



Assessment of needs for psychosocial rehabilitation and re-socialization among probationers and probation staff

Qualitative research report

The survey was conducted within the project: “Back to Society: establishing social bureaus for former prisoners, prisoners and probations, including drug users” funded by European Union. Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health “Tanadgoma” is responsible for the survey and its contents. This report does not reflect the views of the European Union Delegation to Georgia.

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Introduction

The research has been conducted within the **project** “Back to society: establishing Social Bureaus for former inmates, prisoners and probationers in Georgia” financially supported by EU. The project is being implemented by Tanadgoma - Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health (Georgia), Mainline Foundation (the Netherlands), AIDS Foundation East West (AFEW – Ukraine).

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The goals of the survey are:

- Assessment of the needs of persons under probation in terms of psychosocial rehabilitation and re-socialization;
- Collect information from probation staff regarding their needs to successfully carry out psychosocial rehabilitation and re-socialization services and obstacles to implementation of these services;
- Analyze the findings of qualitative research and draw out the recommendations for improvement of psychosocial rehabilitation and re-socialization programs for persons under probation;
- Based on final results of the survey prepare a “Guide for health and social services provision” for probation personnel.

Geographical area of the research: The survey has been conducted in 4 different cities of Georgia -Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi.

Target groups: The target groups for this qualitative research are:

- Probationers in four cities of Georgia (Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Zugdidi);
- Probation officers from the Probation Bureaus located in four cities of Georgia (Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Zugdidi).

Survey methodology: 4 Focus group discussions (1 per city) and 20 in-depth interviews (5 per city) were conducted with probationers; 4 Focus group discussions (1 per city) and 20 in-depth interviews (5 per city) were conducted with probation officers. In total - 40 in-depth interviews and 8 Focus group discussions.

Focus group discussions and In-depth interviews were conducted using previously elaborated and approved questionnaires. Separate questionnaires were created for In-depth interviews and Focus group discussions. Interviews and discussions were recorded by audio recorder (after receiving a consent from all participants) and experienced facilitators and interviewers were involved in the process. Quality control was done by the project coordinator and executive director of the implementing organization “Tanadgoma”.

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Part I (Probation officers)

Socio-demographic features

A) General information

Age of the participants varies from 24 to 51 years. The majority of the probation officers participated in the survey is under the age of 40. Only 3 participants are above 40.

All the participants are with higher education. Most of them have received high juridical education. Only a few participants are with diplomas in economics or international relations. The participants indicate that there is no requirement to have a juridical education for being employed as probation officer:

„-: It is not mandatory to have a high juridical education to be employed in our bureau” (Tbilisi, IdI (In-depth Interview) # 1, 11-12).*

The length of working at the position of probation officer varies from 1 to 9 years. They work full time from 10 AM to 6 PM. Most of the survey participants have previous working experience in public service such as, office of the public defender, city court, etc. Only a few respondents have previous experience working in private sector (“Geocell”-mobile network) and nongovernmental organizations.

B) Working conditions

All participants have their own desk, chair and computer. None of them has individual room. The officer shares the office with 4 to 10 other colleagues depending on room size. In most cases they share the room with other officers, sometimes with social workers:

„-(R.5): There are big rooms... Some of the rooms are 20 sq.m., some-12 sq.m... we are 4 or 6 persons in rooms... (Tbilisi, FGD (Focus Group Discussion), 22-24).

„-: Rooms are arranged according to the regions, there are 6 or 8 employees sitting in the rooms. 8 persons in the room is rare case in most cases there are 6 persons in the room. All are probationer officers and doing the same job“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 13-15).

The working space attributed to one officer does not exceed 5-6 sq. meters:

„+: Do you have your own working space?

-: Yes I do.

+: How big is it?

- : Around 5 sq. meters- desk and cupboard“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 32-35).

***- + attributes to the interviewer, - attributes to the respondent.**

In some probation offices the officers' working spaces are separated by the dividers. It creates more comfort during the meeting of probationer and the officer as visualization of this meeting is not possible for other persons in the room, but still the sound can be heard and full comfort and confidence can't be achieved:

„-: There is a big room where 10 people are sitting, we all have our individual desks, individual computers, spaces are divided by special dividing partials, so we cannot see each other, but the voices can't be isolated...”(Batumi, IdI #3, 19-23).

The working environment of probation officers working with underage probationers is much better. There are 3-4 persons working in one room. They also have a separate room for private meeting with the probationer though this room is often busy and the officers cannot use it. Therefore in most cases they are using their offices which they share with other colleagues:

„-: So there are 2 rooms, in one of them I'm working with 2 social workers and in another room – 4 social workers are sitting. Also there is one small room for individual meetings but this room is busy as we have quite a lot individual meetings. So I have to meet the probationer in my room which I share with others (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 26-30).

Part of the respondents think that their working space and working environment are fully in accordance of the standards:

„-: Nobody disturbs you, you have your own desk and that's enough... (a few other participants agree and nod their heads) (Tbilisi, FGD, 31-32).

During the in-depth interviews the majority of the respondents indicate that the working space attributed to the officer is not enough and does not create the positive ambience for establishing the confidence between the officer and the probationer:

„-: There are some personal issues and questions on which the probationer might not answer and speak with you when there are 4 or more other persons presented in the room....It would be nice if it were additional space...There are some exceptions when we ask our colleagues to leave the room...As I know there is a plan to have a separate rooms for individual meetings with probationers (Tbilisi, IdI # 5, 20-26).

„-: To establish the certain level of confidence It would be much better if we are isolated from other people“ (Batumi, IdI # 1, 61-63).

„-: I can't say that I'm satisfied with working space, sometimes we help each other, but when the new probationer is coming....The right communication might not be established especially if we have to speak on very intimate issues“ (Zugdidi, IdI #5, 20-24).

In some regions the offices of probation bureaus are in mending conditions. A few respondents indicate that uncomfortable environment could negatively affect the probationer's attitude to the probation officer and probation service in general:

„-: You know, the environment means a lot... When the probationer is coming and sees that the floor is damaged or something needs to be repaired...The tender for repair works is envisaged from

Monday, so around 1 month we will feel extremely uncomfortable but eventually....The environment means a lot. . .“ (Batumi, IdI # 2, 617-621).

A few respondents say that even in case they have individual meeting space (without the presence of other persons), there are surveillance system and video/audio recording of the rooms, so it means that full confidentiality cannot be achieved anyway:

„-: Of course there is an issue but even without that there is video and audio surveillance in all rooms, so it does not make a lot of difference for the probationer if I were there alone or with other colleagues” (Tbilisi, IdI # 1, 45-48).

Experience of participating in special training and knowledge on duties/responsibilities

The employment of the probationer officer is standard procedure and all the participants have undergone it. At first stage there is a vacancy announcement in accordance with public service requirements. All potential candidates can apply to the vacancy. After the selection of short list the personal interview is held. Successful candidates have to undergo the special 2 week learning course in accordance to probation law. The courses are held at Rustavi and Tbilisi training centers under the probation agency. After the completion of the course the future officer has to pass the exam. After the exam the person is appointed as probation officer with probation term:

„-: At the beginning it was an interview, then selection, appointment with probation term. The legislation says that all who are appointed must have undergone the special preparation learning course at probation agency. We were 3 new candidates, we were selected, then we were sent to take this preparatory course and only after this we were appointed, and before that we had also probation term of employment“ (Batumi, IdI #2, 28-33).

Basic learning course consists of theory part (legislation, how to work with data, management of documentation etc) and practical part as well (case discussion etc.):

„- (R.6): We are taught the laws, different definitions and their usage at work space; how to deal with electronic data...also how to do reporting and all related procedures; all the procedures we are going to use at our work we learn during this course“ (Batumi, FGD, 127-131).

„-: Yes, yes, practical and theoretical parts both are included, for example, case discussions, role plays, we were either probationers or probationer officers and played their parts“ (Batumi, IdI # 3, 97-99).

After the appointment most of the probationer officers underwent different training courses. The participants indicate the following courses: communication skills, stress management, computer skills, courses for social workers, HIV/AIDS, motivational interview:

„-: It was about effective communication, computer skills, social work, stress management, now I'm taking course in motivational interview, also I took the training in compliance of Georgian probation system with European and western values and standards“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 4, 35-40).

A few respondents took trainings even outside of Georgia:

„-: Yes I underwent various trainings, abroad as well, I have been to US for training. I was appointed in February and then I went for training to US in March, we were a few officers and senior colleagues from the bureau. The training was on planning issues. It was 2 week theory and practice combined“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 1, 20-23).

Part of the participants cannot clearly indicate the training which was the best and most successful one. The same time they say that all the trainings they have attended were useful for them:

„-: I don't know, I cannot choose particular one. I took quite a lot of trainings“ (Zugdidi, IdI #2, 31-32).

Part of the respondents indicates the trainings which they remember and like the most and consider them the most useful:

„-: I liked the psychological type of trainings. Communication, getting information by gesture and posture, how to pose the question properly, it was very interesting. I'd like to have this kind of trainings more often“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 50-53).

The trainings are conducted in most cases by nongovernmental organizations. Sometimes the initiative comes from the training centers which are under the probation agency. The majority of the respondents wish to have different kind of trainings more often, though trainings are provided occasionally:

„-: More trainings are needed, the more the better. Every year I undergo 3-4 trainings, of course, sometimes the themes of trainings are repeated but I feel I need them. After each training I approach to my duties in different, new way. The trainings are provided by our training center and NGOs“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 1, 33-38).

On some topics the participants wish to receive more information and to attend more trainings. Mainly those topics are on psychological and communication skills:

„-: On psychology, communication... it would be better to have more trainings“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 5, 43).

„-It would be better if we have communication trainings, trainings on stress management and most important is the training on legislation changes because some changes have been done in legislation and I'd like to dig it deeper“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 2, 63-67).

One participant indicates the necessity on TB training as former prisoners often have TB and he does not know how to protect himself while contacting this type of probationer:

„-: (R.I): You know, I have the probationers when they are coming and coughing and some of them say they have TB. It would be nice if we undergo some kind of training how to prevent ourselves from being infected...“ (Tbilisi, FGD, 81-84).

Small part of the participants says that they try to use the knowledge and skills received at the trainings in everyday practice. Some of them admit that they try to use them in practice but sometimes they fail and the reason for failure is the small duration of the training:

„-: Well... I can't say that I use them very much. . . It's impossible to use all the techniques successfully only after attending 2 day training. Sometimes I fail in using this, but honestly each time I am trying to use them while dealing with the probationer“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 225-228).

„-: Now I undergo the motivational interview... when you see the probationer is depressed it is useful to know how to ask the proper question using communication skills and techniques“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 4, 157-159).

The majority of the respondents think that the making referrals to psychologist, social worker or other relevant professional based on probationer's need is very convenient and useful:

„+: Do you use any intervention methods learnt during the trainings or you prefer to refer the probationers to psychologist, social worker or other relevant specialist? As I understood you do not use any intervention methods...

-: Yes, I prefer to refer them“ (Batumi, IdI # 3, 288-291).

The following duties are included in probation officer's responsibility: to get familiar with the case, to warn the probationer to register on time; if it is not possible to make connection with the probationer it is mandatory to verify the information at penitentiary department, also to verify if the person is alive or whether he/she left the country. If after all these efforts the probationer is not found the person officially will be announced in search.

After the probationer is registered at probation bureau and he/she has met the officer the individual schedule for the probationer is designed. Usually the probationer must visit and make a registration at probationer bureau once a week. If he/she is not registered on time the probationer will be fined. If it happens systematically the probationer officer can apply to the court to change the probationer's status and make him/her imprisoned. The exception is allowed if the probationer has health issues and has health impairments preventing him/her to move. In that case the probationer come to the probation office once a month (after getting the appropriate approval from the probation agency):

„-: Usually we met probationers once a week. There is no need to meet the probationer in person. In many cases they just come make registration and go. Meeting them in person mostly is necessary at the beginning to identify the problems and to make appropriate planning etc.“ (Batumi, IdI #2, 231-234).

The duties of the officer are written in internal regulation of the agency and are regulated by the law:

“(R.7): In general there is the law “about probation and non-prison execution of the punishment” and also the internal regulation” (Tbilisi, FGD, 87-88).

The most of the respondents say that they get acquainted thoroughly with their duties after they are appointed and they sign the internal regulation, though there is no detailed job description there. This document (internal regulation) describes mainly the functions of the probation bureau:

„-: Yes, when I was appointed after submission of all papers, I signed the internal regulation, we made an oath, all is done according to existing standards and regulations“ (Batumi, IdI #3, 126-127).

„-Internal regulation exists but there is no detailed job description of the officer. This documents describes the functions of bureau itself“ (Tbilisi, FGD # 5, 88-89).

A few respondents mention that they have not signed anything:

“-(R.1): No, nothing like that. We are taught our functions during basic course...“ (Tbilisi, FGD, 95- 96).

The majority of the respondents are happy with their salaries. According to them their salaries are not low taking into account the Georgian reality. Some respondents claim that they have received even bonuses. Only a few respondents complain about insufficient of their salaries:

„-: I think that comparing to others our salaries are quite OK“ (Batumi, IdI # 1, 217-218).

„-: I do not complain about my salary. There was an increase; also, there are some bonuses at holidays (Tbilisi, IdI # 5, 95-96).

“-: More or less. In Georgian reality this salary is not enough but there is a tendency to increase it“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 92-93).

Relationship with and attitudes towards probationers

The number of probationers attributed to the probation officer varies from 5 to 130. Most of the officers are responsible for 70-90 probationers. The number of probationers has dramatically decreased during last 2 years:

„-: Around 90, Before I had around 200“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 5, 76).

„-: Comparing what I used to have (and I had 600) these 130 I have now is easy task though according to European standards even this is too much“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 5, 62-63).

The majority of the respondents think that the number of the probationers they have is quite appropriate and they are not overloaded. The same time most of them are aware of European standards and indicate that optimal number of probationers attributed to one officer is around 35:

„-(R.2): At the beginning you can think that this is too much but during the working process you understand that there is no much difference whether you have 300 or 50.... I used to have even 700, but what to do; anyway you are working there and stay all the day from the morning till 6.30 except Saturday and Sunday... I can't say that I do not have enough time to fulfill my duties, it is manageable... (Tbilisi, FGD, 257-261).

„-: Now I have 73, that is not big number comparing to what we used to have before, but in Europe one officer has no more than 35 probationers“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 95-97).

Only a small part of the probationers thinks that the number of the probationers attributed to one officer is too high and for effective fulfillment of duties the number should not exceed 30-35 probationers:

„-: ...maximum 30-35 if you want to work efficiently and get familiar better with the probationer and his family, friends etc. The same standards in Europe...“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 4, 81-82).

According to the respondents all probationers are given the telephone number of his/her probationer officer. This is the responsibility of the officer. The officer must be available anytime in case the probationer needs to contact the officer so that the probationer can call the officer freely anytime without any restrictions:

„-: We are available 24 hours a day, we never switch off our cell phones and they can call us anytime they need. They can call us even during weekend“ (Batumi, IdI # 3, 214-216).

„-: From the very first our meeting they know my name, cell number and they can approach me anytime they are in need“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 112-113).

The majority of the respondents say that the probationers can call them anytime to discuss various issues: changing the address, the rule of probationer's registration at probation service, job opportunities, the permission to leave the country etc:

„-: Yes, in general they are notified that if something is changed they have to notify us. For example, if the person has left a job, or changed it, or has changed the address....If he/she does has not contacted with us then we call them and ask questions” (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 113-116).

According to the respondents the officers themselves contact the probationers quite often. Mostly to figure out some additional information or if there is an opportunity to provide them with additional or relevant trainings or to attend some socially beneficiary activities:

„-: We call them if there are training opportunities for probationers or we need some additional information or if we are going to take them to do some social activity, for example, to clean the church or park etc“ (Zugdidi, IdI #5, 93-95).

„-(R.3): Now we have just arranged the tournament in football among the probationers, we called most of them and offered to take part in this event...“ (Tbilisi, FGD, 165-169).

The respondents say that sometimes they call the family members of the probationers and this is preliminary agreed with the probationers:

„-: This is voluntary... I called the father of my 21 y.o. probationer, I told him I wanted to meet him and to discuss his son's issue, he came himself though I assured him that I could come to his place, but he came and we had a long productive discussion about his son... So this is based on probationer's free will, nobody will contact probationer's family members if he/she is against . . .“ (Batumi, IdI # 2, 163-169).

The absolute majority of the probationer officers indicate that all probationers are given the document about probationer's responsibilities and duties during their first visit to the probation bureau. At the beginning the officer verbally explains the responsibilities of the probationer and then probationer has to sign the document. The officers indicate that in many cases probationers sign the document automatically without reading. Also very rarely they take the copy of the document home:

„-: No, the signed document remains with us. The probationer of course has to get familiar with the document, read it, then I explain it well, then the probationer signs it. Some of them do not read the document at all and signs it without reading. After signing I also give them the leaflet with similar content. The signed original paper remains with me“ (Batumi, IdI # 3, 258-261).

„-: Of course we are providing them with the document on duties and responsibilities. This is 3 page document with all details. I explain everything what is written there, entire document from the beginning to the end. If the person has some additional questions I answer them of course. We both sign the document. Some of them have desire to take a copy home, some do not. Those who want to take the copy can take it for sure“ (Batumi, IdI # 2, 286-291).

Along with explanation and documents given to the probationer the special leaflet describing the duties and responsibilities of the probationers are also available at probation offices:

„-: The leaflets sent from the probation agency are provided to the probationers in all cases“ (Batumi, IdI # 2, 294-296).

„-: The probationer signs the document and after we give them the special leaflets in order to be sure that he reads everything“ (Batumi, IdI # 1, 306-307)

Most of the officers indicate that the assessment of needs and risks of probationer is one of the most important activity after making first contact and explaining his/her own duties and responsibilities to the probationer. The process of assessment and filling out the special questionnaire is started from the first meeting. In most cases the respondents prefer to make judgment about the risks and needs gradually, step by step. According to the officers this process may take some time and a few visits are needed to complete the questionnaire. In the process a lot of depends on how open and sincere the probationer is:

„-: If we see that probationer is not sincere and outspoken enough we give him some time, 1 week, 1 month... we wait until the certain level confidence is established and only after that we fill out the forms on their needs and risks“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 76-78).

While estimating the risks the following features are taken into account: education level, employment status, the severity of committed crime, family situation, first or repeated conviction, circle of friends, attitude to alcohol and drugs, gambling etc. After considering all these factors the level of risk (high or low) to commit crime again in future is estimated:

„-: We start from the dynamics of committed crime, it is first crime or repeated one, education, work history, family status, relation with drugs and alcohol, or gambling, also, there is some personality features – how self confident the person is, whether the person regrets committed crime or not, so we make conclusions based on these“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 104-109).

According to the respondents the special questionnaire/form on probationer's needs and risks is filled out electronically:

„-(R.2): We have electronic cases of all probationers. In this electronic files you can find the page about risks and needs and we fill it out electronically (computer based) “ (Kutaisi, FGD, 318-319).

Some of the respondents indicate that after collecting all the necessary information along with the officer, psychologist and social worker also take part in making decision about probationer's risks and needs. The majority of the respondents say that this process is the competency of the officer and they are able to make estimates based on their own experience:

„-: Based on our experience and knowledge we estimate the risks, there is no existing standards“(Tbilisi, IdI # 1, 249-257).

The participants say that the referral to psychologist or social worker is done according to probationer's needs:

„-: Based on my conclusion if some issue or need is revealed I refer the probationer to psychologist or social worker and then we work with the person to solve the problem. If no problem is revealed we make a conclusion that the probationer does not have any major problem which has to be addressed. Then periodically after 3 or 5 months we assess again the situation and if something is revealed we will react“(Batumi, IdI # 1, 289-295).

Most of the participants indicate that various documentations are kept in probationer's case. Along with abovementioned documentations there are some other documents such as: Identity card, resume, notifications to probationer, final and interim evaluation forms. All documentation both electronic and hard copies are accessible for probation officer, social worker and also for probation agency's senior staff:

„- (R.8): The staff of probation bureau: officers and social workers, and bureau's head of course have access... “ (Kutaisi, FGD, 347-348).

The probation officers say that electronic data is connected with police database and different departments at Ministry of Interior including border police have access to these data:

„-: I fill out the electronic form, we have this program e-doc, all data related to the probationers is entered and kept in this program. As I know also police and border police has an access to this database. We use special passwords to access the data and other people cannot access it“(Batumi, IdI # 4, 80-83).

The majority of the respondents have not heard about the conflict or any kind of disagreement between the officer and the probationer. According to them none of the probationers have demanded to change his/her officer. All respondents say that they have not heard about such conflict:

„-: There was no case like that. I have not heard of that” (Batumi, IdI # 4, 259).

Part of the probationers thinks that there is no official document describing the procedure of replacing the probation officer:

„- (R.6): There is no document indicating that the probationer can change his/her officer. But even in case of some conflict between the officer and the probationer it is not difficult to solve it“ (Batumi, FGD, 410-413).

According to the survey participants there are video surveillance systems in all rooms and the relationship between the officer and the probationer is being controlled. Therefore, if there are some deviations from officers side they assume that their seniors will react promptly:

“- (R.3): There are cameras in all rooms and all the aspects of our relationship with the probationer are controlled and probably assessed as well... “ (Tbilisi, FGD, 102-103).

In most cases the probationers approach the probation service to request the employment opportunity:

„-: Most of all they request an employment“ (Batumi, IdI # 1, 277-284).

The participants say that the unemployment is a common problem in Georgia especially for probationers and former prisoners. The officers give examples of probationers' successful employment cases though they indicate that the number of employed probationers is not high. The probationers are employed in the following domains: building and roads construction, laundry, car repair services etc.:

„+ : How many of your probationers have been employed successfully?

-: Around 10 probationers during the time I've been working as an officer.

+ : Which fields they are employed in?

-: Construction business, car washing, cleaning the streets“ (Kutaiai, IdI # 4, 309-313).

„-: Yes, by the way, there were a few cases of successful employment.... Construction, car repairing, as I remember... they were not my probationers but there are some cases though it is quite rare...“ (Batumi, IdI # 2, 412-414).

„-: For example, this year in April there were some vacancies for road repair work and we managed to assiste 2 probationers employ there “ (Zugdidi, IdI # 2, 80-82).

One of the officers gives an example of successful employment when the probationer established his own small private business and hired 6 other probationers there:

„-: Recently the probationer established his own small business and provided us with this information and after he has hired 6 persons in his business... (Tbilisi, FGD, 215-218).

Private and business industries avoid hiring probationers or former prisoners. According to the officers that can be explained by increased concurrency and existing stigma and prejudice towards probationers and former prisoners in the society. In concurrency they mean that there is high unemployment in the country and having a huge pool of potential employees the employers prefer to hire the person without being in conflict with law rather than probationer or former inmate:

„-: You know there is kind of stigma in the society and to say truth I understand this people, I mean the people who run their private business. There are so many unemployed resources and they prefer to employ the persons without conflict with law of course rather than the probationer“ (Batumi, IdI #2, 528-533).

The respondents say that there are quite a lot cases when the probationers are offered some particular jobs and they refuse to use this chance. Though before he/she declared that the finding the job is top priority:

„-: Yes, there are quite a lot cases. It is kind of “Georgian mentality”, they do not want to work as factory worker or railroad man. Everybody wants to be employed as a manager.... And of course nobody will hire them as managers especially private and business sector“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 216-219).

The majority of the officers declare that it is higher probability to find a job for probationers while social worker is involved in probationer’s case management:

„-: We are working together with social workers. That’s why we can offer more trainings and employment opportunities to the probationers. Social workers have more flexible working schedule compared to us, so they can go and search for training or employment opportunities for the probationers“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 146-150).

According to the majority of the participants, looking for the trainings and employment opportunities is not their direct responsibility and there is no official document indicating that officers are in charge of probationer’s employment or training. The officers do that according to their good will:

„+: So you are doing it on volunteer basis as it seems?.

-: Yes, we simply help them (probationers) “(Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 163-164).

Along with the employment requests the probationers apply to the officers for legal or medical services or some social issues. In all these cases the probationer is referred to social worker:

„-: for example, to write the request or some statement or if they have some problem in family or in school (in case of underage probationer) they apply or call the social worker“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 118-119).

The officers indicate that among legal services the probationers are interested in are the issues regarding their convictions, how to write a request for pardon, how and when it is possible to annul a conviction, how to get new Identity card, driving license, the procedure to register LTD etc:

„-: Mostly they apply to clarify the issues related to their convictions, the procedures of granting the pardon, what to do, to whom apply etc... Of course they always have questions like that (Batumi, IdI # 1, 452-456).

„-: In my practice there was one case the probationer was interested how to register and establish his own LTD. I found out the information for him at public service agency“ (Batumi, IdI # 2, 427-428).

If the officer cannot help the probationer in his legal inquires the probationer is referred to fiscal lawyer or to the Association of Young Lawyers (NGO working on law issues):

„-: If there is a possibility to help the probationer we do it ourselves, if it is beyond of our responsibilities or competence we refer them to fiscal lawyer or to the association of young lawyers“ (Batumi, IdI # 5, 384-388)

The demand on legal and medical services has been increased significantly during last 2 years after the officers started to provide the probationers with special leaflets about organizations offering different services to the probationers and former prisoners:

„-: There were the cases of requests for legal or medical services. These services have become more in demand after we started to provide them with information on different NGOs and also we give the probationers leaflets about these organizations... (Batumi, IdI # 3, 332-335).

The majority of the participants indicate the one of the priority is to offer the training opportunities to the probationers. There are different types of trainings offered:

„-: The course of car driving (theory part)... Also training on Hepatitis C...“ (Batumi, IdI # 5, 414-416).

„-: Recently the training on gender equity has been conducted, also on STIs, Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS. Also training on microfinance issues and training and film discussion on Georgian history issues“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 1, 288-291).

According to survey participants there are no clear criteria for probationers to participate in the trainings. The officers decide themselves which probationer should participate in particular training. Requests from probationers to participate in particular trainings are very rare. The probationers are getting interested in participation when they are told that this kind of activity can positively influence their case and lighten the regime (instead of registration at the bureau once a week the probation can come to the bureau once or twice a month):

„ (R.6): ...we decide ourselves, we know who are who, what type of psychology etc. No instruction exists....“ (Tbilisi, FGD, 226- 227).

According to the participants it is quite often when probationers refuse to participate in trainings despite the fact that many of them agreed to participate before:

„-: A lot of them say that they desperately need to start working but when in reality they are offered the job then they refuse. The same situation is with trainings. They declare that they want to study something and they are eager to attend different trainings or courses but when they are offered concrete training the person might tell you that he is not interested in any more and refuse to participate“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 157-163).

Trainings are held at different locations depending on who implements the training. In most cases trainings are offered by NGOs and trainings are conducted at NGO office or at the Center of Democratic Involvement (where these centers are available). If the organizer is the probation bureau the training is held at probation bureau's office (conference room):

„-: We conduct it [the training] at our conference room, or sometimes we conduct it at the center of democratic involvement, we conducted 3 trainings there“ (Batumi, IdI # 1, 399-400).

Most of the probationers say that the participation in the trainings is voluntary for all probationers. A few participants from Tbilisi declare that in case of systematic refusal to participate in the trainings the regime of probationer can be tightened (instead of once a week the probationer can be ordered to register at the bureau 3 times a week). This could happen when the participant preliminary agreed to participate (especially in written form) and then he/she refuses to go. According to the officers there is no official document indicating existence of sanctions in case the probationer refuses to participate in trainings. The decision is taken by the officer individually with consultation with his/her senior officer:

„-: If the probationer agrees to participate and does not go to selected training the regiment can be tightened for him/her, especially after the person signs the paper“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 186-187).

„-: We decide ourselves subjectively of course it is agreed with our bosses“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 174-175).

The majority of the participants say that the probationers who are under their responsibility have undergone various trainings on different topics. They easily name the trainings and number of participants who attended these trainings:

„+: How many of your probationers have undergone the trainings during 2014?

- (R.2): Around 40.

- (R.3): Around 20.

- (R.5): 30“ (Kutaisi, FGD, 441-445).

“+: Can you remember when last training was held?

-: On Monday.

+: What was this training about?

-: On diseases, Tanadgoma conducted it.

+: The participation in training was mandatory or voluntary?

-: Participation in all trainings is voluntary of course.

+: How many of your probationers took part in the training last year?

- : Around 10 of my probationers“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 215-223).

The officers say that the probationers are also offered various professional educational courses such as: carpenter courses, accountant courses, sewing courses etc:

„-: There is Black Sea college and we signed a memorandum of cooperation with them and we referred some probationers to them. Also, there were some courses at the Center of democratic

involvement like driving license courses, accountant courses, and some probationers were referred there“ (Batumi, IdI #1, 440-444).

„-: Women were taught how to sew and were gifted the sewing machines, for one probationer the windmill was repaired, some of probationers were given technical devices (used by carpenter and tin man) though some of them sold these devices“ (Zugdidi, IdI #2, 184-186).

Underage probationers are more eager to participate in various trainings or professional courses. The reason for that, according to the officers, is that the adults do not want to “waste” a few months to attend the professional courses. Some of them (adults) especially with higher education are kind of embarrassed to participate in these kinds of trainings and they refuse:

„-: There were 3 month professional courses and we sent there underage probationers. Many of them are with 6-7 grades education and for them it is better to master in handicraft as they do not have desire or financial sources to follow up with higher education, therefore they prefer to acquire some handicraft skills in a few months and start working and making their bread“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 136-141).

„-: My probationers refused to participate because they already had higher education and profession as well and they did not want to change anything. Some of them were aged enough and they said that it was not appropriate to learn something new at their age. There was the carpenter 3 month course but many of the probationers refused. According to them they did not want to waste 3 months on learning. They are more eager to agree on certain job offer and prefer to start earning some money immediately. But even though we had a group of probationers who underwent professional training courses. In most case they are young and underage probationers who do not have a higher education or any handicraft skills” (Batumi, IdI # 3, 439-448).

Information about trainings and different learning courses the officers are obtaining from NGOs, Employment Agency (The probation agency has signed a memorandum with the Employment Agency), also the officers use their private connections to find out the training opportunities. There is no full list of organizations which provide services to probationers. The majority of the respondents can not name the organizations offering different trainings and services to probationers and former inmates. Small part of the probationers can name organizations like Democracy Institute, Tanadgoma, Young Lawyers Association, Employment agency, GCRT. They also name the services they are providing:

„-: We have signed the memorandum with the Employment agency and they provide us with information on different professional learning courses. Also Tanadgoma provided us with leaflets and offered psychological services...“ (Batumi, IdI #3, 458-462).

„-: They [organizations] provide with healthcare related services, also they help materially, for example, Children Village provided the probationer with bed, chairs and cupboard, GCRT offers some medical services, also Tanadgoma offers some free testing” (Kutaia, IdI # 3, 252-257).

According to the majority to find training or other educational courses is not the primary responsibility of the probationer officer. Social workers have more information about training opportunities:

„-: ...Sometimes I get the information about trainings through my acquaintances and I send the probationers to these trainings. Mostly there are trainings for drug users. But it does not happen very often, It is not included in our job responsibility...“ (Tbilisi, FGD, 239-242).

„-: I can offer trainings but social workers have more information. Their department disposes of relevant information and then provides the probationers with them” (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 126-1128).

Some of the officers indicate that they have accompanied the probationers to the venue of the:

„-: I took the probationer to register at the training and also I spoke with the trainer there“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 4, 139-140).

The majority of the respondents declare that the trainings rarely result in probationer’s employment:

„-: I have only one case when the probationer was employed after training, in other cases I do not know how happy they are with trainings“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 337).

According to the survey participants there is no monitoring form or procedure to find out the satisfaction level among probationers after training or any other course. In most cases the officer can get feedback from the probationer during private talk.

The majority of the survey participants have very positive and even cordial relationships with their probationers. All of them indicate that there was no case of complaints coming from the probationer or his/her legal representatives against the officer. Some of the officers say that they established so close relationship with the probationers that even after the probation time is over they continue to contact with each other. According to the officers the type and severity of the committed crime does not play any role while dealing with the probationer:

„-: It is not a prison, We are not here to punish somebody, we want to correct them“ (Tbilisi, IdI #4, 154-155).

„-: ...From their side [probationers] I feel also a positive attitude towards us, I’ve been working for quite a long time at probation bureau and I have never had any complaint from the probationer or his/her parent (Tbilisi, IdI #3, 186-188).

„-: Everybody makes mistakes, every person can be improved...“ (Batumi, IdI # 2, 569-573).

The majority of the officers say that they establishes a certain level of confidence with probationer though the complete trust in all questions can’t be achieved as their relationship is still formal:

„-: I think that there is certain level of confidence between us but can’t say there is full trust in everything. Still we have to remember that we have quite specific relationship“ (Batumi, IdI # 3, 573-576).

„-: Of course there different kind of probationers, different personalities and I cannot say that 100% of them have confidence with us, but I’m sure that around 90% of them have certain level of trust in their personal officers“ (Batumi, IdI # 1, 518-520).

According to the officers there has never been the case of breaking the confidentiality from the probationer officer's side and the confidentiality of the probationer is protected by law:

„-: In general the personal information of the probationer is protected by law and dispensing the information is possible only after the probationer's written consent“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 1, 373-375).

The officers say that the confidence level increases when probationer and his officer take part in some cultural or social events (excursion, cinema, theater, literature discussion) together. Also positive role plays when probation officer accompanies the probationer to the place of some service delivery (employment opportunity, medical services etc):

„- : Sometimes we arrange for them [probationers] excursions to Botanical garden, or Gonio castle. We arranged literature discussion at botanical garden and invited some local writers and poets”(Batumi, IdI # 5, 458-460).

„- : Yes, I accompanied the probationer to crisis intervention center. There was a doctor, I talked to him. The doctor said that medical intervention was needed as the probationer did not have any major problems. The probationer was very happy. After that case we established better and warm relationships“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 400-404).

The majority of the respondents say that despite the steps taken by the State in terms probationers' psycho-social rehabilitation and integration in the society are not sufficient. The state does not have enough financial resources to effectively follow up the issue:

„-: I don't think that is sufficient, more resources are needed“ (Tbilisi, IdI #3, 196-202).

„-: No, State does not have enough resources. There should be rehabilitation centers and special programs for drug users, also more employment opportunities. They desperately need jobs. Their material situation is very poor. Of course they could commit the crime for second time when their children are hungry, what to do . . . “(Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 209-213).

The respondents indicate that the majority of underage probationers are from poor families. They can't afford themselves to pay for trainings or professional courses, also they can't pay for sport activities as most of sport circles are not free:

„-: Most of them are from very poor families. All courses, trainings require some payment and they cannot afford that. It would be great if there were more free opportunities for those children. More trainings, educational courses, handicraft courses and sport activities are need for them“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 196-202).

According to the respondents a lot has been done during last year. Agency appointed psychologists at all probation bureaus, memorandums have been signed with different institutions, trainings become more permanent:

„-: Establishing the rehabilitation department is very advanced step I think, they sign the memorandum with different organizations and request various services for the probationers“ (Batumi, IdI # 2, 483-487).

„-: The Agency decided to appoint the psychologist at all bureaus and now it is second month the psychologists have been working at all probation bureaus“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 315-316).

„-: The training opportunities have been increased especially last year. Of course there were trainings before too, but now they become permanent“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 4, 286-288).

Part of the participants thinks that the improvement of the social-economic situation in the country would be a crucial point in order to improve the probationer's integration process in the society:

„-: The most important thing is the employment of the probationer. After he/she is employed it is much more easy to work with them and make them involved in different programs“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 1, 402-404).

The majority of the respondents think that along with State NGO and commercial sector are also responsible for probationers' psycho-social rehabilitation process:

„-: Probably State first of all, all of them actually, NGOs and private companies as well ...“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 204-205).

„-: First of all the society and then the State should take care of it“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 4, 130).

Attitudes towards probation agency

The majority of the respondents describe well and clearly the functions of the probation bureau and the responsibilities of the officer:

„-: To assist them [probationers] in reintegration. The person should be back to society. I should help them, the person might have done mistake or committed something... does not matter...“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 4, 87-90).

All the respondents indicate very firmly that they have not faced any pressure or other enforcement (from their superiors, colleagues or probationers themselves) while performing officer's duties:

„+: Have you ever face any pressure or enforcement at your working place in order to get any kind of information?

-: No, definitely no“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 5, 250-252).

Main findings and recommendations (Probation officers)

Socio-demographic features and working environment

The majority of the probation officers participated in the survey is under the age of 40. Most of them have received high juridical education. It is worth to mention that there is no requirement to have a juridical education for being employed as probation officer.

The length of working at the position of officer varies from 1 to 9 years. Most of the survey participants have previous working experience in public service.

Conclusion: The majority of the officers are quite young (under the age of 40) and most of them have an experience working in public service.

Working environment

All participants have their own desk, computer and chair but none of them have their own (separate) office space. The officer shares the office with 4 to 10 other colleagues depending on room size. In most cases they share the room with other officers, sometimes with social workers. The working space attributed to one officer does not exceed 5-6 sq. meters.

Some of probation bureau's offices have a separate room exists but usually they are busy and these rooms are not available for probationer-officer private conversation. Therefore, in most cases the officer talks to the probationer in his office where other staff are working as well. As a result the confidential and trusty environment between probationer and probation officer can't be established. In some regions the offices of probation bureau need to be renovated. Neglected view of the office also negatively affects the attitude of the probationer to the probation bureau in general.

The majority of the respondents are satisfied with the salary they receive. According to them in Georgian reality they are well paid. Only a few respondents say that their salary are not enough for living and they wish their salaries to be increased.

Conclusion: Individual working space of the officer is too small and cannot guarantee full confidentiality and trust between probationer and the officer. Some of the probation bureaus need renovation which is one more additional aspect for creation of comfort working environment. The officers are quite satisfied with salaries which make positive influence on their motivation.

Participation in particular trainings and knowledge of their own responsibilities

All survey participants have gone through standard employment procedures. After a successful interview candidates undergo to basic 2 week learning course. Courses are held in special training centers of Probation Bureau in Tbilisi and Rustavi. The course consists of both theoretical and practical parts. After passing the exams candidate is appointed as probation officer with probation time.

After starting working as full-time probation officers the majority of respondents have passed various training courses such as: communication skills, stress management, computer skills, basic course for social workers, HIV/AIDS, motivation interview etc. Despite the fact that survey participants like most of these courses respondents can not name the most interesting and successful training. Part of the respondents indicate psychological and communication skills trainings as most needed and interesting.

The responsibilities of probation officers are described in probation bureau's internal guideline and are regulated by the special law. The most of respondents say that they get detailed information about their responsibilities after they are appointed and then they sign the document (guideline). But they indicate that there is no detailed job description of probation officer in this document and this document provides the description of probation bureau and its functions. A few respondents say that they have not signed any documents about their responsibilities.

The majority of the respondents describe well the functions of the probation bureau and the responsibilities of the officer. All the respondents indicate very firmly that they have not faced any pressure or other enforcement (from their superiors, colleagues or probationers themselves) while performing officer's duties.

Conclusions: Probation officer's employment process and procedures are transparent and are regulated by law. All the officers have gone through the same process. Preparation course (basic learning course for the officer) is quite short and need of additional trainings/courses are obvious. The majority of the respondents know well their responsibilities. According to them the detailed job description of the probation officer does not exist and after acquaintance of their duties they sign the guideline where the role and function of probation service is described. The officers know and describe well the role of probation service. None of the respondents face difficulties or pressure from other colleagues or their superiors.

Relations with and attitudes towards probationers

During last 2 years the number of probationers attributed to one officer has been decreased dramatically. Now one officer is responsible for 50-130 probationers. Most of them have 70-90 probationers. Most of the officers think that the number of probationers each of them is responsible for is not high though they know well that according to EU standards the number must not exceed 30-35.

All probationers are given the document about probationers responsibilities and duties during their first visit to the probation bureau. At the beginning the officer verbally explains the responsibilities of the probationer and then probationer has to sign the document. The officers indicate that in many cases probationers sign the document automatically without reading. Also very rarely they take the copy of the document home. Special leaflet describing the duties and responsibilities of the probationers are also available at probation offices. These leaflets are also rarely demanded by probationers.

The probationer is given the contact information (name, surname, tel. number) of his/her personal officer from the very beginning. The probationer can contact his officer anytime if needed.

In case of any conflict between probationer and his officer there is no official document describing the procedure of replacing the probation officer (if the probationer insist to change this/her officer) on that). The same time most of the respondents think that practically it is possible to change the officer if there is a demand from the probationer. All respondents say that they have not heard about such conflict.

The majority of the survey participants have very positive and even cordial relationships with their probationers. All of them indicate that there was no case of complain coming from the probationer or his/her legal representatives against the officer. Some of the officers say that they established so close relationship with the probationers that even after the probation time is over they continue to contact with each other. According to the officers the type and severity of the committed crime do not play any role while dealing with the probationer. The officers say that the confidence level increases when probationer and his officer take part in some cultural or social events (excursion, cinema, theater, literature discussion) together. Also positive role plays when probation officer accompanies the probationer to the place of some service delivery (employment opportunity, medical services etc).

The majority of the respondents say that despite the steps taken by the State in terms probationers' psycho-social rehabilitation and integration in the society are not sufficient. The state does not have enough financial resources to effectively follow up the issue though the respondents indicate that recently a lot of efforts have been done by the State to improve the situation. Probation agency designated the psychologists to each probation bureau's offices, Signed the memorandum with different agencies, more trainings are available for probation officers.

Conclusions: The number of probationers attributed to the officer is much higher than it is recommended by EU standards. The probationer is given the detail information about his/her responsibilities and duties during his first visit to the probation bureau. The explanation is given in verbal and than in written form. In most cases the probationer signs this document without reading and further examination. Also copies of the documents they sign are not requested by the probationers. The contact information of personal officer is given to the probationer from the very first visit to the probation bureau.

In case of any conflict between probationer and his officer there is no official document describing the procedure of replacing the probation officer (or officers do not know about this procedure).

The probation officers develop very positive and sometimes even cordial relationship with their probationers. The officers do not distinguish the probationers based on the type and severity of the committed crime. Mutual participation in cultural and social events can increase the confidence level between probationer and his/her officer.

State has increased its participation in probationers' psycho-social rehabilitation and their integration in the society (more psychologists are available at the bureaus, more training opportunities, agreements/memorandum with different agencies). Though the financial resources provided by State are not sufficient to tackle the issue fully.

Assessment of the needs and risks of probationers, employment opportunities

To assess the needs and risks of probationer is one of the most important activities after making first contact and explaining his/her own duties and responsibilities to the probationer. The process of estimation and filling out the special questionnaire is started from the first meeting. In most cases the respondents prefer to make judgment about the risks and needs gradually, step by step. According to the officers this process may take some time and a few visits are needed to complete the questionnaire. In the process a lot of depend on how open and sincere the probationer is.

The majority of the respondents say that this process is the competency of the officer and they are able to make estimates based on their own experience. Some of the respondents indicate that after collecting all the necessary information sometimes along with the officer, psychologist and social worker also take part in making decision about probationer's risks and needs.

In most cases the probationers approach the probation service to request the employment opportunity. The officers give examples of probationers' successful employment cases though they indicate that the number of employed probationers is not high. The unemployment is the common problem in Georgian society. The probationers are employed in the following domains: building and roads construction, laundry, car repair services etc. Private and business industries avoid hiring probationers or former prisoners. According to the officers that can be explained by increased concurrency and existing stigma and prejudice towards probationers and former prisoners in the society.

The respondents say that there are quite a lot cases when the probationer are offered some particular job and he/she refuses to use this chance. Though he/she declares that the finding the job is top priority.

Conclusions: The process to estimate the needs and risks of probationer starts from the first day when probationer enters the probation bureau and is conducted gradually, step by step. Openness and sincerity of the probationer is the driving factor to adequate estimation of his/her risks and needs. The estimation of risks is the competency of the officer and psychologist and social worker are not always involved in the process.

Employment related requests from the probationers are most frequent while approaching the probation services. There are cases when probation bureau successfully assist the probationers in getting the job. Generally probationers are being hired in construction business and service provision. Often probationers refuse to start offered job. It is worth to mention that frequently probationers are unrealistic in their job demand and do not consider their skills and educational background reasonably. It is extremely difficult to employ probationer in private and business industries. It can be explained by high level of unemployment in the country in general and existing stigma and prejudice towards probationers and former prisoners in the society.

Trainings, courses and other services provided by probation bureau to the probationers

The officers offer probationers to participate in various trainings. According to survey participants there are no clear criteria for probationers to participate in the trainings. The officers decide themselves which probationer should participate in particular training. Requests from probationers to participate in particular trainings are very rare. The probationers are getting interested in participation when they are told that this kind of activity can positively influence his case and lighten the regime (instead of registration at the bureau once a week the probation can come to the bureau once or twice a month).

Participation in the trainings are volunteer for all probationers. Some of participants declare that in case of systematic refusal to participate in the trainings the regime of probationer can be tightened (instead of once a week the probationer can be ordered to register at the bureau 3 times a week). According to survey participants there is no monitoring form or procedure to find out the satisfaction level among probationers after training or any other course.

Along with trainings different professional educational courses are provided to the probationers. Young and underage probationers are more open to participate in this kind of learning than adult probationers. According to the officers adult probationers prefer to find some job and make income rather than spend a few months for professional courses. Some of the probationers, especially with higher education, are embarrassed to take part in such courses, as the skills these learning courses provide are much below than their educational background.

Information about trainings and different learning courses the officers are obtaining from NGOs, employment agency (The probation agency has signed a memorandum with the employment agency), also the officers use their private connections to find out the training opportunities. There is no full list of organizations which provide services to probationers. The majority of the respondents can not name the organizations offering different trainings and services to probationers and former inmates. At some probation bureaus leaflets of such organizations are available. Leaflets and booklets are provided by the organizations themselves. The request on legal and medical services has increased in the bureau's where these kind of information is given to the probationers by the officers.

According to the participants, looking for the trainings and employment opportunities is not their direct responsibility and there is no official document indicating that officers are in charge of probationer's employment or training. Officers do that according to their good will and emphatic relationship to the probationer. The officers say that social workers are better aware of training and employment opportunities.

Conclusions: Probation officer decide themselves which probationer to choose for particular training. Initiative to participate in trainings usually does not come from the probationer. The main motivation for the probationers to take part in trainings is the possibility to lighten the probation regime. Participation in the training is officially volunteer but in case of repeated refusals the officer (with approval of superiors) can order the probationer some kind of sanctions (to make stricter the regime).

Professional training courses are more attractive for young (underage) probationers. Adult probationers do not want to spend a few months on professional skills study. Especially, the probationers with high education who think that their educational background is much higher than the offered courses can provide.

Not all officers have the full list of the organizations which provide different services for the probationers. In case of having this kind of information they are eager to provide it to the probationers. Sometimes organizations provide the bureaus with the leaflets about their activities and services. Presence of these kind of leaflets at the bureau increases the number of requests on juridical and medical services by the probationers.

There is no official document indicating that officers are in charge of probationer's employment or training. Though officers do that based on their good will and emphatic relationship to the probationer.

Part II (Probationers)

Socio-demographic features

a) General Information

The age of the survey participants varies from 20 to 51. The vast majority of the participants are below 40. Most part of the probationers is married. Only small part (mostly young probationers) is unmarried. A few participants indicate that they are separated.

More than half of the probationers are with secondary education (9 or 12 grades). The rest are with higher education in the following fields: architecture, lawyer, agriculture field, political sciences etc.

For the majority of the respondents this probation term is their first conviction:

„-: This is my first conviction and I beg the god to help me, I won't repeat this mistake anymore in my life...“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 1, 16-18).

Around 1/3 of the participants say that this probation term is not their first conviction:

„-: I've been visiting probation bureau since 2007. From previous term I was released by amnesty but then again 2 weeks later I was arrested“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 5, 21-22).

The length of probation term by the time the interview was recorded varied from 3 months to 4 years. In most cases this period varies from 4 months to 1 year.

b) Living conditions, relations with family

The majority of the respondents live with their families. Most of them share the home with spouses, children and parents:

„+ : How many persons live with you?

-: I, my father, my wife and children and my aunt... my mother and brother live and work abroad“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 1, 30-33).

Living space of the participants varies from 40 to 700 sq. meters. In most cases these spaces are belongings of the participants. Only a few respondents declare that they rent their home spaces.

The majority of the respondents say that they have very warm relationship with their family members. Only a few respondents admit having tense relationship with families. In all cases the reason for these tense relations is drug usage of the respondents:

„ +: *What kind of relationship you have with family members?*

-: *With my sister bad*

+ : *Why?*

-: *My drug dependence, what else, So many stupid things I have done in my life... ” (Tbilisi, IdI # 4, 53-56).*

Along with family members the probationers declare that they have contacts with other relatives and friends. Most of them say that they have remained good relationships with friends. Only a few respondents say that their friends have left them after they had been convicted:

„- : *You know... Those people who used to be my very close friends they abandoned me after this car accident . When I was in prison I relied on them but they left me and my family“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 2, 58-61).*

c) Employment and income

More than half of the respondents are unemployed by the moment when the interview was recorded. Small part is employed in private sector. They work at petrol station, car washing, construction, shop, nuts processing etc. None of the respondents are employed at public sector. Employment at private sector in most cases is subject of support from family members, relatives or very close friends:

„ +: *Where do you work?*

- : *At my aunt’s shop, she is running her own shop and I work there“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 42-43).*

„-: *Because of my probation terms I can’t start working at public sector, I have a ban to work at state institutions for a while...“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 4, 34-36).*

Some of the respondents worked in public service before the probation penalty such as: police, post office, and army. Part of the probationers thinks that their unemployment is connected to their probation term. Confiscation of driving license is given as main obstacle on the way of finding the job:

„ +: *Were you employed before your probation sentence?*

- : *Yes, I was working at post office as a courier.*

+ : *Why you don’t work now?*

-: *Now I have no driving license. It was taken away from me for 3 years after I was sentenced.*

+ : *So it means that your unemployment is linked to your conviction?*

-: *Yes, I think so“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 2, 67-72).*

„-: *Even now I have an opportunity to start a job but I can’t because I do not have a driving license“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 17).*

„-: *It is very difficult to start working either in public or private sector if you don’t have a cousin or very close friend there. Even those can’t get jobs who do not have any probation term and never had a conflict with law“ (Tbilisi, IdI #4, 137-139).*

Part of unemployed respondents declares that they cannot work physically. Some of them justify this with poor health condition and some of them with holding high education diplomas and therefore with perspectives to find well paid job:

„-:..... *I can't work at construction or anything like that...*

+ : *Car washing?*

- : *I have vertebral problems and I cannot work... “ (Kutaisi, IdI # 5, 80-83).*

The majority of the unemployed respondents do not think that the reason of their unemployment is connected with their probation penalty:

„ + : *Is your unemployment somehow related to your conviction?*

- (R.5): *No... Not at all... (Batumi, FGD, 162-164).*

The average income of the respondents' families varies from 300 GEL to 1500 GEL. The income of the majority does not exceed 500 GEL. Some of the respondents are given financial support from their family members working abroad. A few respondents say that they rely on a pension or salary of their family members:

„ + : *What is your family's average monthly income?*

- (R.1): *Around 500 GEL (Georgian Lari).*

- (R.2): *The same with me “(Batumi, FGD, 182-185).*

„ - : *My father has exactly 373 GEL, my aunt -295 GEL. I know exactly because I use their cards to withdraw money from ATM (laughing) “ (Kutaisi, IdI # 1, 72-73).*

„ - : *Yes, my mother is abroad and working there[abroad] “ (Batumi, IdI #1, 98)*

Those respondents who are employed say that most of the day they are busy with their job and then they spend the rest of remaining free time with families. Part of unemployed respondents says that they help their family members in domestic affairs (such as: looking after the children, working on land etc.). Small part of unemployed respondents say that they have plenty of free time and do not know where or how to spend it:

„ + : *Can you tell me about your everyday activity? What are you doing when you have free time?*

- : *Well... (laughing). I amuse myself... I have plenty of free time...talking to my friends and playing cards with them, that's how I spend my free time (laughing) “ (Batumi, IdI # 1, 108-111).*

d) Health related issues

The majority of the respondents say that they do not have any concerns regarding their health and have never applied to healthcare services. Around 1/3 of respondents says that they have different health issues. A few probationers have diagnosed TB. In one case the respondent abandoned the treatment:

“-: My situation was very grave. When I was given prescribed medication (against TB) I felt myself much worse. Then I went to village healer at mountain area and after that I feel much better. I was doing tests before but now I have not done it for a long time“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 76-77).

Some respondents have viral Hepatitis C, A few respondents name also chronicle inflammation of prostate gland, chronicle arthritis, vertebral problems etc. The majority of those with health problems declare that their diseases are not treated because of money shortage:

“-: I need a surgical operation on my collar-bone, after car accident it was damaged. I do not have enough money to do this surgery, also I have some problems in joints, can't move one finger and again because of lack of money I cannot go to the doctor“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 2, 87-90).

„-(R.4): I have hepatitis C... how I can do treatment? In prison it is free but outside...“ (Tbilisi, FGD, 59-60)

Around ¼ of respondents admit the fact of using of illicit drugs before. Their probation term in most cases is related to drug use as well. Among used drugs the respondents name: marijuana, “crocodile”, subutex etc.:

„+ : What kind of illicit drugs you used?

-: All types, the worst was so called “crocodile“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 60-61).

Some of them had other administrative penalties connected to drug use in the past:

„- : Yes before I got administrative penalties, fines for 2 times. Third time I was sentenced to probation term“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 84-85).

Relationship with the probation service

The majority of the respondents say that they know the obligation and duties of probation service in general. According to them the duty of probation service is to control the probationers, to advise the probationers how to register, how to cross the border, how to change the address etc. Correction of the probationers and “showing the right way” is the main responsibility of the probation service:

„- : What I have noticed they try to “correct” the person's behavior and to show them the right way how to live“ (Kutaisi, IdI #1, 99-100).

„- (R.7): The role of probation service is to give the right advices to you and to pull you out of the difficult situation“ (Kutaisi, FGD, 240-241).

„- : The role of probation service is to control the probationer... not to cross the border without permission, not to commit the crime and their function is to correct us. Once committed a crime I regret it now and will never do the same again in future“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 103-106).

Part of the probationers thinks that the only reason for existence of probation service is to make probationers register once a week at probation bureau:

„-: They have to control us, we are coming to probation bureau and register each time“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 100).

A few respondents have difficulties to identify the role of probation service and they say that they know little about the service:

„-: I haven't figured out what is their duties. Simply you have to come to the probation service, put the finger and register and that's all“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 89-90).

„-: I don't know about their role. What I know well is if you are late for registration they immediately make you pay fines. They are very good in that“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 2, 90-91).

„+: Let's talk about probation service. What kind of attitude you have towards them? What is probation service's function do you know?

-: No....

+ : No?(pause)..

-: Oh, I will avoid answering this question OK.... “(Batumi, IdI # 1, 137-141).

According to some of the probationers the only duty of probation service is to make probationers pay fines:

„+: How do you think, what is the main role of probation service?

- (R.4): To make money, nothing else...

+ What do you mean?

- (R.6): From everything they make you pay fine: late registration-100 GEL, positive response for drug test -5000 GEL... “ (Tbilisi, FGD, 35-40).

The majority of the respondents believe that the probation service fulfills its duties successfully and give the particular examples of that:

„-: Yes, I think they fulfill their duties well. They help the probationers in finding the job. I do not need their help myself but I've heard they assisted 3 probationers in Poti to start the work... I think they try to do their bests“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 3, 97-100).

„-: Yes, what I have seen they are doing everything properly. If I have a problem I can go to my officer anytime. The girls at registration are very kind and try to serve me promptly without making me wait in a line. There is quite good ambiance and comfortable environment“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 109-112).

A few respondents reveal skepticism while assessing the probation service. Those respondents doubt very much if the probation service can “correct” the person at all:

„-: Probation service cannot correct the person and cannot “show the right way” of living, I do not believe in that

+ : So, you think that the probation service cannot help the probationers??

-: Yes, exactly“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 5, 148-150).

In order to improve the functions of the probation service the vast majority of the respondents would change the frequency of probationer's visit to the bureau. According to them, registration once a week is very inconvenient and is linked to financial expenses (travel costs), especially if the probationer is coming from remote village or settlement. Besides, it is very time consuming. Especially, for those probationers who are employed. Registration every week at the bureau makes conflict with working schedule of the employed probationers:

„-(R.2): You know, I can come once a week but very much appreciate if they can provide the transportation. I live very far from the probation bureau and it is not easy to find money each time when I have to come to the probation service... (Other participants are nodding showing their approval) “(Tbilisi, FGD, 68-70).

„-: It would be much better if we are able to come to the bureau once a month...”(Batumi, IdI # 5, 414).

„-: I have to walk from my village to here. I walk also when it is heavy snow. It is very difficult to come by foot from the village to the city. That creates a problem for me“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 1, 149-152).

The majority of the probationers are aware of their own duties and responsibilities. According to them they have to obey the laws, avoid any kind of misunderstanding and aggressive behavior, and register on time at the probation bureau according to their registration schedule:

„-: You must obey the law, once a week you have to go to the probation service and register yourself“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 136-137).

„-: My responsibility is to come here once a week, make my fingerprint and register myself (day and time)“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 1, 91-92).

According to the majority of the respondents the duties and responsibilities of probationers were explained to them by the officers at the very beginning of their probation term. The officer explains the responsibilities verbally and then gives the document to the probationer in written form. In some cases the probationer is given also special leaflet describing probationer's duties and responsibilities:

„+: From where you have received the information about your duties and responsibilities?

-: I was explained orally and in written as well

+ : So the written document exists?

- : Yes. One copy I was given to take home as well and everything is written there“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 110-113).

„-: I was explained all the rules first time I came to the probation bureau, also I was given the leaflets where everything is written“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 3, 121-122).

The majority of the probationers sign the document about the duties and responsibilities. In some cases they are given the copy of the document. Part of the probationers admits that they sign the document without reading and they do not read the copy of the document given to them as well:

„-: *First time when I came to the bureau the officer introduced himself, we had a talk, the officer explained the document about my responsibilities and duties and asked me to read it with attention. Even without suggesting me that I have no confidence in others so I would anyway read the document prudently to be sure what I had to sign. Then I signed it*“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 125-129).

„+: *Did you sign it?*

-: *Yes, I signed it, also I was explained the document verbally. I was also given the practical suggestions. One copy was printed out and was given to me*“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 134-136).

„-: *I don't know. I was given some document but I don't know what it was*

+ : *So you did not read the document?*

-: *No*“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 1, 138-140).

A few respondents declare that they even did not understand the oral explanation of their duties as it was done in very formal way and the language used by the officer was too sophisticated:

„+: *What did you sign?*

-: *Oh, I don't know... (laughing)*

+ : *Did the officer explain the document to you?*

-: *Yes he did, but it was done in very sophisticated way and I did not get the meaning of some words (laughing)*“ (Batumi, IdI # 5, 262-265).

A few respondents declare that they have not signed anything after the explanation of their duties and responsibilities and also no copies of any document were given to them:

„+: *When you were explained this document?*

-: *The very first day when I came to the probation bureau.*

+ : *Did you sign the document?*

-: *Nothing like that, no*“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 1, 121-132).

The majority of the respondents do not remember if they were explained the duties of the officer. Also they do not know if the officer's duties and responsibilities are given somewhere in the document they have signed:

„+: *The probation officer explained your responsibilities and duties and did he explained the officer's duties and responsibilities to you?*

-: *No, not at all. As I remember he told me to apply to him if I needed any assistance*” (Tbilisi, IdI # 5, 52-54).

While talking about probationer's psycho-social rehabilitation part of the respondents declare that the probation service takes care of probationers in general and does enough in terms of their rehabilitation:

„- (R.1): *In my case, every time when I come to the probation bureau my officer always take me to the psychologist and the psychologist tells me he wants to know how I feel myself. It is very nice when they try to take care of us*“ (Kutaisi, FGD, 441-446).

„- (R.5): Yes, for example, I felt myself very bad, I had some psychological problems, I could not even recognize people. I was taken to the doctor. GCRT is the organization, they were involved and took me every time to treatment procedures by their car. The necessary treatment I received. Now I feel much better“ (Batumi, IdI #2).

The majority of the respondents experience the difficulty while talking about psycho-social rehabilitation. Most of the probationers do not have enough information and have never thought about the topic:

„+: How do you think, is it sufficient what is being done now in terms of probationer's psycho-social rehabilitation?

-: I don't know what to say, I don't know what is being done, the only thing I know is to come to probation bureau and make registration once a week“ (Zugdidi, IdI # 1, 95-98).

„+: Is it sufficient what is being done in terms of probationers' psycho-social rehabilitation process?

(Pause).

+: what can be improved?

(Pause-No answer from the probationer)“ (Kutaisi, IdI #1, 133-137).

In many cases the majority of the respondents identify the psycho-social rehabilitation as their probation regime issue. While talking about the improvement of psycho-social rehabilitation the probationer speak again about the frequency of registration and shortening the probation term:

„-: I've heard that probation officers are helping probationers in employment and healthcare issues, also to reduce the term of probation. My officer promised me if I do everything according to law my term can be reduced twice“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 4, 128-131).

Some probationers emphasize the need of individual approach to the probationers. They think that all probationers should not be treated the same way. According to them those who are serving first term and have committed less severe crime deserve more loyal treatment:

„-: It would be great if there were staff talking to probationers and identifying what kind of person and personality is this particular probationer, they have to figure out if the person is normal, sincere etc....Some of probationers I meet are really geeks and terrible... Some of them are timid and honest... All types of probationers must not be treated the same way, I would select those with families, with first term, less severe crime, personality etc...“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 1, 136-141).

Most of the probationers do not have an answer on the question about State's and civil society's role in solving probationers psycho-social rehabilitation issues. The majority of them give very superficial and general answers, such as -the more the State does the better for them:

„+: How do you think is the State responsible for the integration of probationers into the society?

- : If State can do something I won't be against (smiling).

+: Does civil society have any responsibility?

(pause)

-: I don't know what to answer“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 2, 146-152).

“-:...They should try to correct the person and make them lead a proper way in life. It might not happen in 100% but at least partially it should be done“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 144-146).

The majority of the respondents requests from the society to treat them respectfully, without judgment and aggressions and without regarding them as criminals. Part of the respondents admits that they have difficulties in terms of reintegration in the society and they avoid the crowded places and society in general:

„- (R. 4): I tried to avoid the crowded places because I become very easily to lose my temper and can make somebody harm.

- (R.9): We do not have any kind of aggression and others also should not have an aggression towards us. We from our side will try to avoid any difficult situation“ (Kutaisi, FGD, 460-463).

„-: Yes, they [the society] should consider us not like criminals but the normal human beings and should not cut us off from the society“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 259-260).

All participants deny the fact of any kind of pressure or threat from the representatives of probation service or any other State institution:

„+: Have you been forced from someone at probation agency in order to get some information from you or some other pressure or blackmailing?

-: No, never. Nobody has bothered me with these kinds of things“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 3, 205-208).

„+: Have you experienced any rude behavior from the officer’s side or any blackmailing in order to get some information from you?

-: No, no, of course not. I have very nice relationship with my officer, so.... (Tbilisi, IdI # 5, 163-165).

Relationship with the personal probation officer

All probationers have their own probation officers. All of them know the name and cell number of their officers. Only a few respondents do not remember the surname of their officers. Most of the respondents say that they have very positive and sometimes even friendly relationship with their probation officers:

„- (R.6): They are very attentive. I don’t feel myself as convicted person. For example, the way they address me, or when they call me...they have very friendly way to communicate with me...” (Batumi, FGD, 284-286).

„-: My officer is very kind person... God bless him...” (Tbilisi, IdI # 1, 56-57).

„+: Do you know his name and surname?

-: Yes I know him; I don’t remember his surname but he is really nice person and we have very normal relationship...” (Batumi, IdI # 4, 137-138).

The majority of the respondents meet their probation officers according to probationers’ registration schedule. Most of them do it once a week. The respondents say that it is not mandatory to meet the

officer each time the probationer comes to the bureau unless there is some particular issue. The probationers can register with their fingerprint without seeing the officer each time. According to the respondents they do not remember the fact when the probationer wanted to see the officer and the officer was not available:

„- (R.9): I don't remember the case when I wanted to see the officer and I was not able to do it“ (Kutaisi, FGD, 517-518).

The majority of the probationers say that the officers spend enough time with probationers and also they are available through telephone any time. The officers themselves have the telephone numbers and all necessary contact information about probationers and contact them in case of need:

*„+ : The officer spend enough time with you to discuss the issues you are interested in?
-: Yes, my officer always answers all my inquires“ (Batumi, IdI # 3, 189-190).*

„-: When I needed I called him 2 times. I wanted to ask something regarding my driving license“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 148-149).

„+ : When they contact you?

-: When the probation bureau is arranging some event or activity and when they offer us to take part in these events. They call us and ask if we can participate“ (Batumi, IdI #1, 209-212).

„-: For example, the officer called me and informed to attend the training, today he called me and told me to come to this interview, I have been here with the group when it was a focus group“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 2, 176-178).

The majority of the respondents say that none of them have had any kind of misunderstanding or conflict with their officers. They have not heard about this kind of conflict from other probationers as well. The majority of the respondents think that the replacement of the officer is possible but no probationer has done it yet.

Part of the probationers has spoken about their needs with the officer and the future plans have been planned. Most of these probationers indicate that there are employment needs and some medical issues:

„-: My officer always tells me that he would inform me about additional opportunities regarding employment or education. He knows that I'm working now at construction...“ (Tbilisi, IdI #1, 123-125).

„- (R.4): My officer called me, for example, and offered me an employment opportunity as he knew that I was unemployed“ (Batumi, FGD 288-289).

Part of the probationers says that after such planning the officer have offered some kind of assistance. In some cases that was an employment opportunity, in other cases – medical assistance:

„+ : How useful it was to plan the process?

-: I It was very useful. Before I did not go to the doctors though I had problems... Even if I go I would pay huge amount of money but with the help of probation officer I was sent to proper

healthcare facility. I felt myself very weak because of my health problems. Now I feel much better. That was probably the result of proper planning and assessment of my needs” (Kutaisi, FGD, 575-580).

„-(R.5): Inflammation of prostate gland and also I had psychological problems, I felt myself very bad and the probation service helped me a lot, I was taken to the doctors and examinations were done” (Kutaisi, FGD, 184-185).

„-: Yes there was an offer in terms of employment at construction site, I had to undergo to some professional learning course to obtain the necessary skills but I refused, I did not want to work there, but the real offer was done from the probation service“ (Batumi, IdI # 4, 195-196).

Around 1/3 of the respondents say that in their cases needs assessment and planning have not been done by the officer:

„+: Did you have a discussion on your needs with your probation officer?

-: No.

+: So, your needs assessment has not been done?

-: No.

+: Do you have any needs?

-: No“ (Kutaisi, IdI #1, 202-207).

„+: Has your needs and risks assessed and planned?

-: No, I haven't heard about that (Kutaisi, IdI # 5, 202-203).

In most cases the probationers are satisfied with an assistance offered by the probation officer:

„-: I was employed by efforts of my officer [name and surname]. During first or second our meeting he offered me an employment opportunity and I agreed.

+: And where you were employed?

-: ... At car washing service“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 67-70).

Part of the probationers says that the officer had offered an employment opportunity but they refused because they simply do not want to work at all in some cases and in other cases the probationers have unrealistic high ambitions:

-: yes, regarding the job and trainings.

+: Did you agree?

-: No, I did not want.

+: Why?

-: No, I don't want to work...” (Batumi, IdI # 1, 263-267).

There was one case when the probationer had two different high educations and knows 3 foreign languages and an offered job was very much below his qualification:

„-: As I told you I have not worked and would not work in future physically as a factory man or something like that, I know 3 foreign languages, I have 2 university diplomas, I can work mentally, I

can do intellectual work. With my background I could find well-paid job related to my profession“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 4, 66-69).

In some cases the probationers want to start working at managerial positions without having proper education and qualification:

„-: No, I cannot work physically, and nobody will offer me office work and high managerial position ..(Tbilisi, IdI #5, 84-87).

Part of the probationers says that the officers offer them to participate in different trainings and professional courses. According to them participation in such courses are voluntary. The probationers who participated in various trainings are quite satisfied with the trainings in general. Though many of them indicate that these trainings and courses eventually have not resulted in their employment as they expected:

„-: Yes I participated in 3-day training at Geocapital, we were taught how to write CVs. To say truth I already knew that and I can't say I acquired something new during this training but anyway these trainings are good and somehow useful.

+ : And participation is voluntary?

-: Of course, if you don't want nobody force you“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 4, 177-181).

„-: It was not bad at all but I can't say I have acquired something that I really needed though I think the trainings are very good initiative in general“ (Kutaisi, FGD, 606-608).

„-: Yes I was offered the course, 3 month training course. It was around one month and half ago. It was professional course for welders. I promised the officer to think about. Then I did not go because I did not have enough free time” (Kutaisi, IdI # 3, 216-218).

The probationers who are employed find it extremely difficult to participate in the trainings or other courses because of their working schedule though they show willingness to take part in various courses:

„-: I would go to the training, with pleasure...But I have to support and feed my family and I have to earn my bread. I work at construction now and I don't have a possibility to leave the job and attend the training... I have to earn money... also I have to cover my bank debts...“ (Tbilisi, IdI # 1, 75-78)

„-: yes there are some, but I can't go and always have to refuse, I have no time.

+ : And the reason is that you have a job and do not have enough free time?

-: Yes“ (Batumi, IdI # 3, 243-345).

A few respondents indicate that though the participation in such courses are on volunteer basis in some cases the officers insist on and literally make the probationers participate in the trainings. Otherwise the officer can tighten the probation regime as the respondents say:

„-: I did not like it, why I needed this training. It was a period when I used drugs and the officer told me that he would make my registration at bureau three times a week instead of one in case of my refusal.

+ : *So it means you were forced to go to this training.*
- : *Yes I think it means that (Tbilisi, IdI # 5, 74-78).*

„ + : *So you were forced to come to this meeting?*

- (R.4): *Of course, otherwise I would not come myself. You think we do not have some other staff to do?*

- (R.1): *Yes, we were told to come and we came, now from you (to facilitator) I understand that this is volunteer and I could say no..*

- (R.7): *And you could say no? (Addressing the R.1). You can't do that, and then they will make you pay for this refusal... (Tbilisi, FGD 16-21).*

„ - (R.5): *... If there are some events or activities he is calling me. We were at the literature discussion, and then there was a football game, also an excursion to "Green Cape"*

+ : *Was this an offer or obligation?*

-(R. 1): *Obligation..*

- (R.5): *Rather an offer. At first the officer calls you and offers you... If you can't participate he (the officer) tells you: ok, no problem. If you promise to go you have to go then, like today we agreed and came here. So I can say that they are quite active and try to do something for us... "(Batumi, FGD, 374-382).*

Small part of the probationers says that they have not been offered any training opportunities from the probation service. The same time they indicate the reason for that. According to them this happens because they are newly registered at probation agency and probably too little time has passed to receive this kind of offer:

+ : *Has your officer offered you to participate in trainings?*

- : *Not yet, I'm newly registered (Kutaisi, IdI #5, 208-209).*

Besides the trainings and educational courses the probationers are offered to participate in different cultural or social events such as theater, cinema, literature discussion etc. some respondents say that they have nothing against the cultural events but they do not like when they are invited to the event as a group of probationers when everybody can recognize them as probationers and look at them with suspicion. According to them that is not an effective way of probationer's integration in the society:

- (R.7): *Going to the theatre you know is something like.... They'd better give me a ticket and I can go myself with my child. That would make easier our reintegration process in the society rather than taking all of us (probationers) as a group... When everybody starting from ticket seller ending with actor and looks at us like a band of criminals....That does not make a sense... "(Tbilisi, FGD, 152-156).*

The majority of the respondents do not approach their officers with the request of legal assistance unless it is related to their probation regime. Part of the respondents declares that they have their own lawyers and can get all the legal information and documents from them:

+ : *Did you have any questions or inquires regarding your probation term?*

- : *No, I had a lawyer and he arranged everything though the officer explained me everything what was needed. (Kutaisi, IdI # 1, 220-222)*

Part of the probationers has received an information about different organizations providing services to the probationers by their officers. Along with the officers in some offices leaflets and booklets describing some of these organizations are available:

„- (R.1): *I was offered some free tests.*

+ : *What kind of tests?*

- (R.1): *On hepatitis C.. “(Batumi, FGD, 572-574).*

„-: *Small leaflets and also verbally I was told where to go but I did not think I needed it“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 2, 223-224).*

„-: *Yes, I know Tanadgoma, also I was told about young lawyers, that is all I know“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 4, 193-196).*

The majority of the probationers think that the provision of this kind of information can be very helpful for them especially in terms of medical services:

+ : *Do you need this kind of information?*

- : *Yes, everything free is always useful, especially, free medical services“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 5, 222-224).*

Part of the probationers says that if needed the officers accompany them to the places of service provision:

„- (R.5): *I was accompanied by the officer and social worker. They took me by car.*

- (R.4): *I also was accompanied when they offered me a job opportunity.*

- (R.6): *I was taken to prosecutor, I was under-age by that time, all who were under-age were accompanied“ (Kutaisi, FGD, 660-663).*

According to the majority of the respondents some level of confidence exists between the probationer and the officer, especially regarding the issues of probation term and regiment. But as probationers say they prefer not to speak about their private life and family problems with the officer:

„+ : *Do you trust your officer?*

- : *It depends*

+ : *Private issues, have you shared this kind of information with your officer?*

- : *No, it is less probable“ (Tbilisi, IdI #2, 149-152).*

„-: *Nothing private, never, I have no desire to speak with the officer about myself and my family“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 2, 234-235).*

„+ : *Do you trust your probation officer?*

- : *I have no other choice (laughing), I trust him“ (Kutaisi, IdI # 4, 199-200).*

The absolute majority of the respondents declare that the officers show respect and treat them in very proper way. No cases of improper behavior from the officers have been mentioned:

„+ : *So you are not treated as sentenced?*

- (R.4): *No.*

- (R.3): *No (All participants together “No“..)*

- (R.2): *No looking from above or something like that no, it never happens! “(Batumi, FGD 504-507).*

Main findings and conclusions (Probationers)

Socio-demographic features

The age of the participants varies from 20 to 51 years. The majority of them are under the age of 40. Less than half of the participants are with high education. For the majority of the probationers this probation is the first penalty. The duration of the probation by the time of the interview varies from 3 months to 4 years. In most cases the duration is 4-12 months.

The majority of the respondents live with families. In most cases they share home with spouses, children and parents. For the most part the apartments or houses they are living are their own properties. Only a few respondents indicate that they are renting the homes.

The majority of the probationers have very good relations with their family members. Only a few respondents admit that they have tense relationship with some family members. All these cases are closely connected with drug usage. Most of the respondents have remained good relations with their friends. Some respondents indicate that they lost friends after they had been sentenced.

Conclusions: The majority of the respondents lives with families and has good relations with them. Only those who practiced drug use have difficulties with their families. Part of the probationers lost their friends because of their problems with law.

Employment and income

More than half of the probationers are unemployed by the time of interviews have been recorded. None of employed probationers work in public service. Employment in private sector is strongly linked with the support of family members and close relatives.

Some of the respondents worked in public service before the probation penalty such as: police, post office, and army. Part of the probationers thinks that their unemployment is connected to their probation. Confiscation of driving license is given as main obstacle on the way of finding the job. Part of the unemployed respondents refuses to work in construction business or service provision because of health conditions. Some of them with higher educational background believe that in perspective they could find better and well paid job. Some of the participants simply do not want to work without giving any reasonable explanation. It is worth to mention that the majority of the respondents do not think that the reason of their unemployment is their probation penalty.

The average income of the respondents' families varies from 300 GEL to 1500 GEL. The income of the majority does not exceed 500 GEL. Some of the respondents are given financial support from their family members working abroad.

Part of the unemployed probationers says that they assist their family members in domestic affairs (looking after the child, agriculture work etc). Small part of the respondents says that they have too much free time and do not know how to spend it.

Conclusions: More than half of the respondents are unemployed by the time of interviews recorded. None of the working probationers are employed in public sector. Employment in private and business sector is arranged by family members and close relatives. The average income of probationers' families are low and in most cases do not exceed 500 GEL. Part of the unemployed probationers, mostly those who are unmarried, have plenty of free time and do not know how to spend it.

Health conditions and drug dependence

The majority of the respondents say that they do not have any concerns regarding their health and have never applied to healthcare services. Around 1/3 of respondents says that they have different health issues. The majority of those with health problems declare that their diseases are not treated because of money shortage though, among other health conditions (viral hepatitis C, chronic inflammation of prostate gland, chronic arthritis etc.) a few probationers name tuberculosis. The treatment of TB is fully financed by State budget.

Around ¼ of the respondents have the history of drug use. Their penalty is also connected with illegal usage of drugs. Some of them had other administrative penalties connected to drug use in the past.

Conclusions: Most of the probationers do not have serious health issues which can be predetermined by their young age. Some of the probationers have untreated diseases because of their poor financial conditions. In some cases (TB cases) when the treatment is financed by the State programs the probationers do not follow up the treatment till the end and show irresponsibility and low awareness while addressing health issues.

Around ¼ of the probationers are with the history of illegal drug use. They have used injecting and non-injecting drugs. In most cases their current probation terms is determined by illegal drug use.

Knowledge of responsibilities and relation with probation service

The majority of the respondents say that they know the obligation of probation service in general. According to them the duty of probation service is to control the probationers, to advise the probationers how to register, how to cross the border, how to change the address etc. Correction of the probationers is the main responsibility of the probation service. Part of the probationers thinks that the only reason for existence of probation service is to make probationers register once a week at probation bureau. A few respondents have difficulties to identify the role of probation service and they say that they know little about the service. A few respondents reveal skepticism while assessing the probation service. According to them the only duty of probation service is to make probationers pay fines. Those respondents doubt very much if the probation service can "correct" the person at all. Though the majority of the respondents believe that the probation service fulfill its duties successfully.

The vast majority of the respondents would change the frequency of probationer's visit to the bureau. According to them, registration once a week is very inconvenient and is linked to financial expenses (travel costs), especially if the probationer is coming from remote village or settlement. Besides, it is very time consuming, especially for those probationers who are employed. Registration every week at the bureau makes conflict with working schedule of the employed probationers.

The majority of the probationers are aware of their own duties and responsibilities. According to them they have to obey the laws, avoid any kind of misunderstanding and aggressive behavior, and register on time at the probation bureau according to their registration schedule.

The duties and responsibilities of probationers were explained to them by the officers at the very beginning of their probation term. The officer explains the responsibilities verbally and then gives the document written form. The probationer signs the document and in some cases they are given the copy of the document and printed leaflet where their duties are described. But in most cases the probationers sign the document without reading and they do not read the leaflet too. A few respondents declare that they even did not understand the oral explanation of their duties as it was done in very formal way and the language used by the officer was too sophisticated.

The majority of the respondents do not remember if they were explained the duties of the officer. Also they do not know if the officer's duties and responsibilities are given in the document they have signed.

All participants deny the fact of any kind of pressure or threat from the representatives of probation service or any other State institution.

Conclusions: Despite the fact that most of the probationers are well aware about the role of probation service, there are some probationers who do not know the function of the probation service and have some kind of skepticism towards the service.

The majority of the respondents believe that the probation service fulfill its duties successfully. In order to improve the probation service the majority of the respondents would change the frequency of probationers registration at probation bureaus. Coming to the bureau once a week is very inconvenient. It is time consuming and is linked with financial burden, especially for the employed probationers.

The probationers are explained their duties and responsibilities during their first visit to the probation bureau. The explanation is given by the officer in verbal and written forms. Part of the probationers does not read the document about their duties and some of them even do not understand verbal explanation given by the officer. Sometimes the explanation is given in very formal and sophisticated way.

The majority of the respondents does not know the duties and responsibilities of their officers and do not have an idea where this information is written.

No fact of pressure or any kind of violation from the probation service officials is revealed towards probationers.

Probationers' psycho-social rehabilitation

The majority of the respondents experience the difficulty while talking about psycho-social rehabilitation. Most of the probationers do not have enough information and have never thought about the topic. In many cases the respondents identify the psycho-social rehabilitation as their probation regime issue. While talking about the improvement of psycho-social rehabilitation the probationer speak again about the frequency of registration and shortening the probation term. Some probationers emphasize the need of individual approach to the probationers. They think that all probationers should not be treated the same way. According to them those who are serving first term and have committed less severe crime deserve more loyal treatment.

Most of the probationers do not have an answer on the question about State's and civil society's role in solving probationers psycho-social rehabilitation issues. The majority of them give very superficial and general answers, like the more the State does the better for them.

Conclusions: The majority of the probationers has never thought and has no idea about the needs of their psycho-social rehabilitation. Psycho-social rehabilitation issues are recognized as the frequency and way of probationer's registration at the bureau. The probationers have also difficulty to understand the role of State and civil society in their psycho-social rehabilitation process.

Relation with the probation officer

All probationers have their own probation officers. All of them know the name and cell number of their officers. Only a few respondents do not remember the surname of their officers. Most of the respondents say that they have very positive and sometimes even friendly relationship with their probation officers.

The majority of the respondents met their probation officers according to probationers' registration schedule. The respondents say that it is not mandatory to meet the officer each time the probationer comes to the bureau unless there is some particular issue. According to the respondents the officer is available anytime when the probationer wants to see him/her.

The majority of the respondents say that none of them have had any kind of misunderstanding or conflict with their officers. They have not heard about this kind of conflict from other probationers as well. The majority of the respondents think that the replacement of the officer is possible but no probationer has done it yet.

Some level of confidence exists between the probationer and the officer, especially regarding the issues of probation term and regiment. But as probationers say they prefer not to speak about their private life and family problems with the officer.

The majority of the respondents declare that the officers show respect and treat them in very proper way.

Conclusions: All probationers know their officers well and have their contact information. All respondents can easily meet their officers if needed.

Conflict situation between the probationer and the officer which can lead to change the officer has not occurred. Most of probationers think that replacement of the officer is possible but none of them have heard about this procedure.

Respondents express their satisfaction how the officers respect and treat probationers in a correct way. The confidence between the officer and the probationer exists but the probationers prefer not to speak about their family and private issues with the officers.

Needs of probationers and ways of its satisfaction by the probation service

Part of the probationers has spoken about their needs with the officer and the future plans have been planned. Most of these probationers indicate that there are employment needs and some medical issues.

Part of the probationers says that after such discussion and planning the officer has offered assistance. In some cases that is an employment opportunity, in other cases – medical assistance. Around 1/3 of the respondents says that in their cases the officers have not done these kinds of needs assessment and planning.

Part of the probationers say that the officer had offered an employment opportunity but they refused because they simply do not want to work at all in some cases, in other cases the probationers have unrealistic high ambitions. There was one case when the probationer has two different high educations and knows 3 foreign languages and an offered job was very much below his qualification.

Part of the probationers says that the officers offer them to participate in different trainings and professional courses. According to them participation in such courses are volunteer. Though in some cases the officers insist on and literally make the probationers participate in the trainings. Otherwise the officer can tighten the probation regime as the respondents say. For employed probationers it is extremely difficult to participate in the trainings or other courses because of their working schedule. The probationers who participated in various trainings are quite satisfied with the trainings in general. The same time many of them indicate that these trainings and courses eventually have not resulted in their employment as they expected.

Newly registered probationers have not received yet an offer to participate in the trainings. Besides the trainings and educational courses the probationers are offered to participate in different cultural or social events such as theater, cinema, literature discussion etc. some respondents say that they have nothing against the cultural events but they do not like when they are invited to the event as a group of probationers when everybody can recognize them as probationers and look at them with suspicion. According to them that is not an effective way of probationer's integration in the society.

The majority of the respondents do not approach their officers with the request of legal assistance unless it is related to their probation regime.

Part of the probationers has received information about different organizations providing services to the probationers by their officers. Along with the officers at some offices (not everywhere) leaflets and booklets describing some of these organizations are available. The majority of the probationers think that the provision of this kind of information can be very helpful for them especially in terms of medical services.

Part of the probationers says that if needed the officers accompany them to the places of service provision.

Conclusions: Part of the probationers has discussed their needs with the officers and has arranged the future plans. Eventually an employment opportunity or needed medical services were offered. In case of some probationers, according to them, this kind of needs assessment has not been done. It can be assumed that in these cases needs assessment was done very formally or information to the probationer was not given in understandable way.

Despite the fact that an employment opportunity is given to some probationers they refuse to start working. The reason is that in some cases offered job is much below of the probationer working qualification and educational background or in some cases the probationers have too high ambitions which are not based on realistic ground.

Participation in various trainings and learning courses is on volunteer base. Though in some cases the officer insists on probationer's participation otherwise he/she can make more severe the probationer's regime. Employed probationers very often cannot participate in the trainings because of their working schedule. The probationers in general are happy with the trainings they participated in but it has not resulted in their successful employment as they expected before.

Some participants think that collective visits to the cinema or theater can't be effective in terms of probationers' integration in the society as everybody can recognize them as probationers and look at them with suspicion. Still there the prejudice and stigma towards former inmates and prisoners in the society is too high.

It is possible to get information about different organizations providing relevant services to the probationers though this information is not available at all probation offices.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that the probation officer has a separate room for face to face meeting with the probationer. That will make relations between probationer and officer more sincere and cordial. Also confidential issues will be better addressed.
- The basic preparation courses for the officers are short enough (10 working days) to acquire all necessary skills. Therefore it is desired to increase the duration of this course or conduct additional relevant trainings (required by the officers) after the officer is appointed.
- It would be very effective if the needs and requests of the probationer officers are taken into consideration while planning the trainings for them.
- Though the officers know well enough their duties and responsibility it is recommended to have a detailed written job description of the officer. It is highly recommended to separate and define the duties and responsibilities of probation officer and social worker from each other. It is necessary to make probation officers and social workers familiar with the document describing their duties and responsibilities immediately after their appointment.
- It is recommended to optimize the number of the probationers attributed to one officer in accordance of EU regulations.
- The officer should explain the duties and responsibilities to the probationer in “understandable” way and while offering to sign the document it is recommended that the officer makes sure that the probationer has read and understands the document properly. Along with explanation of probationer’s responsibilities it is desired that the probationer is given and explained an officer’s responsibilities as well in more detailed and structured way.
- While assessing the risks and needs of the probationer the involvement of psychologist and social worker from the very beginning of the process is recommended because only the officer does not have enough competencies to judge the probationer’s risks and needs. More discussions of psycho-social rehabilitation issues should be conducted with the probationer and again the role of psychologist and social worker is desired to increase. Also it is recommended to explain the term and meaning of psychosocial rehabilitation to the probationers.
- The trainings and learning course should be provided to the probationers based on their individual needs, interests and time capacity. The age, educational background, existing skills, working scheduled (if employed) should be taken into account.
- It is desired that an offer to participate in trainings or in other events should have recommendation meaning than must do assignment.
- It is desired that more efforts should focus to find the employment opportunities for the probationers as the risk to commit repeated crime is lower in case of employed probationer.

It is recommended if this responsibility is more detailed described in social worker's or officer's job description.

- The frequency of probationer's visits to probation bureau is standard but it is desired if individual needs and risks of the probationers are taken into consideration. Coming to the bureau once a week (which is the frequency of probationer's registration at probation service in most cases) could be really inconvenient especially for those who have jobs (and risk of committing the crime is really lower) or those who live far away from the probation services (time and budget co consuming).
- Involvement of the probationers in cultural and social events could be very helpful in terms of probationer's integration into the society. But instead of collective visits to the cinema and theater with the group of other probationers it is recommended to give the possibility to go to the event individually with family members, relatives or sometimes with probation officer which can increase the trust between them.

ANNEX I: Survey Instruments

Guide for In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions among Persons under Probation

Project funded by European Union: “Back to society: establishing Social Bureaus for former inmates, prisoners and probationers in Georgia”

Implementers: Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma, Mainline Foundation (the Netherlands), AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW - Ukraine)

Survey title: Assessment of needs for psychosocial rehabilitation and re-socialization among probationers and probation staff.

Date:

Name of the interviewer/facilitator:

Name of the note taker:

Participant code:

Start time:

End time:

Instruction for the interviewer/facilitator:

Please read the introduction, which describes the goals of the meeting. Remember, that the participants should be informed that if at any time they feel themselves uncomfortable while talking about some topic, they are not obliged to talk. Also, please inform them that there are no right or wrong responses to the questions posed. It is not necessary to ask all the questions or ask them in the sequence provided by the guide, as it is presented below.

Sometimes the topic raises spontaneously and it is desirable to discuss it, despite the sequences provided in the guide. Also, it is not necessary to ask all the questions. These questions will help you to understand the topics of the discussion deeply and motivate participants for the discussion. If the participants are already freely speaking, it might happen that in-depth questions are not necessary. Facilitator should be very well familiar with the guide before meeting the group/interviewee, in order to successfully moderate conversation including spontaneously raised issues and to know, when the particular questions should be used for maximal benefit.

Introduction:

Hello, my name is _____, I represent non-governmental organization “Tanadgoma”. Our organization conducts the research, which aims at assessing capacity of national probation service and, based on this assessment, elaborate effective future interventions for improving psychosocial rehabilitation of probationers. Today we are going to talk about Georgian probation service, in particular, about functions of this service, rights and responsibilities of probation staff, your relationship with the probation service and with probation officers. All this has a goal of identifying whether the probation service is ready to face the challenges, whether it meets the needs of persons under probation.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary, anonymous and confidential. This means that we are not asking your name, surname, your identification information is not registered anywhere. You can

quit participation in the interview (or focus group discussion) at any time. Also, you are not obliged to answer the questions, which you do not deem necessary to answer. Information shared by you will not affect your probation conditions or sentence. On the contrary, this information will help us provide recommendations to the probation agency on how to improve its work and better comply with the needs and requirements of persons under probation. This will help you and other probation officers as well as probationers in knowing their rights and responsibilities during probation and receive maximum benefit which is possible during the period of probation.

I. Socio-demographic characteristics

a) Basic information

Let's start. In the first part of the survey I would like to receive some information about your social and demographic data...

Interviewer: Please probe according to the provided scheme:

- How old are you?
- What is your marital status?
- Are you currently married?
- Have you ever been married?
- Do you have kids? If yes, how many?
- What kind of education have you received?
- Have you received any education? What kind of education?
- How many grades at school have you completed?
- Do you have any vocational education?
- Do you hold any métier?
- Did you study/did you graduate a high school/university?
- What are you by profession?
- Is this your main profession?
- Have you ever worked in the field of your profession?
- Do you have another profession?
- How long have you been under probation?
- Is this your first conviction?
- Before probation, have you been detained in a prison? If yes, for how many years?

Interviewer: Please give the respondent possibility to talk about the issues that he/she deems important.

b) Living arrangements, relationship with the family

- Please, describe your living arrangements.
- Do you own a living space?
- Do you rent a living space?
- How big is your living space?
- Are you living alone or with some other people?
- How many people live together with you?
- With whom do you live together? Please list.
- Please, describe your relationship with your family members..

- Is there any family members with whom you are more close, and who supports you?
Who is this person?
- Have you had some tense relationship with your family members? What was the reason for that?
- How did you solve this problem? Did anyone help you? Did you manage it by yourself?
- Apart from your family members, with whom do you have close relationship?
- What kind of relationship do you have with these persons?
- How frequent do you see these persons?
- How relationship with these persons influences your life?
- Do they help you to solve your problems?

c) Employment, daily activities, income

- Are you employed?
- If yes, where do you work? What do you do?
- Is this your permanent job or temporary?
- Have you been employed before conviction/probation?
- If yes, where?
- If no, what was the reason for that?
- Have you ever tried to get a job? Where and how did you look for a job?
- Have you ever referred to any official structure for getting employment?
- What was the reason of not being able to get a job?
- Is your unemployment related to your conviction record?
- Have you been refused to get a job because of your conditional conviction?
- Have you been fired because of your conditional conviction?
- Have you ever heard of such a fact from another probationer?
- How many of your family members are employed?
- What is average income of your family?
- How many of your family members do you support financially?
- Do your family members support you financially?
- Please, tell me about you daily activities.
- What do you usually do when you have free time?
- How do you spend holidays?

d) Health-related issues

- Do you have any problems related to health?
- Could you tell me about these problems?
- Have you referred for medical assistance because of these problems?
- If no, what was the reason for that?
- Did you know to whom to refer to?
- Was lack of financial resources the reason not to refer for medical assistance?
- Have you ever been addicted to or a user of any chemical substances?
- Which substances did you use?
- Did you overcome your addiction on your own or did you get any treatment?
- Have you ever been convicted because of substance (drug) use?
- Have you ever received administrative punishment because of drug use?
- If yes, what kind of punishment it was?

- Have you had any problems with your family members because of your drug use?
- Do you have such problem now?

II. Relationship with the probation service

Let's speak about the probation service now...

Interviewer: Please probe according to the provided scheme:

- Do you know what the mission of the probation service is?
- If yes, could you list rights of probation service?
- Could you list duties of probation service?
- What responsibility does the probation service hold?
- What goal does it serve?
- In your opinion, what should probation service aim at?
- Can you describe this in your words?
- In your opinion, does the current probation service fulfill its functions?
- If yes, could you share any example of this?
- If no, what is the reason?
- What would you change or improve in the probation service?
- What responsibilities do you, as a probationer, hold?
- What are your duties?
- Where do you have information about your duties from?
- Is there any special document regulating your responsibilities during probation?
- What is this document?
- When you were made familiar with this document?
- In your opinion, is there enough focus made on psychosocial rehabilitation and resocialization of probationers?
- In particular, what is being done in this regard?
- What can be improved?
- What would you like to do in the future?
- What is hindering probation service to implement these particular activities?
- What is responsibility of the state in the field psychosocial rehabilitation of probationers?
- What is responsibility of civil society?
- Could you add any other players (e.g. business structures)?
- Have there been cases during probation that you experienced pressure, blackmailing from probation services (or some other law enforcement structure) in order to get some information from you (or with some other purpose)?
- If yes, what these cases were connected to?
- Did you agree with the requests posed upon you?
- If you did not agree, were there any complications for you after this incident?
- How did you manage the whole situation?
- Have you ever heard from other probationers about such facts (I mean violence, blackmailing)?
- How often have you heard about such facts?
- If you have heard about such facts, can you share, what was the case about?

III. Relationship with the personal probation officer

In the third section of the questionnaire we will discuss your relationship with the probation officers.

Interviewer: Please probe according to the provided scheme:

Format and frequency of contacts with the personal probation officer

- Do you have your personal probation officer?
- Do you know your personal probation officer (name, surname)?
- What kind of relationship do you have with him/her?
- What is the frequency of your meetings?
- In your opinion, does your personal probation officers dedicate enough time to your meetings?
- What is the content you your meetings?
- Do you have telephone number of your personal probation officer?
- In which cases do you call him/her?
- Does your probation officer have your telephone number? Does he/she call you?
- In which cases does he/she call you?
- Do you have contacts with only one or several probation officers?
- How often personal probation officers are changed?
- If there is a problem between you and your probation officer, can you request changing him/her?
- Has such thing ever happened? If yes, was your request satisfied?
- If no, what was the reason of that?
- Have you ever heard from other probationers about such facts?

Duties and responsibilities of probationer and probation officer

- After or during your first contact with your personal probation officer were you acquainted with your duties and resopnsibilities?
- What was the form of making you familiar with your duties and responsibilities? Was it done in a written form or verbally?
- Did you sign any document?
- What kind of document was that?
- Where you provided a second copy of this document?
- Did this document include duties and responsibilities of the probation service (probation officer)?
- If no, did the officer inform you about duties and responsibilities of the probation service (and your personal probation officer) in relation to you?

Needs of probationers and meeting those needs by the probation service

- After your first contact with your personal probation officer have you talked to him/her about your needs?
- If yes, whose initiative was that?
- Could you describe the process?
- Was some assessment of your problems conducted?
- Were your needs/problems documented?
- Were the resources needed for solving your problems assessed?
- Did you create an action plan to solve your problems?
- Did your personal probation officer offer you assistance in implementing your action plan?

- What was this assistance about?
- Did your probation officer offer you some other kind of help/assistance?
- Did you agree to his/her suggested help?
- If no, what was the reason for that?
- Have you referred to your officer for any kind of help?
- What kind of help did you ask for?
- Did he/she provide you with the help requested?
- How comprehensive was this help?
- Were you satisfied with the help provided?
- If no, what was the reason for your dissatisfaction?
- Has your officer offered you participation in any kind of training?
- Did you take part in the training offered?
- I mean, was your participation in the training based on your will?
- If no, what was the reason that you agreed to participate?
- how useful was the training for you?
- Has it ever happened that the probation service referred (took) you to some meetings without informing you?
- I mean the meetings where you did not have information about where you were going? What these meetings were about? Who were initiators of the meetings?
- Have you ever heard from other probationers about participation in trainings or other meetings?
- Have you ever heard that other probationers' involvement in training or meetings happened without informing them in advance?
- Or maybe without their will or by force?
- Have you ever talked with your probation officer about employment?
- Has the officer offered any assistance with the employment?
- What kind of jobs/employment was the discussion about?
- If you did not agree to receive such assistance, what was the reason?
- Have you ever heard from other probationers about such assistance from the officers?
- Have you ever heard that some probationers got employed with assistance of the probation bureau??
- If yes, what kind of job did the probationer get?
- Have you ever been in need of any legal assistance and have you referred for such assistance to you probation officer?
- What kind of assistance it was?
- Did your officer assist you?
- Where did you get the legal assistance – at the probation bureau or at some other organization?
- Were you satisfied with this assistance?
- If no, what was the reason for your dissatisfaction?
- Have you ever heard from other probationers about such (legal) assistance?
- If yes, do you know whether they were content or not?
- Have you ever had a case that your personal officer provided you with the information about different organizations that could provide you with various free of charge or non-free of charge services?
- Did you need such information?
- If you needed this information, did you make use of it?
- If no, what was the reason?

- Could you list organizations/facilities, information about which was provided by the probation officer?
- Have you ever heard from other probationers about having received such information?
- Has your probation officer ever offered you to accompany you to some services? (I mean that the probation officers comes together with you to the place where you get the needed services)
- Did you agree with this suggestion?
- If no, what was the reason?
- If the officer accompanied you, did you receive the service you needed?
- How social accompanying by the probation officer was helpful in terms of receiving the needed service?
- Have you ever heard from other probationers about such service?
- To what extend do you trust your personal probation officer?
- I mean, have you ever talked with him/her about your personal life matters?
- Do you think that the officer would keep information share by you confidential?
- Have there been cases when the officer shared your personal information to the third party without your consent?
- If yes, who was this third party?
- How this fact affected your relationship with the officer?
- Have you heard of similar cases from other probationers?

Thank you for taking part in the survey!

Guide for In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions among Probation Officers

Project funded by European Union: “Back to society: establishing Social Bureaus for former inmates, prisoners and probationers in Georgia”

Implementers: Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma, Mainline Foundation (the Netherlands), AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW - Ukraine)

Survey title: Assessment of needs for psychosocial rehabilitation and re-socialization among probationers and probation staff.

Date:

Name of the interviewer/facilitator:

Name of the note taker:

Participant code:

Start time:

End time:

Instruction for the interviewer/facilitator:

Please read the introduction, which describes the goals of the meeting. Remember, that the participants should be informed that if at any time they feel themselves uncomfortable while talking about some topic, they are not obliged to talk. Also, please inform them that there are no right or wrong responses to the questions posed. It is not necessary to ask all the questions or ask them in the sequence provided by the guide, as it is presented below.

Sometimes the topic raises spontaneously and it is desirable to discuss it, despite the sequences provided in the guide. Also, it is not necessary to ask all the questions. These questions will help you to understand the topics of the discussion deeply and motivate participants for the discussion. If the participants are already freely speaking, it might happen that in-depth questions are not necessary. Facilitator should be very well familiar with the guide before meeting the group/interviewee, in order to successfully moderate conversation including spontaneously raised issues and to know, when the particular questions should be used for maximal benefit.

Introduction:

Hello, my name is _____, I represent non-governmental organization “Tanadgoma”. Our organization conducts the research, which aims at assessing capacity of national probation service and, based on this assessment, elaborate effective future interventions for improving psychosocial rehabilitation of probationers. Today we are going to talk about Georgian probation service, in particular, about functions of this service, rights and responsibilities of probation staff, your relationship with the probation service and with probationers. All this has a goal of identifying

whether the probation service is ready to face the challenges, whether it meets the needs of persons under probation.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary, anonymous and confidential. This means that we are not asking your name, surname, your identification information is not registered anywhere. You can quit participation in the interview (or focus group discussion) at any time. Also, you are not obliged to answer the questions, which you do not deem necessary to answer. Information shared by you will not affect your working for the probation service. On the contrary, this information will help us provide recommendations to the probation agency on how to improve its work and better comply with the needs and requirements of persons under probation. This will help you and other probation officers as well as probationers in knowing their rights and responsibilities during probation and receive maximum benefit which is possible during the period of probation.

I. Socio-demographic characteristics

a) Basic information

b)

Let's start. In the first part of the survey I would like to receive some information about your social and demographic data...

Interviewer: Please probe according to the provided scheme:

- How old are you?
- What kind of education have you received?
- Did you study/did you graduate a high school/university?
- Which high school/university did you graduate from?
- What are you by profession?
- Is this your main profession?
- Have you ever worked in the field of your profession?
- Do you have another profession?

Interviewer: Please give the respondent possibility to talk about the issues that he/she deems important.

b) Working conditions

- How long have you been working for probation system?
- Are you a full-time employee?
- Do you have your own working space?
- If yes, how big it is? Is this space enough for you, in order to fulfill your tasks?
- If no, with how many persons are you working in the same room?
- Are they probation officers too?
- If no, what are they by profession or what are their positions?
- In your opinion, does the working space provided to you comply with the requirements of your position?

c) Experience of participating in special training and knowledge on duties/responsibilities

- Have you undergone any specific preparation before you started working?
- What kind of preparation it was? Was it some training or some practical on-job coaching?

- Can you list what were these training/trainings?
- Which training would you assess as the most successful? The most unsuccessful?
- What kind of practical on-job coaching did you receive?
- How long did your preparation last?
- Was it enough?
- If no, what kind of course or training would you like to receive?
- What are your duties and responsibilities in the probation system?
- Could you list your duties and responsibilities, as a probation officer?
- Is there any document regulating your duties and responsibilities?
- What kind of a document it is? What is the name of this document?
- Have you signed this document? Does this happen according to some law or internal regulation?
- Does any document of "job description" of a probation officer exist?
- If yes, did anyone make you familiar with this document?
- Have you signed it?
- According to this document, what rights a probation officer has?
- What are duties of a probation officer?

d) Income

- Are you satisfied with your reimbursement?
- Is your reimbursement corresponding to your tasks and duties?

II. Relationship with and attitudes towards probationers

This section of the questionnaire is about relationship with and attitudes towards the probationers. If you are ready to talk about this, we can continue...

Interviewer: Please probe according to the provided scheme:

- How many probationers are assigned to one probation officer? Cases of how many probationers do you have at the same time?
- In your opinion, is this number high or low?
- Do you have enough time to work with them?
- How many times a week do you meet with one probationer?
- Is there anything that the number of these meetings depends on? What, in particular?
- Where do you meet? Do you have a separate room for these meetings?
- How many such rooms are there for these meetings at your probation bureau?
- What is the content of these meetings?
- Do you have telephone number of the probationers?
- In which cases do you call them?
- Do they have your telephone number?
- Do they call you?
- In which cases do they call you?
- What kind of information about their rights and responsibilities do you provide to probationers?
- Do you inform probationers assigned to you about their rights?
- Do you inform them about their responsibilities?
- How do you inform them about this – verbally or in a written form?
- Is there any specific document, which regulates rights and responsibilities of the

probationers?

- What kind of a document is this?
- When this document is made familiar to the probationers?
- Do they sign this document?
- Do they receive the second copy of the signed document?
- Which methods of intervention do you use in working with probationers?
- Have you underwent any special training in these intervention methods?
- Where did you receive this training?
- What was the duration of these courses?
- Can you list the intervention methods that you use while working with probationers?
- In your opinion, are these methods effective in working with your clients?
- How these methods help you?
- Do these methods help your clients?
- How these methods help them?
- Please, describe the process of working with the probationers.
- Apart from informing them about their rights and responsibilities, what kind of work do you conduct with them?
- Are their needs identified/inquired?
- In which form does this happen?
- Which needs are identified?
- Are the identified needs captured in some document?
- If yes, what is the name of this document?
- What other documents are filled out?
- What is the goal of having this documentation?
- If there is a problem between your and a probationer, can this person ask to change you, as his personal probation officer and assign himself to another officer?
- Have such kind of facts ever happened? Was the request of a probationer satisfied? If not, what was the reason?
- Have the probationers referred to you for any kind of help?
- What kind of help were you referred for?
- Could you satisfy these needs?
- How comprehensive was this help?
- Was the probationer satisfied with the help you provided?
- If no, what was the reason for dissatisfaction?
- Do you offer (have you ever offered) to probationers participation in any kind of training?
- Could you list these training?
- How often such trainings are planned?
- Who organizes these trainings?
- Where are they conducted?
- Can you remember last time when such training took place?
- What kind of a training that was?
- Is participation of probationers in such trainings voluntary or compulsory?
- If compulsory, and if a probationer refuses to take part, what kind of sanctions he/she might receive?
- Do the probationers agree to take part in these training?
- During the last year, how many probationers assigned to you took part in the trainings?
- Is satisfaction of the trainees measured after the trainings?
- Do you work on assisting probationers with employment?

- What do you do in this regard, what do you offer them?
- Do you offer them professional skills building courses?
- In particular, what courses do you offer?
- How many of your probationers have undergone such courses?
- Did participation in these courses contribute to their employment?
- Did any of your probationers get employed?
- If yes, where?
- Have the probationers referred to you concerning legal aid?
- If yes, how often does this happen?
- What are the main topics of legal aid?
- Could you recall the recent case?
- What kind of legal aid in particular was it?
- How did you manage to solve this issue?
- Do you have information about the organizations, which provide different services interesting for your probationers?
- How did you get information about these organizations?
- Did those organizations themselves provide you with information?
- Did you search for this information?
- Was this information provided by the probation bureau?
- Could you list some of these organizations?
- What kind of services these organizations offer to the clients?
- How do you inform about these services your probationers – verbally or in a form of some material, informational brochure?
- Do you ask the clients after this, whether they had referred to any of those organizations and received services? Do you ask them if they were satisfied?
- Do you have any communication with such organizations?
- What kind of communication do you have with them?
- Do you refer your clients in different organizations?
- Could you provide an example, where had you referred your clients? Do you check afterwards, if your clients went to get the services? How do you check this?
- Have you had such case, when a client is not able to go independently to some facility which provides necessary services?
- Has the client asked you to accompany him/her to such services?
- Did you help him/her?
- In your opinion, do your duties include such social accompaniment?
- What is your attitude towards probationers?
- How would you characterize your relationship with the probationers?
- Is your attitude different depending on the crime committed??
- Do your clients, I mean probationers, trust you?
- Do they talk to you about their private issues?
- Do they trust you when it comes to confidentiality of the information?
- If they do not trust you, in your opinion, what is the reason for that?
- What could be done to improve relationship between probation officer and probationer?
- In your opinion, is there enough focus on psychosocial rehabilitation and resocialization of probationers?
- In particular, what is being done in this direction?
- What could be improved?
- What would you wish to do in the future?

Which obstacles are there to conduct these activities?

- What is responsibility of the state in psychosocial rehabilitation of probationers?
- What is responsibility of the civil society?
- Can you add something (or someone, e.g. business sector)?

Interviewer: Please give the respondent possibility to talk about the issues that he/she deems important.

III. Attitudes towards probation agency

The third section of the questionnaire is about your opinion on probation service, it's goals, and ways of improving its effectiveness...

Interviewer: Please probe according to the provided scheme:

- Do you know what the mission of probation service is?
- If yes, could you list goal, functions of this service?
- In your opinion, what goal should the probation service serve?
- In your opinion, does the current probation service fulfill these functions?
- If no, what are the reasons for that?
- What would you change in the probation service?
- In this structure that you work (or from any other law enforcement) have you ever been a subject of pressure or blackmail in order to get some information from you (or for any other reasons)?
- Has there ever been a case when such information was simply requested?
- If yes, what was the case about?
- Did you comply with this request?
- If you did not agree, what happened after?

Thank you for taking part in the survey!

ANNEX II: Informed Consent Form

Project funded by European Union: “Back to society: establishing Social Bureaus for former inmates, prisoners and probationers in Georgia”

Implementers: Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma, Mainline Foundation (the Netherlands), AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW - Ukraine)

Survey title: Assessment of needs for psychosocial rehabilitation and re-socialization among probationers and probation staff.

Informed consent form for persons under probation

Hello, my name is _____, I represent non-governmental organization “Tanadgoma”. Our organization conducts the research, which aims at assessing capacity of national probation service and, based on this assessment, elaborate effective future interventions for improving psychosocial rehabilitation of probationers. Today we are going to talk about Georgian probation service, in particular, about functions of this service, rights and responsibilities of probation staff, your relationship with the probation service and with probation officers. All this has a goal of identifying whether the probation service is ready to face the challenges, whether it meets the needs of persons under probation.

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You are selected for participation in this survey based on a simple random sampling principle. If you agree to take part in the survey, I will interview you using a special questionnaire. The whole process will take about 30-40 minutes.

Before you take decision about taking part I the survey, I suggest making yourself familiar with the survey questionnaire, which will guide our discussion. Please, have a look at the instrument and think about my suggestion of participating in the survey. You may ask any question about the survey and I will try to answer.

If you agree to take part in the survey, I would like to ask your permission to start our conversation. Do you agree to answer my questions? If yes, I will sign on your behalf a voluntary participation consent form. If you do not agree, thank you for taking your time.

Respondent agrees to take part in the survey: _____

Respondent does not agree to take part in the survey: _____

Date:

Project funded by European Union: “Back to society: establishing Social Bureaus for former inmates, prisoners and probationers in Georgia”

Implementers: Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma, Mainline Foundation (the Netherlands), AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW - Ukraine)

Survey title: Assessment of needs for psychosocial rehabilitation and re-socialization among probationers and probation staff.

Informed consent form for probation officers

Hello, my name is _____, I represent non-governmental organization “Tanadgoma”. Our organization conducts the research, which aims at assessing capacity of national probation service and, based on this assessment, elaborate effective future interventions for improving psychosocial rehabilitation of probationers. Today we are going to talk about Georgian probation service, in particular, about functions of this service, rights and responsibilities of probation staff, your relationship with the probation service and with probationers. All this has a goal of identifying whether the probation service is ready to face the challenges, whether it meets the needs of persons under probation.

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Respondent agrees to take part in the survey: _____

Respondent does not agree to take part in the survey: _____

Date: