა ზუგდიდში მცხოვრები აფხაზეთიდან დევნილი ქალებისთვის; წარმოდგენილი ფოტო გამოფენა მისი სამაგისტრო საფეხურის დისერტაციის პროექტია.

ის ძალიან მადლიერია, რომ გაიცნო ყველა ქალი, ვინც ამ პროექტში მიიღო მონაწილეობა და თითოეულ მათგანს ახალ მეგობრად მიიჩნევს. იგი მადლობას უხდის თითოეულ რესპონდენტს მზაობისთვის პერსონალური ისტორიების გასაზიარებლად. ის მიიჩნევს, რომ შესწავლილი პერსონალური ისტორიები მას მოვლენების უკეთ აღქმასა და გაგებაში ეხმარება. რესპონდენტებთან მუშაობა მისთვის შთამაგონებელი პროცესი აღმოჩნდა.

თარგმანი შესრულებულია საოცარი სოფია კვარაცხელიას მიერ.

xiii. First Group Meeting: Photos



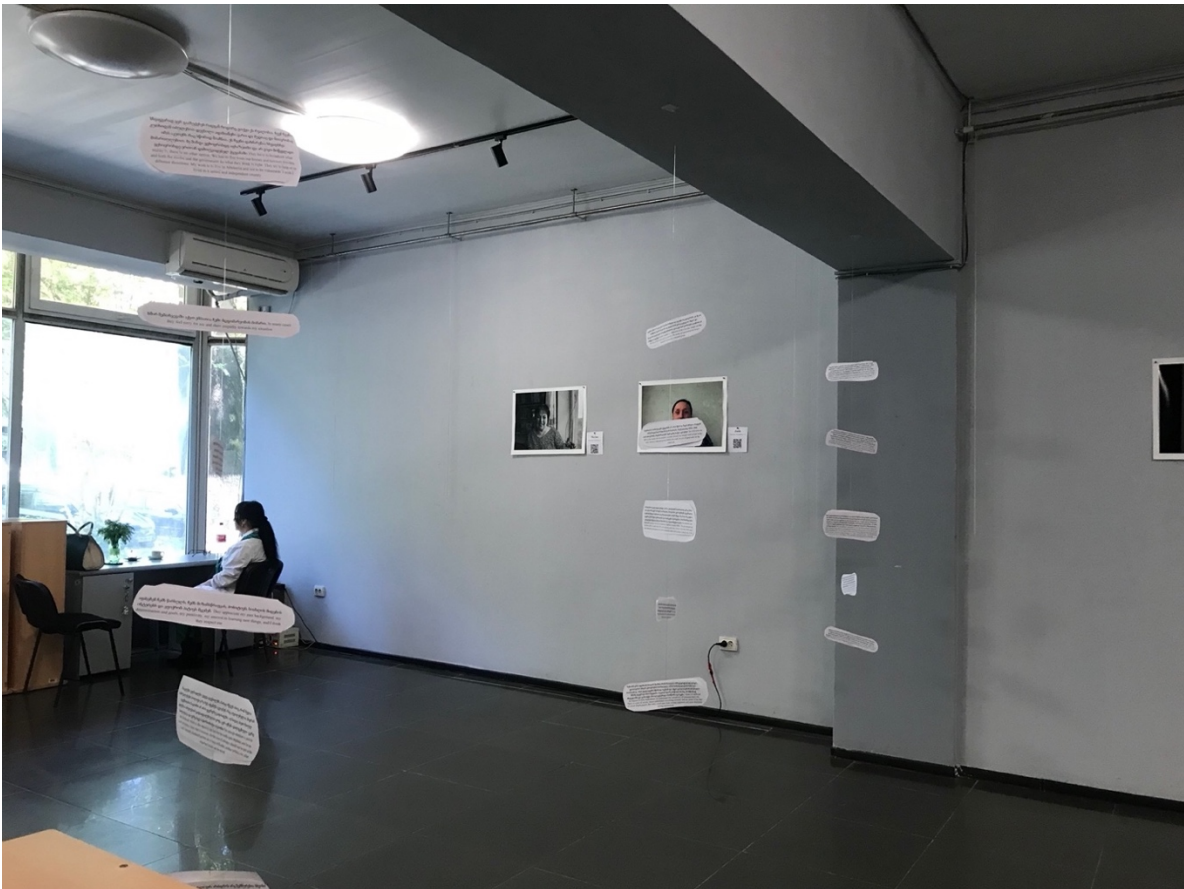
INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

xiv. Individual Meetings: Photos

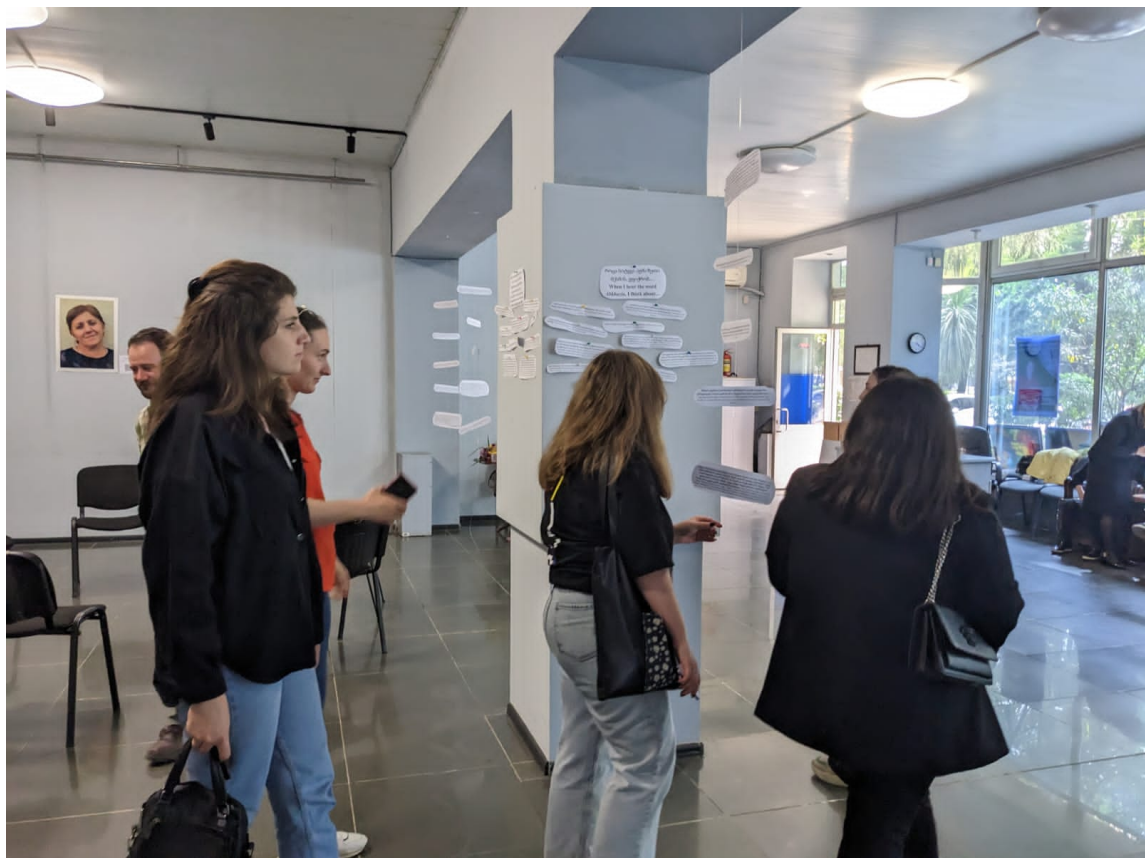


xv. Photo Exhibition, Gallery, and Hanging Installation: Photos

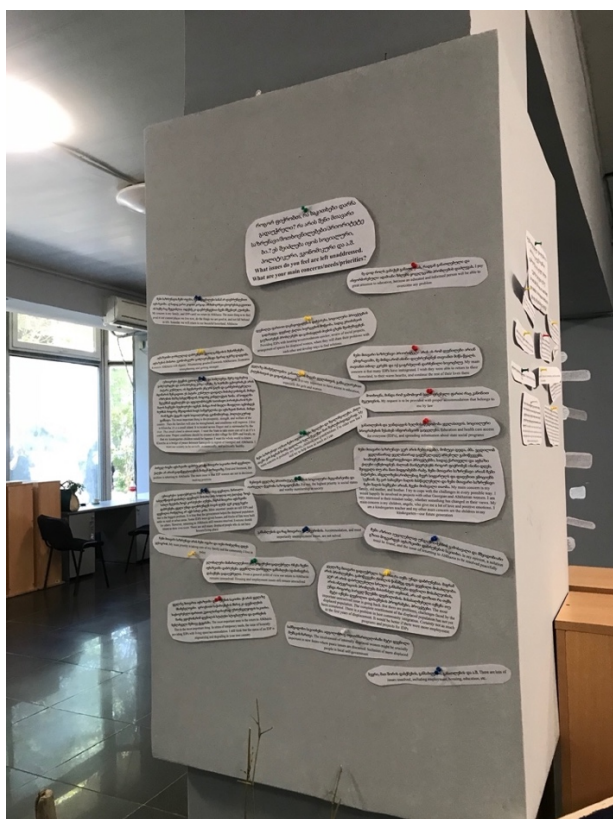
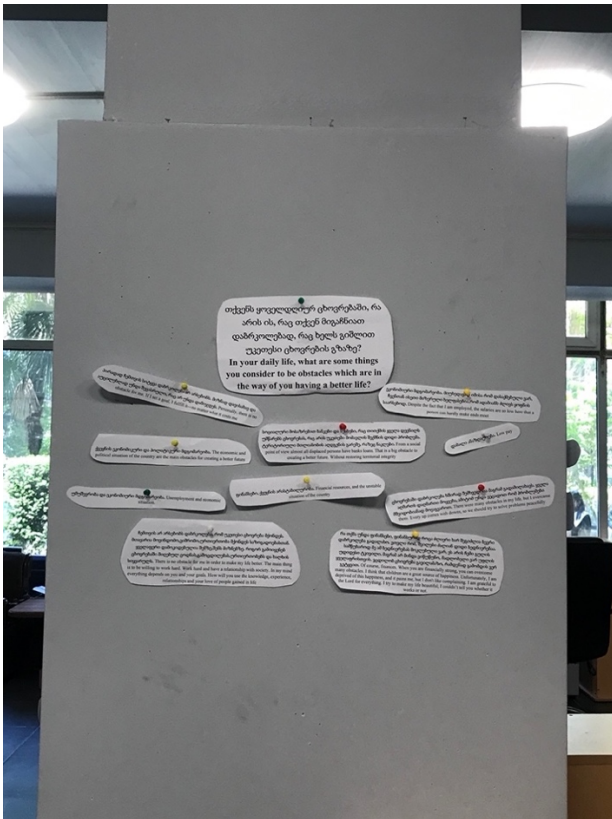
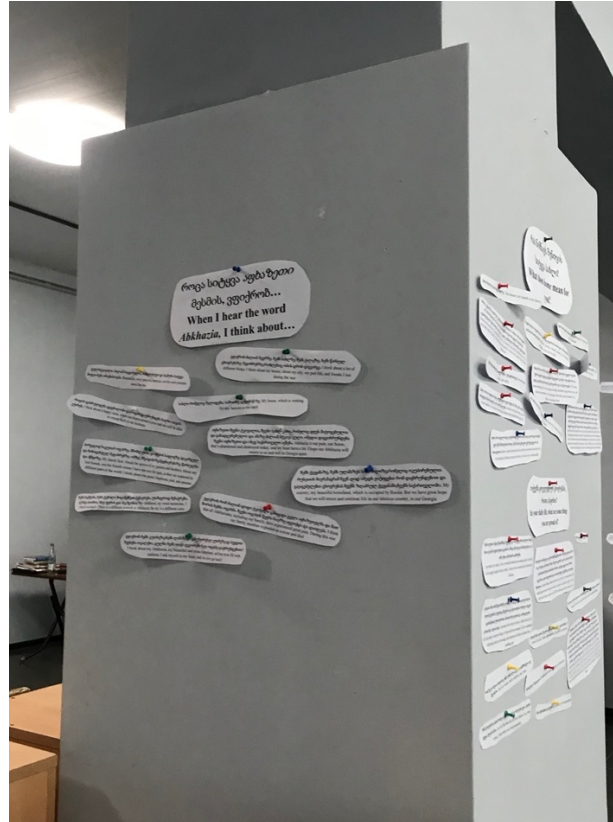
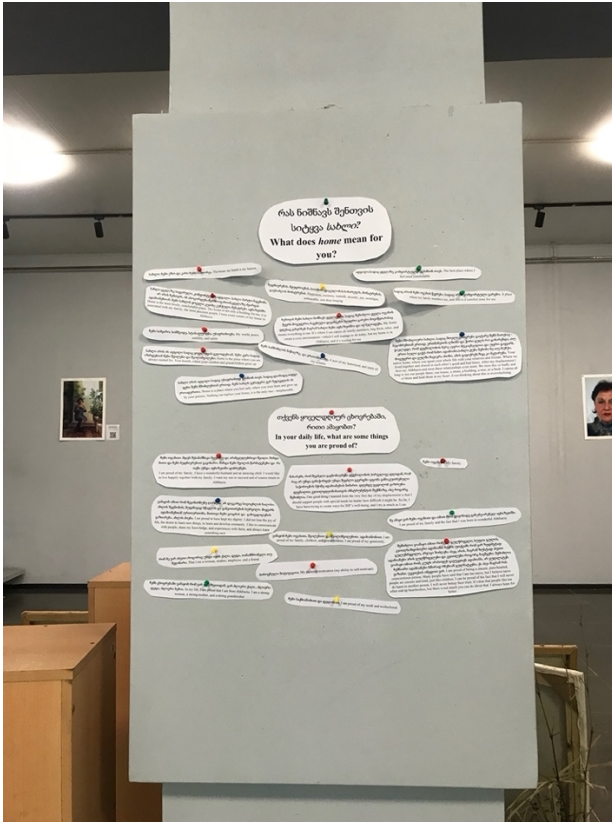




INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES





UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

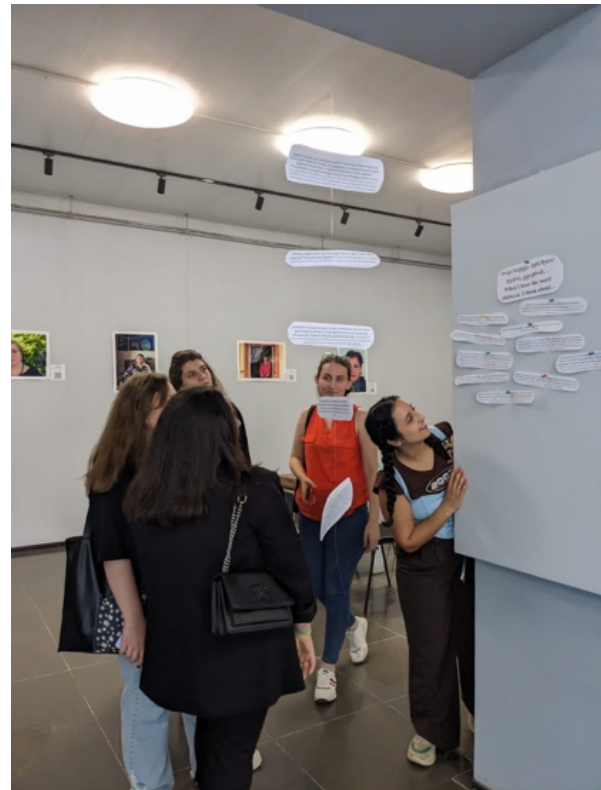


UNIVERSITAT JAUME I
Avda. Sos Baynat, s/n
12071 - Castellón (Spain)
Tel. +34 964 729 380
Fax: +34 964 729 385
www.epd.uji.es | epd@uji.es



UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I
Cátedra UNESCO de Filosofía
para la Paz







UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I

Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace

INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

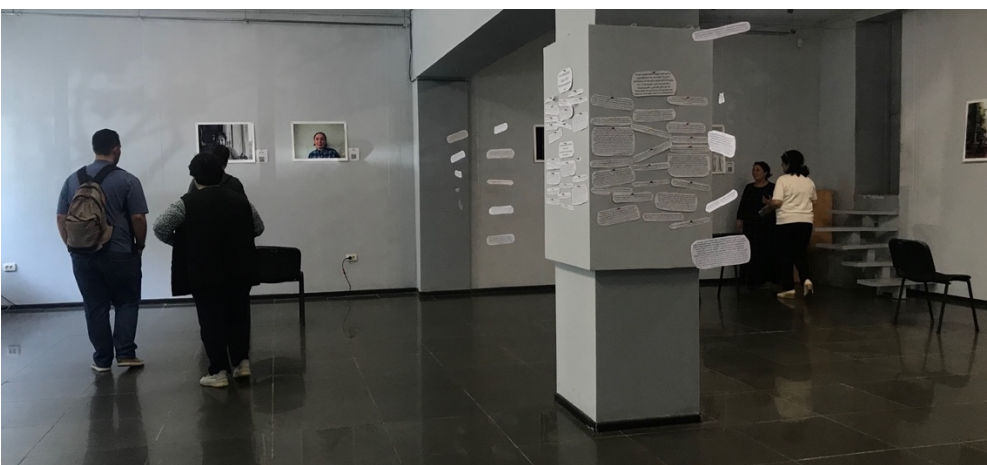
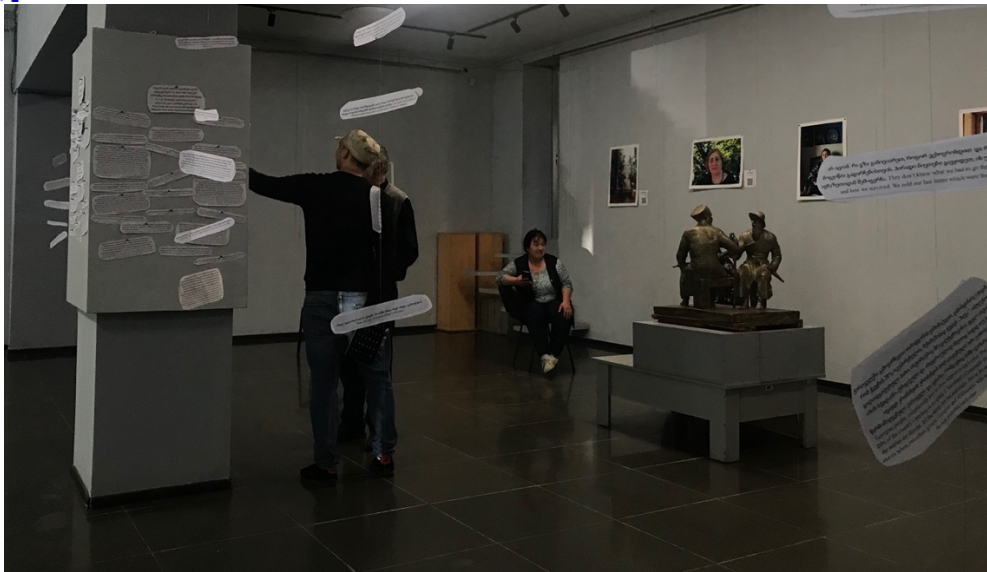


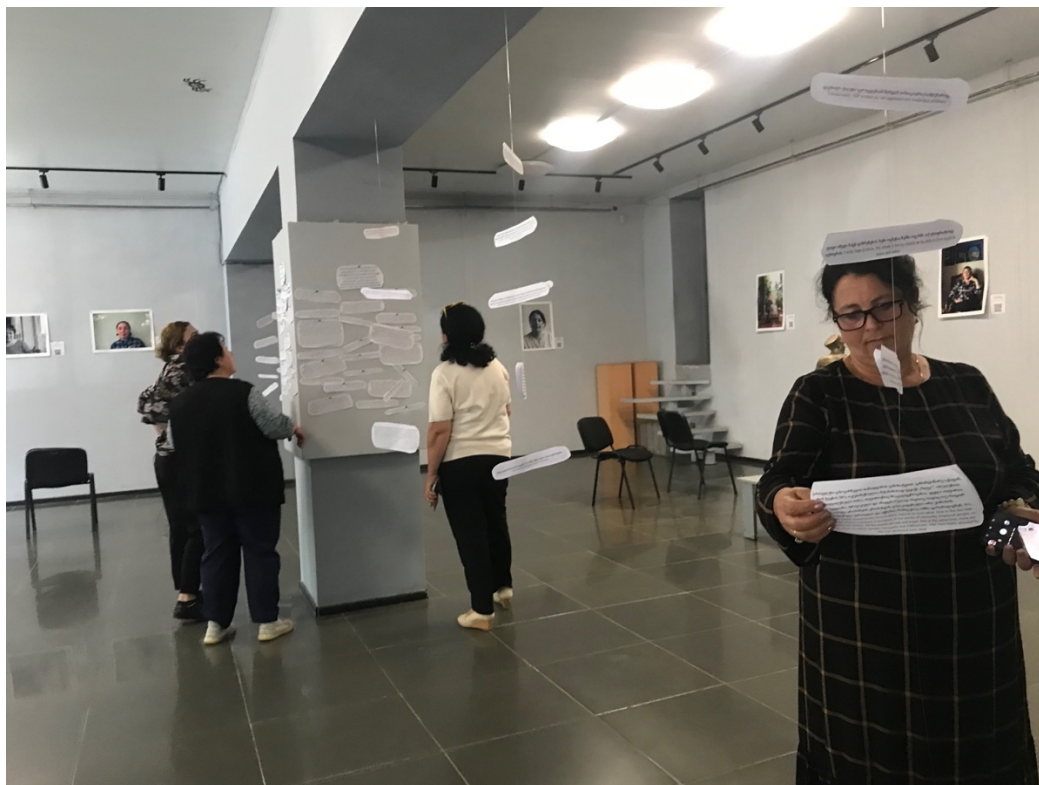
UNIVERSITAT JAUME I
Avda. Sos Baynat, s/n
12071 - Castellón (Spain)
Tel. +34 964 729 380
Fax: +34 964 729 385
www.epd.uji.es | epd@uji.es

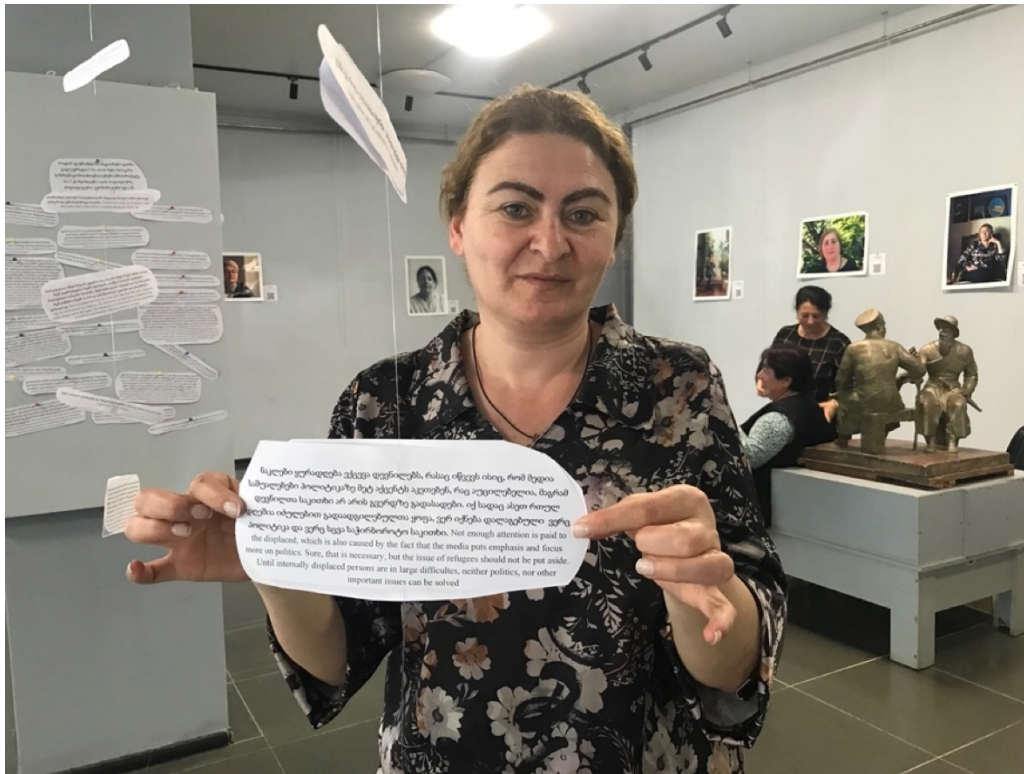


UNIVERSITAT
JAUME I
Cátedra UNESCO de Filosofía
para la Paz





















- xvi. Final Group Meeting: Certificate Example, Certificate Ceremony, and participants receive their portraits as a thank you gift for their participation.

სერტიფიკატი

პროექტში მონაწილეობა

დაჯილდოვდა

NAME HERE

ეს სერტიფიკატი არის დევნილი ქალების ფოტოგამოფენის პროექტში მონაწილეობისთვის

ქეტრინ ნინო ლამანა

პროექტის
ფოტოგრაფი და
მკვლევარი



INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES





INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES





INTERNATIONAL MASTER AND DOCTORATE
IN PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

