

Needs of Internally Displaced Individuals

2023



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1. Situation Analysis

According to the information provided by the State Agency for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) [hereinafter - the Agency] as of the year 2023, a total of 92,000 displaced families are registered, comprising a total of 292,887 individuals with displaced status.¹

A “displaced person” is considered an inhabitant of Georgia or a person with the status of residency in Georgia who has become forcibly displaced from their place of residence due to territorial occupation, aggression, armed conflict, general public unrest, and violations of human rights.

The official Agency’s website contains a statement that has been reiterated in diverse formulations throughout successive years in the annual and specialized reports of numerous governmental entities and public advocates. The articulated priority of the state revolves around the conscientious concern for Internally Displaced Persons [hereinafter - the IDPs], encompassing their resettlement and the enhancement of socio-economic conditions. All official documents, articles, resolutions, and studies pertaining to the concerns of the IDPs primarily emphasize the aspects of IDP resettlement, irrespective of their overarching objectives. Whether addressing socio-economic, legal, integration issues concerning IDPs, or the procedures for furnishing them with enduring housing, the central focus remains on the conditions of IDP resettlement.²

The 1996 Law of Georgia titled “On Internally Displaced Persons - IDPs” serves as the foundational and primary regulatory framework addressing issues related to the IDPs. The preamble explicitly asserts its foundation upon the Constitution of Georgia and universally acknowledged principles of international law. Notably, Georgia distinguishes itself as one of the nations possessing dedicated national legislation specifically tailored to address matters pertaining to the IDPs.

It is noteworthy that as of December 29, 2009, the UN annex addressing the rights of the IDPs, titled “Framework-Principles of a Long-Term Solution for Internally Displaced Persons,” explicitly articulates one of the prerequisites for a sustainable resolution as the provision of living conditions conforming to adequate standards without discrimination.³

The 2016 report by the Public Defender of Georgia, titled “The Legal Status of Internally Displaced Persons,”⁴ incorporates a notation from the document “Scheme of the Interagency Committee on Long-Term Solutions to the Problems of Internally Displaced Persons.” This document underscores that the specific needs of the IDPs and human rights-related challenges persist beyond the cessation of conflicts or natural disasters. The report emphasizes that such challenges endure even when these individuals initially seek refuge in secure locations during ongoing conflicts. Continuous support is deemed necessary until enduring solutions to these issues are identified.⁵

¹ <https://shorturl.at/hluzM>

² <https://shorturl.at/hluzM>

³ <https://shorturl.at/DLRS5>

⁴ <https://shorturl.at/ahpCS>

⁵ Scheme of the Inter-Agency Committee on Long-Term Solutions to the Problems of Internally Displaced Persons.

In accordance with the aforementioned scheme, the attainment of a durable solution is deemed realized when displaced persons no longer require specific assistance and protection associated with forced displacement, enabling them to fully enjoy their human rights free from discrimination based on their displacement status. This achievement can manifest through three distinct avenues: (1) sustainable reintegration in a permanent place of residence (entailing the right of return), (2) reintegration in places of refuge (termed local integration), or (3) resettlement in another region within the country.

Furthermore, the Public Defender's report prominently cites a document adopted by the United Nations on June 28, 2005. A significant stipulation of the 2007 implementation of the "Pinheiro Principles" titled "Restitution of Housing and Property for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons" underscores that the primary responsibility for resettling the IDPs lies with the state. While these principles lack a binding nature and do not impose legal obligations on states, they derive their basis from international, regional, and national legal sources. Crafted by United Nations experts, these principles are to be duly considered by member organizations of the UN⁶. Consequently, the legislation of Georgia acknowledges and incorporates these international principles. In accordance with these principles, all the IDPs possess the entitlement to suitable housing within the territorial confines of Georgia, and it is incumbent upon the state to fulfill this obligation by providing such housing to every IDP.⁷

Despite efforts prioritizing the protection of the legal status and socio-economic well-being of the IDPs, a significant portion of issues remains unresolved during the current period.

For instance, according to the information from the Agency responsible for the IDPs, a significant challenge in the process of resettling displaced families emerged over the years, revealing the absence of any specific criteria or norms for socio-economic support. In 2013, a commission, comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons, Labor, Health, and Social Affairs of Georgia [hereinafter - the Ministry] and other governmental and non-governmental organizations, initiated collaboration to establish criteria for assessing the socio-economic needs of IDPs. Since 2013, various programs have been implemented, each with its specific criteria, resulting in over 32,000 displaced families receiving housing.⁸ In 2019, the decision to consolidate extant programs for the IDPs under the purview of the Agency was undertaken with the objective of enhancing operational efficacy. This consolidation sought to facilitate the development of targeted programs and projects that are meticulously tailored to meet the specific needs of the IDPs, thereby optimizing the Agency's responsiveness and effectiveness in addressing their concerns.

Despite recent efforts to improve living conditions for displaced populations, approximately tens of thousands of IDPs still await housing solutions. The State Agency's multifaceted programs, including infrastructure development in regions, the 'House in a Village' project, acquisition of living spaces in newly constructed buildings, distribution/give a title of living spaces in state-owned territories, and monetary compensations⁹, generate an optimistic outlook when considered collectively. However, a comprehensive overview of the programs, encompassing management effectiveness, compliance with standards, and transparency regarding the progress and impact of displacement processes, remains elusive. This lack of accessible information hinders the creation of an accurate picture and understanding of the current status of the reparation processes, which is crucial for further advancing these efforts.

⁶ <https://shorturl.at/dnpK9>

⁷ Regarding the IDPs from the occupied territories of Georgia, 06/02/2014, Parliament of Georgia, Article 12 "Rights and duties of the displaced person", Article 14 "Protection of the rights related to the residential area of the displaced person".

⁸ <https://shorturl.at/cfiuA>

⁹ <https://rb.gy/lhqrmx>

The official oversight of the state is mandated by legislation and various legal acts. Over the years, in the context of the state budget, the prioritization of studying the needs and allocation of funds for the displaced population has had a low focus.

In the annual report of the Public Defender of Georgia in 2022, it is noted that the monetary assistance and socio-economic support linked to the status of the IDPs is problematic. The policy associated with the entitlements of IDPs based on their status faces challenges, and verifies the imperative of transitioning towards a more efficient system based on needs to effectively address the prevailing issue. The proposed changes may represent a step towards a more effective policy, with the potential to enhance the practice of Georgia's Public Defender in executing oversight of the entitlements of the IDPs.¹⁰

The increase in informational transparency for the IDPs is a significant factor, closely related to the activities outlined in point N2.3 of the implementation of the State Strategy for 2017-2018. This development focuses on communication strategies and the involvement of IDPs in legal consultations, aiming to improve their accessibility to programs, as well as their participation in the decision-making process of relevant programs. The activities aimed at enhancing knowledge and information for IDPs are highlighted as a key priority within the communication strategy and operational plan. A primary objective is to apprise the IDPs of programs specifically designed for them, with the aim of enhancing their engagement in the formulation of said programs. This facilitates the IDPs in making informed decisions during the delivery of state services.¹¹ This statement identifies and supports the primary objective of the State Strategy, which is the support and improvement of the living conditions of internally displaced populations in the country.

Correspondingly, it is essential to have, at a minimum, information aligned with the execution mechanisms and instruments related to the key principles set forth in the strategic operational plan. Furthermore, access to information oriented towards the outcomes of implemented mechanisms in the public life of the beneficiaries is vital. This information serves as a crucial instrument for evaluating the efficiency of the strategic plan's implementation, particularly in terms of achieving specific goals.

The existing analysis of official documents indicates that, over the years, attention to the priorities of the issues raised by the IDPs is dwindling. In the report of the Public Defender of Georgia, several paragraphs are dedicated to discussing the concerns of the IDPs, despite the fact that emphasis on different issues related to certain activities becomes more pronounced during the execution of various initiatives. Additionally, despite recurring challenges in addressing the needs of the IDPs, comprehensive statistical indicators of the needs of the beneficiaries, especially in urban or geographic distribution, are not fully disclosed. Hence, to mitigate the risk factors associated with the disruption of the multi-component chain, it is crucial for the state to devise comprehensive and efficacious strategies for the prompt realization of its acknowledged priorities.

¹⁰ <https://rb.gy/3i1nel>

¹¹ On the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the state strategy for internally displaced persons - IDPs in 2017-2018, the Government of Georgia, 13/02/2017

2. Technical Part of the Research

2.1 Research Methodology

This report represents a unified document created based on information obtained through qualitative and quantitative research.

The triangulation of research methods, which combines the verification of initial data with the analysis of secondary data (literature review), explores various systemic, practical, economic, social, and psychological factors that contribute to the overall picture of the challenges IDPs face and impact of surveyed phenomena on the economic development of affected communities.

These identified impacts do not signify any specific legal or physical barriers but rather the unity of them all. The trends delineated in the research document are a product of the researcher's efforts, offering insights into both individual and collective attitudes regarding the research objectives. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that, owing to the limited size of the respondent sample, the research findings do not assert representativeness. Furthermore, in the context of qualitative research outcomes, certain data facets may not universally apply as pertinent or prioritized across all community members. Nevertheless, such findings distinctly underscore the gravity of specific issues germane to the research objectives.

2.2 Research Objectives

The research project sought to undertake a comprehensive investigation, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Specifically, it involved conducting focus groups and in-depth interviews with IDPs (as a result of conflicts with Russia in 1990-1993 and 2008) and Ukrainian refugees residing in the capital and various regions of Georgia. Additionally, representatives from organizations primarily engaged in addressing the needs of IDPs and refugees were included in the research to provide a multifaceted perspective on the subject matter.

The purpose of the research was to identify the needs of the IDPs in Georgia, resulting from the Russian aggression in 1990-1993 and 2008 and Ukrainian refugees. The research focused on examining the following units about the mentioned topic:

- An intricate exposition of the living conditions experienced by the identified IDPs and Ukrainian refugees was conducted, encompassing an examination of their social status and the duration of their displacement or refuge.

- Exploration of respondents' income, employment conditions, and, in general, economic status.
- Analysis of healthcare service accessibility and needs in the healthcare sector.
- Examination of respondents' access to education, existing needs, and challenges;
- Uncovering the perspectives and supporting arguments employed by the target audience when discussing engagement and integration in public life.
- Research on the preferences and desires related to the type of residence and housing.
- Recommendations regarding the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions and overall quality of life, as well as addressing the needs for the well-being of IDPs and refugees.

2.3 Research Design

The research was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, focusing on the attitudes of focus groups and conducting in-depth interviews.

The research covered the territory of Georgia, specifically Tbilisi, Rustavi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, and Gori, where displaced individuals and state and non-governmental organizations are located.

Quantitative Research - 250 interviews were conducted in the quantitative and qualitative research phases with IDPs. Of these, 170 interviews were conducted with individuals affected by the 1990-1993 conflicts, and 80 interviews were conducted with those affected by the 2008 war.

The respondents were selected based on the "Snowball Sampling" principle, representing individuals aged 18 and above among the displaced population.

Quantitative research questionnaires were collaboratively developed with the client. Following the fieldwork phase, the collected data was inputted and analyzed using the SPSS. The data, presented in graphical/tabular formats, as well as verbal interpretations, are included in the analysis. The quantitative research data does not claim representativeness due to the small sample size; however, it addresses relevant issues for the target audience. The tendencies observed in both quantitative and qualitative research are generally consistent.

Qualitative Research - A total of 5 focus groups were conducted, including 2 focus groups from Abkhazia and Samachablo, 1 focus group with the IDPs who experienced the events of the 2008 war, and 2 focus groups with people displaced from Ukraine to Georgia. In addition, 25 in-depth interviews were conducted, including 8 interviews with representatives of organizations mainly involved in addressing the needs of the displaced, and 7 in-depth interviews with IDPs.

Given the specialized nature of the issue, the “snowball sampling” method was employed for respondent recruitment. This method, characterized by its iterative and referral-based approach, enhances researcher reliability and fosters respondent sincerity.

The average duration of a focus group session was determined to be 1.5 hours, while the average duration for in-depth interviews ranged between 60 and 80 minutes. The qualitative research was conducted remotely through a distance-based approach, utilizing online research methodologies.

The research instrument employed was a guideline comprising a list of issues or topics, serving as a general framework. During the qualitative research engagement, the questionnaire underwent modifications to accommodate the specific nuances of the interview context.

2.4 Characteristics of the Fieldwork

Providing a detailed account of the technical and content-related attributes of the fieldwork results from the qualitative research is crucial for enhancing the clarity and comprehension of the issues elucidated in the main section of the report.

- While the qualitative research guidance instruments primarily incorporated minimal inquiries about the past, centering on the present, and future expectations, and needs, the challenging journey associated with forced displacement emerged as a significant component within the discussions of the respondents. This shared experience was nearly universal among all participants in the research, except for the younger demographic. Notwithstanding the retrospective examination of the past, respondents underscored transformative shifts in various facets of their lives. This entailed grappling with a spectrum of challenges at the onset of displacement, encompassing deteriorating material conditions, hurdles in securing housing, educational difficulties, feelings of alienation, and the intricate process of rebuilding or forming new social relations.
- The direct interview process was marked by a substantial level of engagement and candour, as respondents openly discussed various extant issues, their personal expectations, and outcomes achieved in diverse domains. Participants actively shaped their perspectives on each research issue, assessing its merits and drawbacks. Respondents attributed their high level of engagement and interest in the discussion to the gravity of the problems discussed and the emergence of a party demonstrating genuine concern for these issues.
- During the course of the research, information provided by respondents often did not elaborate on personal circumstances or needs. Given the inherently concise nature of qualitative research, the focal point on collective or individual desires and needs served as a means of supporting IDPs. This emphasis not only contributed to the provision of additional information for the discussion but also lent substantive support to the well-being of IDPs.
- In the report, opinions are collectively categorized under the broader groups of IDPs and Ukrainian refugees. The generalization of opinions does not involve individual considerations related to specific regions, cities, or participants in the research. This approach is chosen based on the overarching nature of the prevalent issues and the inherent specificity intrinsic to qualitative research.

3. Principal Findings

- IDPs confront a range of challenges rather than a singular problem, contributing to the intricate nature of their circumstances. While the issues affecting IDPs undergo gradual changes over time, the unresolved aspect pertains to the persistent challenge of addressing the fundamental needs required to establish normal living conditions for this social group.
- The primary and foremost challenge for a majority of IDPs, whether in the past, during the initial stage of displacement, or in the present, revolves around the provision of housing or suitable living conditions.
- The implementation of the action plan stages outlined by the state strategy for IDPs progresses at a sluggish pace, primarily focusing on the construction, renovation, or purchase of residential premises from developers. These properties are intended for transfer to IDPs as private ownership. The sentiments regarding this process are varied and reflect a mix of perspectives. On one hand, this constitutes one of the most substantial state initiatives, holding the promise of a palpable positive outcome for the displaced—namely, a refurbished apartment with private ownership. Conversely, discontent arises due to state decision-making occurring without accounting for the opinions of the displaced individuals and presenting them with alternatives. Additionally, concerns linger about the expectation that, following the transfer of apartments to private ownership, the state may absolve itself of obligations to the displaced persons.
- In contrast to IDPs from Abkhazia, those affected by the 2008 war highlight issues predominantly associated with living conditions. Respondents express the view that the swift pace of construction has given rise to numerous problems, which could have been easily averted with a more extended period dedicated to planning and design. Yet, participants highlight that the Georgian government tends to move quickly towards its goals, despite having sufficient resources. Respondents believe donors can play a significant role in funding projects, but there's uncertainty about how transparent the details are to them.
- In the focus group, participants view the neglect of families that haven't sought state housing or alternative monetary compensation as a key factor contributing to IDPs' discontent. Respondents suggest that the potential frustration of this group is linked to the later phases of the housing provision process. Furthermore, some participants connect the delay in the long-term housing process to the government's apprehension about potential backlash from this overlooked segment.
- Most IDPs perceive the term "integration" as a reunification with society, entailing the enjoyment of various rights without discrimination based on forced displacement. However, there is a level of caution among some, especially concerning issues of stigmatization and outdated public attitudes. Certain respondents highlight the need to adapt to the presence of established, often negative, stereotypes in society, which they view as a manifestation of their stigmatization.
- Young individuals seldom discuss integration challenges, and there is an impression that they may not fully grasp the significance of inquiries regarding integration issues with society. Almost all young respondents conveyed that, in their perception, this process is concluded, and they increasingly resemble the local population. According to the youth, the primary distinction at this stage between IDPs and locals lies in the form and ownership of private property (specifically, collective settlements). Some respondents also noted that the employment rate of the local population is higher, adding to the perceived differences.

- The state's policy towards individuals displaced from Abkhazia lacked consistency, with activities being fragmented and less effective. Respondents argue that the state's delay in addressing housing-related issues for IDPs hindered their integration, keeping them not just as IDPs but also as guests to the territory. While interviewees acknowledge the current significance of the state strategy and ongoing processes, they cannot overlook the historical lack of robust moral and material support from the state, citing the notably minimal aid allocated to IDPs as evidence.
- A prevailing optimistic sentiment persists among the majority of IDPs, who harbor hope for the prospect of returning. When considering a return to their pre-displacement places of residence, a significant number of research respondents highlight the importance of reuniting with relatives and friends as a key motivational factor. Security guarantees from the state hold considerable importance for the respondents, with more than half of those surveyed in each segment viewing security as a significant factor influencing their decisions and, consequently, a potential hindrance.
- The primary challenge faced by IDPs is low income or the absence of a stable source of income. Interviewees note that only a small fraction of IDPs are formally employed, with the majority relying on modest state assistance, engaging in agriculture, or participating in trade to make ends meet. However, cultivating land in municipalities poses difficulties due to limited land resources and a scarcity of available free land.
- IDPs typically encounter similar fundamental challenges as the local population, including issues related to water supply, gasification, uneven road surfaces, sewerage, and shared utilities. Respondents emphasize that the lack of income is a public concern affecting not only IDPs but also the broader community.
- Discussions about the adaptation of the IDPs are predominantly framed in the past tense. Respondents note that there were no significant mental differences between displaced individuals and locals, emphasizing the close interrelation of all corners of Georgia due to its limited territorial size. However, it becomes evident from respondents' conversations that the arrival of IDPs significantly heightened the social and emotional challenges amid material hardships and the backdrop of several open wars.
- The duties and responsibilities of local government bodies toward the IDPs are limited. The budgets of local municipalities lack dedicated funds for IDPs, even though activities within their jurisdiction should be directed towards both IDPs and the local population. The sole assistance provided by the local government to the IDPs is monetary compensation for the family in the event of the death of the displaced person. Other potential activities, such as one-time assistance to socially vulnerable IDPs or financing medical services for them, depend on the goodwill of the municipalities.
- The Respondents generally characterize their relations with various state agencies as constructive, seldom mentioning difficulties. Any identified issues are attributed to objective circumstances rather than a lack of willingness to cooperate. Notably, the only agency consistently mentioned as posing challenges in their relations is the Ministry of Economic Development. Delays in transferring property to the local government's balance impede municipalities from managing or disposing of the property, resulting in a loss of potential income.
- In the surveyed municipalities, established relations with international and non-governmental organizations are a well-established practice, often initiated by these organizations themselves. The attitude toward these organizations is generally positive, as interviewees believe they play a crucial role in addressing the needs of local government bodies and the population, especially when resources within the municipality are limited. However, it was also observed that the activities of international and non-governmental organizations have diminished con-

cerning the IDPs, eliciting not so much distress as a sense of resentment among interviewed IDPs who feel that their issues are receiving less attention.

- Respondents view the establishment of small agricultural enterprises, particularly those focused on fruit processing, as the most promising avenue in the surveyed municipalities. However, they emphasize that assistance from the state or non-governmental/international organizations is vital in this direction.
- For the IDPs to participate in economic activities, there is a need to provide them with fundamental skills such as drafting business plans/projects, conducting market research, managing businesses, and understanding tax matters. This foundational training is essential to instill confidence in IDPs to initiate and manage small or medium-sized businesses. Furthermore, in addition to these general skills, a substantial portion of IDPs may require specialized training, emphasizing the necessity to organize qualified training programs tailored to their specific needs.



4. Displaced people affected by the Russian aggression (1990-1993 and 2008) in Georgia

4.1 Residential and socio-economic conditions

The research indicates that today, groups of the IDPs do not face a singular problem. The complexity of their living conditions is multifaceted. While the challenges faced by the IDPs evolve gradually over time, the unresolved issue of meeting basic needs persists, hindering the creation of normal living conditions for this social group.

The primary and foremost challenge for the majority of the IDPs, whether in the past, during the initial stage of displacement, or in the current period, is the provision of residential apartments or living conditions. Depending on the duration of displacement, the nature of these problems varies across different periods. Nevertheless, for some respondents, a recurring theme in their displacement history is the persistent challenge of securing housing.

Clearly, following displacement, the IDPs sought various forms of temporary housing. As the majority of respondents indicated, initially, they sought refuge with family relatives or acquaintances residing in the controlled territory of Georgia. However, they explained that it was not feasible to stay with family relatives or acquaintances permanently. As a temporary solution to the problem, at the subsequent stage, some of the IDPs opted to continue residing in dormitories, while others had to occupy various abandoned buildings. In the initial days of displacement, all these forms of dwellings served as temporary shelters for them. However, the pressing need for the swift provision of living conditions is underscored by the fact that a segment of the displaced population, particularly those from Abkhazia and Samachablo, still resides in some of these places (referred to as temporary shelters) while awaiting a long-term housing solution.

“*Abandoned and dysfunctional settlements, such as villages, schools, resorts, and sanatoriums, were gradually occupied, primarily, at the initial stage of displacement. However, even today, a considerable number of individuals who were initially displaced in Georgia still continue to live in type of settlements.* (IDP from Abkhazia, Tbilisi)

“*Recalling the initial stage of forced displacement remains the most challenging episode in my life, haunting me like an unending nightmare. However, over a decade later, I could not fathom that the issue of providing housing would still persist for IDPs. We, the ‘old IDPs,’ harbor particular concern about this predicament, and I don’t mean to offend anyone, but, except for isolated cases, we find ourselves in worse conditions than the IDPs from Abkhazia.* (IDP from Samachablo, Gori)

According to their assessment, the process of securing housing was most challenging for the IDPs from 1990-1993, as they observed that the state did not provide housing, requiring them to locate and settle in vacant or uninhabited buildings independently. Respondents appraise the initial housing they obtained upon leaving the occupied territories as unsuitable for living, citing deficiencies in space, heating, water, gas systems, hygiene, and other basic needs. Notably, during the initial displacement stage, evaluations of living conditions, encompassing so-called “temporary shelters” like shared housing, gardens, hotels, and other structures, are characterized by homogeneity. Experiences of respondents who did not reside in the apartments of relatives are identical, revealing the challenging conditions they had to contend with.

“*The communal housing had notably poor conditions, with shared bathrooms, the absence of bathrooms and kitchens, among other deficiencies. Moreover, my fellow IDPs ended up in places already deemed abandoned, with walls damaged by dampness, not to mention other challenging conditions. (IDP from Abkhazia, Zugdidi)*

“*Amidst persecution, water scarcity, lack of electricity, and hunger, we endured extremely challenging living conditions. Simultaneously, a constant fear loomed over us - the fear of losing this home as well, a pervasive sense of absolute abandonment. Which problem should have been addressed first? It's crucial to note that without a sense of ownership, there's a lack of motivation even if opportunities arise. Do you recall the facade of the Abkhazeti Hotel in Tbilisi? For years, IDPs from Samachablo did nothing because there was no property. (IDP from Samachablo, Gori)*

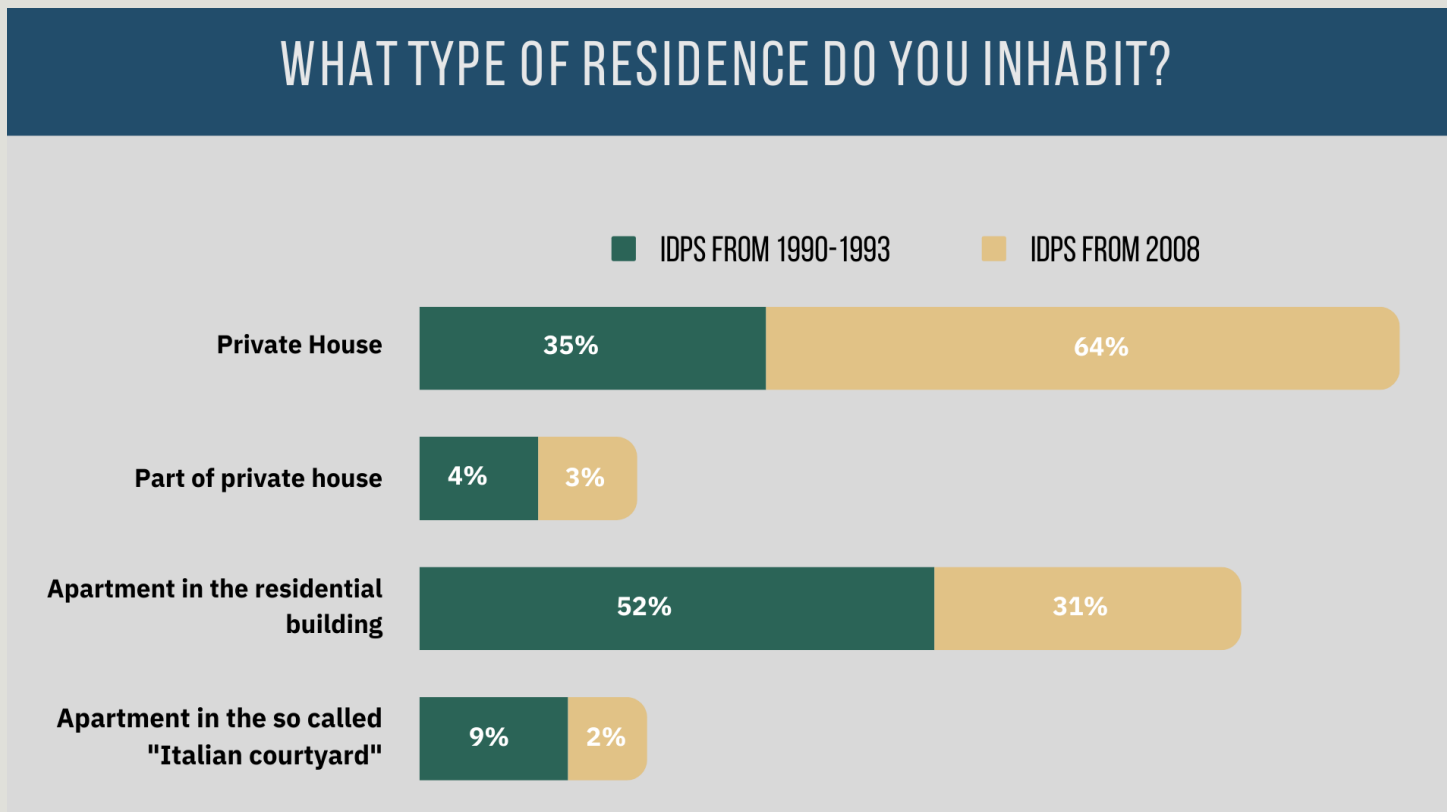
According to representatives of IDP organizations involved in the research, the 2007 state strategy for IDPs prioritized the long-term goal of voluntary and dignified resettlement, aiming to reduce dependency on the state and incorporate extremely needy IDPs into a unified social program. However, the emergence of a new wave of IDPs following the August 2008 war necessitated changes in the state's approach to address the needs of those displaced by the conflict.

“*After 2008, when a significant amount of money, up to three billion dollars, was allocated for housing, in reality, the majority of the IDPs remained without proper housing. This money was spent non-transparently, channeled towards the construction of justice houses and it resulted in the closure of the fund and a negative decision on financing. After this period, the financing for this project shifted from the state budget, which slowed down the process significantly. Initially, collective centers were prioritized for rehabilitation and construction for housing. Later, the construction of new houses began, and the first five years were notably slow. About 500-600 families were receiving housing annually when 53,000 families were in the waiting list. In the last 2-3 years, the pace of construction has increased considerably. However, the entire methodology, criteria for selection, raises many questions.*

In response to new challenges, following the approval of the final strategy, the first action plan was implemented in 2009. This plan outlined two forms for providing long-term housing for IDPs: offering housing directly and providing monetary compensation for the purchase of housing. These options included several possibilities: (1) transferring former compact settlement facilities to IDPs through privatization; (2) offering satisfaction with an apartment in a newly rehabilitated or newly constructed residential building; (3) facilitating the purchase of individual houses for displaced families in various regions.

As mentioned, the research encompassed the IDPs from Abkhazia and so called South Ossetia who experienced displacement at different times. These individuals currently reside in various settings, including collective centers (comprising privatized, rehabilitated, and non-rehabilitated facilities), cottage-type settlements, private apartments, and relatives' apartments, either with their relatives or separately.

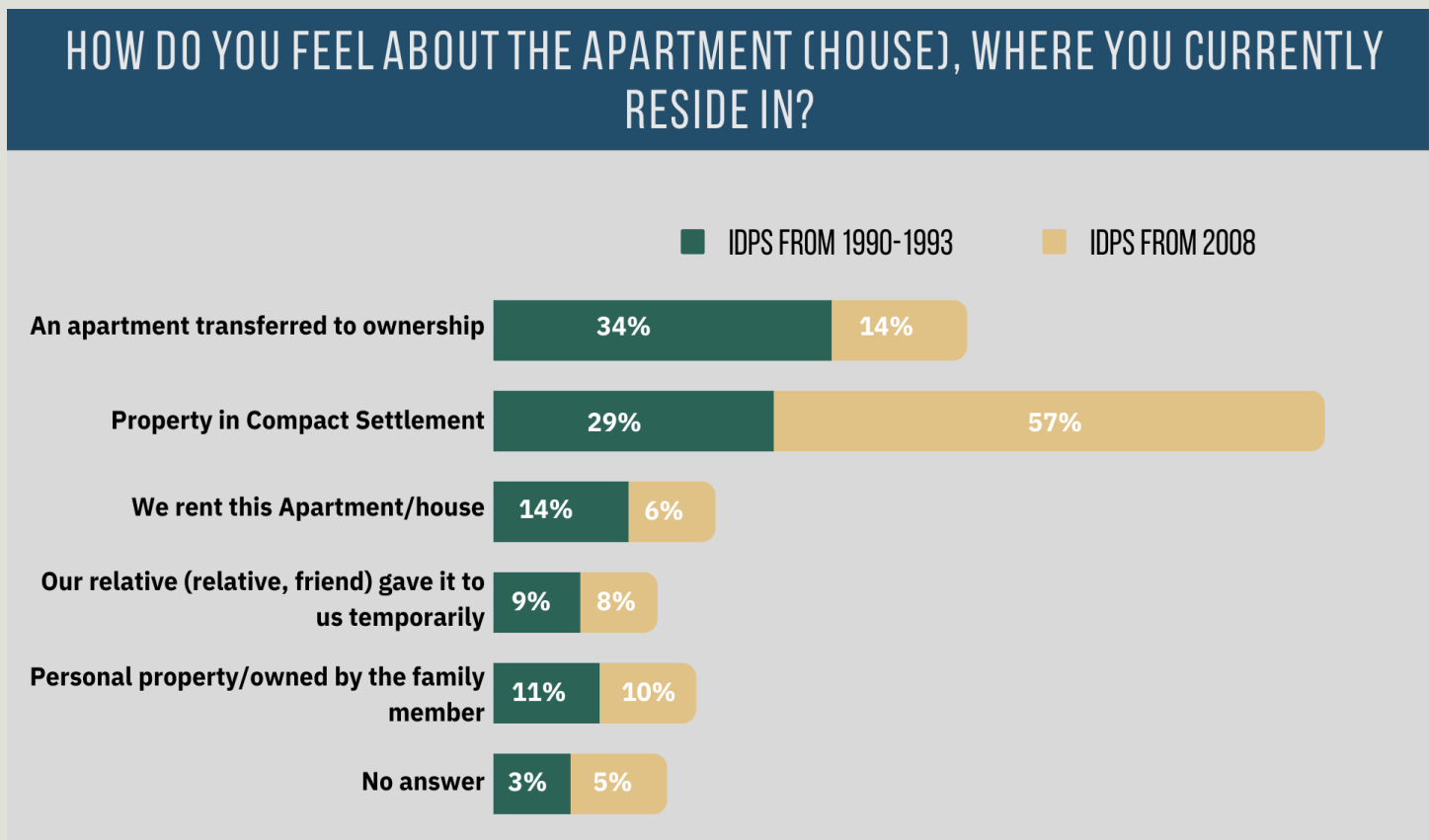
The results of the research show that between 1990 and 1993, the majority of relocated families lived in residential complexes (52%), while a larger proportion (64%) IDPs from 2008 resided in cottage-type houses. This logical progression is due to the fact that the 2008 relocated population predominantly inhabited newly built compact residential units, specifically those of cottage type.



From the results of qualitative research, it appears that, in terms of socio-economic stability, there is also a distinctive difference when compared to the displaced persons from 2008. Despite the magnitude of the new wave of the IDPs, a significant portion of them swiftly returned to their homes. The provision of housing for the remaining displaced population was accomplished in a much shorter time frame compared to addressing the needs of displaced persons from Abkhazia and Samachablo. It is evident that today, IDPs from the 2008 conflict discuss the waiting period for housing provision less frequently.

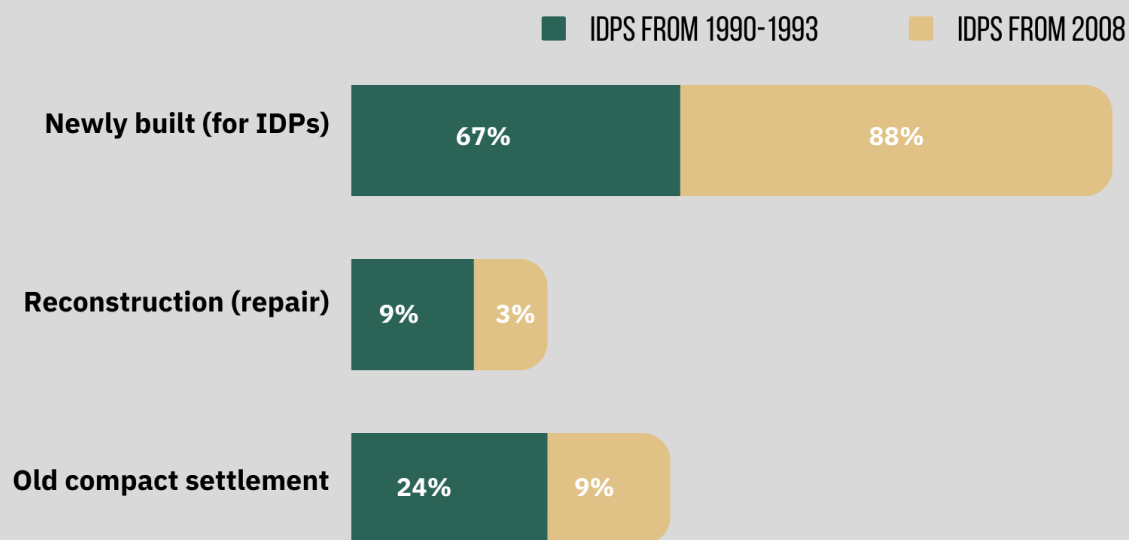
Individuals displaced as a result of the 2008 war share a common experience of securing permanent housing, with the state able to provide them with accommodation within a few months after the conflict. Respondents generally assess the process of finding a place of residence as not very difficult, attributing this perception to the belief that, compared to IDPs from 1990-1993, the process for the 2008 war-affected IDPs involved fewer challenges.

The current residence of the majority of participants in the research is owned property. Corresponding to the housing type trend, property for IDPs from 1990-1993 typically consists of apartments in multi-apartment buildings, while property for IDPs from 2008 comprises houses in compact settlements. It is noteworthy that despite the displacement period and the limited sample size, the research indicates that 21% of IDPs from 1990-1991 and 14% of IDPs from 2008 either live in or rent an apartment from a relative or acquaintance.



The research has revealed that, in the current period, the challenges faced by IDPs living in collective settlement centers exhibit specific characteristics based on categories, particularly in terms of who resides in what type of collective settlement. It's important to highlight that the majority of IDPs who were the first occupants of their homes, regardless of the resettlement or migration period, consider their current residences as their original addresses. Specifically, 67% of the IDPs from the 1990s and 88% of the IDPs from 2008 included in this research live in newly constructed housing. In older collective settlements, the number of IDPs from the 1990s to the present exceeds the number of IDPs from 2008.

TYPES OF COMPACT SETTLEMENTS



The categorization of respondents living in collective housing centers, based on the results of the qualitative research, includes the following:

- Respondents residing in old, unrenovated, and in some cases, dilapidated collective settlement centers;
- Respondents who reside in rental accommodations or with relatives and friends and have submitted applications for housing in collective settlement centers;
- Respondents who, similarly, live with relatives or friends but have never submitted applications for housing in collective settlement centers;
- Respondents who live in newly constructed or rehabilitated (repaired) collective housing centers.

Naturally, while examining the living conditions of IDPs, certain details varied based on categories. Nonetheless, several factors were identified that remained consistent across all respondents involved in both quantitative and qualitative research:

- In collective housing centers, the majority of respondents residing there (92% from the 1990s, 89% from 2008, as indicated by the remaining percentage marked as “refused to answer”) reported not owning any other residential property. It is logical to infer that the primary majority of those living in collective housing centers do not incur rental costs for housing.
- Families in collective housing centers live together with their family members. The predominant portion of surveyed families have multiple members, and currently, they reside in single, double, or triple-room apartments within these centers.

- Residents of named apartments do not own any other real property within the current living area. They do not possess any rural-agricultural land, which, on its own, does not provide the opportunity for internal animal and poultry farming.

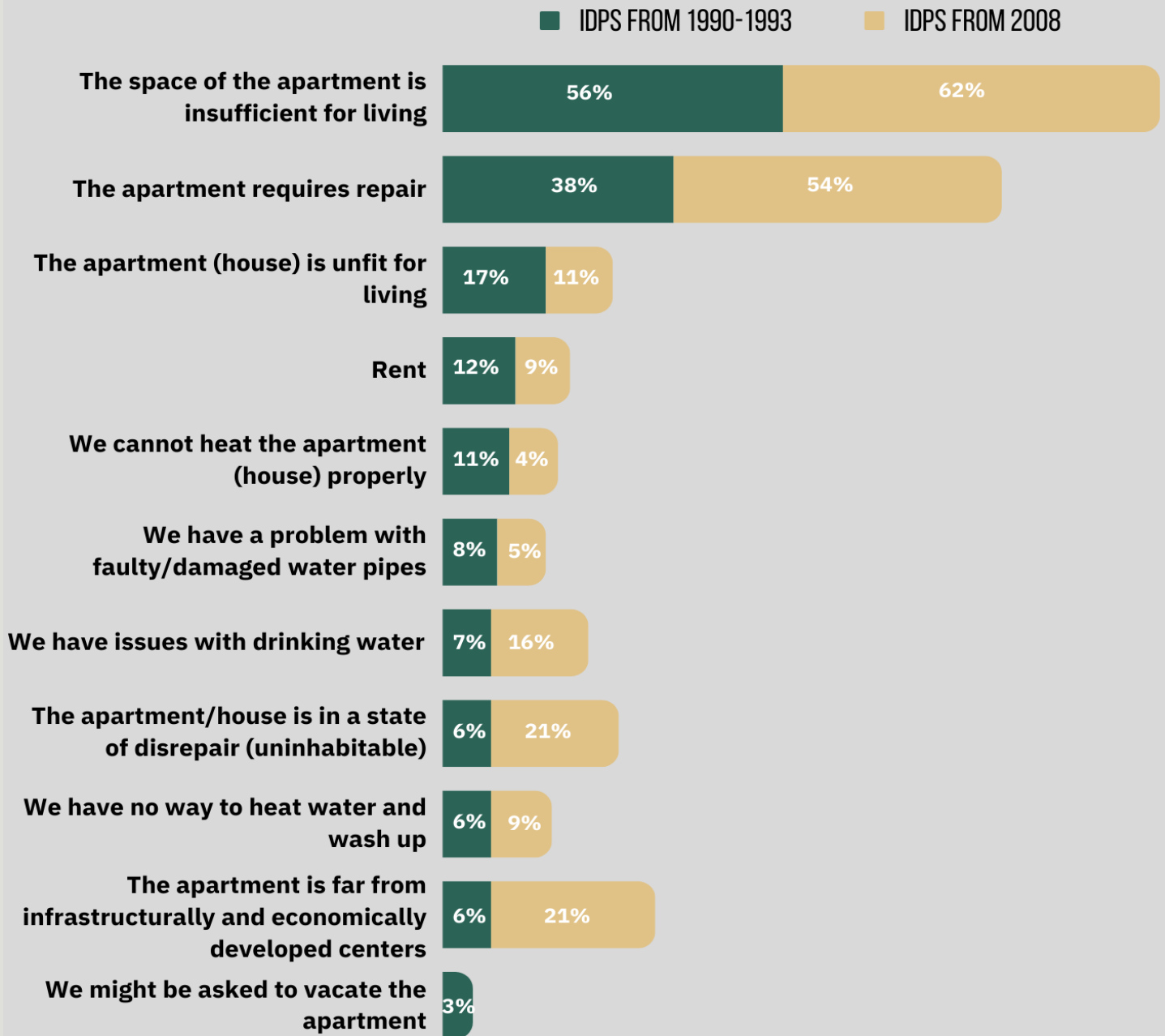
The research revealed that a majority of respondents (more than 50% in each category) face challenges related to insufficient living space. The area, which was previously adequate for families during the earlier period, is no longer deemed sufficient. This inadequacy is attributed to the increase in the number of household members or the potential for future growth, resulting in a need for more space.

The second-row issue is the current condition of living spaces. According to 38% of respondents from the 90s, their housing requires renovation, while 17% reported that it is so cramped that it falls short of adequate living standards. The living conditions of the IDPs from 2008 present a similarly critical situation, with 54% emphasizing the need for renovations, and 11% indicating that living conditions are challenging and do not meet general standards for living.

Qualitative research yielded similar results - the primary issue for IDPs living in collective settlement centers is the limited living space or the deteriorating external conditions. Furthermore, various problems arising from financial constraints, such as cracked walls, damaged sanitary ware and sewage systems, windows and roofs, as well as unsanitary conditions in entrances, were identified.



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES AFFECT YOU IN RELATION TO YOUR APARTMENT (HOUSE)?



Qualitative research yielded similar results - the primary issue for IDPs living in collective settlement centers is the limited living space or the deteriorating external conditions. Furthermore, various problems arising from financial constraints, such as cracked walls, damaged sanitary ware and sewage systems, windows and roofs, as well as unsanitary conditions in entrances, were identified.

Although issues related to the privatization of housing remain relevant for some families in collective settlements, the focus on the needs of displaced respondents from 2008 minimally addresses housing problems. According to them, the steps taken to provide housing seem to exclude the 2008 IDPs from the broader category of IDPs in Georgia, with the reasoning that “most importantly, they have roofs over their heads.” *They express a sentiment that the so-called “problems of providing old IDPs with an apartment have dragged on for so long, as if there were no other needs, and to solve those problems, at best, we have to wait for ‘our turn,’ which no one knows when it will come.”* (IDP from 2008, Tserovani)

The focus group participants primarily consisted of IDPs residing in Tserovani, Karaleti, Gori, and Khurvaleti settlements, with some respondents from Shaumiani and Koda settlements. These families, displaced as a result of the 2008 war, obtained housing in specially built settlements under the conditions of displacement. In certain cases, IDPs received repairs to their existing war-damaged houses, mostly in villages, or monetary compensation (as per information from the respondents, equivalent to 10,000 USD) as an alternative to housing.

The IDPs from 2008 highlight that decisions made immediately after the war aimed to swiftly address the housing problems of the new wave of IDPs. With financial support from international donors, the government constructed thousands of private houses or renovated apartments in vacant buildings for the new IDPs in just three months. However, the accelerated pace of this process negatively impacted the quality of construction.

Unlike the IDPs from Abkhazia, those displaced as a result of the 2008 war highlight problems related to living conditions. Respondents express the belief that the accelerated construction pace has led to many issues that could have been easily avoided with a few more months dedicated to planning and design. However, they note that this rushed approach to achieve specific goals was characteristic of the Georgian government, despite having sufficient human resources and financial capabilities. Respondents believe that in such a context, donors can wield significant influence on project financing, but it raises questions about the transparency of the details of such processes for donors in general.

“ *Cottage-type collective settlements face several problems, particularly issues related to dampness, such as peeling paint, mold, and gaps between floorboards. The building materials, especially cement and wood, were not completely dry when the walls were painted, and families moved into the cottages. Construction work took place during winter, which naturally extended the drying period. Even the planks used for floors and roofs, as well as the cement blocks for walls, were not fully dry. Many defects could have been eliminated if the state had extended the construction period by a few months. Cottages were constructed with donor funding, and in general, if information about the processes for which aid funds are allocated were available to donors, the state would bear more responsibility. This process should be regulated at all times.* (IDP from 2008 war, Tserovani)

In a considerable number of cottages, the condition was so deteriorated that in 2009, it became inevitable for the state to address the issues. Consequently, re-renovation works were initiated to eliminate defects, repair, and enhance the damaged cottages. However, in some of them, the problem persists to this day.

It is worth noting that among the participants of the focus group, only one respondent from the collapsed old collective settlement center participated—a resident of Zugdidi’s “Porcelain Factory.” Focus group participants highlighted that the majority of collective settlement centers in disrepair or collapsing were closed. The “Porcelain Factory” is among them, declared closed in the spring of this year. However, three displaced families from Abkhazia are still not satisfied with housing, and due to the unbearable conditions in the building, they are temporarily seeking refuge in relatives’ apartments. The critical conditions of the “Porcelain Factory” led to the almost complete destruction of all household goods owned by the mentioned families.

“

At the last stage of providing apartments, 12 families left the building. The building is in such a state of disrepair that all its dwellings were protected from rain and wind by various makeshift devices. After they moved in, the building became more and more desolate every day. I realized that the neighbor’s wall protected me from the rain. To the neighbor - to another neighbor and so on. The first rainfall completely destroyed my furniture. The water entering the room covered our shoes. In fact, I only reached out to my sister’s family with utensils. It means I have to start life a second time. But if I’m ever provided with an apartment, I’ll deal with that too. (IDP from Abkhazia, Zugdidi)

It is noteworthy that the IDPs participating in the qualitative research lack accurate information on the current period, including whether IDPs are residing in damaged and crumbling facilities. According to them, despite the information reported by state structures indicating the closure of most problematic collective settlements within the framework of new housing or replacement programs, individual families still continue to live in dilapidated buildings. Some respondents exhibit a high degree of mistrust toward the disseminated information, believing that providing IDPs with housing in any city on the territory of Georgia is a matter of interest for all IDPs, and all IDPs should have access to complete information. This shared perspective among IDPs leads to the assumption that *“state agencies, by continuously discussing future plans and minimally covering already executed cases, shield themselves from the agitation caused by the ‘competition’ among IDPs waiting for housing.” (IDP from Abkhazia, Kutaisi)*

On the other hand, it should be noted that the issues prevalent in old collective settlements (those without the assigned status of a disrepair or collapsing building) are similar to those in Tbilisi and the regions. Research participants rarely discuss the aesthetics of old collective settlement centers. In general, other problems arise so frequently in buildings that the condition of facades or entrances, according to them, becomes less relevant over the years.

For the majority of respondents, their level of interest in housing problems is a crucial factor. It is noteworthy that, in this context, respondents recall specific projects by international and non-governmental organizations during various displacement periods that aimed to enhance their living conditions. Conversely, they express absolute nihilism regarding the involvement of state agencies or representatives of local government in addressing housing issues.

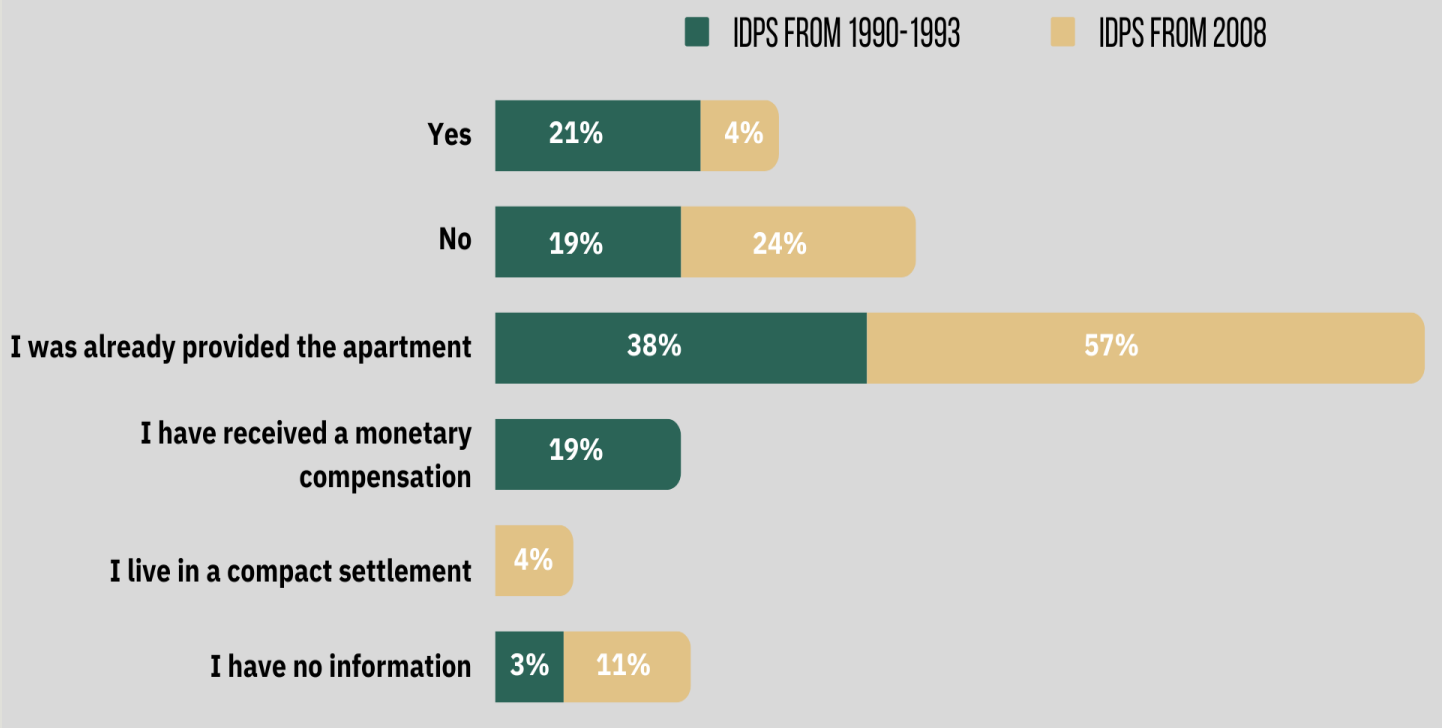
In the current period, among the respondents involved in qualitative research, the family of one participant benefited from the project of the non-governmental organization “Abkhazeti” in Zugdidi, which facilitated the arrangement of bathrooms and toilets on the inner perimeter of the residential area.

“

We have been using public toilets for years. ‘Abkhazeti’ provided solutions to household problems for several families - repair/removal of bathrooms, rehabilitation/improvement of latrines. For a number of families, arrangement of bathrooms for individual use, and cosmetic repair works in corridors. I informed all IDPs in Zugdidi that some international organization still remembers us. It’s been years as if everyone forgot about us. (IDP from Abkhazia, Zugdidi)

Respondents living on rent or with relatives - IDPs who live on rent typically opt for affordable apartments. Some respondents living with relatives have not paid rent for years. Part of the IDPs participating in the quantitative research, who live with their relatives or rent an apartment, state that they received an apartment from the state. However, they cite moving to cities for the purpose of socio-economic empowerment as the reason for living on rent or in someone else’s property. This is particularly common among respondents aged 18-30 (38% of IDPs in 1990-1993, 57% of IDPs in 2008). Notably, about one-fifth of the IDPs in both target segments claim they never applied to relevant agencies for housing (19%-24%).

HAS/DID YOUR FAMILY OR ANY OF ITS MEMBERS APPLY FOR AN APARTMENT IN COLLECTIVE CENTERS FOR IDPS?



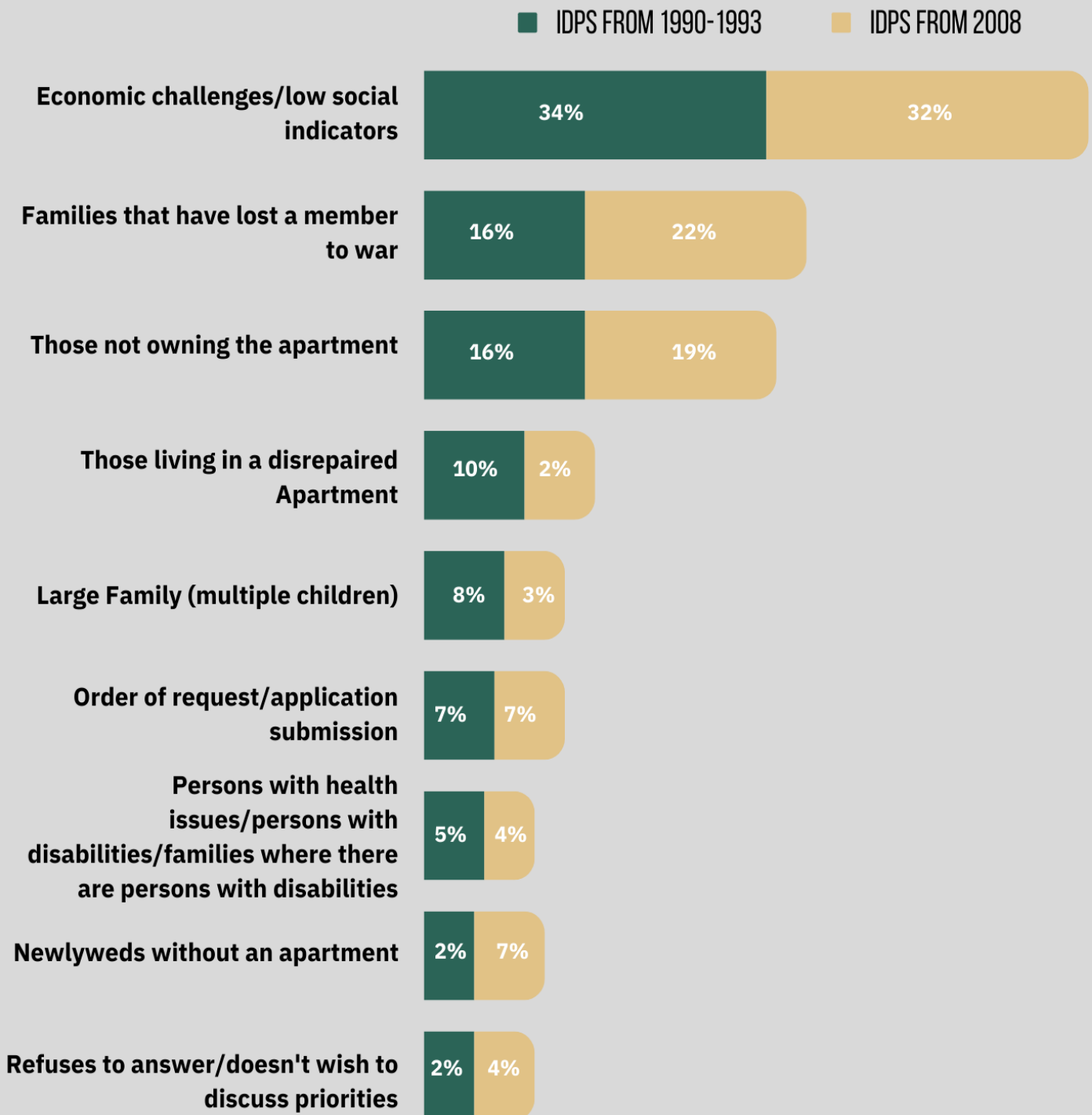
Qualitative research has revealed that living on rent or in a relative's apartment is the sole "shelter" for the respondents. None of them own any real estate. Additionally, among the interviewees, there were respondents who live in private apartments and, in addition, own apartments, mostly in occupied territories.

The primary challenge for respondents in this category is the lack of housing. Their attitudes toward obtaining an apartment are divided into two groups. One part, comprising those who have never approached relevant authorities for housing, cite the following reasons (applicable to either the respondent or their social circle):

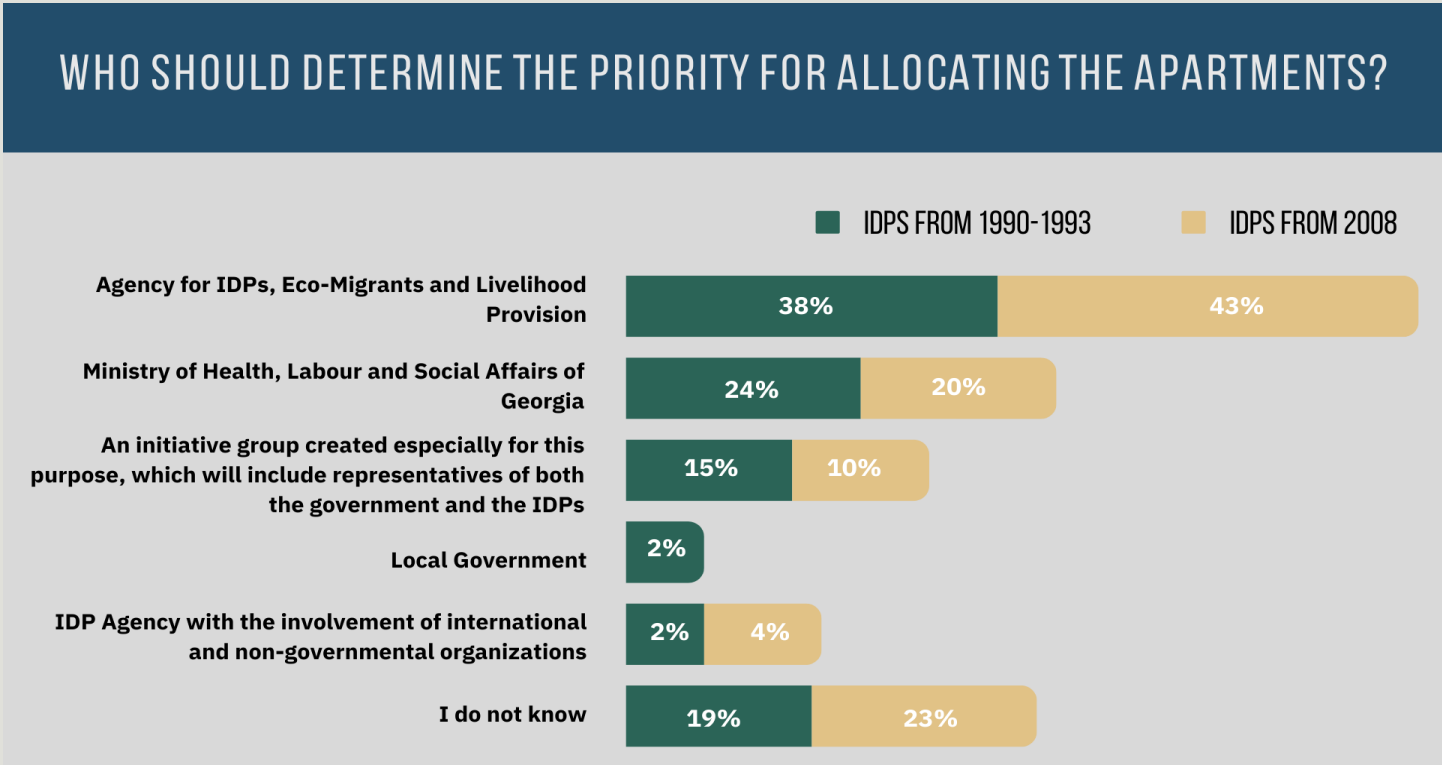
- We do not have information regarding criteria for housing assistance / living conditions and operational steps for achieving the goal of housing provision.
- They lack hope for assistance and feel unable to engage in a "futile struggle";
- After displacement, they obtained residence through marriage and adopted a passive approach to securing housing ("postponed to the future");
- They believe that upon receiving an apartment, the number of family members will not be considered, leading to a more confined living situation;
- They reside in vacant homes of relatives without incurring rent, and for now do not contemplate changing their living situation.
- In larger cities, they sustain apartment rent through their own work and aspire to better prospects, preferring not to settle in other territorial or urban units.

For the majority of respondents, the prioritization of beneficiaries based on material problems is crucial in the process of providing apartments, with about a third holding this view. About a fifth of the respondents in each target group believe that families of those killed in the war should be given precedence over other criteria. A percentage ranging from 16-19% suggests that all IDPs without an apartment should be accommodated, and they refrain from discussing privileges. Consideration of the situations of residents in dilapidated apartments, those with multiple children, deadlines for submitting applications for an apartment, etc., received relatively lower percentages.

WHEN PROVIDING HOUSING, IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT CRITERIA/CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES SHOULD BE GIVEN PRIORITY?



It is noteworthy that among the decision-makers regarding the allocation of apartments, respondents, in addition to individual structures, mentioned various entities. These include initiative groups, which, besides professionals, directly involve IDPs in the work process (10%-15%), and representatives of non-governmental and international organizations (2%-4%), seen as a trust group by research participants, and in some cases, considered an alternative to their direct involvement. Despite the fact that the Agency holds the highest share at 38%-43%, the Ministry is separately mentioned at 20%-24%. However, it is challenging to ascertain the extent to which their functions are perceived as distinct in the respondents' views.



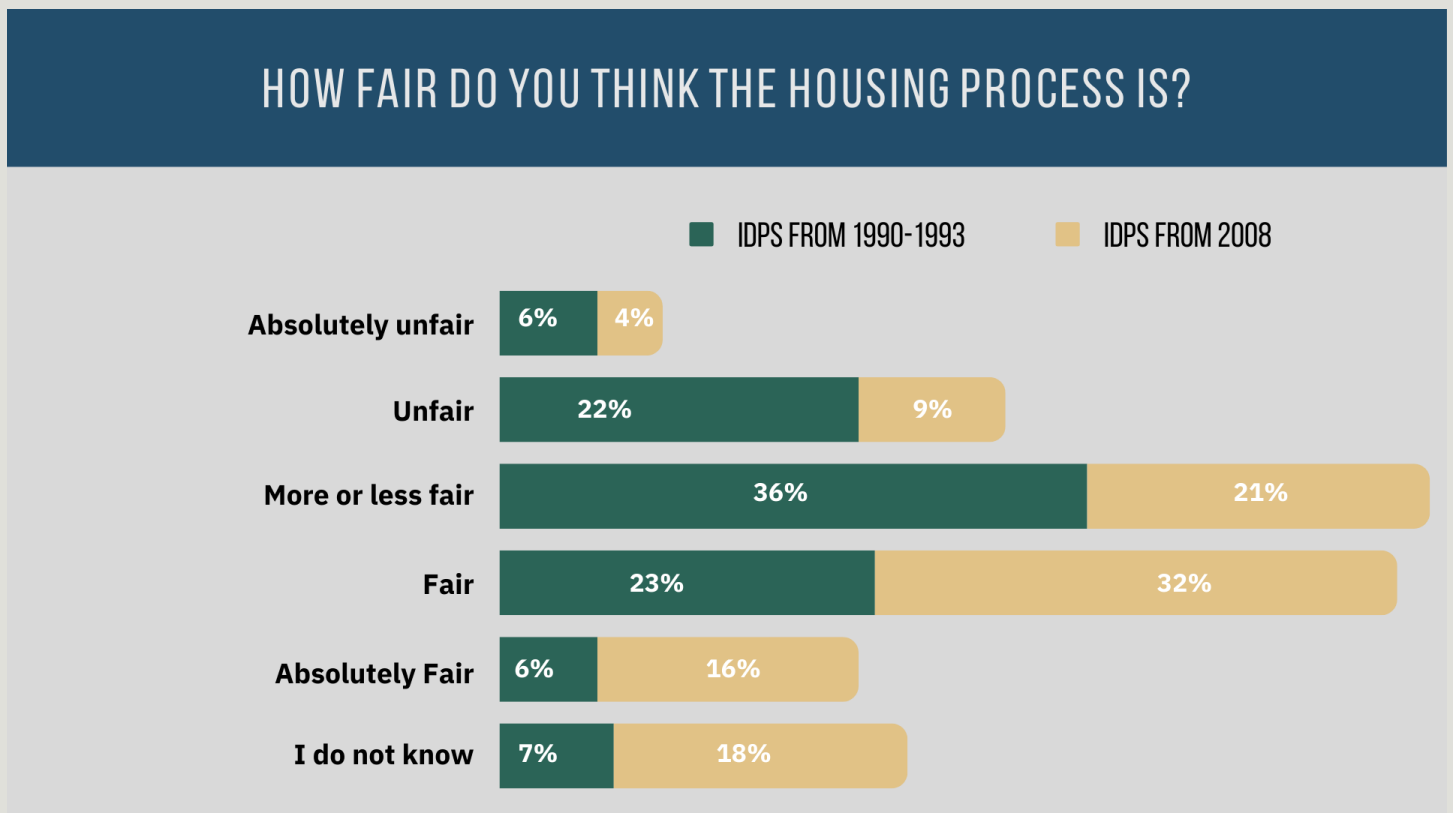
As per the information provided by the IDPs, the state housing program incorporates criteria related to the assessment of the housing area's usability and social criteria. Respondents point out that, for a certain period, the criteria were less favorable to families that changed their residence at least twice in the last 5 years, a component they find controversial. Specifically, the criterion for evaluating the usability of the residential area included the stipulation, "Stability of housing for a family living in the private sector." If a displaced family changed their rented accommodation within 5 years, which is theoretically quite common, they lost a competitive point and, consequently, the opportunity to secure housing. However, in reality, these families may be the ones in the greatest need of long-term housing. It should be noted that specific conditions and the assessment process led to some families with low rating scores adopting a nihilistic attitude toward the possibilities of receiving housing, as indicated by the lack of information about the criteria in the current period, emphasized in the qualitative research.

The respondents who applied multiple times to various structures/organizations with the request to be provided with an apartment mention that

- They express concern about the limited living space. While they do not anticipate receiving a spacious residence from the state, they see it as beneficial since it would eliminate the need to pay rent for an apartment or inconvenience their relatives.

- They have a very modest income and are no longer capable of covering rental expenses.
- Their relatives request them to vacate the apartment, and they are urgently in need of alternative housing.
- They want to have their own apartment, regardless of the conditions. Collective settlement centers are seen as “not the best option,” but they are believed to at least guarantee IDPs ownership rather than a return to their land.

The research showed that the evaluation of the resettlement process carried out up to now, according to the 2008 IDPs, generally leans more towards justice than towards unjust conduct. 48% of the respondents believe that the distribution of spaces at the time was fair, 21% think it is more or less fair, and 13% express dissatisfaction with the process. It is important to note that 18% find it difficult to characterize the process. The attitude of the IDPs from the 90s is highly critical, however, not essential. 28% of respondents believe that resettlement was unfair, and 36% are neutral, saying that the process was more or less fair. In the 1990s, 32% of IDPs characterized the resettlement process positively.



The qualitative research showed that despite improvements in the process of providing housing for IDPs of 2008, gaps were still identified when compared to the IDPs of 1990-1993:

- Primarily, information regarding the location of settlements and residences was not transparent. IDPs did not participate in the process of selecting a place of residence.

- IDPs would sign a particular document upon settling into a new residence, but many did not receive ownership documents for years. Consequently, these families are still registered in the settlements. Moreover, the disbursement of monetary compensation to those whose applications were rejected has been significantly delayed.
- There's an uneven distribution of spaces and what's referred to as "semi-legalized" objects. Measurement works have been conducted multiple times, but complete privatization has not been executed to date. As a consequence, because only a certain part of the building has been legalized, IDPs are unable to form a cooperative of apartment owners, make decisions about the property independently, and exercise other civil rights.
- One of the reasons for the shortcomings in the privatization policy is seen in the fact that some IDPs were initially reluctant to acquire residential areas into private ownership. This hesitation stemmed from uncertainty about the available alternatives and the hope for obtaining larger housing. The main factor contributing to the issues related to privatization, as indicated by respondents, is the ineffective implementation of new initiatives and information concerning privatization for IDPs in general.

In the context of qualitative research, interviews were conducted with residents of new collective settlement centers in Batumi (on Leonidze Street, newly built buildings), Poti (Maltakva area), and Tskaltubo. In these new complexes across all three regions, residents expressed similar attitudes and evaluations regarding the implemented accommodation conditions. Respondents discussed both positive and negative aspects of the resettlement process and conditions, providing reasons for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Overall, acquiring living space in newly constructed buildings, often with favorable geographic locations, generates a positive sentiment among the respondents.

“*Houses were built, and we were settled. Everything is new, and it lifts our spirits in its own way. Even the smell left by the building materials brings such a positive emotion, as if we forgot about all the other problems. It is desirable for any person to enter a new, clean environment. Especially for those of us who were displaced from incredibly difficult conditions. We may face problems here as well, but they will not come close to the challenges of living in old, polluted, desolate houses.* (IDP from Abkhazia, Tskaltubo)

“*This house has provided us with the stimulus for life. Everything is new. “We were in such a situation that we didn't even want to spend money to buy furniture. Here we have a different attitude. We left such problems behind; we still don't believe that this is the present.* (IDP from Abkhazia, Zugdidi)

“ *I prefer not to recollect the past situation. Delving into discussions about challenges seems unproductive. Even the recollection of the time spent in the previous dwelling is disconcerting. Although we have confronted issues, solutions will emerge. The primary focus lies in the novelty of our current surroundings, and through collective efforts, predicaments shall be addressed.* (IDP from Samachablo, Gori)

“ *Batumi was our choice. We came from the seaside and returned to the seaside. Everything is familiar here. With its geographical location, we are very satisfied and comfortable.* (IDP from Abkhazia, Batumi)

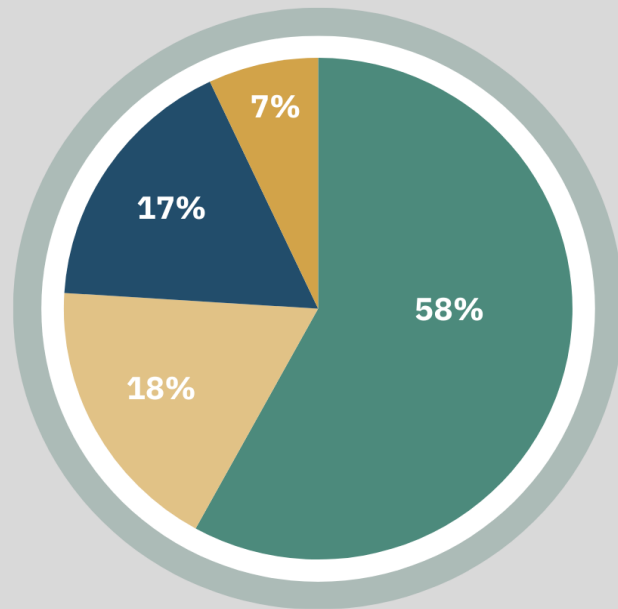
“ *We lived in Poti, and staying in Poti was the most acceptable option for us. Except for this, there is Samegrelo. We are from this region and adapting is almost natural for us.* (IDP from Abkhazia, Poti)

“ *Almost one street separates us from the old living place. This neighborhood was very cozy for us. We got used to Tskaltubo. We work here, our children grew up here, and there was no need to move elsewhere. This place suited us, and we decided to stay.* (IDP from Abkhazeti, Tskaltubo)

Among the respondents in the research, there is a minimal percentage of IDPs from 2008 who have not applied to the state for housing provision. Therefore, examining the attitudes of “old settlers” towards future prospects becomes particularly interesting. The research reveals that the majority have intentions to apply for an apartment or monetary compensation in the future (76%). Seventeen percent choose not to provide an answer. Only 7% mention any ongoing application processes, expressing skepticism due to the spaces already in their possession, which may lead to rejection.

IDPS OF 1990-1993 WHO DID NOT APPLY FOR HOUSING - ARE YOU OR ANY MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY PLANNING TO APPLY FOR AN APARTMENT AT THE COLLECTIVE SETTLEMENT CENTER FOR IDPS?

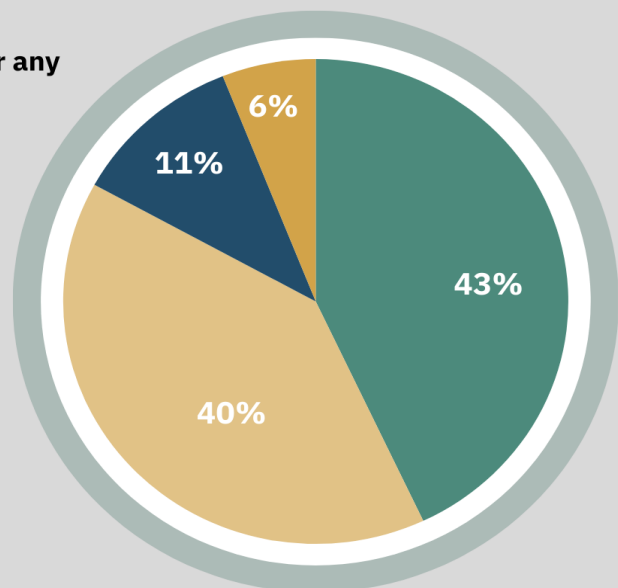
- Yes
- I will demand monetary
- Hard for me to respond
- No



Forty-three percent of IDPs from the 1990s dismiss the possibility of rejection of apartment or monetary compensation requests, expressing confidence that all IDPs will receive some form of assistance from the state. 11% emphasize the importance of legal recourse. It is noteworthy that 40% find it challenging to predict effective measures. A small minority, 6%, adopts a conciliatory stance, perceiving the state's decision as unfair.

WHAT IS YOUR PLAN IF YOUR REQUEST IS DENIED?

- All IDPs must be satisfied, I will not consider any other alternative
- So far it is difficult to answer
- I will fight legally
- I will think, that I was treated unfairly



It is important to highlight that within the cohort of respondents engaged in the focus group, the conspicuous oversight of families that have not sought state assistance for housing or alternative financial compensation is regarded as a foundational factor contributing to the protest sentiment among the IDPs. According to the respondents, there exists an anticipation of discontent within this demographic, particularly in the concluding phases of the housing allocation process. Furthermore, some respondents attribute the prolonged delay in the protracted housing provision process to the government's apprehension stemming from the potential repercussions of addressing this latent concern, often metaphorically referred to as a "mine."

Certain participants within the focus group, who are the IDPs and have refrained from applying for housing, express uncertainty regarding their prospects. While expressing a desire to explore all available options, they have not yet identified the specific activities or actions they intend to employ to compel the state to allocate living accommodations at this juncture.

During the focus group discussions, an observation was made that obtaining an apartment in a timely manner is perceived to be contingent on having connections with friends or relatives within state structures. Additionally, it was noted that the allocation of the number of rooms in the apartment is influenced by rating points, and accommodations are granted based on assessed needs.



Certain IDPs reported receiving two or three-room apartments instead of the designated one-room apartments. This occurred even though their points did not qualify them for such accommodations. Conversely, individuals perceived as more fortunate were observed to receive multiple apartments instead of the expected single allocation. (IDP from Tskhinvali, Gori)

In the overall context of the research, when asked about the primary individual suitable for state compensation in terms of housing, respondents provided a straightforward response: 'Those like to me.' The term 'like me' varies in different circumstances, signifying individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds. However, the priority categories identified include individuals:

- Does not own a property in neither a village nor a city center.
- Never having sought assistance from the state.
- the IDPs residing in rented accommodations and relying on support from their relatives.
- Families with multiple children and single mothers without owning a property.
- Families of military personnel and those who have lost their lives in conflict.
- Individuals lacking a fixed place of residence who entered into marriage subsequent to their displacement.

In conclusion, both quantitative and qualitative studies indicate that a significant majority of respondents, despite the frequency of their applications for housing provision, maintain an optimistic outlook. The prevailing uncertainty pertains more to the conclusion of the process rather than the process itself. Hence, it is evident that irrespective of the nature and multitude of challenges that have surfaced over the years, the overall quality and modes of feedback from the state remain limited. Importantly, the initiative or active involvement of the displaced population in the resettlement process appears to be minimal.

4.2. The stakeholders of an organization with respect to the process of housing process

As previously indicated, qualitative research within the scope of this research involved interviews with representatives from an organization specializing in various concerns related to the IDPs. According to these representatives, the current state of housing provision for the IDPs residing in aged collective settlements can be outlined as follows:

- In Tbilisi, issues related to the living conditions of residents in old collective housing remain relevant, particularly concerning the problems of the “Kartli” sanatorium and the “Ushba” hotel. A portion of the residents at Sanatorium “Kartli” persist in a specific collective settlement, notwithstanding the dilapidated condition of the building. According to respondents, the Agency has made an administrative commitment to all families residing in the structure, presenting two accommodation options:

1. IDPs can independently search for apartments in Tbilisi, with the Agency facilitating their purchase. The cost per square meter is set at the equivalent of \$600 in GEL, and the apartment’s size is determined based on the family’s composition.

2. Alternatively, IDPs can await the completion of apartments acquired by the Agency. In this scenario, the Agency, in collaboration with the board, proposes to provide temporary rental assistance. However, the resolute demand of the IDPs is immediate satisfaction with permanent housing.

- In Batumi and Gori, all the IDPs residing in deteriorating, crumbling, and aged collective settlements have been accommodated. This accommodation involves the provision of apartments or alternative methods such as monetary compensation. Notably, there are no displaced persons awaiting housing in Batumi.

- Precise information regarding the number of individuals awaiting housing in Gori is not readily available. This is attributed to factors such as marriage during the displacement period or private property ownership, which has shifted the approach of these individuals to the matter of housing provision into a passive mode. According to representatives of the organization, these families exhibit a nihilistic attitude toward the housing issue, influenced by their awareness of the ongoing nature of the process and its level of transparency. Conversely, there exists an expectation of their active engagement once their housing needs are completely addressed. Furthermore, according to information from the Agency for the IDPs, monitoring is underway in the village of Dzevera, Gori district. This initiative involves an on-site research of the living conditions and needs of 60-70 IDP families, aiming to establish an accurate rating score. This score is considered a prerequisite for the subsequent provision of housing.

- In Zugdidi, the IDPs are currently residing in the administrative building of the “Porcelain Factory” and the building of “ZDU” located on Chavchavadze Street.

- The IDPs who were resettled in the sanatorium buildings in Tskaltubo expressed overall satisfaction with their living accommodations. However, there are still some IDPs residing in these buildings who were not provided with their housing due to the availability of alternative options. According to respondents, the existence of these alternative housing options, such as apartments in private ownership, was not widely publicized.

- In Kutaisi, the distribution process of 320 residential apartments is currently underway. The relevant commission is tasked with transferring apartments to families based on administrative promises and court decisions. This transfer is conducted without further evaluation, adhering strictly to the commitments made in accordance with the given promises or court rulings.

During the ongoing process of providing support for the living conditions of the IDPs, the organizational representatives possess independent opinions. The account includes the enumeration of several significant factors related to this matter:

1. Issues with residential resources - To address the housing needs of the IDPs from 2013 to 2021, the Ministry initiated a competitive process for the acquisition of residential areas from developers. The primary objective was to secure long-term housing solutions for IDPs. The maximum allowable price for 1 square meter of living space varied by city, with, for instance, Tbilisi set at the equivalent of \$550. Respondents emphasized that the competitive acquisition of apartments proved to be more efficient during the 2013-2020 period, with \$550 being deemed an optimal value that garnered increased interest and participation from builders.

Consequently, this approach yielded robust outcomes in terms of housing provision for IDPs, with approximately 12 thousand individuals satisfied during the five-year period from 2013. In this context, IDPs were allocated apartments in areas such as “Dirsi,” “Hualing,” and “Karvasla.”

Nevertheless, the substantial surge in real estate prices in 2021 resulted in a minimal participation of developers in the competition. Despite the maximum price of 1 square meter being adjusted in 2021, developer involvement remained markedly reduced. Consequently, the Ministry decided to discontinue the purchase of apartments through competition in 2021, opting instead for a tender announcement. This shift entailed the selection of construction companies through tender processes for the implementation of state-subsidized construction projects. As a consequence, the process of housing provision for the IDPs experienced significant delays due to the extended timelines associated with selecting construction companies and completing the constructions.

It is important to note that the timeframe for the completion of constructions and the gradual resettlement of IDPs has been defined for the years 2022-2025.

2. According to representatives of the organization, the state’s decision to transfer its properties to the IDPs is viewed positively. However, the privatization process has been hampered by identified shortcomings and uncoordinated actions among the parties involved, rendering it somewhat ineffective. Respondents highlighted issues during the 2009-2012 privatization period, where the transfer of ownership of spaces within collective centers to IDPs was misconstrued by the state as equivalent to providing proper housing. The privatization process encountered substantial legal violations, technical problems (such as inaccuracies in space measurement, family composition, and drawings), and ineffective collaboration among involved agencies. According to representatives of the organization, these families exhibit a nihilistic attitude toward the housing issue, influenced by their awareness of the ongoing nature of the process and its level of transparency. Conversely, there exists an expectation of their active engagement once their housing needs are completely addressed. Furthermore, according to information from the Agency for the IDPs, monitoring is underway in the village of Dzevera, Gori district. This initiative involves an on-site research of the living conditions and needs of 60-70 IDP families, aiming to establish an accurate rating score. This score is considered a prerequisite for the subsequent provision of housing.

The process was further complicated by having only one family member act as the signatory to agreements, with the rest of the family members treated as third parties. Consequently, contracts for third parties could be enforced only with written consent. In certain instances, IDPs acquired properties that fell below the minimum standards for adequate housing, particularly in cases involving the transfer of ownership of smaller living spaces.

According to respondents, the aforementioned violations have led to an increase in the number of appeals to the court, and disputes in a significant portion of cases are still ongoing. Representatives of organizations note that despite the age of these disputes—having exceeded the three-year appeal period—current dynamics suggest the possibility of initiating legal proceedings to challenge the outcomes of past privatization. This information underscores that, among the principles of housing provision, the privatization process, a substantial majority of which saw contracts concluded before 2013 (comprising more than 80% of cases), has emerged as a significant obstacle to achieving comprehensive housing provision.

“

The challenges associated with resettlement can be traced back to the 1990s when individuals, displaced by conflict, were primarily relocated to municipalities with available space, often in areas with numerous sanatoriums such as Tskaltubo, and in old hotel buildings in Batumi and Kobuleti. For instance, IDPs from Abkhazia were evicted from the Hotel “Iveria” in Tbilisi, a pattern repeated in Batumi and Kobuleti when IDPs were evicted from hotels. At that time, there was a lack of a comprehensive strategy or plan. Some individuals discovered the possibility of purchasing an apartment for a nominal amount, typically around \$5,000. In certain cases, individuals received amounts as high as \$7,000, with the condition that they vacate the premises, whether willingly or not. This approach led to a situation where a considerable number of IDPs, who had initially found housing solutions, once again found themselves without a home. As soon as the funds were distributed, housing prices changed rapidly and what was initially a reasonably priced one-room apartment, valued at, for instance, \$1,500, turned into a substantial amount within a week.

3. A significant challenge pertains to the appeal mechanism following a denial of housing provision. Specifically, the Ministry has not adhered to the practice of promptly dispatching written decisions of housing denial to the concerned IDPs families. Instead, these decisions are only provided upon specific requests from the displaced family. Furthermore, the written decisions lack any reference to the available appeal mechanisms, despite the obligation of the administrative body to delineate the appeal procedures in individual administrative-legal acts.

Respondents posit that the systematic nature of these Ministry actions suggests a deliberate oversight in procedures, possibly intended to diminish the likelihood of appeals.

4. 4. As per the feedback from respondents, the IDPs currently residing in various sanatoriums and buildings under state jurisdiction, who have, in certain instances, formalized the legality of their living spaces, will no longer be included in the waiting list for housing. It is important to highlight that there is a notable absence of information regarding the structural condition of these buildings.

The settlers themselves expressed a sentiment of having “not wanting to agree, but lacking an alternative, were compelled to accept the legalization of these spaces.” Representatives from organizations attribute this issue to a persistent lack of information about the rights of IDPs, a concern that remains pertinent despite intermittent efforts by non-governmental organizations to address specific issues in different periods.

“

the IDPs should have been informed about their rights, and even at present, they retain the right to decline the offered living space. No one is authorized to forcibly evict them from this space unless alternative housing is provided. Additionally, individuals cannot be removed from the waiting list without due process.

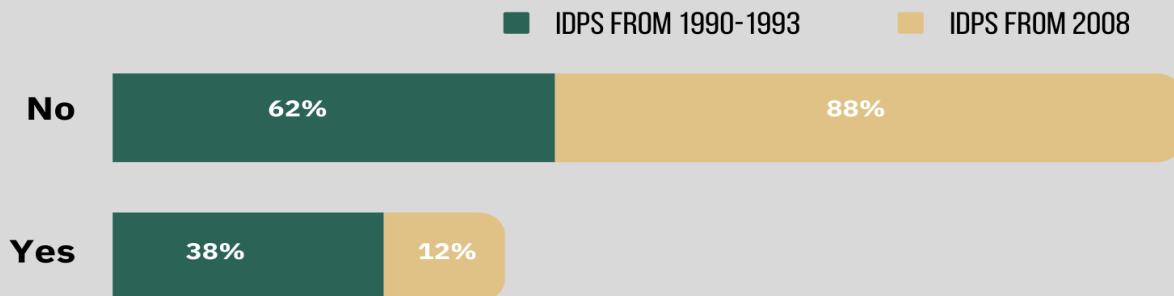
4.3 Informed Decision

The research findings indicate woefully low assessments regarding the quality of information provided to the IDPs about the conditions of housing provision. More than half of the respondents express a lack of comprehensive knowledge about resettlement procedures and conditions. Notably, among the IDPs from 2008, the situation is particularly alarming, with only 12% confirming adequate awareness of the relevant information.

The research outcomes reveal a near-complete lack of awareness among the IDPs from 2008 regarding specific aspects of settlement conditions. Their awareness of crucial parameters for resettlement generally registers at levels below 5%. Although there is a slightly higher level of awareness, at 9%, regarding the housing needs of minors or children without families, this still falls below acceptable normative thresholds. The findings do not preclude the possibility of IDPs taking their own initiatives despite the overall low awareness levels.

The degree of informing the IDPs from the 90s about rehabilitation and construction standards for living conditions reached its peak at 24%. Additionally, 17% of respondents reported that the consideration of family unity was factored into the housing provision process, acknowledging the importance of keeping families together if desired. Moreover, 14% of IDPs have had the experience of previewing their future place of residence.

DO YOU POSSESS COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION REGARDING THE HOUSING CONDITIONS?



It is noteworthy that within both target groups, relatives or friends (54%) and non-governmental or international organizations (31%) serve as the primary sources of information for the IDPs. These sources have provided information either proactively or in response to specific appeals from IDPs. However, a significant majority (88%) of respondents believe that the primary entities responsible for disseminating information should be local government organizations, specifically local government (21%), the Agency (47%), or the Ministry (11%).

	IDPS FROM 1990-1993		IDPS FROM 2008	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
GEOGRAPHICAL SELECTION OF THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE	5%	95%	1%	99%
ADDRESSING AND PRIORITIZING FAMILY UNITY, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE FAMILY EXPRESSES A DESIRE TO REMAIN TOGETHER	17%	83%	4%	96%
CONSIDERING THE HOUSING REQUIREMENTS OF MINORS OR CHILDREN WHO ARE WITHOUT A FAMILY	7%	93%	9%	91%
ACQUIRING INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE STANDARDS FOR THE REPAIR OR CONSTRUCTION OF LIVING CONDITIONS	24%	76%	4%	96%
EVALUATING EXISTING OR PROSPECTIVE LIVING CONDITIONS BY COMPARING THEM WITH REPAIR OR CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS, AND CONDUCTING INSPECTIONS OF THE LIVING PLACE FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES	8%	92%	2%	98%
IDENTIFYING THE LEGAL CRITERIA FOR PROVIDING RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATIONS TO VULNERABLE FAMILIES, THE ELDERLY, AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES	4%	96%	0%	100%
CONDUCTING A RESIDENCE INSPECTION WITH THE AIM OF ASSESSING ITS CONDITION	14%	86%	2%	98%

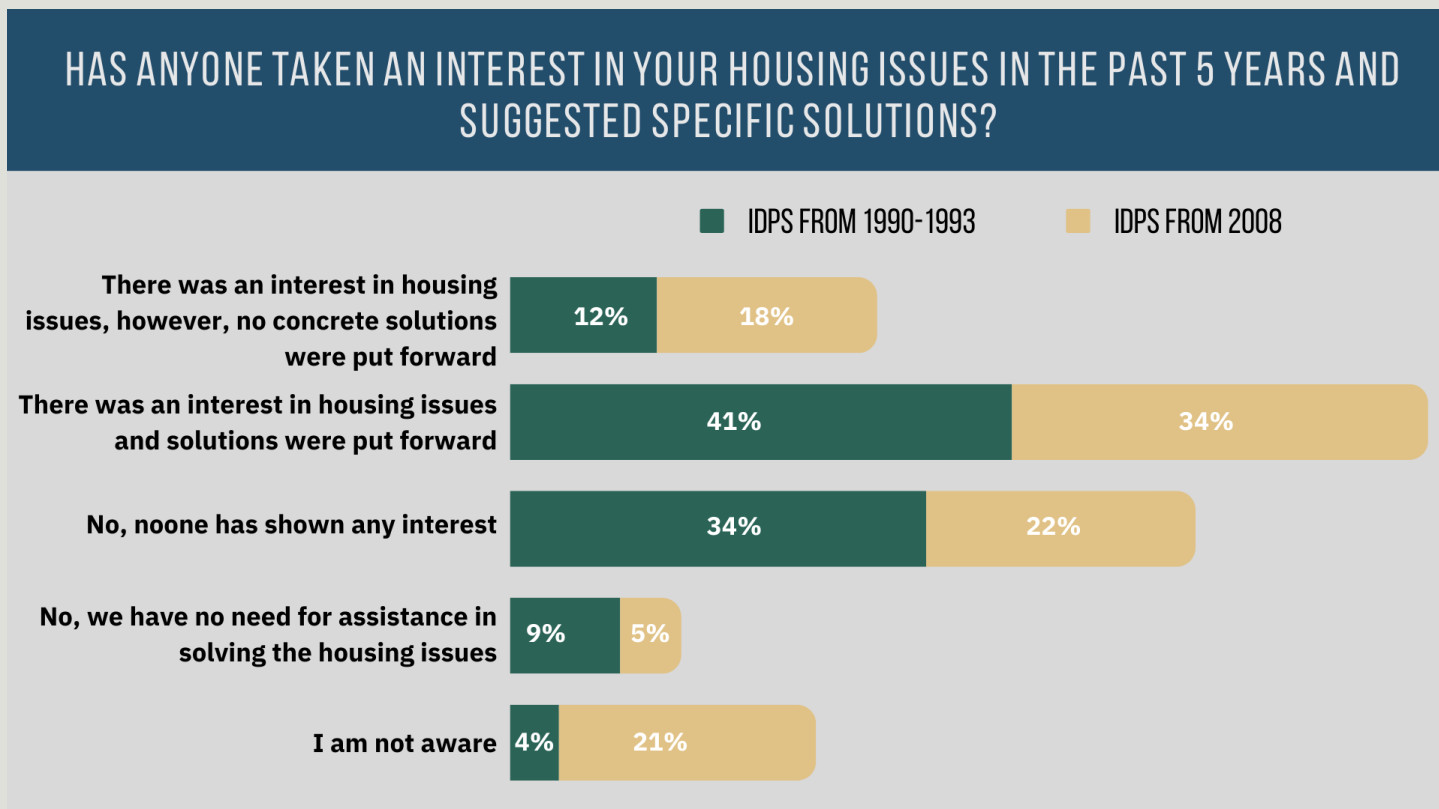
The qualitative research findings indicate a shared perspective among the IDPs regarding the entities responsible for addressing housing issues, with a consistent view that “the state is responsible.” According to the IDPs, the resolution of housing problems falls within the jurisdiction of governmental functions. While some respondents specify the competencies of the Ministry or the Agency, the predominant sentiment underscores the overarching responsibility of the state.

Significantly, there is a recent upswing in optimism among respondents, particularly concerning satisfaction with apartments in new or rehabilitated collective settlement centers. This positive outlook is shaped by active construction and rehabilitation endeavors in new collective centers, coupled with an increasing number of instances where families with analogous conditions have successfully obtained apartments.

4.4 Awareness Regarding the Housing Needs

Examining the housing conditions of research participants within the last 5 years across each target segment yields generally positive outcomes. However, a notable portion of cases includes data describing encountered problems or receiving information (34-41%). Assessing the effectiveness of these interventions is challenging for respondents due to various reasons, including insufficient time having elapsed, a hesitance to express criticism, anticipation of negative feedback, and the perceived difficulty and time-consuming nature of resolving issues.

According to 22-34% of the respondents, nobody showed interest in their problems, while 12-18% indicated a lack of information about pathways for addressing their issues.



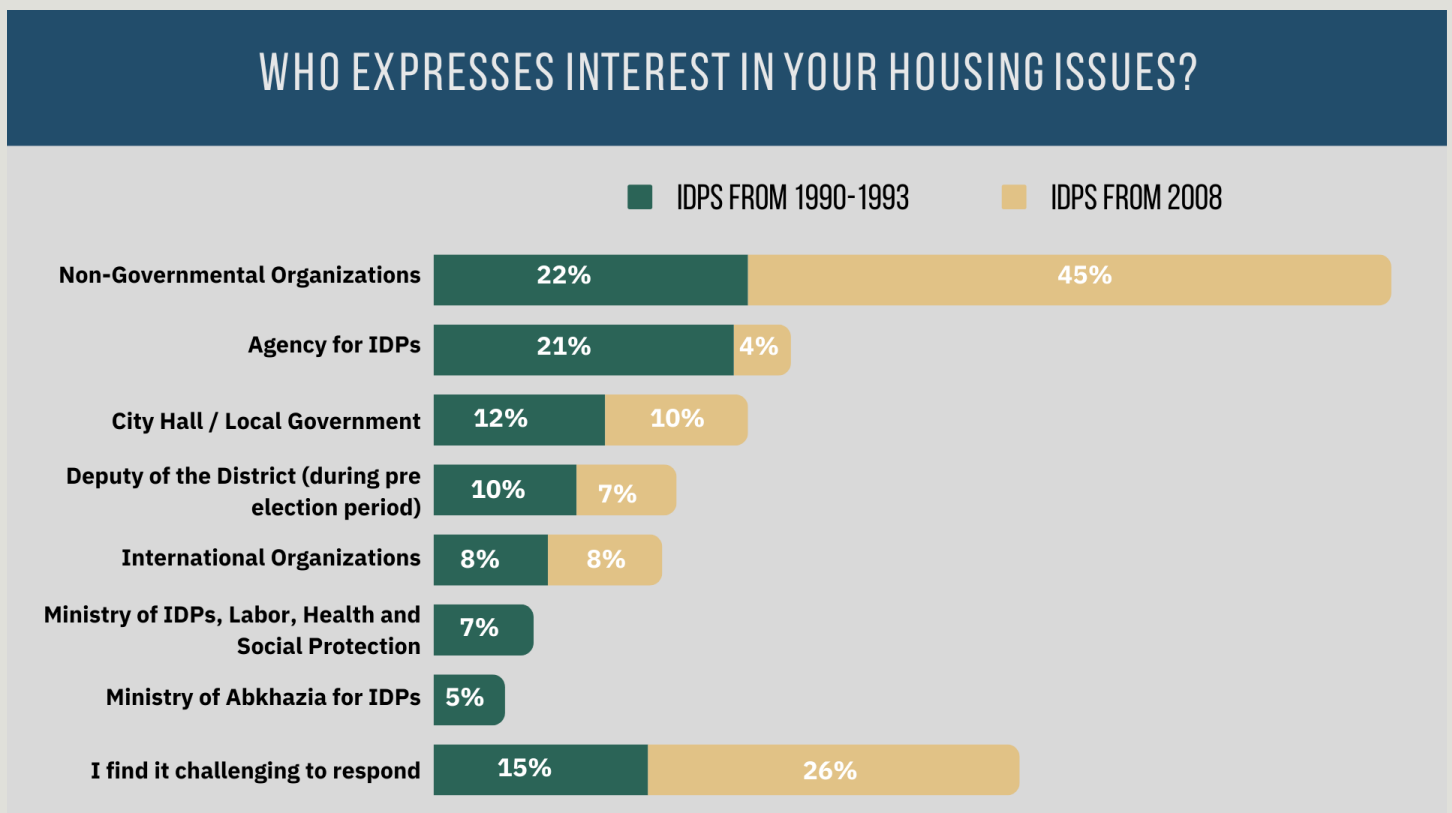
Among the entities expressing interest in the living conditions and existing challenges faced by the IDPs, the non-governmental sector emerges as the most proactive, particularly among the IDPs from 2008, accounting for 45%. In contrast, 21% of the displaced population from the 1990s reported interest from the Agency or representations of the displaced within the past 5 years. Conversely, only 4% of the IDPs from 2008 reported such interest from the agency. Notably, district deputies exhibited interest in the problems of IDPs during the pre-election period, with indicators ranging from 7-10%.

Qualitative research identified a notable case that received positive evaluations from information providers. In Tsalenjikha and Jvari, street cooperatives were established years ago, wherein each street designated a “house-keeper” responsible for systematically conveying information on issues to trustees. Additionally, meetings were conducted with local deputies of the municipal assembly. Respondents highlight that this initiative facilitated improved relations between local government bodies and citizens during that period, acknowledging the general limitation in the involvement of individual citizens in the workings of these bodies. Some respondents attribute this limited engagement to the substantial outflow of youth from the villages. However, others express the view that the middle-aged population is more actively involved in this direction.

Despite expressing dissatisfaction with the limited authority of the village trustee, some respondents acknowledge the continued importance of the trustee as a crucial link in the relationship between the population and local government bodies. Although they have lost their official public status, former trustees are now working as volunteers in various capacities. Interviewees note that despite the trustee’s primary responsibility being the exchange of information between municipal government bodies and the population, their role was significant due to their in-depth knowledge of the village’s realities. They were perceived as individuals with a vital interest in addressing relevant issues and actively sought to advocate for the interests of the territorial unit in local government bodies. The respondents are of the opinion that assigning the function of a trustee to any local structure would not be inappropriate.

In contrast to the trustees, dissatisfaction was voiced regarding certain Municipal Assembly deputies who, following elections, infrequently visit the villages in which they were elected and show diminished interest in local issues. However, focus group discussions highlighted counterexamples where deputies visit villages weekly on designated days, a practice not captured in the quantitative research data. Additionally, dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the handling of complaints against the municipality’s leadership, with concerns typically centered around local issues rather than those pertaining to the IDPs.

Within the scope of the qualitative research, the IDPs residing in collective settlements predominantly discuss issues related to living conditions. Beyond overarching challenges shared among various buildings, distinct and severe individual problems emerge, presenting varying degrees of severity across different settlements.



The focus on housing problems is most evident in the collective settlement centers of Tskaltubo sanatoriums. Some respondents highlight that the primary issue, aside from the confined living space for the IDPs, signifies the challenging conditions of those residing in Tskaltubo sanatoriums. Although cosmetic repairs have been undertaken in apartments within certain sections of the old sanatoriums, the aging of the buildings has resulted in only remnants of the repairs being visible over the years.

While the majority of residents have managed to secure drinking water within their apartments, challenges persist in some units, particularly those situated on higher floors, where low water pressure prevents the use of tap water. Consequently, respondents in such cases are compelled to provide water for their families from their yards. Instances of damaged central water pipes have been reported, and the repair of pipes in small sections has not effectively resolved the issue of drinking water supply for some families. Furthermore, there are respondents who still rely on communal bathroom, kitchen, and toilet facilities.

The research uncovered an ongoing and unresolved issue regarding the maintenance of the water supply (sewerage) network in the military settlement of Senaki. According to a respondent, the local population in the military settlement consistently lodges complaints with the local government to address the problem. Despite multiple on-site assessments by the local government, the issue remains unsolved with each appeal.

The only approach to mitigating the problem has been periodic servicing of the pumping machines. Over time, due to the continued use of the water distribution network during pumping works, the problem has become entrenched as an seemingly insurmountable issue. However, seasonally, particularly during the summer, the release of feces results in an unsanitary and intolerable odor in the surrounding area. This annual occurrence rekindles efforts among the IDPs to address the problem, yet it remains unresolved.

Residents of the Shavshvebi IDP settlement have raised concerns about the unsatisfactory sanitary condition of the drinking water. According to them, the water supplied to the settlement has been deemed unfit for consumption for many years. Additionally, the “semi-fixed” drainage system in the settlement presents a hazard to local residents, as the drains are uncovered despite their considerable depth. Respondents emphasize that this poses a particular danger to children.

Residents of the Gardabani IDP settlement have highlighted concerns about the inadequate construction of the dividing and outer walls of the apartments. These walls are so thin that they fail to provide isolation from neighbors, compromising the residents’ privacy. Moreover, they are unable to shield internal spaces from the sound of rainfall. Additionally, in the majority of apartments, water leakage is a prevalent issue, particularly from the windows during rainy weather.

It is important to highlight that, as per the respondents, the primary responsibility for addressing specific issues lies with the Ministry. If the intervention of other institutions is required, the functions would naturally be allocated to different agencies. However, the information about the existence of problems must, according to the respondents, reach any official level through the Ministry of IDPs, Labor, Health, and Social Protection.

Respondents have only cited isolated instances of roof repairs and similar types of “insignificant works” occurring before elections. According to their accounts, the primary issues persistently remain unresolved. Furthermore, the vast majority of collective centers have not undergone renovation for years, rendering them unable to meet even the minimum housing standards.

The research has indicated that, in most instances, the efforts of the IDPs themselves for enhancing communal and household conditions are more robust than the assistance provided by various structural units. This self-initiated activity is notably appreciated by the IDPs. It is evident that the ongoing process of long-term housing transfer serves as a pivotal and catalyzing factor in their economic integration. This elucidates the significance of the housing transfer process, with minimal emphasis on household issues.

The issue of expensive utility bills is perceived as an insurmountable problem for the IDPs, mirroring the challenges faced by the majority of the population in Georgia. According to the respondents, there is a need to implement benefits for displaced families residing in new settlements and rehabilitated housing transferred to ownership, especially for those families for whom the state could not fulfill its promise of providing jobs. One proposed solution is to defer and distribute the electricity and gas bills incurred during the winter months over the summer months.

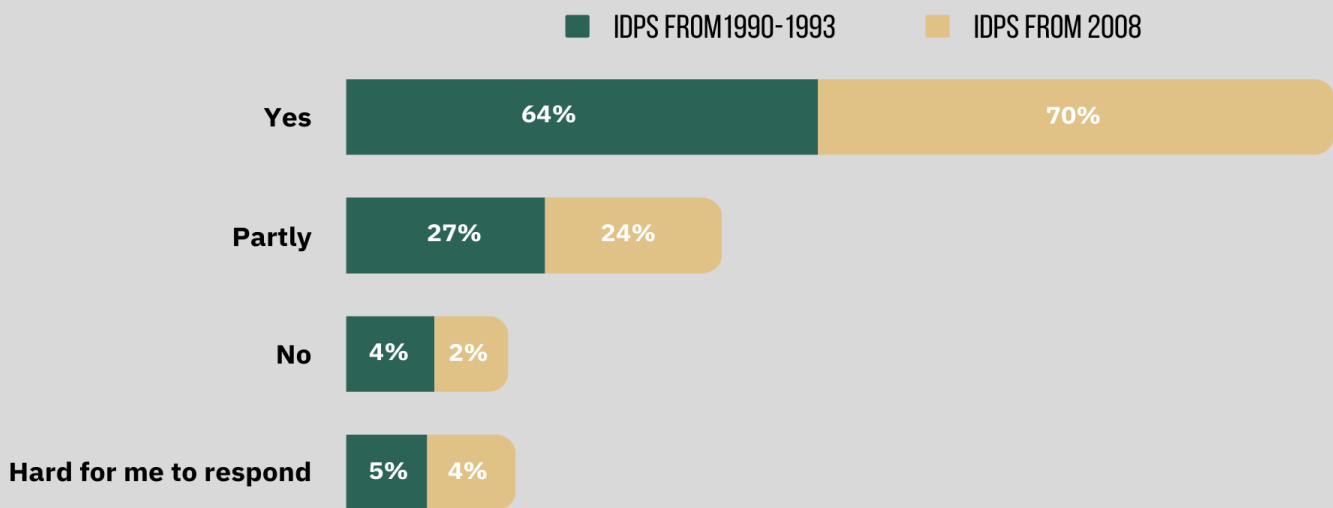
4.5 Integration

In accordance with all action plans delineated for the execution of the state strategy by the Government of Georgia, the state bears the responsibility of facilitating the integration of the IDPs. This obligation encompasses the enhancement of their socio-economic conditions. The examination of integration issues within the research primarily focused on socio-economic aspects, notwithstanding the fact that it did not confine the exploration to topics related to the involvement of IDPs in conflict resolution matters.

It is noteworthy that a predominant portion of the IDPs conceptualizes the term “integration” as synonymous with reestablishing connections with society and enjoying diverse rights without facing discrimination based on the circumstances of forced displacement. However, a subset of individuals expresses heightened concern regarding the potential stigmatization of IDPs and perceives prevailing public attitudes as antiquated and incongruent. Some respondents underscore the need to acclimate to the presence of entrenched, and often negative, stereotypes in society, viewing them as a manifestation of the broader issue of “stigmatization.”

The research reveals that the majority of respondents consider themselves to be integrated locally.

DO YOU PERCEIVE YOURSELF AS INTEGRATED WITHIN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?



Young individuals seldom engage in discussions about integration challenges. The prevailing impression is that they may not fully grasp the significance of inquiries related to the issues surrounding integration into society. While they acknowledge being aware of instances where IDP youth choose not to disclose their displaced status to their peers or experience bullying in school, they assert that their immediate environment is not marked by such problems, making it challenging to substantiate such occurrences.

It is noteworthy that virtually all young respondents asserted that the process of integration is largely completed, and they increasingly identify with the local community. According to the youth, the primary distinction between the IDPs and the local population at this stage lies in the form and ownership of private property, particularly in the context of collective settlements. Some respondents also noted that the employment rate among the local population is comparatively higher.

The IDP respondents originating from Abkhazia posit that there are few mental disparities and associated difficulties between themselves and the local population. This contrasts with the conditions reported by IDPs settled in Eastern Georgia, who perceive the encountered environment as markedly distinct. The perceived unity between Abkhazian IDPs and locals is primarily attributed to shared roots and, in some cases, familial ties. According to interviewees, certain IDPs chose to return to the lands of their ancestors or settled in areas where relatives resided after the war. The passage of years since the displacement has further contributed to the assimilation of adult IDPs with the local populace. Additionally, a new generation has been raised in this environment, considering it as their native setting. Noteworthy are instances of marriages between the IDPs and local residents.

According to the respondents, the equilibrium between the IDPs and locals within territorial units is identified as another influential factor in the process of integration. Additionally, some respondents observed that the local population had to adapt to the IDPs just as much as the IDPs had to adapt to the local population.

Some respondents have difficulty recalling specific instances of conflict between the local population and the IDPs. Nevertheless, observable changes have occurred due to the widespread resettlement of IDPs in municipalities. Respondents highlight the following positive factors.

The infrastructure of abandoned and desolate areas, following the resettlement of the IDPs, has undergone some degree of improvement. External lighting has been installed, and efforts have been made to preserve buildings from demolition and disrepair. According to respondents, the influx of people, stemming from the resettlement of IDPs, serves as a catalyst for increased public demand to enhance infrastructure.

- The resettlement of the IDPs in the respective territories has augmented the market for local products, leading to an expansion of trade activities.
- The settlers introduced a new cultural dimension to daily life, encompassing novel culinary practices, styles of dress, and other aspects.
- The IDPs have introduced a new culture of agricultural production, cultivating crops that are relatively unfamiliar to the local population, such as watermelons and melons. They also employ different cultivation practices, contributing to the diversification of agricultural activities in the area.
- Various projects implemented for the IDPs have yielded positive outcomes for the local population as well. Doctors have provided medical services to both IDPs and the local population at different times. Additionally, stadiums built for IDPs have become spaces where local and displaced children play together. Rehabilitation centers for displaced children with disabilities not only cater to IDPs but also extend their services to local disabled children, teaching them various skills. The local population also benefits from facilities like IDP kindergartens.

It should be noted that the results mentioned above by respondents primarily reflect the initial years of settlement for the residents of the displaced communities. Currently, however, due to the increased integration of displaced individuals with the local population, the term “displaced” is less commonly used. From the respondents’ discussions, it is evident that, unlike in previous years when the term “displaced” was a necessary epithet to specify a person’s status, individuals are now commonly addressed by their names, similar to the local population. However, for some the IDPs, the terms “IDP” and “refugee” may elicit a negative reaction, as these terms, in their perception, carry connotations of a lower social status compared to the native population.

However, a minority of respondents highlight that despite the extended duration of the initial influx of displaced people into the country, the distinction between the statuses of “displaced person” and “refugee” did not become significant in society. Simultaneously, instances of the negative use of the term “refugee” in reference to displaced persons continue to remain relevant.

“

I visited our municipality, and a woman in the reception area gestured towards me, saying, ‘these refugees again... Your problems have no end,’ and then turned her back on me. (IDP from Tskhinvali, Gori)

“ *The shop assistant shouted ‘Debts of refugees’ so loudly that we had a dispute over it. Honestly?! They label us as vulnerable groups, but among the 100 people in the debt book, at most 5 would be displaced. Yet, he insists on using the term ‘refugee.’ This speaks volumes, but perhaps he assumes that someone else did not hear it correctly and that the IDP owes some money he tries to downplay him/her. (IDP from Abkhazia, Tskaltubo)*

“ *Do you know what’s interesting?! The child scored the maximum points on her entrance exams and received a thousand comments asking, ‘There are geniuses among the refugees too’ - in this context. It’s amusing that satire is unavoidable. (IDP from Abkhazia, Zugdidi)*

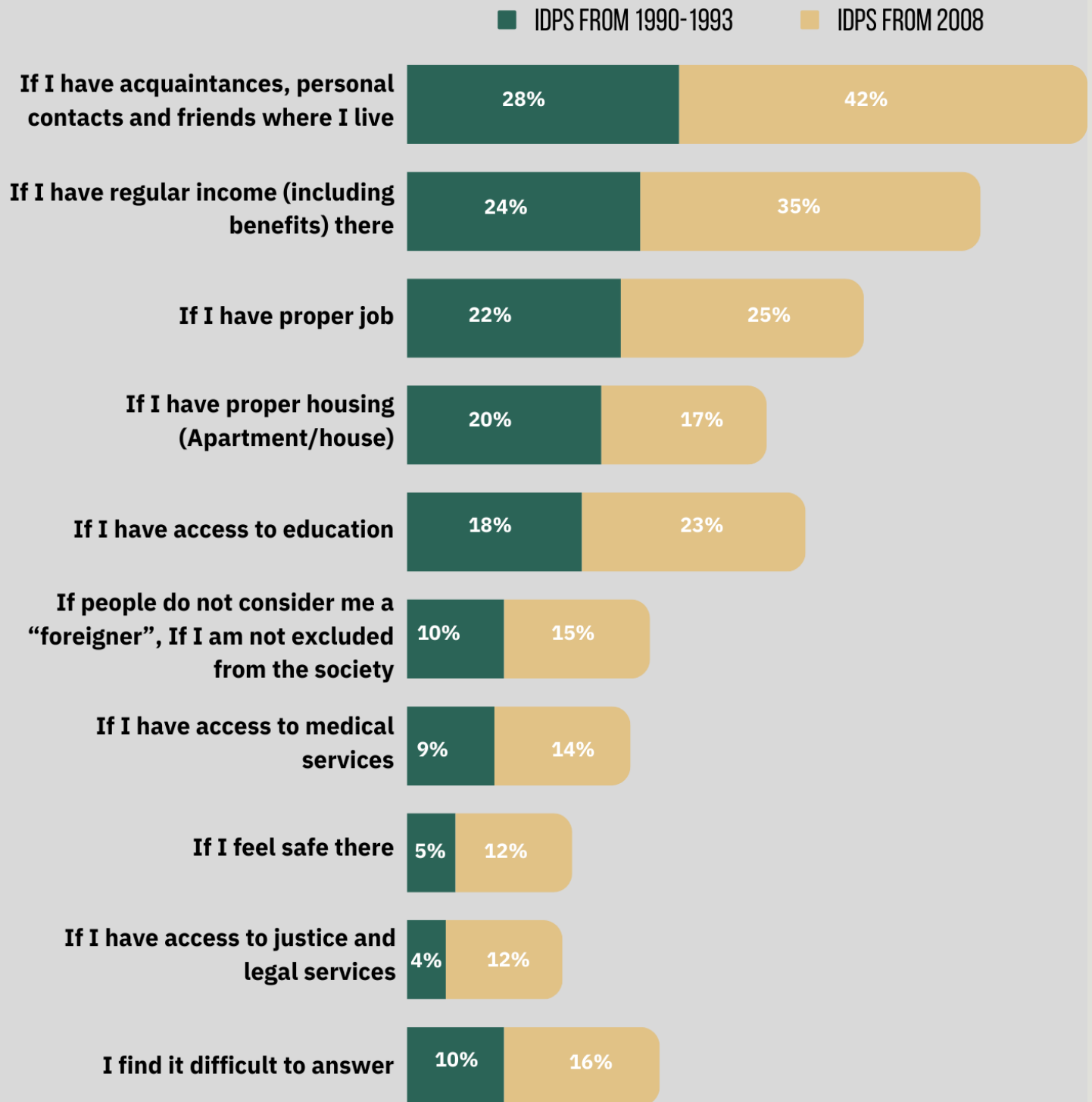
“ *They label us as ‘refugees,’ but when you lived in a building like that, no self-respecting person would stay, and others view you as pitiable and watered down. I’m not surprised. The status of an IDP should not perpetuate the stereotype of a ‘poor refugee’ for young people; otherwise, we have already succumbed to it. (IDP from Abkhazia, Batumi)*

The IDPs from the period of 1990-1993 also recollect the adverse consequences of the settlement of IDPs in the capital and municipalities. However, their reflections are more directed towards the period of their initial arrival rather than the present. These outcomes not so much mirror the examples provided by IDPs from 2008. It is noted that initially, it was challenging to adapt to the significant influx of displaced people. IDPs were initially perceived as guests who were expected to return home soon. Some respondents in this group believe that, owing to the challenging economic circumstances and the impact of several wars that the country experienced in recent decades, the local population struggled to adjust to the sudden emergence of IDPs due to following reasons:

- Already limited resources were further diminished, leading to heightened competition for jobs and land.
- The local population lost hope that the compact settlement facilities would revert to their original function, with jobs being created once again, particularly in the case of sanatoriums.
- The planning and appearance of cities underwent changes and distortions due to not being initially designed for such a substantial increase in population.
- Obligations and responsibilities have increased for local governments

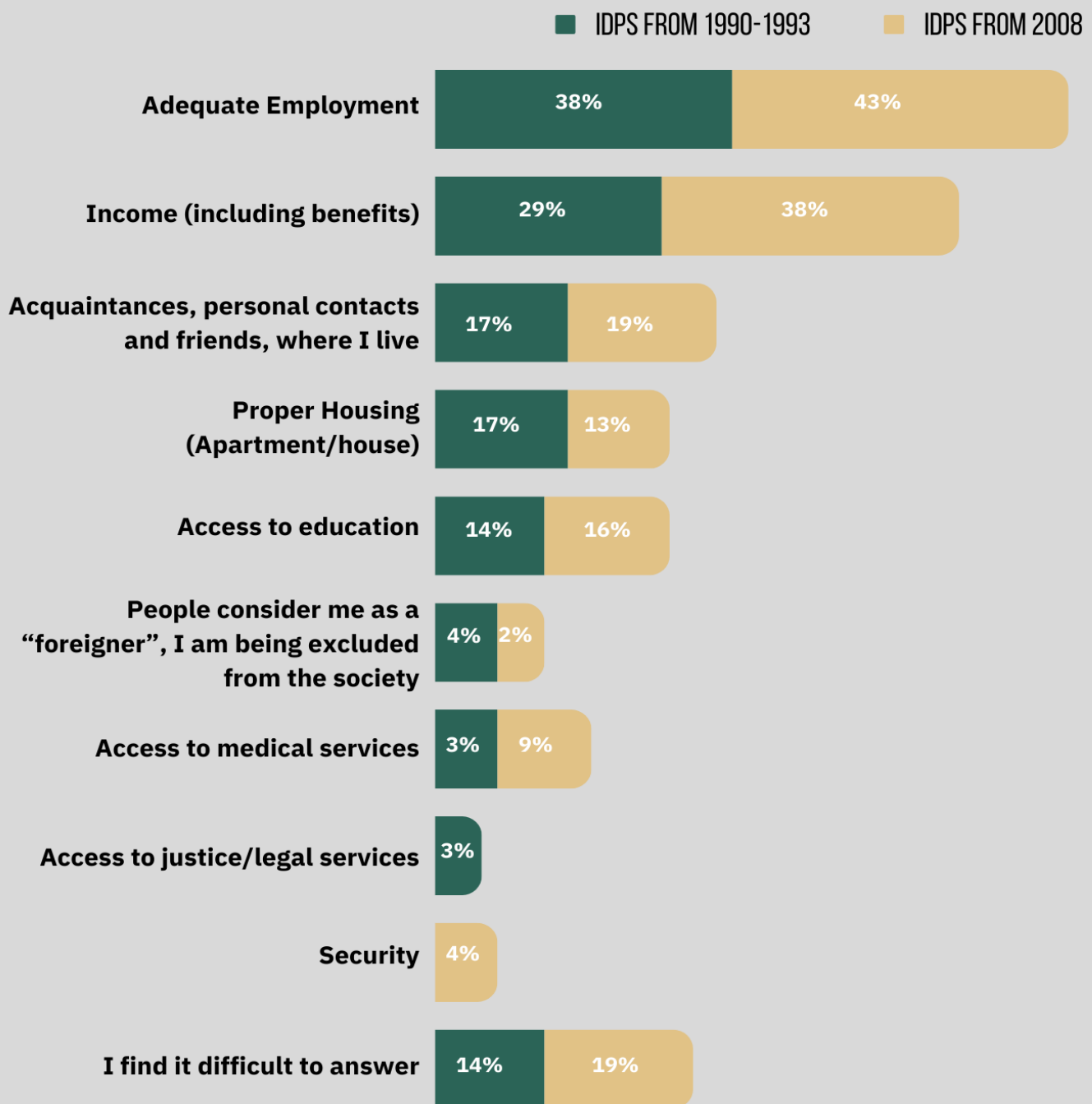
In response to the question, “What conditions are important to meet today for the promotion of better integration of IDPs?” uniform trends are discernible in the answers from both target groups. Foremost, establishing relationships and connections and adapting to society were emphasized, with statements like “If I have acquaintances, I will have personal contacts and I will have friends where I live” being predominant (28%-42%). This indicates that respondents associate social integration more closely with cultural and traditional values than with material or economic factors in their current locations. The importance of employment opportunities (22-25%) and economic status (24-35%) in public integration is also significant.

TO ENHANCE THE DEGREE OF INTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY IN YOUR CURRENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE, WHAT CONDITIONS DO YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT TO MEET?



Adequate employment (28%-43%) and income (29%-38%) are the predominant concerns for research respondents in the current period. It's worth noting that issues related to acquaintances and contacts (17%-19%) among research participants remain relevant, likely influenced by the frequency of changing residences to improve social status or for other purposes.

FROM THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS YOU MENTIONED FOR INTEGRATION, WHICH ONES DO YOU CURRENTLY FEEL THE NEED FOR?



Regarding the socio-economic legal status of the IDPs, which the state has established as a crucial norm for integration, it is evident from the discussed information that this status has been violated persistently. The notably inadequate level of information provided to the IDPs participating in the research regarding the number and content of the strategy document and the action plan demonstrates the degree of the document's effectiveness and the extent to which it is oriented toward problem resolution.

4.6 Opinions of the Organisation's Representatives

According to the opinions of the representatives of the organizations involved in the research, it is evident that the strategies developed and implemented over the years to address the challenges faced by the IDPs have been ineffective. For instance, the strategic document consistently emphasizes the establishment of minimum material conditions for IDPs as an ongoing concern. However, the practical significance of this content has remained unknown to IDPs for years. Integration for IDPs is not solely contingent on material well-being; it is crucial to establish and accomplish effective tasks for both IDPs and society. In this context, various approaches have been identified.

“Institutional Representation of IDPs” - in public institutions, the lack of representation of IDPs is a significant problem according to the respondents, and an important factor for the hindrance of integration. Because the representation of IDPs in municipalities, ministries, and parliaments directly impacts their interests from the government, their voice is heard on relevant issues, and, consequently, it affects public opinion.

“

Since 1999, IDPs do not have a voice in this country. The IDPs are not represented by the municipality, any non-governmental organization, nor their Ministry, which is no longer there at all, nor their government, nor their deputies. For me, this, first of all, has a symbolic meaning - it is a feeling that my voice is there. Besides that, the society and the IDPs themselves believe that the state considered the IDPs worthy of a special approach. Today, when even the Ministry of IDPs is abolished, it looks like an attempt to disappear the problems of IDPs from the orbit.

Some respondents emphasize the importance of displaced individuals moving away from a narrative of perpetual powerlessness and breaking free from the context of traumatic experiences and constant mourning. They believe it's crucial for displaced individuals to actively participate in shaping public opinion, extending beyond topics related solely to conflicts and territorial integrity. Successful instances of civil activism by IDPs can establish a positive foundation for their broader involvement in public life. Through various media channels, highlighting the image of a successful IDP, contrary to the stereotype of marginalized individuals at the mercy of others, can foster motivation for increased activity and initiative.

“

It is crucial for IDPs to break free from the narrative of perpetual powerlessness. This shift will undoubtedly enhance their activity and self-help skills. Additionally, showcasing the successes of IDPs across various domains through media, particularly television, as one of the most popular means, will positively impact public awareness and help diminish prejudices and stereotypes.

Communication between the IDPs and government agencies is deemed important by some respondents. They express concern that international donors may have recently withdrawn support, and this factor underscores the significance of government agencies in addressing the needs and concerns of IDPs.

“

Clearly, there has been a decline in funding from donors over time. Until recently, major donors were international non-governmental organizations, supporting numerous resettlement programs for Georgian IDPs. However, foreign funding is gradually diminishing, primarily due to the aging of the issue. Furthermore, Europe is currently grappling with a significant influx of refugees, necessitating the allocation of material and intellectual resources in that direction.

The respondents' discussions indicate that the state policy towards displaced persons from Abkhazia lacked consistency, and the activities were fragmented and less effective. According to the respondents, the state, by delaying the resolution of problems related to the accommodation of IDPs, hindered their integration, leaving them not only as IDPs but also as guests. While the respondents acknowledge the importance of the current state strategy and ongoing processes, they cannot overlook the weak moral and material support from the state over the years. For example, respondents highlight the extremely limited aid allocated to the IDPs as insufficient.

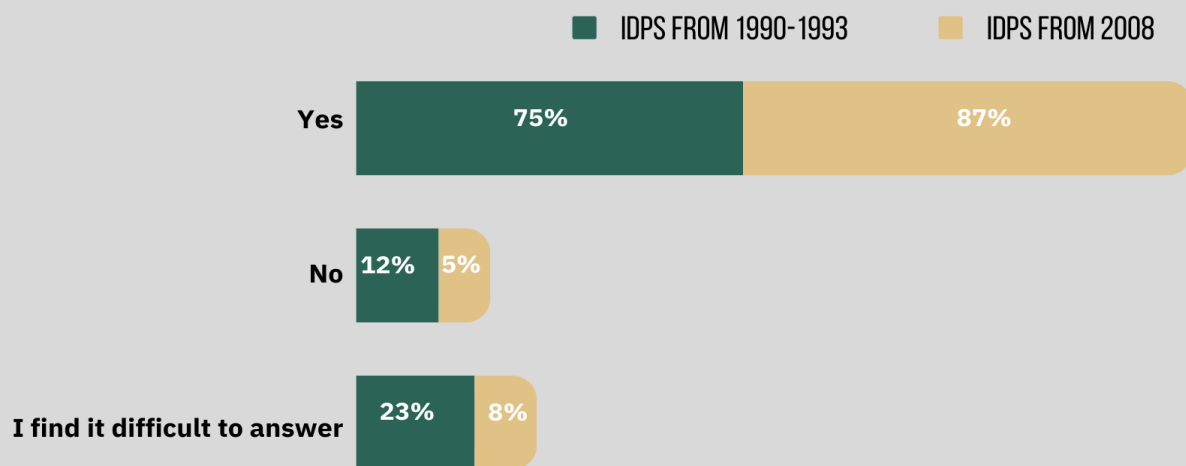
4.7 The Return

Before the new influx of displaced people following the 2008 war, the government's focus was evidently on the concept of return. Some opinions suggest that the rate of local integration for IDPs during that period was essentially low because expanding the role of local integration was deemed incompatible with the concept of return. Assimilating IDPs into local society or creating decent living conditions in the resettlement places provided at that time might reduce their desire to return home.

Recent socio-political studies indicate a diminishing relevance of issues related to Abkhazia and the so-called South Ossetia in society over time. Despite this trend, the order of reasoning among the respondents in the current research on existing needs, quantitative indicators, and discussions about return indicates that the spontaneous character of discussions on the issues of return among displaced persons has waned. However, significance emerges when considering attitudes toward a specific issue. Despite the prolonged forced displacement of IDPs, leading to challenging socio-economic conditions that contradict the positively charged lives experienced by IDPs in the past, the current situation of IDPs can be described as a state of uncertainty or marginality.

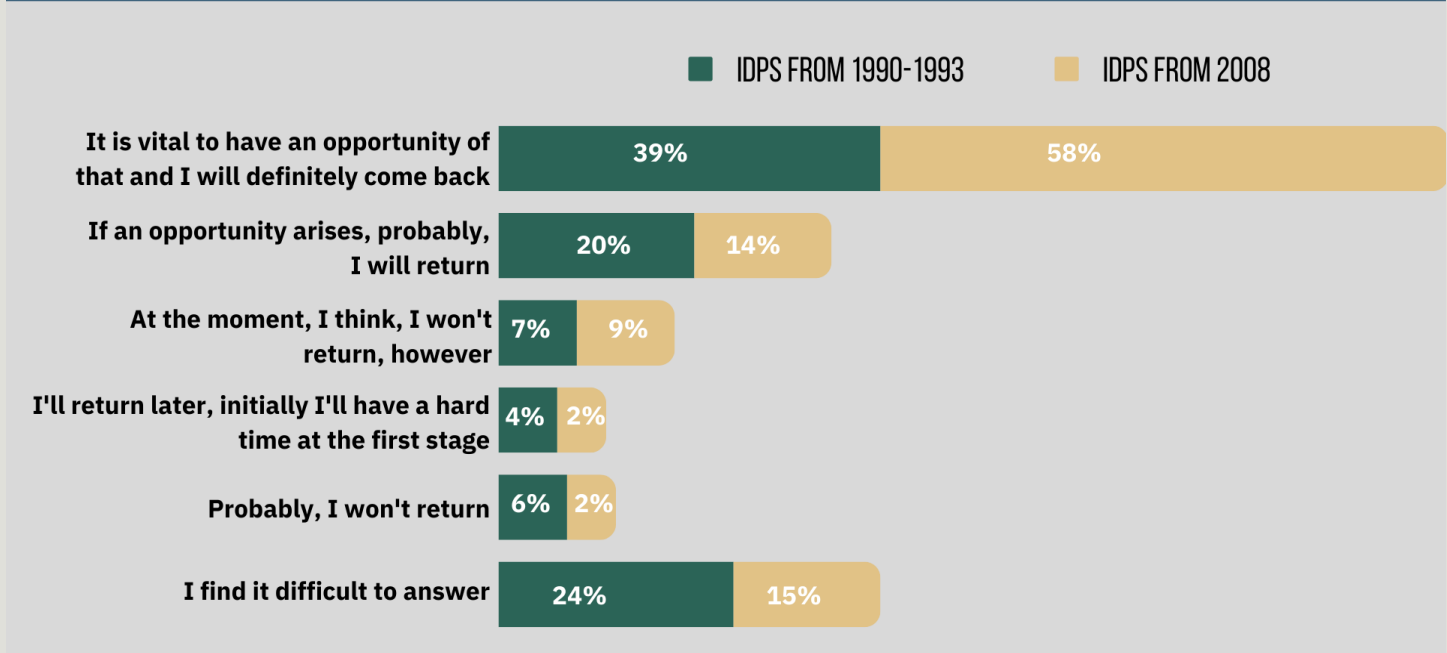
It is noteworthy that the majority of IDPs maintain an optimistic outlook and harbor hope regarding the possibility of return. Specifically, 75% of IDPs from the 90s and 75% of IDPs from 2008 believe that they will be afforded the opportunity to return to their homes permanently. A small percentage, comprising 5% of IDPs from 2008 and 12% of IDPs from the 90s, hold a negative attitude.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN TO YOUR PLACE OF RESIDENCE BEFORE DISPLACEMENT PERMANENTLY?



The research results indicate that, irrespective of the duration of displacement, the inclination to return to the original places of residence in both target segments is more positive than cautious, even among those who currently lack a residence. An interesting aspect for further discussion is how the data might change when real factual circumstances come into play. A minority of respondents express a conditional stance, stating "it depends on the situation" or acknowledging that "it will be difficult to return at the first stage."

WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS REGARDING THE PROSPECT OF RETURNING TO YOUR PLACE OF RESIDENCE BEFORE DISPLACEMENT?



Regarding the question “What is the main reason for the desire to return?” respondents’ answers can be summarized as follows:

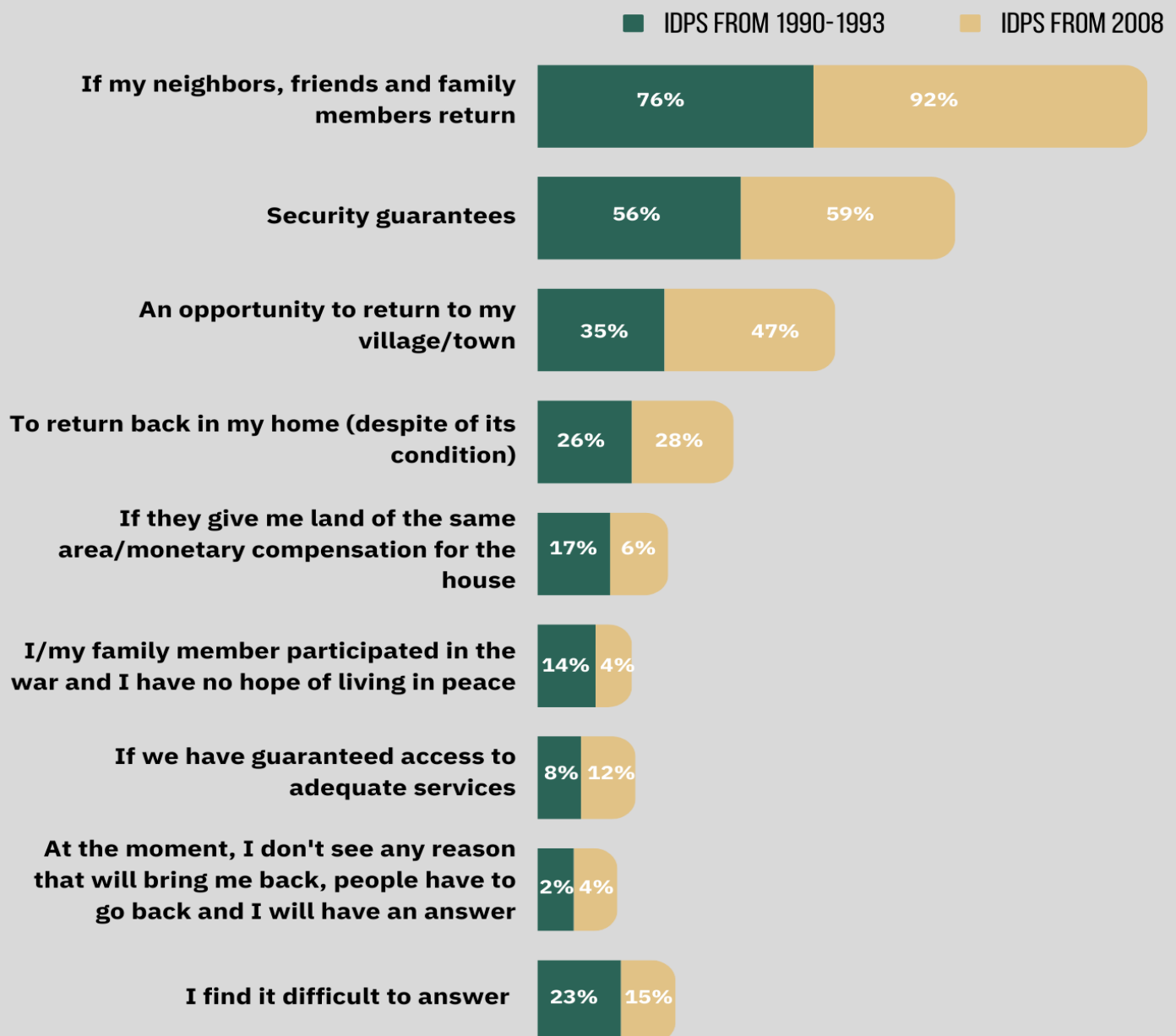
- I have been thinking only about returning since the first day of displacement (total 46%);
- For me, this is most significant for life because all emotions are connected with my place of residence (total 37%);
- My home is still there (total 38%);
- Friends and neighbors are waiting for me every day (total 17%);
- My family members/relatives’ graves are there (total 63%);
- My children do not know anything about their native residence (total 15%).

Those who reject returning after displacement generally express the following sentiments:

- Nothing is there; I’ve lost everything (28%);
- It is a completely different environment; all my relatives and friends are here (26%);
- I don’t know how safe it will be to live there for my family (18%);
- I don’t know anything about the social-economic situation there (10%);
- I cannot start a new life there once again (7%);
- Health conditions do not support the possibility of returning (16%);
- For peace of mind, it is essential that my relatives return, and I don’t know if they have decided or not (12%)

The majority of research respondents identify the return of relatives and friends as a crucial motivating factor (76-82%) for returning to their place of residence before displacement. Security assurances from the state hold considerable importance for respondents, with over half in each segment acknowledging its significant influence on the decision-making process, rendering it a hindering factor. Notably, responses from more than a third of each target group underscore the paramount importance of the possibility of return, which serves as a means to reinforce their decision, particularly concerning the return of territories. Evidently, the IDPs currently face challenges in terms of material conditions, as the majority of these conditions remain theoretical until the prospect of return becomes feasible.

FROM TODAY'S PERSPECTIVE, WHAT CONDITIONS DO YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT TO BE FULFILLED FOR YOU TO RETURN TO YOUR PLACE OF RESIDENCE BEFORE DISPLACEMENT?



4.8 Employment/Education

As evidenced by the research, the financial stability of the IDPs is notably precarious and insufficient. This circumstance is applicable to IDPs residing in collective settlements established in 2008, particularly those situated at a considerable distance from urban centers. Broadly speaking, a substantial portion of the respondents conveyed that their income falls short or barely covers the essential requirements for sustaining life.

The qualitative research outcomes underscored that a primary and significant challenge faced by the IDPs revolves around employment issues. The adverse socio-economic and political crisis conditions during the initial stage of Georgia's labor market formation were further exacerbated by the widespread unemployment among IDPs. Importantly, this issue persists as an unresolved problem to the present day.

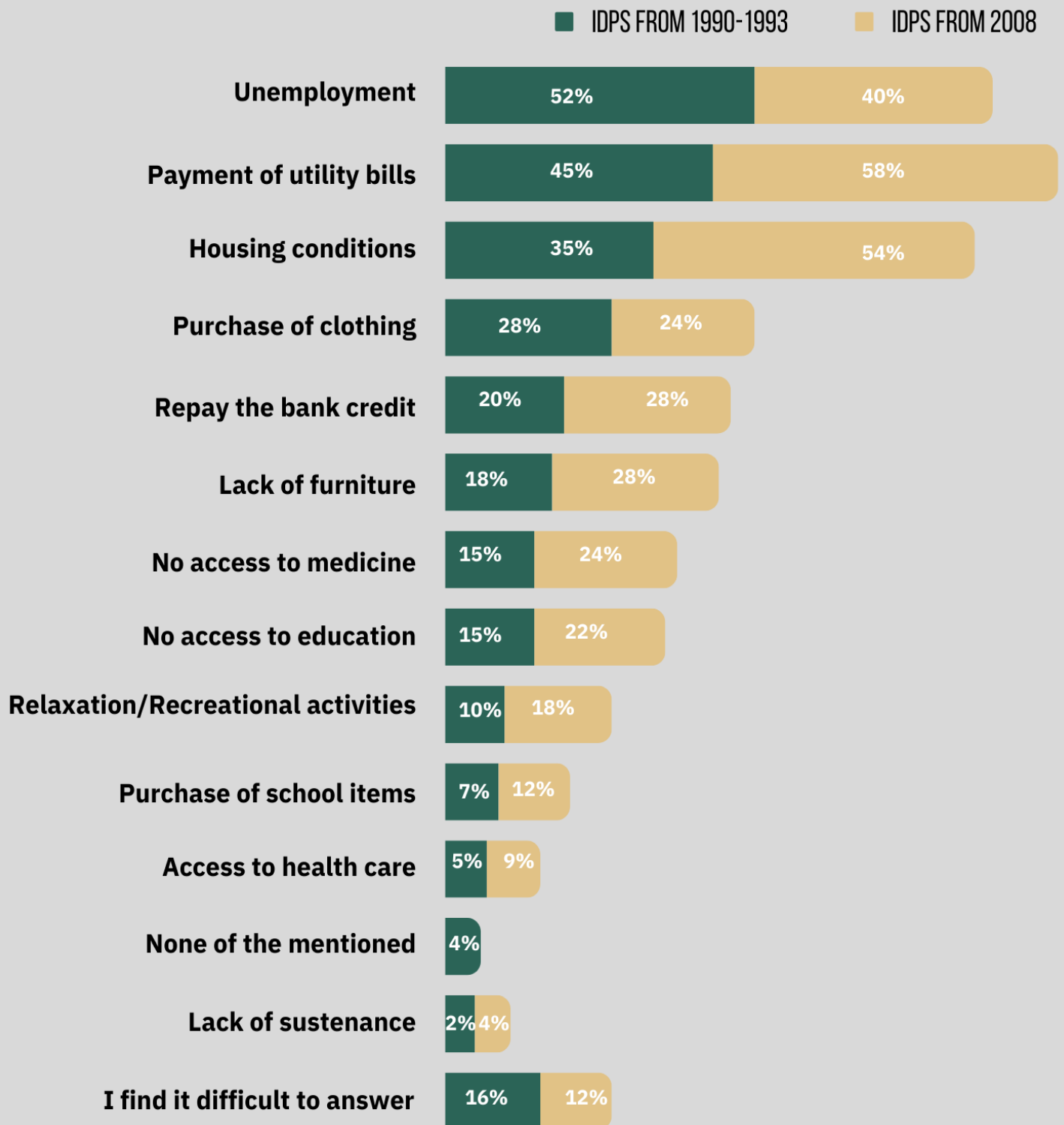
The challenge of widespread unemployment among individuals of working age is equally acute for internally displaced families originating from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. Predictably, this unemployment dilemma heightens the risk of economic insecurity for these families, and they articulate their concerns about this issue with a profound sense of distress. One can readily envisage the economic and social plight of those households wherein the majority or all of the working-age members have remained unemployed for extended periods.

The current situation becomes even more contemplative given that both urban residents and those displaced due to the conflicts in 1990-1993 and 2008 are reliant solely on cash income. However, juxtaposed against this, the low rates of employment among city residents underscore the particularly challenging employment conditions prevalent in rural areas.

The quantitative research findings highlight that unemployment emerges as the most pressing issue for the majority of respondents, with a notable percentage ranging from 40-52%. Utility bills, with a prevalence of 45-58%, and housing conditions, identified by 35-54% of respondents, constitute significant challenges for families of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Remarkably, the overall challenges faced by IDPs mirror the everyday struggles encountered by a substantial segment of society, encompassing issues such as the delicate balance between financial income and expenditure, which hinders the acquisition of essentials like clothing and furniture. Furthermore, the constraints on purchasing items extend to IDPs, reflecting in their difficulties arising from bank loans and credits, with a relevant percentage ranging from 20-28%.

In the context of the prevailing economic challenges, it is logical that a majority of families find themselves resorting to debt for various necessities. Insights from qualitative research indicate that, according to some respondents, the borrowed amounts are substantial. Notably, if the loan is acquired from a foreign entity, a private company, or a bank, respondents often face the additional burden of repaying interest on top of the principal amount. For those grappling with unemployment and a lack of real estate, inhibiting their interaction with traditional banks, respondents opt for pawnshops as a source of financial assistance. A specific source was named several times during the research.

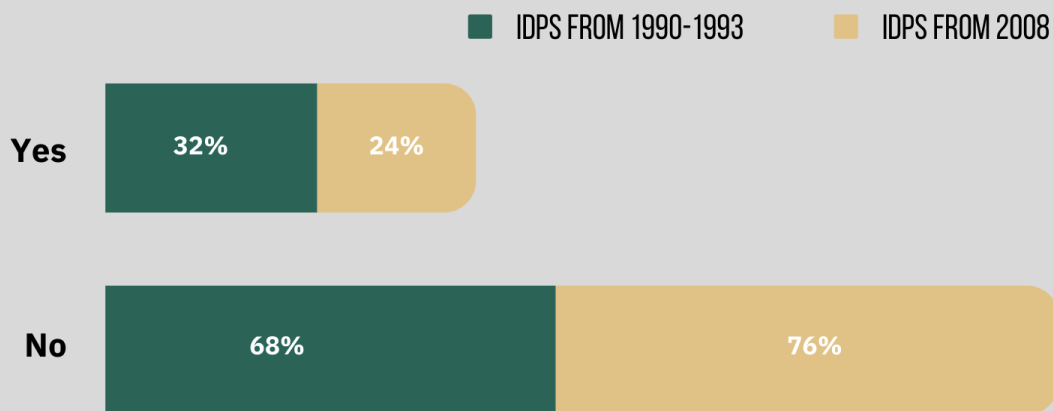
WHAT IS THE PRIMARY CONCERN AFFECTING YOUR FAMILY AMONG THE FOLLOWING ISSUES?



As indicated by the research findings, a subset of the interviewed respondents lacks work experience. The unemployed segment encounters substantial challenges in securing employment, with some individuals unable to find positions aligning with their professional expertise and qualifications. Approximately half of the respondents, irrespective of their profession and qualifications, struggle to secure any form of employment. Among the various challenges cited, issues such as inadequate salary, a dearth of proficiency in a foreign language, and age-related factors were mentioned.

According to the research findings, the current unemployment rates among the IDPs from the periods of 1990-1993 and 2008 stand at 68% and 76%, respectively.

ARE YOU EMPLOYED AT THE MOMENT?



Among the various causes of unemployment, the foremost factor, as indicated by the research, is the prevalence of employment issues in Georgia. This concern is particularly pronounced among IDPs from the periods of 1990-1993, with 48%, and 2008, with 60%. A comparable number of respondents underscore the significance of patronage for employment, expressing sentiments such as “I lack influential relatives who could assist me in securing a job,” with figures ranging from 45-58%. More than a third of IDPs from the 1990s and over half of those from 2008 attribute the employment problem to a lack of professional skills and craftsmanship. Approximately a quarter of respondents from both target groups emphasize the scarcity of services tailored to their specific needs, while an equivalent percentage believes that the current demands of the labor market do not align with their capabilities.

WHY ARE YOU UNEMPLOYED AT THE MOMENT?	IDPS FROM 1990-1993	IDPS FROM 2008
IN GENERAL, THERE ARE NO JOBS AVAILABLE IN THE COUNTRY	48%	60%
I DON'T HAVE INFLUENTIAL ACQUAINTANCES THAT WILL HELP ME TO FIND AN EMPLOYMENT	45%	58%
I HAVE NO OCCUPATION / CRAFTING ABILITIES (LACK OF JOB SEEKING AND SELF-PRESENTATION SKILLS)	35%	54%
IT'S HARD TO FIND A JOB THAT I LIKE	20%	28%
EMPLOYERS ARE ASKING FOR MORE WORK EXPERIENCE THAN I POSSESS	20%	28%
THE PASSIVITY OF JOB SEEKERS IS ALWAYS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR	18%	28%
I HAVE NO INFORMATION ABOUT JOBS	18%	30%
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PRESENT MY DATA TO A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER	17%	6%
I COULDN'T FIND A JOB WITH THE SALARY I WANT	16%	32%
FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS DON'T WANT ME TO WORK	16%	12%
FAMILY OBLIGATIONS HINDER ME FROM EMPLOYMENT	15%	22%
THERE IS NO EMPLOYMENT AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION IN MY CITY THAT WOULD HELP ME LOOK FOR A JOB	15%	24%
I AM A STUDENT AND I CANNOT COMBINE STUDIES AND EMPLOYMENT	14%	4%
I COULD NOT FIND A JOB CORRESPONDING TO MY KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS	10%	18%
I AM NOT QUALIFIED TO DO THE JOB I WOULD LIKE TO DO	10%	25%
I AM AFRAID OF LOSING THE AID/SOCIAL ALLOWANCE INTENDED FOR DISPLACED PERSONS	8%	12%
EMPLOYMENT IS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT FOR IDPS	6%	9%
EMPLOYERS REQUIRE INADEQUATELY HIGH QUALIFICATIONS FOR VACANT POSITIONS, WHICH IN MY OPINION ARE NOT NECESSARY	2%	4%

The qualitative research reveals that, owing to limited employment opportunities, certain respondents rely significantly on financial aid provided by the state. Taking into account the size of their households, the income for many families often falls short of meeting the basic subsistence minimum.

The respondents attribute the insufficiency of capital, lack of property, and reduced demand for services to be the primary reasons hindering their ability to maintain and develop their own businesses.

Several focus group participants are engaged in various forms of employment; nevertheless, in numerous instances, their current employment does not provide adequate economic security. Dissatisfaction is voiced by those employed in government institutions, primarily stemming from low salaries. Additionally, they face ongoing risks associated with continuous reforms. Similarly, individuals employed in the private sector or engaged in day jobs encounter their own uncertainties and risks.

The research indicates a high prevalence of structural unemployment in both the broader labor market of Georgia and among the IDPs. This phenomenon can be attributed, on one hand, to the disorganization within the professional training system and, on the other hand, to the distorted perception among the population regarding employment opportunities associated with specific professions. For instance, individuals believe that obtaining a specialization as an economist or lawyer provides the optimal chance for integration into the labor market. A third factor contributing to this situation is deemed to be the low quality of professional training, encompassing areas such as teaching and engineering.

Despite the absence of legal or administrative restrictions on the employment rights of the IDPs, they highlight several obstacles encountered when seeking employment or engaging in agricultural work:

- **Limited availability of workplace opportunities.**
- **Insufficient or inadequate skills:**
- **Limited access to land ownership.**
- **Difficulty obtaining necessary resources for initiating personal business ventures or obtaining credits.**
- **The presence of nepotism.**

The qualitative research reveals that in the targeted municipalities under research, there is a scarcity of private enterprises. Instead, there is a prevalence of small-scale operations such as tea, nut, and wood sawmills, characterized by intermittent employment. According to interviewees, the IDPs primarily sustain themselves through trade. Some IDPs engage in local business activities, while others operate in different cities, supporting their families from afar. Certain IDPs own their business facilities, while others work within or trade at these establishments or in local markets. When suitable opportunities arise, IDPs contribute to local communities by engaging in activities such as plot work and firewood cutting, receiving appropriate compensation. Although some IDPs pursue livelihoods in specific crafts, the research participants could not identify crafts that are in high demand within the municipalities.

Municipalities face challenges in significantly assisting the IDPs with employment, primarily due to the physical absence of job opportunities and the prolonged presence of IDPs in the local territories. This limitation arises from the need to avoid potential tensions with the local population, who may share similar employment challenges. However, it is acknowledged that when various projects arise, IDPs have fewer employment opportunities compared to the local population.

While the 45 GEL assistance to displaced persons is acknowledged as important for all the interviewed families, its impact is perceived more as humanitarian rather than a significant financial benefit. Respondents do not categorize the assistance provided to the IDPs as part of their income, emphasizing that pensions and salaries remain the primary sources of income.

Respondents engaged in addressing the concerns of the IDPs assert that the substantial humanitarian aid and monetary compensations provided during the early stages of displacement have, to some extent, contributed to the dependency of IDPs on aid. This, according to the respondents, is cited as a factor influencing the elevated unemployment rates among IDPs. For instance, the limited presence of self-employed individuals among IDPs and a perceived lack of initiative or an indifferent attitude towards participating in various programs are attributed by some respondents to a perceived “lazy nature” within a specific segment of the IDP population.

“

When I reached adulthood and had to manage my own employment, especially after starting a family, I understood the necessity of working for a living. I question the notion that others are obligated to provide constant assistance. Many individuals fail to leverage their abilities effectively. The IDPs ought to proactively strive to move beyond the victim role. The post-conflict syndrome, characterized by a tendency to remain in distress and expect perpetual help, hinders the initiative to overcome challenges.

The relatively modest contribution of income from agricultural activities can be partly attributed to the respondents' perception of agriculture. On one hand, there is a mental association of income with activities that involve receiving a salary through paid employment rather than self-employment. On the other hand, the research indicates that products derived from agricultural activities in the surveyed settlements are seldom sold or converted into monetary value.

According to the respondents, a few years ago, the IDPs faced restrictions as they were prohibited from owning agricultural land in private ownership. Presently, this restriction has been lifted, allowing IDPs to purchase land through auctions, albeit with limited financial capacity. In response to this challenge, some IDPs collaboratively acquire land, pooling their resources to collectively pursue livelihoods.

It is important to highlight the situation of the IDPs resettled in newly constructed or rehabilitated collective settlements. These individuals had to undergo a change in their geographical location and perceive encountering substantial challenges, particularly concerning employment.

The IDPs relocated from Tskaltubo to Batumi express dissatisfaction, stating that they were promised employment by the Ministry prior to the resettlement. Regrettably, these promises were not honored. Similar grievances are voiced by IDPs from other regions resettled in Poti.

“

We were informed that there were construction projects everywhere, and we would be employed. This news brought us joy. However, when we inquired about the construction opportunities, we were met by a Turkish manager. It turns out that all construction work is done by Turkish workers. We have yet to find our place anywhere. Is this not a blatant deception?
(Batumi, Benze)

“

We were provided with information about the employment opportunities in Poti before relocating. They suggested living by the sea and engaging in fishing. However, fishing demands specific knowledge, experience, proper equipment, and water transport. They even remarked, “Where are you, how did you live here? You can make a living elsewhere.” This attitude intensifies our frustration, although we are aware that the issue of employment is currently one of the most pressing challenges in the country. (Poti, Maltakva)

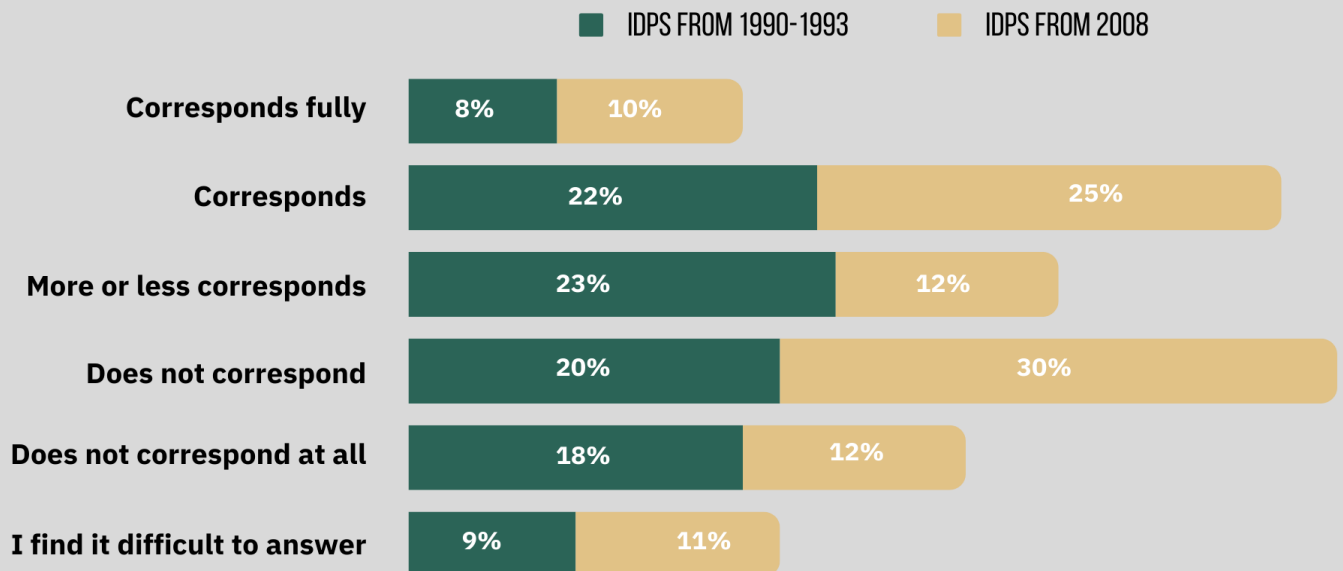
Displaced youths are seamlessly integrated into society, experiencing no barriers to employment. They hold the perspective that both the local and displaced populations enjoy equal opportunities for employment within the local labor market.

The research findings indicate that a significant majority of respondents fall short of meeting the minimum requirements of the labor market in terms of knowledge, skills, and employment opportunities. For instance, 67% of interviewees among the IDPs from the 1990s and 60% among the IDPs from 2008 do not possess a resume. Interestingly, as the research delved deeper, a notable number of respondents demonstrated an unexpected lack of awareness regarding the necessity of creating a resume.

Within the research framework, respondents conducted self-assessments of their abilities. A significant majority expressed the belief that their competencies, knowledge, and skills do not align with the requirements of employers.

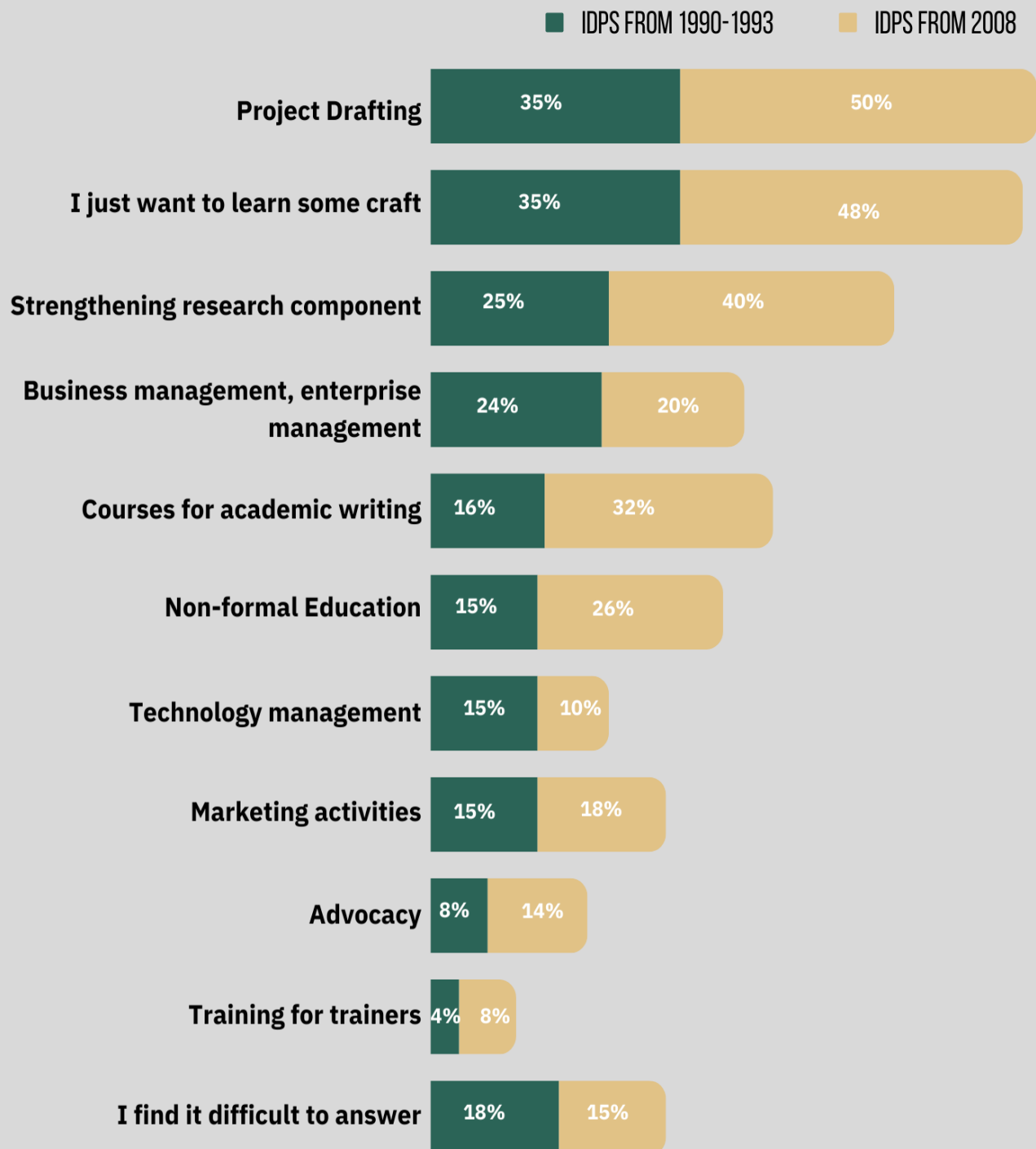
In response to the question, “If you were offered a consultation, training, program, workshop, master class, in what direction would you like to gain knowledge?” It is evident from the respondents’ answers that there is a high willingness to actively engage in such opportunities. The majority express a desire to acquire proficiency in project writing or to learn practical crafts/specialties (35-50%). Notably, only 12% of research participants expressed a lack of interest in attending training and workshops of any content and program. This low percentage is particularly noteworthy, given the research’s indication of low self-evaluations of their own skills by the respondents.

HOW WELL DO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND COMPETENCIES ALIGN WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT?



It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents (75%) perceive participation in short-term educational activities in a face-to-face setting as more optimal, considering it to be more efficient and effective compared to distance learning.

IF YOU WERE OFFERED A CONSULTATION, TRAINING, TRAINING PROGRAM, WORKSHOP, MASTER CLASS, IN WHAT DIRECTION WOULD YOU LIKE TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE?



Respondents lack information about employment promotion programs, and there is a diminished level of trust in employment agencies, selection contests, and particularly government employment sites. According to respondents, employment agencies are often perceived as serving merely as registers of job vacancies and the unemployed, rather than effectively facilitating connections between employers and job seekers. This perception contributes to the belief that the activities of these agencies are less effective.

Some participants in the qualitative research advocate for a focus on retraining in specific crafts as a means to facilitate the self-employment of the IDPs, particularly in situations where there is a scarcity of enterprises.

According to the respondents, the primary requirement in the surveyed municipalities is the establishment of mini-factories and factories, particularly in those areas facing a severe shortage of land. The idea is that these enterprises could subsequently provide opportunities for retraining the IDPs in specialized areas aligned with the functions of these newly established facilities.

The respondents view the establishment of small agricultural enterprises, particularly those focused on fruit processing, as the most promising avenue for development in the surveyed municipalities. However, they emphasize the vital importance of assistance from the state or non-governmental/international organizations in this direction. Agriculture represents a domain with a rich tradition of work, and respondents in this sector feel more reliant on their own abilities rather than on external factors. Therefore, according to the respondents, advising the IDPs on more effective ways to acquire land, such as establishing farms, is desirable. However, respondents emphasize that retraining would be less effective without accompanying financial support, even if it is a modest amount, to enable IDPs to initiate their own businesses and meet the initial minimum needs.

- Respondents have identified woodworking as a promising direction for retraining. They note the presence of wood processing workshops in the municipalities, leveraging Georgia's general richness in timber. Consequently, they consider the establishment of wood processing and furniture enterprises to be a promising avenue for development.
- According to the respondents, organizing cutting and sewing courses could serve as a foundation for the establishment of tailoring businesses. However, in the case of both furniture production and sewing enterprises, the respondents admit to having no clear idea about the profitability of these ventures.
- Tea cultivation is mentioned as a promising direction in Samegrelo. While respondents express skepticism about finding a market for selling tea, some of them still consider tea cultivation to be promising based on past experience.
- Respondents discuss and identify the potential of tourism, noting that municipalities possess corresponding resources and traditions.

The interviewed IDPs expressed a desire to organize various thematic circles for school children, recognizing that the opportunity for education for them is primarily limited to the school setting.

Questions related to general, professional, and higher education are aspects of the research where respondents lack answers. It's important to note that the opinions of the respondents involved in the research are consistently uniform:

- The majority of respondents' children attend local schools, which are integrated into Georgia's education system.

- After completing school, a significant portion continues their education in higher educational institutions.
- Occupational schools experience low popularity, despite the potential role they could play as a key link in promoting the employment of the IDPs.

According to some representatives of the organization, enabling the IDPs to engage in economic activities requires teaching them general skills such as drafting a business plan/project, conducting market research, business management, and understanding tax issues. This is intended to instill self-confidence stemming from sufficient awareness to initiate a small or medium-sized business. Besides general skills, a significant portion of IDPs also requires professional training, necessitating the organization of qualified training programs for them.

The respondents believe that there is a significant number of the IDPs who possess considerable experience and skills, but they need official confirmation to facilitate easier access to the labor market. Consequently, they emphasize the importance of financing the recruitment of experts in various fields and developing an evaluation and certification system that would be agreed upon and recognized in collaboration with relevant state agencies. The consideration of adopting the Law on Vocational Education presents new opportunities in terms of vocational training.

Additionally, the respondents highlight the importance of having an effective mechanism to connect human resources with market requirements. While the state-established “worknet” is operational, the primary challenge lies in validating skills. Therefore, they propose the establishment of an IDP database that indicates a person’s skills and qualifications through a reliable and understandable criterion. This database could serve as an important mechanism for promoting employment by directing or recommending different IDPs based on business needs.

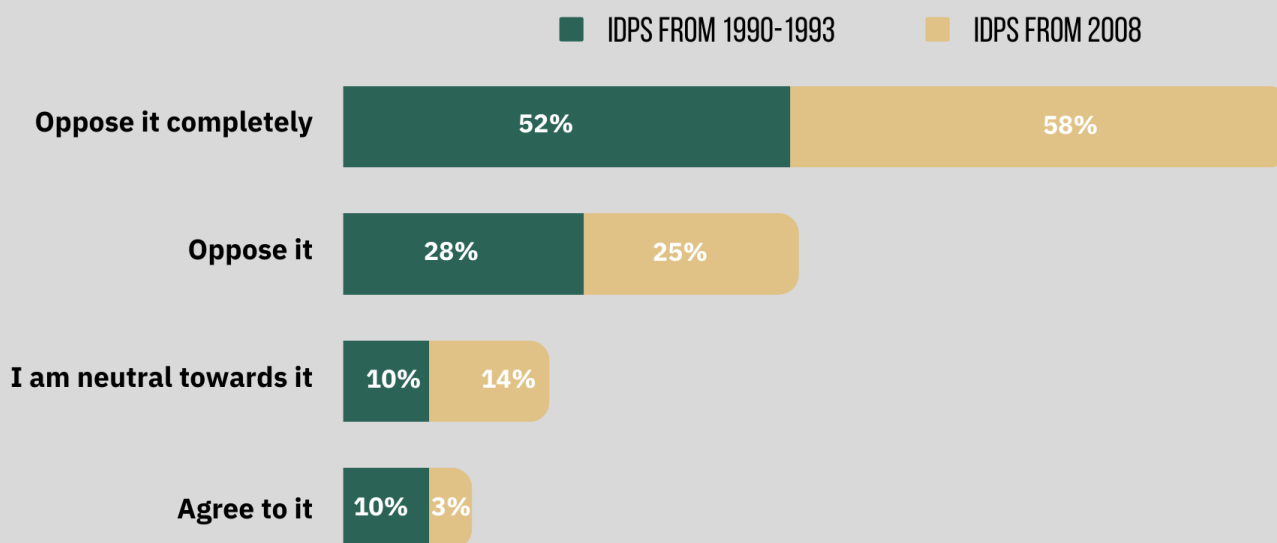
4.9 Miscellaneous Issues

The IDPs receive allowance or assistance below the poverty line. However, respondents associate the status of being a displaced person with additional protection. According to the interviewees, some expect that the removal of the displaced person’s allowance could jeopardize the status of being forcibly displaced. Nevertheless, they are aware that the status of an IDP is not subject to verification, unlike the status of being below the poverty line, which is always subject to review.

The quantitative research conducted in the framework of the research revealed that 74% of the respondents view the termination of assistance to the IDPs as a potential risk factor, particularly after 2017 when the government initiated specific changes. There is a concern that terminating assistance, especially after ceasing to provide IDPs with living conditions or monetary compensation, could lead to a reconsideration of their displaced status. However, it’s important to note that this concern is shared by only a small portion of the respondents. The interviewees express the belief that the government would be hesitant to risk revoking their status, as a significant number of IDPs could pose challenges for the government, particularly during the election period.

A substantial majority, 80% of the IDPs, express opposition to the suspension of aid to IDPs. The neutral stance, identified in slightly more than a tenth of the respondents, is mainly prevalent among young people. Particularly for some of the displaced youth from the 90s, as mentioned, the status is perceived as a part of the history of their homeland rather than an individual belonging.

WHAT IS YOUR STANCE ON THE SUSPENSION OF ASSISTANCE TO THE IDPS?



Interestingly, social status, which denotes their economic vulnerability, is quite popular among the displaced population. The demand for social status is significantly higher, indicating a substantial difference from the amount of aid provided to displaced persons. However, participants in focus groups highlight that economic hardship is not exclusive to the displaced population. They illustrate that both displaced and local residents face similar difficulties, as evidenced by both groups making similar requests to municipalities to enrol in programs for those below the poverty line, and often experiencing the same outcomes.

In the qualitative research, the respondents express minimal discussion about specific healthcare issues due to their satisfaction with the healthcare service. They note that healthcare issues are adequately covered by state insurance. Even though the status of an IDP does not entail additional benefits in this regard, the respondents do not express any complaints.

The respondents exhibit low awareness of their rights, both concerning the operations of local government bodies on various issues and in terms of awareness about accommodation conditions and their practical aspects. It's important to note that the results obtained are more indicative of the respondents' preparedness for such activities rather than being practically expressed through concrete actions.

During the focus group sessions, respondents highlighted that when problems arose, they most frequently engaged with the chairpersons of the buildings' committee. This committee serves as an intermediary link between the municipality and the settlement, conveying the problems to the local government bodies. While some respondents express dissatisfaction with the committee's work, perceiving them as less effective ("they are passive or do not want possible confrontations or troubles with the municipality"), but these are the people who know the hardships of the settlers "from the inside".

This time, the institution of committee chairpersons has been abolished in newly built and rehabilitated apartments. The results of the research do not confirm the respondents' motivation for its restoration, although they still express a desire to have a connecting/intermediary link with the local or central government.

It was observed that the respondents directly contacted various state agencies relatively infrequently, primarily to address specific and less routine problems (such as obtaining an IDP certificate, acquiring a new residence, or dealing with matters like marriage or death where financial assistance is provided). However, in recent times, the increased resettlement of IDPs in collective centers has led to a rise in their appeals in this regard. The respondents' appeals are mainly triggered by issues related to the scarcity of available space or concerns related to the distribution of apartments.

It should be noted that the indifferent attitude towards information about laws, the rights of IDPs, and the conditions of resettlement is influenced by past experiences. On one hand, there is a sense of hopelessness regarding the supportive stance of the government and local governments. On the other hand, the multitude of problems that impede the activities of displaced people in this direction contributes to their public passivity. Respondents articulate this approach as follows.

“*We submitted a complaint to the authorities and told them about the problems we have, they retored that others also had issues with housing and we already had new apartments.* (Batumi, Benze)

“*I settled the people in Potskho, and what are your complaints”, the representatives of the Ministry answered us.* (Poti, Maltakva)

“*In Kutaisi, the mayor (representative of the Ministry), who is supposed to protect the people, is the protector of the government. You have a complaint and that's where their relationship with you ends.* (Kutaisi, Nikea str)

“*It doesn't matter to have information about laws and rights. The more you know, the angrier you become at injustice. However, if you file a statement, request something within the law, they will put it aside.* (Tbilisi)

“*I have diabetes, I am constantly on medication, but not on insulin. When I wrote a statement about health policy, they answered, 'you are not on insulin,' and did not satisfy me. They do not consider anything. What's the point of saying anything? Was there any result? I even came to Tbilisi with some problems, but to no avail. Doesn't this need money, time, nerves, endurance?!* (Batumi, Leonidze str. No15)

It should be noted that facilitating a broad public discussion about return mechanisms and justice with the active participation of IDPs is important, and such discussions should be based on reliable sources of information. At the end of the research, the respondents identified the main issues that are particularly important to them and emphasized existing needs as recommendations. Interestingly, the requests made by the respondents, as a result of the research, are, in fact, generally identical to the requests of the local residents, and the benefits of the IDPs are not directly reflected in the content of any provision.

PLEASE, SPECIFY THE ESSENTIAL REQUISITES THAT ARE PARAMOUNT FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF YOUR FAMILY'S NEEDS	
APARTMENT/HOUSE RENOVATION	19.1%
REDUCTION OF UTILITY BILLS	15%
PROVIDING SOCIALLY VULNERABLE FAMILIES WITH MEDICINES	11.7%
INFORMING OF THE POPULATION ABOUT THE IDP PROGRAMS ACTIVELY	10.6%
EASY AND TIMELY ACCESS TO MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES (CREATING A SINGLE SERVICE SYSTEM/CREATING INFORMATION CENTERS, RECEIVING INFORMATION VIA SMS)	9.4%
ARRANGEMENT OF OF SEWERAGE SYSTEMS	8.6%
FREQUENT DISCUSSIONS ON THE ISSUES OF IDPS IN THE MEDIA	8.3%
IMPROVEMENT OF SQUARES/GARDENS/STADIUMS IN IDP SETTLEMENTS	6%
MORE COMMUNICATION WITH IDPS FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND CARE FOR SOLVING THEIR PROBLEMS/GAINING TRUST AMONG THE POPULATION	5.1%
ARRANGEMENT OF DRAINAGE SYSTEMS	4.6%
DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS/ INCREASE OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THE PROCESS OF WORKING WITH IDPS	4.6%
MORE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUTH AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN VARIOUS ACTIVITIES/MORE SUPPORT OF YOUTH	4.3%
OBSERVANCE OF SANITARY NORMS/ADDING BINS IN COLLECTIVE SETTLEMENTS/WET CLEANING OF STREETS AND BINS	4.3%
I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ANSWER	20%

5. Recommendations

- Ensuring the transparency of the resettlement process and the active participation of the community in this process is crucial;
- It is necessary to enhance state control over the quality of construction and repair of residential houses, ensuring the adherence to reasonable deadlines.
- Ensuring the involvement of IDPs during the planning and implementation of socio-economic and infrastructural projects, especially in municipalities and regions inhabited by IDP communities, is important.
- It is important for state structures to adopt a dialogue mode with the displaced community, including active participation in meetings initiated by international organizations, as requested by the IDPs.
- It is necessary to ascertain the number of displaced families that have not received any assistance from the state and develop a plan outlining the types of measures the state can offer them in the future.
- It is important that approaches and policies towards IDPs are organized around opportunities and successful examples. The current situation in the IDP community does not align with the state's law-enforced definition of integration, contributing to fostering dependence in the IDP community and impeding autonomous action.
- Creating a favourable business environment to promote small and medium-sized businesses in IDP settlements is crucial.
- The complex promotion of community-oriented, sustainable, and responsible business development is important. However, promoting the sale of IDP products and attracting wider audiences to create examples of success with a permanent face remains relevant to breaking stereotypes.
- It is important for the state to develop mechanisms to incentivize employers who actively promote the employment of IDPs.
- It should become a priority for the state to establish criteria for promoting the participation of displaced youth in higher educational institutions, including foreign educational programs.
- It is crucial to unveil the intellectual and professional potential within the displaced community and enact genuine integration strategies grounded in their inherent resources.
- It is imperative to establish a comprehensive governmental coordination mechanism to thoroughly delineate state-implemented projects and evaluate their coherence. The necessity arises from the requirement for specific data on funded entities and a comprehensive description of project/program performance, aiming to enhance the identification of pertinent factors for future funding facility selection. This need is predicated on the prevailing view that financed projects are frequently expended in an inefficient manner.

- It is essential to formulate and execute mechanisms for the active engagement of the displaced community in peace and public processes. Furthermore, there is a need to advocate for measures regarding return mechanisms and justice, encompassing a broad public discussion.

- It is crucial to empower regional structures responsible for addressing the concerns of IDPs with effective and sufficient authority and responsibilities to secure their functional role in addressing the issues of IDPs. Additionally, it is vital to ensure the active engagement of the IDP community.

- Ensuring the representation of IDPs in the government and state agencies is crucial to establish correlations between the political participation of IDPs and decision-making structures.

- It is essential to enhance the involvement of the Public Defender of Georgia, ensuring a clear reflection of the issues faced by IDPs in the annual reports. This is generally a prerequisite for the determination of priorities by the state.

- It is crucial to develop and implement a needs-based information/awareness campaign for IDPs covering health care, agriculture, local infrastructure, environmental protection, state, and non-governmental programs. The objective should not only be to inform but also to actively promote the responsibilities of IDPs.

