

Society Free of Corruption: Which Way to Choose?

Deliberation Results

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Center for Change and Conflict Management “Partners-Georgia”
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Introduction

Corruption has become a serious political and economic challenge in recent times and the need for anti-corruption measures is increasingly obvious.

Each stage of the state-building and national development process is marked with specific signs and levels of corruption. That is why there are different ways to fight corruption. But corruption cannot be tackled successfully without the society's political will and support. This problem is especially painful in the so-called transitional societies, for instance post-Communist countries. As Georgia is one of them, just specific problems of these countries must be put in the spotlight.

Two non-governmental organisations of Georgia – Centre for Reforms and Conflict Management “Partners – Georgia” and Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development – initiated a joint project with financial assistance of European Union. **The main objective of the project was to make a valuable contribution to anti-corruption measures and corruption prevention in Georgia by means of consolidating the civil sector's efforts on the one hand and encouraging participation of ordinary citizens in the process on the other hand.**

The so-called *public discussion methodology*, less known in Georgia, was tested in the framework of the project. That is why the authors of the project consider it a pilot study to a certain degree.

Two major tasks were implemented during the project:

- **Training workshops and seminars** were carried out in various regions of Georgia for local NGOs in order to help them overcome their institutional weakness. During the training the target NGOs improved their knowledge and skills, and also learned special management methodology and a citizens' political process.
- **Citizens' political process** was encouraged in various regions of Georgia by means of public forums. Ordinary citizens were invited to take part in the forums to jointly discuss the problem of corruption and anti-corruption measures. The authors of the project were confident and hopeful that learning public opinion on the problem of corruption and anti-corruption activities could help both NGOs and respective governmental agencies take account of the public opinion during the development of anti-corruption programs. As a result, these programs would get more support in society.

The given publication presents the summary of the implemented public forums with final generalised accounts and analysis of the opinions of the residents of eight cities of Georgia on the problem of corruption.

Methodology of the deliberation

People's active participation is crucial for efficient implementation of democratic politics. It is not enough to vote in elections and support elected representatives. It is not enough to speak out on urgent problems or simply wait and see. People must act, provided they know the final goal and the method to achieve it.

Public deliberation is a process with long historical roots, which provides an opportunity for people to come together and jointly decide their future actions. After in-depth consideration and analysis of a problem, its solutions and their likely consequences, people may realise that other people's perception of the problem (and respectively the solutions) can completely differ from theirs. This understanding may urge them to look for alternative methods and decisions, which can be valuable and acceptable for entire society, not only for them. The public deliberation process may involve small groups with only a dozen of participants. These groups are known as *research groups*. Large-scale public deliberation is called a *public forum*. Just the latter, the large-scale deliberation, was applied in the given project. It is described in more detail below.

What is public deliberation and what are its specific features?

Prudent decisions cannot be reached only by talking, discussing or identifying values. Each likely result of a decision must be thoroughly analysed and understood, and all its positive and negative aspects should be assessed. This is the meaning of deliberation. It helps find out whether a decision is justifiable and whether its likely consequences are acceptable for society.

Debate is the most frequently used form of political discussion. There are numerous stories in media about endless political rivalry in which people waste their time and energy trying to find out who are their allies and who are their enemies.

Public deliberation is fundamentally different from debates. It is not a political discussion in which each side is trying to outdo the other using a demagogic language. It also has nothing to do with a casual talk, which takes a lot of effort to maintain it in a more or less civilised manner. Public deliberation is a method of *joint discussion and joint decisions*.

Deliberation is a structured dialogue about three or four (not two opposite) alternative solutions to a problem. Such a structure helps prevent mutual accusations and verbal attacks "backed" by simplified arguments.

Deliberation is a method to assess every alternative in accordance with our real values. It also means evaluating other people's views and perceptions. No single individual, or a small group of individuals, has enough experience and wisdom to make the best choice. That is why it is important to combine and generalise opinions of representative groups of citizens.

Certainly, no decision can be regarded as absolutely right, until particular steps are taken. It is quite possible, however, to consider all likely results and decide whether we are prepared to accept the worst-case scenario.

Public deliberation means that decision-making is based on our genuine values, not only on facts. When facing a difficult choice, people try to get as much information as possible. No doubt, facts are very important but they cannot answer all the questions. ***Public deliberation is efficient for understanding just such problems that lack reliable factual materials to make a universal and right decision.***

A prerequisite for deliberation: problem description must be broadly understandable

Before setting out to discuss an urgent problem, it should be described in a way that can help raise public awareness of the problem. Citizens must have a common view on the problem in order to be able to seek solutions jointly. Very often, however, problems that concern entire society are defined and "wrapped up" by experts with ready solutions enclosed. Afterwards, the "solutions" are put forward by political leaders and publicised by media as if just these solutions were a problem. The real meaning of a problem is "lost" as a result, and the question why the society is concerned with the problem drops out of the public discourse.

The methodology of public deliberation takes into account all the above-mentioned aspects and tends to define and explain a problem in such terms that reflect real visions and values of citizens. As a result, even people with different priorities are able to understand the problem, its meaning and reasons, and become aware of *their own problem*.

Analysts and experts in respective fields prepare and publish the so-called *thematic brochures* designed to present a problem adequately at a public forum. The brochures contain popular interpretation of the problem and are handed out to participants of the forum in advance, in order to give them an insight into the problem and its alternative solutions, and

urge them to think about it before the deliberation. The brochures also include respective case stories, and enough information for comprehensive consideration and analysis of all positive and negative aspects of every alternative “solution”.

Problems that can be put forward for a public debate are briefly described below:

- problems that require making a choice but do not give ready answers;
- problems that concern the majority of the population;
- problems that require certain groups of citizens to act in order to improve the situation;
- problems that can be solved by new approaches;
- problems that have not been debated and analysed by citizens yet (i.e. people have not discussed various directions of activities and their likely long-term results);
- problems that can be solved only if politicians take account of public opinion

Problems that should not be put forward for a public debate:

- problems that are too technical and need technical solutions;
- problems that require only “yes” and “no” answers;
- problems that the government has already decided how to solve and the society has only to endorse the solution;
- problems that need immediate response;
- problems that affect only a very small group of interests.

What is the final product of a public debate?

Changes in public mentality

Thousands of public forums have been conducted in various countries. Their experience showed that the initial effect is mainly limited to the personal level. Follow-up forums change people. As a result of a forum, its participants become more aware of a problem, can view it in the global context, compare it to other problems, etc. The forum gives them an insight into the problem and its significance. *The joint deliberation of a problem makes people more confident – they come to realise that they can have their own opinion on the problem and give voice to it.*

The experience of public forums demonstrated that about half the participants change their views as a result of the deliberation. A large number of the respondents (71%) admitted that they accepted dissenting beliefs in their heart but maintained their stance in public. More than 78% of the participants emphasised that they appreciated the ideas, which differed substantially, from their own views.

Participation in only one public forum cannot change our beliefs and views. However, participants of multiple forums admit that they hear and read news differently than others – they are trying to figure out alternative ways of the development of the news and likely consequences of the process. People claim also that they have become more active citizens. People may come to believe in the possibility of joint actions because they change their attitude towards other people’s opinions. Forum participants consider themselves direct participants of the political process, not mere clients.

Citizens’ responsibility

The responsibility for making a well-thought-out and prudent choice contributes to the development of citizens’ responsibility. People feel much more responsibility when they have to make a choice on their own, not when others do it instead of them.

New knowledge

Information and knowledge, which cannot be obtained from analysing public opinion or consulting experts, are the main products of a public forum. This kind of information is sometimes called “public knowledge” and it can be gained only through close relationship. Particularly, the following questions can be answered:

- How is a problem seen by a society? What approaches does the society prefer to use for solving the problem?
- What are people’s values? Where do their beliefs overlap or contradict?
- What actions are people willing or unwilling to take in the problem-solving process?
- What consequences can be brought about by actions that are unacceptable for society? What are acceptable measures for them?
- Do people’s views have anything in common that can allow to set mutually acceptable priorities for future actions?

Public forums help fuse experiences of lots of people to produce a common concept, common framework of vision.

Public forums are not merely tolerant towards different opinions. They use these opinions to draw unique, integrated approaches to a problem.

How can the products of public deliberation be applied?

Products of public deliberation can be useful for two fundamental tasks:

1. They can facilitate **public action** (i.e. various civil actions)
2. They can provide **information for the government** during the policy development process and regulate complex relations between citizens and public servants.

Public forums stimulate society's activity, though they do not end in a universal compromise. They guide people to certain objectives and help them identify common goals. When people have common goals, they are able to plan and carry out various practical measures. Although these measures are quite different, they have a common purpose. They perfectly conform with each other and contribute to each other.

Certain information (public knowledge) is "created" and amassed during public forums. Public servants need this information and they cannot obtain it from any other sources. Sometimes public servants request this information, but people simply neither believe nor trust them. The lack of trust stems from the difference in the perception of their own roles. Most of the public servants are confident that they have been granted the honourable duty to make and implement decisions. They view themselves as guardians of public interests and expect the society to obey their orders. However, citizens think a bit differently – they do not like to be governed, confronted with ready decisions, and treated like clients.

For their part, public servants also often have enough reasons to resent the citizens. They may have genuine willingness to cooperate with the people but encounter serious obstacles (for instance, they may be rebuked by their colleagues for being too candid and outspoken in relations with citizens). Public servants also face a lot of problems but citizens are unaware of their concerns and, respectively, do nothing to help them. Public forums provide both, public servants and citizens, with an opportunity to express their views and exchange the information, which can open their eyes to lots of things.

Some organisational aspects of public deliberation

Some important organisational aspects of public deliberation (public forums in this case) are briefly described below.

Diversity streamlines public forums. Participants of the forums deal with serious problems. Such forums are called public not only for the range of discussed themes but also because they bring together people with very different backgrounds – education, gender, age, experience – regardless of their ethnic identity or position. Public forums are usually very successful, if the participants do not know each other in advance.

As mentioned above, a forum is a relatively large meeting (20-40 participants), which is carried out once and lasts two or three hours (we have opted just for this approach). There is, however, an alternative option: small (5-12 participants) regular meetings to discuss one specific problem of a community (society). Such meetings are usually called *research groups*. Public forums and research groups have the same objectives and tasks. They differ only in the number of participants and the number of meetings.

Every forum must have **a moderator**, who leads the discussion in public forums or research groups. The moderator must help participants stick to the themes of the forum and ensure their active involvement in the analysis process. Sometimes forums need two leaders – an organiser and a moderator, though one man can often perform both tasks simultaneously. The **organiser** hands out invitations, sorts out logistical problems, and orders thematic brochures. The **moderator** leads the deliberation, explains rules of the forum, and helps participants discuss and analyse, not merely chat.

It's necessary to say a couple of words about **moderator training**. Public forums are especially efficient when they are led by well-trained moderators, who understand the meaning and process of public deliberation, and are more or less aware of the main themes of discussion. If a moderator has experience of other types of meetings, he/she may encounter serious problems and his/her technique may bring the forum to a standstill (instead of leading the discussion to the final goal). So public forum moderators really need preliminary training.

Thematic brochures. As mentioned above, public forums are more efficient, if all participants read thematic brochures beforehand. Although the real-life experience shows that participants are less likely to read the brochures in advance, the

more of them do it, the more interesting and efficient public forums will be. Thematic brochures and other materials are handed out to participants several days before a public forum.

Another organisational aspect is the need to prepare *pre-forum and post-forum questionnaires*, which are supposed to help analyse the profile of participants (age, education, ethnic identity, gender, etc), and identify changes in opinions, which usually result from the deliberation. As a rule, these questionnaires are designed by the same experts and analysts, who prepare thematic brochures.

As to the length of public deliberation, most of the forums usually last about two hours, though there are no strict limits. Some people prefer three-hour forums because they give more time to examine each problem in depth. Sometimes participants agree to follow-up forums.

Questions can be raised about the costs of such forums. Typical costs include publication of thematic brochures and, if necessary, purchase of video materials; distribution of advertisements and invitations; and publication of press-releases. It is a good idea to offer brief lunches and refreshments to participants.

Our strategy

After getting more or less familiar with the general methodology of public deliberation, we would like to draw attention of the readers to our specific strategy. The objective of our project was to carry out public forums in eight cities of Georgia to analyse local public opinion on corruption and likely solutions to the problem.

Our strategy was based on the following principles:

- Respective NGOs were selected in eight cities of Georgia (Tbilisi, Akhaltsikhe, Gori, Kutaisi, Ozurgeti, Batumi, Poti, and Zugdidi), which agreed to organise and implement the public forums. The involvement of an NGO in the current (or future) anti-corruption programs, as well as its willingness to fulfil all its obligations in the project, were the main selection criteria.
- Selected NGOs nominated their candidates for participation in the project. In the framework of the project, the candidates were trained as moderators of public forums.
- A thematic brochure on the problem of corruption was prepared and published simultaneously with a series of preliminary training workshops for moderators. Participants of the project (would-be moderators) were the first to examine and comment on the brochure at a special working meeting. Their comments and opinions were taken into account for the preparation of the final version of the brochure, which was then published and handed out to the moderators and the NGOs in charge of the forums. Afterwards, the organiser NGOs distributed the brochure among all participants of the forums. Pre-forum and post-forum questionnaires were integrated into the brochure.
- The next stage focused on the organisational aspects of the forums. As mentioned above, the forums were led by specially trained moderators, who were assisted by members of their NGOs. Representatives of the CIPDD and “Partners – Georgia” (David Losaberidze, Koba Kikabidze and Milena Mitagvaria) attended each forum to take the minutes.
- There was only one criterion to select participants of the forums – the audience should have been as diverse as possible. There were no restrictions on age, gender, religion, education, social status, etc.

On the whole, 361 participants took part in 15 public forums, which were carried out in the framework of the project in eight cities of Georgia (two forums were organised in each city); 275 of them filled pre-forum and post-forum questionnaires (i.e. 550 questionnaires were analysed altogether).

Each forum lasted about 2-2.5 hours and was carried out by the moderators in accordance with a strictly defined format. The format is briefly described below:

1. The opening of the forum (5 minutes): a welcoming speech, presentation of the leading organisations of the project (authors and donors) and the forum, opening speeches.

2. Explanation of the rules of the forum. Defining public forums as a public deliberation process and explaining its main specific features (10 minutes) in accordance with the following principles:

- moderators are completely neutral in the deliberation process
- everybody is aware that a forum is not a debate
- everybody is given an opportunity to express his/hew views
- the forum is not dominated by one or two participants
- each approach is discussed impartially and fully

- favourable environment is maintained for deliberation and analysis
- participants listen to each other.

3. **Filling out the pre-forum questionnaires** (5 minutes). Moderators help participants to complete the questionnaires and explain the questions if necessary.

4. **Presentation of the theme** (5-7 minutes). Moderators made a brief presentation of the theme of corruption (urgency of the problem and brief description of likely solutions) in order to ensure that all participants, including those who had not read the thematic brochure for some reasons, were in equal start-up conditions.

5. **Learning personal experiences of the participants** (15 minutes). At this stage the theme of the forum was linked to people's everyday life. Participants were asked by moderators to speak about their personal experience caused by corruption. As a result, the theme became less abstract and more "human", i.e. more familiar for the participants.

6. **Analysis of alternative approaches** (20 minutes for each approach). In-depth analysis of the pros and cons of each approach. The discussion was structured as follows: at first the audience looked into positive aspects of an approach and then examined its negative aspects. Moderators should ensure impartial and full analysis of every approach.

7. **The end of the forum** (10 minutes). Moderators asked the following questions in order to find out individual impressions and opinions:

- Did you change your attitude towards the problem?
- Did you change your opinion about other people's views?
- How did you change your views as a result of the forum?

8. **Filling out the post-forum questionnaires** (5 minutes). Moderators asked the participants to complete the post-forum questionnaires and submitted them to the authors of the project.

9. **Lunch for participants** (30 minutes). In lunchtime participants were able to continue discussing the most interesting aspects of the problem in private. There were also able to become acquainted with each other and agree on future relations.

Corruption was the theme of the first-ever public forum in Georgia, since the problem is very urgent for the country. Over the last 15 years it has been the theme of numerous debates and discussions but no real steps have been taken so far and few people had knowledge of the anti-corruption activities.

The meaning of corruption

Definition of corruption

Paradoxically as it is, although the problem of corruption has plagued the mankind since the first societies emerged on the planet, a general and comprehensive definition of corruption is still lacking. At the 34th session of the UN General Assembly on December 17, 1979, corruption was defined as the solicitation or acceptance by a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or another person or entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties.

In legal terms corruption means accepting any illegal material or non-material profits by a public servant, or bribing a public servant with offers of such profits by any other person.

According to J. Belentain's law dictionary, "corrupt" means transformation of state structures aiming at making illegal profits.

H. Black's law dictionary defines corruption as any act done with intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duty and the rights of others.

R. Perkin's handbook on the criminal law offers the following definition: under the criminal law corruption is any dishonest and high-profile illegal action, abuse of authority, and corrupt behaviour of a public servant when implementing his/her duties and/or powers.

Webster's modern dictionary defines corruption as inducement for a person (public servant) to abuse his/her authority by improper or unlawful means (as bribery).

Besides, various books on corruption include some broadly accepted definitions:

- Corruption involves behaviour on the part of persons in which they improperly enrich themselves or those close to them (persons, family or clan) by misusing power with which they have been entrusted.
- Corruption is abuse of power by a civil servant or a public official, or employees of a private or any other (including international) organisation, for personal gain (property, rights, and privileges, including non-material ones) or offering them such gains.

Generally speaking, it may be assumed that corruption is a social phenomenon, which involves a mix of the breaches of legal and ethic norms, and can be defined as the abuse of public service for private gain, either material or non-material, or offers of such gain.

The historical process

The word "corruption" derives from the Latin one "corruptus" (wrong, dishonest). In the ancient Roman society the term referred to both political and sexual acts. It had moral dimension and meant harm to human health (abdominal pains, water getting bad in closed storage, spoiled business, erosion of moral, embezzlement, missed opportunities, dried-up water springs, restrictions on freedom, seduction of teenage girls and boys, distortion of ideas, election rigging, humiliation). According to the Roman law, "corrumpere" meant bribing anybody or everybody (not necessarily an official), giving false testimony in court, raping anybody and inflicting any damage.

The first-ever recorded case of corruption in public service in the history of mankind dates back to the time of King Enatum, who ruled the Sumerian town-kingdom Lagash in the XXIV BC. The system of government was under reform in Lagash at that time. The reform intended to crack down on abuse of power by civil servants and judges, and reduce illegal fees and bribes taken by officials of the king's administration during religious rituals of the Kurum caste.

Brahman, the prime minister of King Chandra-Gupta's Magadkhi Empire (India, IV-III BC), described "at least 40 means" of misappropriation of public funds. Civil servants of ancient China (Cin Empire) were paid bonuses, the so-called "yung-lien", which means "allowance of incorruptibility". It is obvious, however, that such an allowance was often ineffective.

Plato looked into bribery in his Laws and argued that every civil servant must perform his or her duties honestly, without accepting any gifts.

Abdul Rakhman Ibn Khaldun wrote in the XIV AC that the basic reason of corruption was the ruling elite's enormous aspiration for a life of luxury. The ruling elite took bribes to cover the costs of luxury goods.

N. Machiaveli's works gave significant impetus to the studies of corruption. He compared corruption to a disease, a plague, which is hard to diagnose but easy to cure at the initial stage and easy to diagnose but hard to cure in its late phase. The same rule applies to corruption in public service, he argued. If it is detected early, something only a prudent and efficient government is capable of, corruption can be eradicated quite easily. However, if corruption develops to the point where it becomes visible to everybody, hardly any remedies can help.

Machiavelli emphasised that free but corrupt nations could be hardly able to maintain their independence. In his words, Roman emperors were so corrupt that the successive governments of a couple of such corrupt rulers would have inevitably ruined the Roman Empire. Rome was lucky only because Roman emperors grew corrupt quite rapidly and were promptly overthrown and ousted. Machiavelli argued that corruption was less dangerous in monarchies with the government and civil service because every minister and civil servant depended on the king's will and was hard to bribe.

In the following years the study of corruption focused on criminal and legal aspects of the problem. Thomas Hobbes (VII AC) wrote in his Leviathan that people boasting of their wealth are prone to commit crimes easily, as they hope to get away with their crimes by bribing or offering other gains to corrupt judiciary. People with influential relatives or famous persons breach the law in the hope that they will be able to bring pressure to bear on the courts and the government. In Hobbes' words, corruption is the root of the disrespect for law.

The meaning of corruption

As a rule, the state itself encourages corruption within its structures and then fights against it by itself. Even countries with unprecedented levels of corruption have anti-corruption legislation, but it simply does not work in practice, while the principle of the government's accountability to the society is neglected. Corruption cannot be defeated only by adopting and enforcing respective laws. Most importantly, it is necessary to make the system work and change the model of people's behaviour.

It is impossible to eliminate corruption, as a phenomenon, completely. It will exist forever, like any other form of crime (robbery, murder, etc). The main idea of the anti-corruption struggle is to minimise corruption cases and, at the same time, take respective punitive measures against corruption as a crime.

Accurate diagnosis is the first step in the analysis of corruption. What forms of corruption exist in the current reality? How visible it is? Who profits from corruption and who loses on it? What are the reasons of corruption and possible solutions to the problem?

The following table can be used as an example:

Table 1. Forms of corruption

Form of corruption	Beneficiaries	Losers	Reasons	Solutions
Tax evasion	Those who do not pay taxes	Customers, taxpayers	The system of tax payments is too complex. Taxes are too high. Punishment is mild. Reasons are not examined.	The system of tax payments must be simplified. Taxes should be reduced. More stringent punitive measures should be introduced. Monitoring must be implemented
Tax bribery	Corrupt taxpayers and public servants	Customers, taxpayers	The absence of a database. Ineffective punishment. Low salaries.	Information technologies should be applied. Punishment must become more severe. Taxes should be paid through banks. Salaries must be increased. Efficient taxation should be promoted.
Extortion of bribes	Corrupt public servants	Direct victims	Complicated regulations/procedures. The difficulty of detection. Mild punishment. Reasons are not examined. Low salaries.	Regulations/procedures should be simplified. A hot line must be set up. Punishment must become more severe. Each case should be thoroughly analysed. Taxes must be paid through banks. Salaries should be increased.

Easy money	Some taxpayers, corrupt public servants (in exchange for huge bribes)	Taxpayers (business is impeded), the government's popularity	Complicated procedures, the lack of information, mild punishment, the lack of oversight, low salaries	Procedures should be simplified. Computerisation. Taxes should be paid through banks. Punishment must become more severe. Efficient oversight should be introduced. Salaries should be increased.
Embezzlement	Thieves, those who do not pay taxes	Customers, public confidence in law-enforcement structures	Lack of inventories, insufficient decentralisation, mild punishment, lack of oversight	Inventories must be completed. Computerisation. Decentralisation of responsibilities. On-the-spot checks. Oversight.
Procurement	Corrupt public servants, winners of procurement tenders	Customers	The absence of pricing information. Reasons are not examined. Mild punishment. Low salaries.	Prices must be reviewed. All cases should be examined. Punishment must become more severe. Decision-makers should get higher wages.
"Phantoms", Litter-louts	Pretenders	The government's morale image and popularity	The absence of oversight. Mild punishment.	Oversight. Punishment must become more severe. Efficient law-enforcement.

There are various forms of corruption that may be classified at different levels:

1. **Private "fees"** are charged for services, which are officially free of charge (for instance, a payment for a formally free visa). On the other hand, they can be viewed as a fee for direct actions breaching the law (for instance, a taxman can seek bribes by providing incorrect information about a taxpayer) or a private fee for inaction when the law requires to act (for instance, an audit inspector can be bribed to conceal significant information).
 2. Corruption can be **internal** and **external**. Internal corruption involves personnel of the same organisation, while external corruption means that an employee of an organisation is bribed by an outsider. So external corruption can be defined as a tool of indebtedness and personal fault, while internal as organised crime.
 3. Corruption can be **official** (bureaucratic or political), when governmental institutions are implicated, or **private**, when corruption affects the business sector.
 4. Official corruption, which is linked to various governmental structures, has two distinctive characteristics, which distinguish corrupt societies from each other:
 - according to the type of bribe-taking - a) **kleptocracy**, where corruption is organised at the top of the government; b) **state**, where corruption involves lots of public servants
 - according to the type of bribery "market" - a) a small number of individuals accepts bribes; b) bribery is decentralised
- These two characteristics correspond with **four categories of corrupt states: kleptocracy, competitive market, double monopoly and extremely weak state**, controlled by Mafia.
5. Finally, corruption can exist above the national level. Corruption in international business is one of the most serious problems of the world, which can be combated only through a concerted effort of various countries and international cooperation.

The origins of corruption

Corruption arises whenever an individual illegally puts personal interests ahead of the public interest and the values of his/her official duties.

Corruption and its reasons are interconnected. On the one hand, these reasons make corruption worse and their elimination can help reduce corruption. On the other hand, large-scale corruption exacerbates and "freezes" problems of the transitional period and makes them hard to solve. That is why, firstly, corruption and its reasons should be tackled simultaneously and, secondly, an all-out crackdown on corruption can create favourable conditions for dealing with its reasons.

Some reasons of corruption are listed below. In our opinion, just these reasons are the most serious obstacles to Georgia's development at the present stage:

1. **The legacy of the totalitarian past.** The merger of government and economy, a typical feature of the centralised system of economic management, and the illogical distribution of roles and functions within governmental institutions,

which prevent creating favourable conditions for economic development and free market. Officials of administrative bodies draw up and follow their own rules of economic activity.

2. Political instability and economic decline. Impoverishment and inability to maintain normal living standards for public servants, which is strengthened by the old Soviet tradition of backstage deals. The constant political risk for long-term investments, inflation, the government's inefficient and inappropriate involvement in the national economy, which promotes such types of economic activity that aim at getting short-term and huge, though rather risky, profits. Public servants become easily corrupt due to the lack of confidence, caused by political instability, and the absence of guarantees for successful career. Wary of economic crisis, the government is increasing taxes, contributing to "black economy" and, consequently, corruption. The businessmen seeking to evade taxes and escape punishment are the best sources of bribes for corrupt tax inspectors.

3. Undeveloped and inefficient legislation. The development of respective legislation is unable to keep pace with the process of fundamental economic reforms. The legislation is undeveloped, inefficient and vague, and many of its provisions are controversial. As a result, public servants are able to intimidate and blackmail citizens. The central government's directives and decrees, prepared in a completely uncontrollable manner, are also ambiguous, providing the basis for unclear, "closed" and hard-to-understand instructions. The absence of procedural regulations for legislative activities creates a steady flow of illegal incomes (from illegal deals, procurement tenders, etc). The lack of bilateral and multilateral contracts in the country contributes to these negative processes.

4. Inefficiency of governmental institutions. In totalitarian countries governmental bodies are usually overstaffed, while the bureaucracy is able to sustain the strongest blows - the more radical reforms become, the greater efforts the bureaucracy makes to survive. The current post-revolution period clearly illustrates how the management system is reacting to the numerous complicated problems, multiplying its inherent systemic flaws, and creating additional hierarchical levels of management and lots of irresponsible coordination structures. The result is obvious: the more complicated and uncontrolled the management system becomes, the easier corruption can gain a foothold there. It is hard for the government to follow the rules of market economy and observe the private property rights in the post-revolution period. However, if the government does not protect businessmen, the latter seek protection from individual members of the government. At the same time, while the nomenklatura system has been already dismantled, a modern system of selection and promotion is still lacking in the public service. Many of the newly recruited bureaucrats are incompetent and come-and-go people, who apply for public service only to unlawfully enrich themselves.

5. The weakness of the civil society. The estrangement between the government and the public. Democratic governments can solve their problems only in cooperation with public institutions. The deterioration of the citizens' social and economic conditions and ensued public disillusionment contribute to the estrangement between the society and the government, and the latter's isolation from the state. It is widely acknowledged, at the same time, that neither low-level nor high-profile corruption can be defeated without the help of public organisations.

6. Lack of democratic political traditions. The following reasons can help corruption permeate the political system: the lack of political culture, which affects the election process (candidates are able to buy votes "on the cheap" or win votes by demagogic speeches); inefficiency of the election legislation, which provides for excessive mechanisms to protect the status of candidates, fails to ensure real accountability of candidates to voters, and encourages financial violations in the election campaign. As a result, the election process actually paves the way for the spread of corruption in executive structures. Due to the absence of real political competition, corruption and political extremism continue unchecked in the political system. That is why chances of achieving political stability have lessened in the country. The opposition is actually unable to influence the political situation. As a result, opposition politicians often opt for economic activity. At the same time, semi-legal lobbying is gradually giving way to unconcealed corruption.

The above-described fundamental (underdevelopment of political and economic institutions), organisational (frequent amendments to the legislation, weakness of the control system, low salaries) and societal (norms of bureaucratic behaviour, the public's tolerant attitudes towards corruption) reasons open the door to the introduction of market rules (profit seeking) into the state regulation process.

One of the basic axioms of the business theory states that monopolists are able to overcharge for their goods and services, in comparison with prices that could be agreed in competitive free market environment. In such cases the surplus revenue is called "monopolistic rent". If conditions for monopoly exist in a state or economic structure, there is always a temptation to take control of such monopolies. The winner gains the monopoly, while the loser gets nothing. Resources the loser spends in the process are rarely used to produce any sort of goods or services. An economist Jagdish Bhagwati described this expenditure as "directly unproductive". As a result, those seeking the rent behave, in most cases, in a socially unproductive way. Given the nature of various state-sector activities, the state has a monopoly on certain goods and services (police protection, export permissions, admission to state-run universities, taxation policy, etc). So public servants, who are free to act, are tempted to charge the monopolistic rent for these services. Consequently, citizens have to pay too much for them.

The *rent-seeking* leads to social losses. Public servants may vie with each other for positions that can empower them to charge the monopolistic rent, diverting their time and energy away from productive activities into the struggle for unproductive rent. Under such circumstances, the entire government may be tempted to seek the unproductive rent.

As a result, “positive aspects” of corruption may provide the only way out of the hard situation:

- The government may use formal criteria, not because it wants to pay for the distributed rent, to distribute the scarce rent between lots of individuals and companies (bribes can clear the market)
- Motivation is weak in the public service due to low salaries and inefficient internal control (bribes play the role of bonuses)
- Individuals and companies are trying to reduce their expenses, caused by the government’s taxation, customer protection and regulation policies (bribes reduce expenses for those who pay them)
- The government often helps private companies get substantial financial gains by means of lucrative contracts, privatisation deals and concessions (bribes affect the monopolistic rent and its distribution between private investors and public servants)
- Politicians can be bribed to make certain decisions. On the other hand, politicians themselves can offer bribes, i.e. to buy votes (bribes can substitute for political influence)
- Georgia can impose expenses and redistribute resources among involved parties (bribes can override hard norms)

It is an absolutely universal process, characteristic of virtually every country of the modern world, even though each country has its own way and preconditions of development. According to S. Huntington, the following reasons account for governmental corruption:

- At a time of rapid growth and modernisation corruption tends to increase due to the change of values, the emergence of new sources of income and power, and the expansion of the government’s authority.
- Countries with wider social stratification, deeper class polarisation and feudal tendencies have lower levels of corruption. These aspects are conducive to a clearer system of norms and sanctions, reducing temptation and opportunities for corruption.
- Corruption is higher in “black” countries of Latin America, if compared to countries with “indigenous” and “mixed” populations. It is also rife in Africa. In Huntington’s opinion, this phenomenon should be explained by the complete absence of class divisions in these countries, rather than simply by racial issues.
- The ration of political to economic opportunities in a country also affects corruption. If the former overtake the latter, people will try to make money in politics, and corruption will increase as a result.
- Corruption develops easier in a country where local businesses are outnumbered by foreign companies.
- The less developed political parties of a country are, the higher corruption is there.

Motivation - superiors, agents, and clients

Economic modelling of corruption is considered one of the most efficient methods for analysing the problem of corruption. It looks into correlation between the level of corruption and the amount of benefits (profits) the culprits (“agents”) get from corrupt actions, and examines the difference between the benefits and the costs (for instance, implied risks). The moral aspect is also viewed as one of the economic factors (for instance, moral satisfaction is one of the benefits).

The superior-agent-client model is very efficient for the analysis of corruption. Superiors have agents in office, who act as their proxies in relations with clients. This model requires an economic approach to the problem of corruption. Agents become corrupt when advantages they are likely to get from corruption outweigh disadvantages. Clients, too, become involved in corruption, or other forms of illegal activity, when their gains prevail over losses.

Let’s imagine that an agent has two options: to accept or reject bribes. If he/she gets a regular salary and moral satisfaction that he/she is not corrupt. If the agent is corrupt, he/she accepts bribes. At the same time, the agent suffers from what can be described as the “moral cost” of being corrupt. The cost depends on the agent’s ethic, cultural, and religious standards, as well as on the behaviour of his/her colleagues and the amount of bribe in accordance with the level of his/her accountability to the superiors. In corrupt subcultures the moral cost of being corrupt may drop to zero for dishonest persons.

Corrupt agents may be sued and punished. That is why they should assess their prospects when making a decision. The punishment may include a fine, the dismissal from office, imprisonment, a damage to reputation, etc.

So the agent has the following choices:

- I am not corrupt. I get my regular salary and moral satisfaction that I am not corrupt.
- I am corrupt. I take bribes but pay the moral cost. Chances are also high that I may be sued and punished, and my legal and illegal incomes will be gone.

Thus I will be corrupt if:

Bribes - moral cost - the danger of prosecution and punishment > my salary + moral satisfaction

Corrupt agents make private profits but create “negative environment”, i.e. the cost, for their superiors. That is why superiors want their agents to find an optimal way of carrying out both the productive and corruption activities. If superiors have comprehensive information about productive and corruption activities of their agents, they can easily persuade the agents to act according to their will. Superiors pay their agents the cost of their products only in case of productive activities. In case of corruption, superiors tax incomes of their agents, just like they make a levy on other forms of activity.

As a rule, superiors run into trouble when they do not have full information about actions, both productive and corrupt, of their agents. It costs the superiors too much to obtain additional information about activities of their agents. Agents know that they are doing but superiors cannot believe them. There is a strong incentive for agents to lie to their superiors in order to make them believe that they are engaged only in productive activities, not in corruption. Superiors are well aware of this fundamental asymmetry of information. Conflicting stimuli and asymmetric information are in the heart of the problem of superior-agent relationship. Superiors have to find out their agents’ incomes and costs without full information about their activities. Superiors may realise that they need to set up a certain system of collecting information about actions of their agents. But such systems are rather expensive themselves.

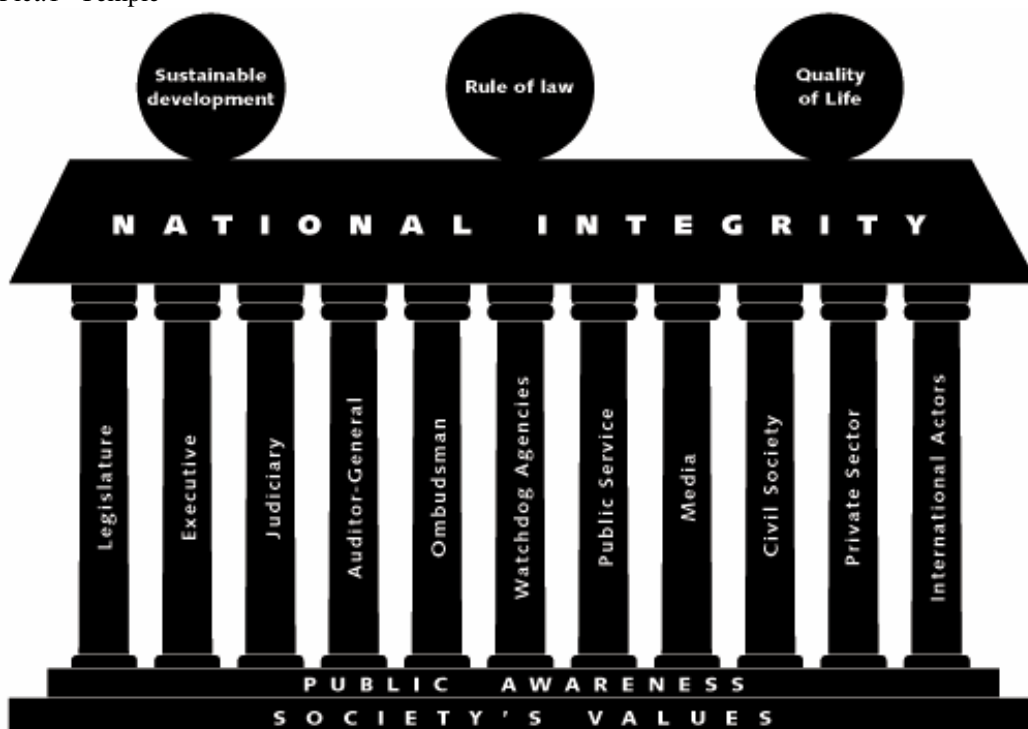
The simple superior-agent-client model offers some ideas about the problem of corruption. Criminal activity expands when agents have monopolistic power over clients, freedom of action, and weak responsibility. Clients are willing to pay bribes when they expect to get the monopolistic rent from the services of agents. So the basic formula of corruption may be laid down as follows:

Corruption = monopoly + freedom of action - responsibility

Anti-corruption measures and social values

The international anti-corruption organisation Transparency International has devised the so-called “temple scheme”, a significant anti-corruption tool for developing nations, including Georgia. The scheme depicts all elements and building blocks of a temple. If any of these elements is weaker (lower) than the others from the beginning or has weakened over time, the roof of the temple will tilt to one side. Consequently, balls placed atop the temple will fall and break down. Every country, regardless of its conditions, seeks to build its system of objectives from the following three elements - **sustainable development** (not only economic but the entire scope of this term), **stability and security**, and **hope for the future**, which complies with legal norms.

Pict.1 “Temple”



The temple is founded on the most important element - **the society’s values**:

- traditional: family, friendship, fidelity, personal security, stability, hope for the future, respect for traditions;
- universal: good deeds, success/achievements, personal development, team work, honesty, maturity, courage.

These values belong to the group of **personal values**. Everyone has to make a choice at that time. Specialists dealing with the issue claim that behaviour of a majority of people is dictated by not more than five values. We instinctively chose several values, which are most important for us. Our priorities are shaped at an early age.

There is also another group of values. The World Bank, which makes extensive efforts to study and eliminate poverty, has defined corruption as one of the serious obstacles to economic and social development. Corruption hampers a country's development and undermines the legislation and institutions responsible for economic growth. The poor suffer from corruption most of all. They cannot bear the costs of bribery, fraud and illegal economic privileges.

The society will view corruption as its personal problem only if there is such a demand. It is vitally important to understand that what makes us happy will make happy other people too, while what makes us angry will anger others as well. **The anti-corruption struggle should be determined by values of the target audience, rather than our personal priority values.**

Results of corruption

As a social phenomenon (a combination of legal and ethnic breaches), corruption is a serious problem for any country's development. No national project - sovereign state building - can succeed without defeating corruption.

The following problems result from and accompany corruption:

1. Inefficient distribution of resources (not incomes), which impedes implementation of governmental programs, prevents efficient allocation of budgetary funds, and increases the trans-excise cost (not targeted) of business activity.
2. Unfair distribution of incomes (not resources); bribe takers and, sometimes, their clients enrich themselves at the expense of the other members of the society.
3. The difference between declared and real values, the development of a "double mentality", and distorted relations in governmental agencies where the recruitment policy is based on the ability of applicants to adapt to the corrupt environment rather than their professional skills.
4. The growing influence of criminal structures and their increasing contacts with governmental institutions.

Organisational aspects of the anti-corruption measures

The international experience offers four scenarios of measures to fight systemic corruption.

Scenario 1 - changes of government with imprisonment of former heads of state. This method may be successful, though not in every case.

Scenario 2 - peaceful transfer of power. This method requires certain mutual understanding and mutual compromise. It is an equally hard task - the country's kleptocratic leaders are eager to get more and more money.

Scenario 3 - fundamental changes of government lead to sweeping reforms. There are a lot of precedents, however, when new leaders quickly turn their attention to other issues and soon follow their predecessors' path.

Scenario 4 - "islands of honesty". A number of specific governmental agencies are completely "removed" from the whole system in order to pave the way for anti-corruption struggle in particular sections.

Some people argue that efficient law-enforcement is enough to solve the problem. In their opinion, the inefficiency of the law-enforcement system, not the expansion of corruption, is the main problem. To some extent the state has to act as the ancient god Saturn, who ate his own children, giving birth to corruption in its structures at first and fighting it afterwards.

If it really were the essence of the problem, corruption would have been already long defeated in the world. Even countries with unprecedented levels of corruption have anti-corruption laws, which are simply not observed. Most of such countries have codes of conduct for top governmental officials, which reflect bona fides but are actually stillborn. Anti-corruption laws and their enforcement are not enough to defeat corruption. The main point is to make the system work and change people's attitudes.

Some authors of anti-corruption methodologies keep insisting that main perpetrators must be punished. Others counter that reforms require to look forward, trying to change the system, rather than backward, seeking to punish culprits for past wrongdoing. However, even when there is an intention to bring those responsible to justice, there must be a government firmly committed, first and foremost, to fundamental reforms. The advantage of being oriented towards the future, not the past, is that reforms meet minimal opposition. Those who enriched themselves by illegal and dishonest

means (these people often belong to the country's elite) do not view anti-corruption programs as a threat to their personal security. The program of anti-corruption measures should be backed by the country's political leadership, no matter who can face criminal or administrative charges as a result of its implementation.

A struggle against corruption requires to deal with values of the society. It is necessary to make people realise that corruption ruins their values. Demand for change should be promoted. A crackdown on corruption can be much more effective if it is based on material aspects of people's life or makes strong emotional impact.

- the material aspect: your money - you have to pay much more for everything because of corruption
- the emotional aspect: Georgia is your homeland - corruption is your homeland's enemy! There is enough statistical data to prove that there has been a clear correlation between the dynamic of mortality for children under five years of age and the dynamic of corruption in Georgia in the last 15 years. Corruption kills your children!

The general policy to reduce corruption

The current methodology for carrying out the anti-corruption process is so diverse that it cannot be described in the given article even in general. That is why only major theses are given below:

- Agents should be selected on the basis of professional qualification, honesty and trustworthiness. If nepotism, favouritism and other similar "criteria" are used for selection, the results will be quite opposite.
- Awards and penalties. The situation cannot be improved merely by increasing salaries if public servants. A system of monetary and non-monetary awards and penalties must be in place, in order to boost motivation in the public service. At the same time, penalties should be differentiated in accordance with consequences.
- Information gathering. It is necessary to set up a system of information gathering and analysis (audit, management information system, etc) and information agent services (audit officers, inspectors, etc). The third party, as well as clients and members of the public, should become a source of information to help overcome the asymmetry of information within the organisation.
- The senior-agent-client relationship should be restructured by means of competition (as a natural foe of any monopoly), freedom of action for agents (it may reduce opportunities for corruption), rotation of agents, the organisation's mission or product (clear definition of objectives and procedures), and client groups (interest groups must be created since anti-corruption mood is usually short-lived).
- Attitudes towards corruption must be changed. The following tested tools can affect public attitudes towards corruption: education and private initiative (aiming to increase public awareness of the cost of corruption), code of ethics (for instance, the so-called Nolan Commission, UK, outlined seven key principles for the public service in 1995 - benevolence, incorruptibility, impartiality, accountability, transparency, honesty and leadership) and organisational culture (public servants must have a say in the decision-making process).

Public servants of any country have two sets of values: official (legal) and unofficial (traditions and customs). Although public servants ought to respect and obey the law, they are often seen as staunch adherents to unofficial values at bottom. Traditions are so strong that they continue influencing public servants even if the latter denounce them in public. For instance, politicians and high-ranking governmental officials help promote their relatives and friends in order to evade accusations of ingratitude, although those public servants who understand the significance of law encounter problems as a result. While such a system causes only slight embarrassment at the top of the public service, it must fuel real panic among ordinary citizens.

Due to these factors:

1. A decision-making scheme should be worked out on the basis of clear and unambiguous instructions. It must be designed to identify and exclude people who may easily fall under influence of relatives and clans.
2. The instructions should be made public. They should state definitely that public servants must adapt every tradition to the present-day reality.
3. An efficient system of professional development should be established. The code of conduct and ethic norms for the public service should be clearly defined.
4. Administrative measures must be widely applied to ensure responsibility of leaders at all levels for activities of their subordinate staff.

The problem of corruption in Georgia

Pre-2003 situation

Like most of the young democratic countries, Georgia has encountered all the above-mentioned problems in the state building process. Although a package of anti-corruption measures was developed in the country in the 90s of the past century, they actually remained on paper.

In 2002 experts of the World Bank studied and measured the level of administrative corruption and illegal take-over of state functions, as well as the impact of corruption on the government, in post-Soviet countries. The findings of the study, as well as the results of the World Bank's research of integrated parameters, proved stunning for Georgia.

Administrative corruption - abuse of laws, regulations and directives by public servants for private gain
Illegal take-over of state functions (*State Capture*) - efforts by private structures to promote such legal, political and regulatory environment, which can ensure untransparent conditions for illegal private incomes of public servants. As a result, private structures are able to take over functions of the state (for instance, buying votes of legislators, illegal influence on the government's procurement decision-making process, bribing judges to overturn court rulings, illegal funding of political parties).

The World Bank's methodology for studying the administrative corruption and the illegal take-over of state functions allowed to identify the topology of the country's corruption and plan a state anti-corruption strategy.

The comparative analysis of the research data on Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia revealed that the index of administrative corruption was quite high in Azerbaijan and Armenia (5.6 and 4.5 respectively), and a bit lower in Georgia (4.2).

As to the take-over of state functions by private structures, Azerbaijan took "the lead" with 41 marks, while Armenia appeared to have the lowest index (approximately 6). Georgia's index reached 32, quite a high (in negative terms) parameter.

According to the study, corruption reached a very high, dangerous level in Azerbaijan. Georgia was only a few steps behind. As to Armenia, the low index of the take-over of state functions place it in the list of countries with modest levels of corruption.

The comparative analysis of good governance and the take-over of state functions also produced rather negative results. The low index of good governance (1.2) and the high level of the take-over of state functions (32) put Georgia at a disadvantage in comparison with Azerbaijan (1.5 and 41 respectively) and Armenia (1.7 and 6).

Eduard Shevardnadze's ten-year presidency ended in growing political and economic corruption, and the break-up of the rule of law, and endangered the development of democracy and market economy in Georgia in the transitional period. Massive popular protest in November 2003 forced Eduard Shevardnadze to step down.

Post-2003 situation

The Rose Revolution resulted in certain transformation of the Georgian society. The peaceful revolution (under the slogan - "Georgia Without Corruption!") was supposed to replace the system of anti-democratic, neo-patrimonial, and clientele social and political relations in Georgia with a new system of development.

The post-revolution government declared its intention to defeat corruption and launched quite radical anti-corruption measures, though real results are still far away.

S. Eisenstadt came to interesting conclusions in his study of the general impact of revolutions on neo-patrimonial societies, which was carried out in the second half of the past century (1978). In our opinion, he actually predicted the current Georgian reality:

1. Despite the presence of all necessary preconditions, pure, classic revolutions do not occur in neo-patrimonial societies. Instead, quasi-revolutions marked with substantial external interference and pressure develop there.
2. As a rule, such societies demonstrate weak links between independent political forces and intellectual leaders.
3. All these regimes make only superficial changes in the centre-region relationship. It minimises autonomous access to the centre for social groups, promoting, instead, patron-client and corporate relations.

These tendencies can be overcome if international organisations increase their pressure and/or if the local elite is given more powers. Unless the latter get financial support, fundamental reforms can be implemented in such regimes only by coercive methods.

Today, three years after the new government came into power, it's time to assess its anti-corruption efforts and identify certain tendencies.

The newly elected parliament, which favoured rapid anti-corruption reforms, adopted a package of anti-corruption laws. The new legislation introduced the following checks and exposure mechanisms to curb corruption:

- the law on public prosecutor's office and the administrative-procedure code of Georgia were amended to legalise confiscation of illegally purchased property of public servants and ensure more robust activities of the prosecutor's office and the judiciary.
- amendments to the law on the conflict of interests in the public service allow to evaluate honesty of public servants
- the criminal code was amended to ensure protection of witnesses who agreed to cooperate with authorities in the investigation of serious crimes
- the law on financial police is designed to streamline measures against financial corruption
- the law on the development and reform foundation aims to reduce corruption by increasing salaries of public servants.

Apart from the legislative initiatives, authorities took some decisive steps to apprehend and prosecute corrupt officials.

The newly emerged problems

In several cases the new government's determined anti-corruption effort led to a range of procedural violations. Struggling to restore and consolidate control of their administrative functions, governmental institutions ignored some laws, pointing to Georgia's hard situation at the time as an excuse for their actions.

According to the corruption index of the international organisation Transparency International (which measures the level of corruption in a country), Georgia slipped from the 85th place (2002) to the 124th position (2003), falling behind all post-Soviet countries and sharing the place with Tajikistan. Despite the government's anti-corruption measures, the country took the 133rd place in 2005.

After the 2003 parliamentary elections the president proposed some constitutional amendments, one of the first legislative initiatives of the new government, which were designed to empower the president to dissolve the parliament in certain situations. Besides, the amendments altered the balance between the legislative and executive branches of power and reduced independence of the judiciary by giving the president the right to appoint and dismiss judges. At the same time, the president was given the authority of the constitutional court and the right to make decisions under governmental authority without interference of courts. The president was also entitled to appoint public prosecutor general without parliamentary approval. The amendments had some shortages as well.

On the whole, the amendments created a system, which tipped the balance between various branches of power and increased its dependence on the government's goodwill.

As early as in 1997, in his comparative analysis of the institutional choice of the presidency institution in post-Soviet countries, an American researcher T.Frye concluded that Georgia had the highest risk of authoritarianism among Soviet-successor states after Central Asian countries. In his opinion, the extremely high presidential authority was the main reason of such a situation (the incumbent Georgian president enjoyed 16 out of the 27 theoretical presidential powers characteristic of an authoritarian system). The research also took account of the impact of cultural, economic, political and societal approaches on the presidential authority. Constitutional amendments of 2004 gave the president even more powers.

The experience of many Latin American and African countries illustrates that tilting the balance in favour of the executive power leads to the growth of authoritarianism and, respectively, the elite corruption. It would be hard to argue at the present stage that Georgia has the same tendency, as there have been no serious anti-corruption analyses in the country in recent years.

It is noteworthy that despite objections from the public and international organisations, these amendments have already become a law, neglecting the legal requirement of a one-month public debate for constitutional amendments, thanks to maximal consolidation of the government and support of the president and parliamentary majority.

The enhancement of presidential powers through constitutional amendments suggests that the danger of authoritarianism is still quite real in the post-revolution Georgia, despite all hitherto implemented reforms.

In the same period the parliament passed the law on the government's structure and authority. After then prime minister Zurab Zhvania set up a new cabinet, the first thing the newly appointed ministers did was a personnel reshuffle. In most cases the staff of the ministries were demanded to resign voluntarily. According to the law, public servants can be dismissed from office only for legitimate reasons, which should be clearly specified in their working papers. No doubt, this legal requirement was not easy to fulfil during the transformation of ministries.

The rights of public servants were violated not only during dismissals but also in new appointments as well. Only in a couple of cases authorities announced that new vacancies were available. A lot of key offices were staffed without any clear selection criteria and competition procedures.

In his state of the nation address in the parliament in 2006 the president Saakashvili said that the recruitment policy of the public service was based solely on the principle of meritocracy. It is a mistake, however, which indicates, at best, that the president does not have access to necessary information. From this viewpoint, reforms of the public service bureau and the merit-based promotion system were very symptomatic. According to the prime-minister Zurab Zhvania's one of the post-revolution statements, the government was planning to introduce the principle of meritocracy to the public service. It was followed by the creation of a public service bureau, which included, according to the new concept, a supervisory board and four main departments (human resource management, personnel training, organisational development, qualification and certification). Unfortunately, apart from some political statements, the government failed to use this initiative to create a wholly new system of personnel recruitment and promotion in the public service. One month after its establishment, the public service bureau was abolished and part of its functions were transferred to the Ministry of Justice.

Since 2004 till present appointments and promotions in the new government have been based on the "old rules" - there are no transparent job contests. The only difference between the new and the old systems is that almost all newly appointed public servants are young people, educated in the West and not implicated in corruption. Thus, although the Georgian government keeps emphasising that the anti-corruption struggle is one of the country's top priorities, authorities do not always apply most acceptable and civilised ways of achieving the goal.

Mass arrests on corruption charges were the most vivid vindication of the government's anti-corruption policy. A lot of former ministers, their deputies, governors, executive officials, public servants and businessmen have been detained. The arrests, carried out by hooded and armed officers, were broadcast by TV.

Although most of those arrested were legitimate suspects in corruption cases, a majority of them have not been tried and convicted yet. High-ranking governmental officials do not seem willing to abstain from commenting on criminal cases and confirm that the government is not going to challenge the independence of the judiciary.

Another serious problem connected with the arrests was that some detainees were able to buy their freedom by paying to authorities. It must be mentioned that this method is quite legal: under the amended law on the public prosecutor's office and the administrative-procedure code of Georgia, illegal property can be confiscated, provided it is proved in court that the property was really purchased by unlawful means. There may be indirect evidence against lots of the detainees but none of them has been convicted of corruption so far. Public servants say that the money paid by those who managed to free themselves by paying to authorities benefited the state budget. However, under the current legislation, if the suspects are not found guilty in court, they should get the money back.

Conclusions

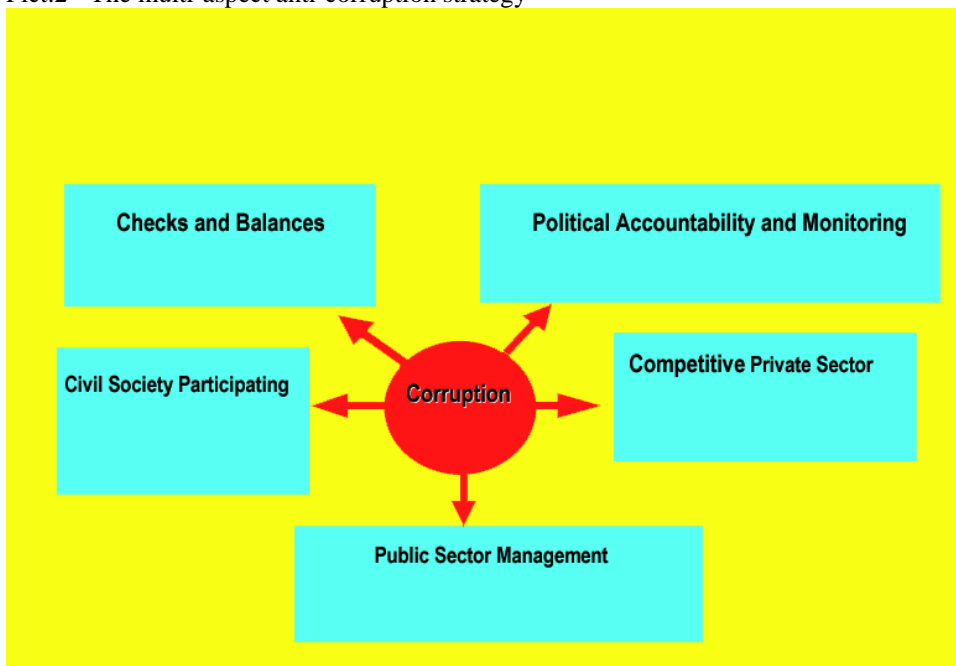
The president signed the concept of the country's anti-corruption strategy, which was developed on the basis of international standards, in May 2005. Simultaneously, the government carried out vigorous anti-corruption measures and institutional reforms, which were clearly dictated by the political situation in the country at the time. For instance, main suspects in corruption cases were punished selectively - the Georgian version of the "jail-them-all" anti-corruption principle and the Georgian analogue (brand) of the internationally recognised practice of "the islands of honesty". Other examples are the reforms of the traffic police and admissions to the country's high schools. Another Georgian innovations were the "let's-begin-from-scratch" principle, which suited the Georgian political elite's book, fresh interpretation of the personnel policy reform and financial amnesty. It must be admitted that the anti-corruption measures did bring about some positive results. It is also obvious, however, that the situation has worsened in Georgia in this respect, as in accordance with the corruption index, the country has plunged from the 128th place in 2004 to the 133rd place in the list of 154 states. There is a logical question - what's the problem?

The answer to this question is the Georgian government’s chaotic policy implemented without any strategy, though in good faith and with revolutionary objectives. The knowledge of positive methodology does not guarantee that its usage will invariably bring about only positive results. Positive results can be achieved only if the methodology is applied in the right place and at the right time. Speaking in management terms, it is necessary to work out a certain vision and strategy, to study the environment for the implementation of the strategy, and identify the right time for its implementation.

A serious anti-corruption strategy can be successfully implemented only in such countries where social and political systems evolved from the accumulated mass of social capital. To change the current neo-patrimonial regime of Georgia, which was partly inherited by the country from the past and partly cultivated by the new Georgian government, it is essential to understand its nature, develop a respective vision and outline/implement the problem-solving strategy.

The following example illustrates the society (not only the government) with respective social capital and systemic anti-corruption program. Each of the measures specified at the scheme can produce no results alone, except that the government will be seen for some time as determined to defeat corruption. If combined, however, these measures create the basis for social capital.

Pict.2 - The multi-aspect anti-corruption strategy



It is obvious that corruption cannot be really eliminated without broad public awareness of the problem and a clear-cut anti-corruption strategy.

How can we get rid of corruption?

The international experience of anti-corruption struggle has produced three basic approaches, which were field-tested in different countries at different times. It would be wrong to take it for granted that success can be guaranteed simply by choosing one of these methods. Each of these models was successfully applied in some countries but either did nothing or even made things worse in others.

We have to decide whether any of the following models suits Georgia or other alternatives should be found.

Objective 1. “All briber takers must be jailed”. The entire government is replaced and the former head of state is taken into custody. This method may prove successful, but not in every case. This scenario represents the so-called “zero option”: since culprits are stripped of their illegal property and prosecuted, all citizens get equal start-up opportunities. It means that everybody begins from scratch, and within the legal framework, and will have to go through the same stages that the elite part of the society had passed earlier in an unlawful way. At the same time, a mechanism must be developed to compensate certain social groups for their losses, which were inflicted by corruption (socially vulnerable citizens, etc) or will be inflicted by the implementation of the above-described measures (for instance, local and foreign businessmen who quite legally invested in enterprises founded by the corrupt elite).

Objective 2. “Let’s begin from scratch”. Former leaders are not brought to justice and/or exiled. The government is replaced peacefully, with tacit consent of the former leadership. A certain level of relationship should be maintained between the old and new governments. Financial (and sometimes political) amnesty is granted for all past wrongdoing, provided the two following conditions are met:

- those pardoned will not be prosecuted if they agree to stick to the legal rules of the game from now onward
- financial and other resources amassed in previous years should be used for the country’s social and economic development, and benefit the entire society (new jobs, more tax revenues through the creation of new enterprises and services).

Objective 3. “Islands of honesty”. Corruption-free zones, enclaves, should be created. Certain governmental institutions are separated from the rest of the system, paving the way for anti-corruption fight in particular directions. In this case, fair rules of the game are enforced in specific areas, instead of total arrests or total amnesty. These areas may represent newly created spheres (for instance, communications, new structures for cooperation with commercial organisations) and old, yet essential, ones (the replacement of traffic police with patrol police, taxation and customs services, etc). The corruption-free zone should be based on the same principles that underpinned, for instance, the development of non-governmental organisations after Georgia regained independence. They had nothing to do with the corrupt system all along and received funds from foreign organisations. While local Mafia was unable to exert its influence on them, the West offered them moral, and sometimes political, support.

Each of the above-specified approaches represents a set of measures, which clearly define:

- objectives
- measures to achieve these objectives
- negative and positive results the implementation of the approaches is likely to yield
- problems that may emerge in the future as a result of this approach

Let’s take a long look at each of them.

Objective 1. “All bribe takers must be jailed”

What are our objectives?

The radical approach to the problem aims to eradicate corruption as the deeply rooted system of relations and minimise its effects in all elements of the state system nationwide, though it may involve violating human rights and neglecting liberal values. Two totalitarian regimes, Bolshevik Russia and Nazi Germany, are a good case in point. Both had formidable mechanisms of repression, which helped minimise corruption in these regimes.

It is impossible to wipe out corruption completely. Of course, corruption is harmful for the society, as it creates “social excess cost”. It should be mentioned, however, that the cost of defeating corruption might be too high. It is important, therefore, to balance these two costs. Successful anti-corruption measures can undoubtedly reduce transaction costs (to put it simply, stolen money). However, the anti-corruption program requires to fund respective agencies and activities, which may really cost dear. So, one may conclude that in most cases corruption cannot be defeated at minimal or reasonable costs.

What is to be done?

- Create the main arbiter - an independent judiciary system
- Strengthen control mechanisms and legislation, and reinforce anti-corruption structures of the state
- Strengthen the rule of law and increase public understanding that any crime will be inevitably punished; encourage whistleblowing on corruption
- Expand the penitentiary system; build new prisons with enough room for thousands of inmates.

Positive aspects of the measures:

- Confiscated property of arrested culprits will be used to improve living conditions of the poor (honest people, not involved in corruption)
- The entire society, especially corrupt public servants, will begin respecting the rule of law, since authorities respond to crimes rapidly and efficiently, and impose strict penalties.
- Favourable conditions will emerge for the principle of social justice - everybody will realise that no crime will go unpunished and justice will prevail.

Negative aspects of the measures:

- This anti-corruption method is very expensive (the high cost of the development of the punishment system) and, respectively, wastes resources of the state.
- The atmosphere of “social catastrophe” will evolve, as people fear that they may be arrested, legally or illegally, at any time.
- Public servants and ordinary citizens may direct their energy towards wrong goals. Besides, there will be a danger of new, higher corruption (as a rule, more money is needed to bribe newly appointed public servants).
- The lack of stability will lead to the reduction or suspension of foreign investments.
- The danger of unproductive actions or preventive measures aiming to take revenge on political opponents may increase.
- The society will be overwhelmed by total estrangement and cynicism. “Whistleblowing” will become common.

Future problems

After the old, profoundly corrupt bureaucracy is brought down (neutralised) as a social group, there will be a need to train new, qualified personnel. It means that for the time being the country’s public service will be manned with unqualified and incompetent people. Such a situation may have a devastating effect on the state.

Objective 2. “Let’s begin from scratch”

What are our objectives?

The old bureaucracy is not replaced entirely during the recovery of the state system from damaging effects of systemic corruption. Political reality requires peaceful transfer of power, regardless of the former government’s will (and may be with its tacit consent in exchange for security guarantees). High-ranking governmental officials are unlikely to give up their positions voluntarily, being well aware that they are facing a real danger. The government and the opposition should reach a certain level of mutual understanding and compromise. It is even harder to show political will for rooting out corruption at the upper echelons of the government. Kleptomania (the subconscious inclination to steal) is steadily expanding. A lot of corrupt politicians or governmental officials are eager to get more and more money, even though they are already quite well off. It is necessary to make it clear that they can be acquitted of their past criminal activities, provided they put an end to their unlawful actions and use at least part of their money for the benefit of the country and the society, and for their own good.

What is to be done?

Prepare and implement a general amnesty, promising to pardon all past crimes in exchange for loyalty

- Carry out partial personnel changes; offer security guarantees for former public officers (even those involved in corruption), provided they agree to use their resources for the public benefit.
- Legalise (“launder”) illegal incomes in order to direct concealed reserves towards the country’s economic development and increase tax revenues with the help of new fiscal policy.

Positive aspects of the measures:

- Citizens will feel more secure, since the danger that the government may put pressure on them has disappeared
- Legalisation of huge illegal funds will boost economic development and improve living standards in the country (by creating new jobs).
- The measures will provide a test ground for liberal anti-corruption methods and help introduce new rules of life without social or political upheavals.

Negative aspects of the measures:

- The feeling of social injustice will intensify (“they stole and had an easy life in the past, and have got away with it”)
- Those public servants who lost lucrative posts may sabotage anti-corruption plans. They will make up the “fifth column”, which may ally with the country’s enemies.
- Since the situation is rather politicised, resources will be often redistributed between the new government and loyal political or economic elite. As a result, there will be a real danger that new monopolies may emerge and, respectively, corruption will renew.

Future problems

It will be hard to reach a consensus in the country: honest people will feel frustrated and humiliated, while motivation to steal will remain strong among the public, as chances of amnesty are quite high. The public moral will weaken.

Objective 3. “Islands of honesty”

What are our objectives?

Corruption is broadly accepted in almost all spheres of social life and, therefore, it is not easy to deal with - there are neither sufficient human resources nor enough time or funds. That is why it would be wrong to set impossible tasks. Attempts to pardon past crimes entirely and immediately may spark off, at best, stronger opposition. It is important to determine the spheres, where reforms are likely to make the greatest progress, and concentrate main resources right on them. A couple of widely publicised “rapid victories” are more significant than simple changes for the better. They can clearly demonstrate that the public will really benefit from the reforms. As a result, the fear of reforms will decline in the society. People will realise that the rules of the game have changed and honesty is regarded as an essential value. They will follow the reformers and corruption will be minimised in the future as a result.

What is to be done?

- Identify priority spheres for the reforms.
- At the initial stage, implement personnel changes only in specially selected spheres
- Develop a code of ethics (code of conduct) and put it into effect in specific spheres
- Strengthen internal control mechanisms in selected spheres
- Increase the role of an independent anti-corruption structure, as a mediator, to reduce the danger of pressure from other (still corrupt) structures when dealing with them.

Positive aspects of the measures:

- The endemic systemic corruption will inevitably reduce step by step.
- The experience of “honest islands”, as well as obtained human and material resources, can contribute to reforms in other spheres.

Negative aspects of the measures:

- Giving priority only to a number of selected spheres will fracture the reforms and drag out the process
- There is a real danger that due to external pressure the “ocean” of corruption will submerge the “islands of honesty”.

Future problems

The society may split in the future and tensions may escalate between social groups with different mentalities, since rifts will appear over time between the norms of honest conduct of the “islands” and dishonest behaviour of the corrupt majority.

Participants of the forum were asked to discuss other approaches as well, if they thought that none of the above-mentioned three methods could succeed. The questions described below were offered only as examples. It does not mean, however, that other approaches cannot be discussed.

- We are a very old nation, the land of Virgin Mary, and, therefore, we do not need any reforms. The Lord will take care of us.
- We are the worst nation in the world and we have no chances of success.
- These reforms are a mere waste of time and effort. It will take us at least a century to catch up with Europe.
- We do not need to do anything. Market economy will regulate everything.
- People must believe in God. Each citizen should behave decently and the problem will be over.
- Let's trust Misha. We have elected him, and we will lead and save us.
- Public education plays a decisive role. Everybody must realise that honesty is better than dishonesty.
- All problems will be solved, if political culture is improved in the country.
- We need an “iron hand”, a new David Agmashenebeli or even Stalin, and everything will be all right.

Participants were also given an opportunity to specify other alternatives, which, in their opinion, can suit Georgia best of all.

Ideas presented at the forum

The 15 public forums, which were held in eight cities of Georgia, revealed that people were greatly interested in the problem, while some participants proposed very interesting ideas.

Unfortunately, the limited format of the publication does not allow describing all these views, which were expressed during the 50 hours of discussion, in detail. However, basic approaches are presented below in kind of these.

In accordance with the format of the forum, participants had to state their positions on several key issues, which can be grouped in three sections:

- the citizens' personal relationship with corruption
- the pros and cons of the discussed model
- the search of the best model for Georgia

The citizens and the corrupt environment

General problems

- Until people get the living wage, any serious anti-corruption effort will be out of the question.
- Former opposition leaders have come into power and some of them themselves are now involved in corruption. They work more professionally and made corruption more sophisticated.
- Sadly, despite high salaries, arrests of public servants on corruption charges continue and the problem is surely not about 100 GEL.
- It looks very suspicious when businessmen wonder what has become of huge sums they invested in various special funds of the state. Corruption is to blame on the people who have never lived on 20 or 30 GEL a month.
- There was a political revolution in Georgia but a social revolution has not come yet - new social classes have not been created. Those who used to manage material and financial resources in the past continue to manage them at present. Nothing will change until a middle class is born in the country.
- A court is the only real and efficient anti-corruption tool. The situation will not improve until there are independent judiciary.
- The government is unable to carry out tenders transparently, without fuelling suspicions, even though the law clearly specifies how the negotiations and tenders should be scheduled.
- Corruption is a problem of mentality. It is not only about making money. There is a complete disregard for the rule of law in the country. Members of the government and ordinary citizens both violate laws in all spheres.
- Corruption is determined by environment, while the latter depends on the existing legislation. The situation is very controversial and, therefore, we all must take our share of the blame.

Public service

- People encounter corruption constantly in their everyday life. It is easy for public servants to make people pay more than they should. However, if asked to justify the additional payments, they promptly back out.
- While taxation inspectors continue to levy a 12% tax on citizens in breach of the law, the minister for finance is still wondering whether one of the senior tax officers has been dismissed from office.

Taxation service

- The government's taxation policy urges enterprises to look for different, sometimes illegal, ways to survive.
- In some cases money was transferred to foreign countries by the oligarchy. The government has not monitored such cases yet.
- There are legal loopholes in the customs regulations on imported cars.
- There were various state funds in the country (for the army, police, prosecutor's office, the president's reserve fund, etc). All of them lacked transparency. It is possible to find out how much money was accumulated there but nobody knows how much money was spent. The expenditure is easy to control, when the money is paid to the budget. However, money is controlled by those who are in charge of the laws. But people are afraid to speak out for fear of arrest.
- Our organisation was relocated from Sukhumi. At that time the government, and the president himself, promised to exempt the organisation, which employed about 220 personnel, from taxes in order to help it stay afloat. The organisation continued its production and wages were paid in time. Inspectors who regularly audited the organisation said that it was indebted. However, in their words, the debt was not real due to the absence of respective legislation. But we made a blunder and restructured the debt, though we would have had no debts, had we paid a \$10,000 bribe.

Local budget

- It would be better to discuss the mechanisms of corruption, not corrupt bureaucrats. Corruption is rife in the country, including the local self-government system. Public servants restrict even unclassified information. If citizens make repeated inquiries, trying to get the information, they are labelled as “intriguers”.
- The budgetary process is marked with illegal arrangements designed to give every involved party its share of the cake. During the allocation of annual budgetary resources it is usually known in advance that a certain part of the budgetary funds will “end up” in Tbilisi, while another part will be grabbed by the local government. Only the remaining money will eventually reach the nation’s coffers.
- It is an open secret how local governments arrange tenders.

Passports and IDs

- I encountered corruption in the passport service and sustained a lot of losses, at least moral, as a result. That is why my son was unable to attend a conference in another country.
- The passport service charged me 10 GEL for the ID. I refused to pay and they gave me a one-year document (I noticed the expiry date only two days later, when I was requested to present my ID in one of the offices).
- At first they misspelled my surname in my driving license and then fined me for that error. They refused to replace the license with a new one because, in their words, such mistakes were common and they feared that their office might be overwhelmed by replacement requests, if they agreed to reissue at least one.
- People view emigration as the easiest way out of the situation. They pay 3,500 EURO to leave the country but they are deceived anyway. There are three levels of corruption: migrants give money to a driver and the latter bribes border guards, private companies are the second level, while embassies are the third one.

Police

- There is no denying that the country has made some progress in the post-revolution period. Preventive measures have borne fruit. One of the sources of corruption, the practice of concealing crimes, has been actually wiped out. True, corruption still exists but the situation is relatively better at present.
- Sometimes people are fined even if all their documents are in order.
- I have paid to law-enforcement authorities to release a man from jail.
- My neighbour was arrested, even though there was no evidence to prove charges against him. His family was demanded to pay for his release, but they refused and he was jailed for unproven charges.
- I have made illegal deals with the police because I had no other option.
- Lots of people have to pay bribes to law-enforcement structures. People prefer making an illegal deal as an easy solution to the problem to settling the case in the legal framework.
- The patrol police often breach the law by writing protocols incorrectly or illegally confiscating mobile phones and cars.

The education system

- One of the major reasons of high corruption is that some university employees simply cannot live without taking bribes.
- I work in a university but I also have a job in the public service because I would be unable to provide for my family with only one salary
- I read lectures in a university. Lazy students themselves begin bargaining, promising to pay for good marks.
- Corruption is not new for universities, it existed there before the revolution. Teachers do not take bribes nowadays, but nepotism remains widespread: the students who have influential relatives usually get higher marks. Earlier, I used to get high marks even without paying, solely by my own knowledge. Today teachers tend to reduce the number of high marks. I study hard day and night, while some other students do not attend lectures at all but get good marks anyway.
- A lecturer should not be paid a salary 30 times smaller than the minister’s one.
- We carried out monitoring of kindergartens last year. Ridiculously, the survey of 150 kindergartens revealed that corruption was the highest in the very service that commissioned the monitoring. They were very disappointed by the results of the survey. For instance, 7,000 GEL were misappropriated in one district during a month.
- The president donated schoolbags for first-grade pupils. The education ministry has not carried out a single procurement tender so far. It solves every problem through unilateral talks with one person.
- Corruption goes unchecked in schools. Parents are as usually required to pay. Social vouchers are not enough even to ensure the supply of heating fuel to schools. I am worried as a parent, a teacher and a member of an NGO.
- Four university students faced fabricated charges. Investigation of the case is still under way but there have been few results so far, except that the rector had to step down.

- As a rule, lecturers always give good marks to their godchildren. This practice is illegal but the lecturers are not seen as corrupt because they do not take money.
- The education system sometimes makes it impossible to avoid payments (students are taught useful subjects and then have to pay to pass respective exams)/
- Bargaining between students and lecturers over the “price” for good marks is common.
- The students who have no money for bribes pay in kind, offering firewood, wheat flour, or labouring.

Public health care and social security

- In our polyclinic some physicians are paid a 7 GEL salary a month. How can be they persuaded to reject bribes? What is the struggle against corruption? Bargaining with bureaucrats is common. Is it possible to curb corruption at a time when the minister and the bureaucracy are paid 3000 GEL a month? They have high legal salaries and they urge you to steal. How can I hold a doctor responsible? In Shevardnadze time pensioners received 14 GEL a month, while public servants were paid 35 GEL monthly. I am deputy physician-in-chief and I am paid only 23 GEL a month. Can I live without bribes?
- Physicians and teachers have to perform their duties honestly, but almost for nothing. What should they do?
- Corruption is rife in the public health care system. Patients need medical treatment but physicians are greatly underpaid. A surgery costs 1,200 GEL. That is why it is specified as an emergency, rather than planned, surgery in the case history. This practice is harmful for interests of patients, physicians and the state, which failed to take into account the public interests.
- My friend was wounded and admitted to hospital. Physicians left the bullet in his body and did not treat the wound thoroughly, because he had no money to pay. As a result, he died.
- There are still many corruption cases in social security services. There is a 20 GEL “fee” for the pension registration.

Power supply

- We received new forms of electricity bills. They specified the total sum to be paid, how much money has been already paid, and the remnant. According to the bill, 50 GEL were added to the remnant. It seems that you have paid more than necessary, they said. Meanwhile, pensioners received 60 GEL bills, even though they consumed much less electricity than I did.
- Corruption is evident in the electricity company. They bill even “dead souls”, the people who died as long ago as 15 years, for power supply.
- I was demanded to pay 50 GEL for installing an individual electricity meter. I refused to pay because it was an illegal demand. Now I have no power at all in my home.
- Our centre has been blockaded for almost a month because of the power supply problems. The court made an unlawful decision. Now we pin our hopes on the regional court. The prosecutor’s office, the court and police should take their share of the blame each. They are telling us to leave the Enguri hydroelectric plant.
- No receipts are available when we pay out electricity bills.
- After our power supply was cut off, we, a group of refugees, collected and paid a 600 GEL bribe and power was soon on.

The pros and cons of the proposed models

The model “Every bribetaker must be jailed” - The pros

Hope and justice -

- The growth of public confidence in the government
- Social justice - nobody is above the law
- People will become confident that nobody is able to commit a crime and get away with it
- Prisons are crammed with petty thieves nowadays. If they are released and really serious criminals are arrested, there will be more than enough room in prisons.

The weight of precedents

- People will become increasingly fearful of the law and that fear will have the preventive effect.
- It will be a shining example for future generations.
- The syndrome of impunity will fade away.
- Widely publicised arrests and trials will set a vivid example and improve the government’s popularity.

The rule of law

- Corruption is a crime. Any crime must be punishable in normal countries.
- The rule of law will be established. Criminals will be punished and crime will decline.
- The influence of the corrupt people will reduce in society.
- The judiciary will become more active.
- There will be more incentives for law-enforcement structures.
- Corruption cannot be eliminated without an “iron hand”.

Public education

- Public mentality will change. The culture of law will increase in society.
- New values will emerge. Every aspect of social and political life should be clearly defined.
- Preconditions will be created for the development of political culture.

Economic aspects

- Society will reclaim misappropriated funds. The fiscal effect is clear: stolen money is returned, budgetary revenues increase, and overdue salaries are paid.
- Corrupt public servants will be replaced with competent and honest cadre.
- New vacancies will emerge.
- New jobs will be created at the construction of new prisons.
- The arrests will demonstrate that their policy cannot last forever, and new anti-corruption measures should be developed.

The model “Every bribetaker must be jailed” - The cons

Democracy and values

- Fear, distrust and total depression will spread in society.
- There are serious doubts as to whether this process will be transparent enough.
- Radicalism cannot benefit society.
- It is necessary to decide who is the subject of corruption - those who created this system and imposed the rules of the game on the public, or those who committed the crime.
- Popularisation and encouragement of the “whistleblowing” institute will spell disaster for Georgian traditions.
- “Whistleblowing” should give way to prosecution. People must openly file charges and provide evidence to prove them.
- The society will split into two conflicting groups.

The absence of criteria

- There will be no room in prisons - half of the country’s population will be corrupt and arrested by the other half. However, there will be nobody to fight corruption soon.
- It is very hard to detect and identify the most corrupt people. The reasons and factors of corruption are much easier to deal with.
- Why shouldn’t we arrest those who have a duty to fight corruption but are implicated in corruption themselves, for instance the president (misappropriation of presidential funds)?
- If this process is really implemented, the government itself will be endangered.
- Those who steal millions should not be equated with those who steal dozens of Lari.
- Law-enforcement agencies must have moral duty to arrest corrupt people.

Human rights

- Private vendetta will play a role in this process.
- Live TV footage of arrests is in breach of the presumption of innocence.
- A lot of innocent people may be jailed and human rights will be violated on a large scale, until the mechanisms are perfected.
- Every culprit has a family, children, and this problem is very painful for them.
- Constitutional and fundamental human rights will be violated more often.

Political challenges

- The government may try to take advantage of the process to take revenge on political opponents.
- The sense of impunity will strengthen in the government, paving the way for totalitarianism.
- The government will use this process as a window-dressing to improve its popularity.
- Such confiscation methods relax the government.
- Corruption will increase in control bodies.
- The government should apply unlawful methods against criminals. Nobody is about the law.

Finances

- This method is rather costly. The country does not have enough resources to build new prisons.
- Rich people will flee the country and take their money with them. Investments will dry up.
- International investors will be scared off by instability.

Fruitlessness

- Corruption is actually impossible to defeat, especially by means of arrests only.
- This method cannot help get back all the stolen money (by various estimates, the Italian Mafia stole from 400 to 800 billions, while the government managed to reclaim only two billions).
- There is a danger of resocialisation - people may become even worse in prison than before the imprisonment.
- This method will give birth to more sophisticated mechanisms of corruption.
- The level of independence and honesty of the judiciary is the main problem.

Personnel

- Did corrupt public servants take bribes willingly or they were forced to do so by the system?
- Who will substitute for the corrupt public servants? Will the replacements be more corrupt or less competent?
- The newly recruited public servants will take even bigger bribes and the level of corruption will increase.
- The arrests are depleting human resources (every man is a resource).

The model “Let’s begin from scratch” - The pros

Values

- This approach is more human and moral.
- The government’s image will become more human.
- This method will lead to economic (and possibly political) lustration.
- The process will be quieter, less stressful for the public, and will not breed motivation for revenge.
- Encouragement is better and more efficient than punishment.
- Corrupt public servants will be given another chance and may begin working for the public good.
- Human rights (including the rights of public servants) will be better protected.
- This approach is consistent with the Orthodox philosophy - compassion.
- Never ask these people how they raised their first million and stick to this rule.
- This method is quite acceptable as it complies with the presumption of innocence.
- The society will consolidate rather than split.

Economic aspects

- Budgetary revenues will increase, illegal property will be legalised and money will not be exported to other countries.
- The government will not have to spend huge funds (anti-corruption war is a costly affair).
- After the WWII Japan offered total amnesty to those who agreed to return their illegally obtained money to the state. The Japanese economy got a boost as a result.
- Morgans initiated most of the businesses in the USA.
- A middle-class will evolve in Georgia.
- The investment climate will become more stable and benevolent.
- Give the rich a chance to serve their country and create new jobs. They must face the dilemma of choosing between the two options: either they stop their illegal financial deals or face prosecution.

The rule of law

- This method will strengthen the rule of law. It’s always easier to build a new house from scratch rather than to reconstruct an old one. The construction will be more solid and stable.

- The legalisation will reduce the number of criminals in the country.
 - This approach will create preconditions for new rules of the game.
 - Unfair and prejudiced approaches will be ruled out.
 - The taxpayer culture, and the culture of law in general, will increase.
 - Under the current circumstances, this model is preferable, since almost everybody is involved in corruption.
- If people get jobs, they will abandon illegal activities (for instance smuggling). As a result, only criminal bosses will remain at large, but they are much easier to apprehend.

State institutions

- Corrupt public servants will be dismissed from office
- Professional cadre will retain their posts and help train new personnel, afterwards they may be gradually replaced.
- The Strasbourg court will hear fewer cases against the Georgian government, while the latter will face less criticism from the Council of Europe.
- The political environment will change, the opposition will become stronger because fear will wane and democracy will strengthen in the country.
- Corrupt public servants will have to return stolen money and will be seen as punished (in the eyes of the people), while the government will not need to spend taxpayers money on arrests and the method is human at that – hence it is the best approach.

The model “Let’s begin from scratch” - The cons

Values

- The belief in social justice will vanish (“they stole my money and got away with it”)
- The syndrome of impunity will gain strength (“I will be able to get away with it just as they did”)
- Law-abiding citizens will be tempted to engage in criminal activities – this approach may create the breeding ground for new corruption.
- There must be an objective formula for confessions (“I have not idea whether the culprit has confessed sincerely”)
- Public frustration and indignation will grow
- “Soap cannot wash charcoal white”
- Double standards will be applied as usual.
- The society will split.

The rule of law

- Crimes will go unpunished and crime will be eventually legalised. In terms of law, this approach is unjustifiable, as it ignores the importance of punishment for crime prevention.
- Impose at least symbolic punishments on culprits and give them a chance to begin from scratch.
- This method amounts to the disregard for law on the part of authorities.
- The dismissed public servants may attempt to retaliate and social conflicts will be inevitable.
- It would be wrong to jail a man for stealing 150 GEL and at the same time turn a blind eye to the theft of millions.
- Corruption will become more sophisticated as a result.
- Rule out bargaining everybody must be held responsible for his/her actions.
- Selective justice, such as for instance “plea bargaining”, is unacceptable

Institutional environment

- It is a moral and religious approach. Nothing will change, however, unless people are placed in an environment, which discourages criminal activity.
- Public confidence in the government will be eroded. That is why Saakashvili’s amnesty did not work.
- The country’s history must be taken into account. Georgia is not Japan – if a Georgian “emperor” vows today to abstain from any confiscations, there are no guarantees that he will keep his pledge in the future.
- This approach illustrates the government’s impotence and inefficiency.
- Only absolutely honest people can work in such a system, but it unrealistic.
- It is impossible to begin from scratch when the system does not provide for such an opportunity (“I can start on a clean page but it is possible to clean up the entire system at once?”).
- Professionalism will be adversely affected.
- The danger of blackmail and scaremongering will increase. Dismissed public servants may attempt to blackmail and intimidate those who remain in office.
- The government’s credibility will be undermined.

- There will be a real danger of sabotage by the politicians who are forced to quit politics.

Economic aspects

- The gap between the rich and poor will expand.
- This method does not comply with the principle of free competition, as it does not provide equal start-up conditions for citizens.
- The country will get a system of economic oligarchy due to bargaining with oligarchs (10% of the population will be rich, while the rest of the population will live in poverty), which will open the door to an authoritarian political system.
- The rise of clans will accelerate.
- Budgetary revenues will fall.
- Very little money will be legalised – a lot of illegal property will be concealed.

The model “islands of honesty” - The pros

Values

- It is a less painful process for the society
- Everyone will get equal opportunities to realise their potential.
- Honesty and the human desire to be “clean” will come to the fore.
- Public mentality will change. Liberal approaches, which are out of favour nowadays, will become more popular.
- People will see that honesty is valued and their confidence in the government will increase.
- There will be no grounds for envy and confrontation in society.
- People will come to believe that reforms are possible and realisable.
- Honest citizens will be separated from corrupt people. It is undoubtedly a positive development.
- This method gives a choice (people will be able to opt for the least corrupt environment).

Precedents

- The “islands of honesty” will set convincing precedents. They will popularise honesty and promote self-consciousness.
- The experience gained by implementing this process can be useful for reforms in other spheres.
- The results will be immediate and visible. Support for this method will grow in society as a result.
- This method will foster the development of a code of ethics for citizens.
- The government will demonstrate its efficiency in selected areas (results will be tangible).
- The fear of reform will wane in society.

Institutional aspects

- The government cannot fight corruption in several fronts simultaneously. So targeted approach is justifiable.
- Legislation will be gradually improved.
- Human resources (i.e. resources involved in the implementation of the reforms) will be optimised and used in the most efficient way.
- Professionals will remain in office and conditions will be created for the recruitment of new, well-trained cadre.
- Specific spheres are more likely to have development strategies. It is not a general approach.
- This method will lead to competition between various governmental bodies, which will be vying with each other for the title of the “honesty island”.
- Anti corruption struggle will intensify in specific sectors (though it may slow down in general).
- This method can streamline the government’s practices and procedures, The governmental oversight and civil control will strengthen in other spheres.

Spheres of activity

- The reform must begin in the education system – in kindergartens, schools, etc. Otherwise, people will not get the right outlook.
- Create an independent arbiter in the country. It must be the first “island” - the judiciary and public monitoring.
- Private business is one of such spheres, as it does not tolerate corruption. Economic freedom cripples corruption.
- This method can be applied in the finance and interior ministries.
- This reform is very easy to implement in the system of public health care.
- The more such islands emerge, the more chances are that they can form a “continent” in the “ocean” of corruption.

Economic aspects

- In this case it is easier to mobilise resources and allocate them in the most economical way than during global transformation.
- Resources will be used efficiently in accordance with priorities.
- It is a financially affordable (cost-effective) model.
- It will be easier to mobilise resources in these spheres (investments will increase)
- It's better to die with a clear conscience
- Motivation of citizens will grow.

The model “islands of honesty” - The cons

Inequality

- This method can unbalance the relationship between certain spheres.
- This approach may hamper the development of other spheres, as available resources will be concentrated in one specific area.
- Focus the reform on a specific sphere but implement it nationwide. The centre should not be separated from the regions.
- While some spheres will be struggling to transform into “islands of honesty”, the others will hurry to embezzle as much as possible. Corruption will escalate around the “islands”.

Injustice

- The “islanders” will be happy, while frustration and disillusionment will gain foothold in the rest of the country (“Lucky guys managed to get jobs in the patrol police. What can I do?”)
- The society will split. There will be active protests from the people who are unable to get to the “islands”.
- Snobbery will develop on the “islands of honesty” and they will gradually turn into “islands of window-dressing and PR campaigns”.

Efficiency

- The reform will be dragged out and results will be late.
- Develop a general policy. No sphere can exist independently from the others.
- Communication between the “islands” (spheres) may be disrupted.
- Separate spheres cannot remain “honest” for long (“I was arrested by the ‘corruption-free’ patrol police and conveyed to another structure, which let me free after I paid a bribe”).
- There are two sorts of corruption: low-level and high-profile. The government is annoyed by the low-level corruption and that is why it decided to “purge” the patrol police. But what about the high-profile corruption in the top echelons of the government?
- What results did the reform bring about in one particular area – national matriculation exam? Parents now have to pay private tutors \$1000 for each subject to prepare their children for the exam. There will be only elite education in the country soon.
- Nepotism will prevent the creation of the “islands”. The “islands” cannot be isolated from the rest of society.
- “Islands of honesty” will try to cover up their mistakes and breaches in order to maintain their high public image.
- The idea of the “islands” can be successful only with a respective wage policy. The “islanders” will be hardly able to live on as low salaries as 30 GEL a month.

Stability

- The “islands” will be unable to function independently for long and will soon sink in the “ocean” of corruption.
- The failure of this method will compromise the anti-corruption program and fuel indifference and apathy in society.
- The problem of communication will become urgent (How can the “islands” communicate with each other? Islands can be reached only by ship).

The summary of the forum results

Having discussed specific models, participants of the forum generalised the results of the discussion. Their conclusions addressed both the procedural issues of the forum and optimal models of the Georgian government's response to the problem of corruption.

We have grouped their ideas in accordance with specific topics as follows.

How did each of you change your opinions about corruption?

- I knew in advance that I would never change my views. Corruption is a crime and must be dealt with in accordance with the law.
- Earlier I thought that culprits must be punished. As a result of this discussion, however, I came to believe that under the current circumstances, this approach would not succeed and might be even harmful. So I am in favour of amnesty now. My attitude has changed: there are no legal mechanisms to protect the rights of citizens in this country. That is why I think that beginning from scratch is the only realistic approach. In law-abiding societies other options can be also viable.
- It would be good if the discussion continues. But will the government take account of our proposals?
- Although I liked the first approach at first, I have realised that the model of “honesty islands” is better.
- These issues were discussed quite often in the past but I was unaware of the models. I understand now that there is still hope in society. Things are not as bad as some people claim.

What are the reasons of corruption?

- There is no civil society. People know little about the laws. In addition we are too passive.
- Society and culture and the major reasons: the culture of conduct and social relations, and the culture of governmental structures. China and Japan have completely different values. So do the Scandinavian countries. The phenomenon of culture makes the impact.
- The habit of offering “honours” to public servants is deeply rooted in our culture.
- People are ignorant and lack self-respect. They are not afraid of bad publicity. We must educate them at first.
- Authors of the anti-corruption laws, i.e. lawmakers, are involved in corruption themselves. They should be stripped of their parliamentary immunity and prosecuted.
- Everyone is corrupt.
- The government must provide the living wage to ensure that public servants do not take bribes.
- Rights must comply with responsibilities: there are a lot of responsibilities but few rights. The balance between rights and responsibilities can help forge internal culture and promote the respect for law.
- Scholars used to get much higher salaries in the past than taxi drivers or shop assistants. It was the government that created the breeding ground for corruption, as it was well aware that drivers, chefs or shop assistants would easily find additional, “black” incomes, while scholars did not have such an opportunity.
- The main reason of corruption is that the government is not accountable to society.

Can you provide real-life examples of corruption?

- Corruption stems from elections. The level of corruption is the highest right in this sphere. Corruption will continue unabated until truly fair and democratic elections are held in the country.
- New clans emerge and replace the old ones. There are only superficial changes, not fundamental reforms.
- People must be motivated (at least by high salaries) to steer clear of corruption rather than discouraged from criminal activity.
- The social background must be taken into consideration. There is a clear correlation between the force of temptation and the size of salary: 39 GEL a month is not the same as 600 GEL a month. It is obvious that a public servant with the 39 GEL salary will be willing to accept bribes.
- Students become corrupt as soon as they pay a \$15 thousand bribe to enrol in a university.
- This government will hardly lift a finger to stamp out corruption, as it is corrupt itself.
- People are silent because they know that their voice will not be heard.
- Judges cannot make lawful decisions, even if they are willing to, because there is dictatorship in the country.
- Private business and new jobs alone cannot solve the problem of corruption. Corruption exists even in such developed countries as UK, France, etc. There are no legal mechanisms yet for managers to get the full profit. A consciousness-raising is necessary for successful anti-corruption struggle.
- The budget of Tbilisi was adopted in a rather corrupt process, marked with noisy rows and punch-ups. There were no projects at all. And just these people are now crying out for strict measures against the drivers stealing a couple of cents.
- The government has not made any radical steps for the implementation of these approaches. Not every corrupt official has been arrested yet, while those who are already in police custody have not been convicted so far. The “clean page” principle does not work and the “islands of honesty” do not seem reliable.
- Nothing will change until the chain of corruption is broken.

What measures can help crack down on corruption?

- It is essential to facilitate the development of small and middle businesses. It is not necessary to seek jobs only in state structures. The problem of unemployment will not go away, if only a handful of jobless people are given employment opportunities. Our prospects will be gloomy until small business development is given a priority.
- Analyses of various models should take account of our country's traditions and historical legacy. The experience showed that a slavish imitation of other countries' models proved unproductive.
- Why should we ascribe all negative aspects of our life to the Georgian tradition?
- There is no point in fighting corruption if people do not trust their government.
- The government should pay more attention to problems of the youth and their education.
- Begin the crackdown on corruption in schools. Otherwise, it will have the same effect as Don Quixote-style tilting at windmills.
- Arrests and TV coverage of police operations are not enough to uproot corruption. Whether we like it or not, we still respect criminal mentality. People do not understand why litterbugs should be rebuked or why it is necessary to blow a whistle on a drug addict next door. Such attitudes can be changed only at an early age, in school.
- Everyone, including the president, must abide by law and respect the rule of law. We must make every effort to improve ourselves.
- The only remedy is to improve social conditions and increase wages and pensions.
- Let's look into experience of other countries and apply it in our country. Why not?
- Don't arrest all bribetakers but punish all of them.
- Mass media must play a considerable role in the anti-corruption campaign.
- Administrative measures alone will yield few, if any, positive results. It's important to reform the entire system.
- It was easier to achieve justice in Shevardnadze time than today. Our trade union stands in the right place but it is too small. Civil sector must become more active.
- People must have free access to legal information.
- The deadline for "clean pages" expired in March 2004. As to other models, the "islands of honesty" seems the most preferable of them. The first approach will require too many resources.
- I have always favoured the "honesty islands" approach. However, it is vitally important to determine priority "islands – whether it should be the patrol police, who will not extort a couple of Lari from citizens in the streets, or a reformed legal system, which can deal a severe blow to corruption in general. Privileges, i.e. "clean pages", should be available to perpetrators only if they agree to "invest" in the "islands of honesty".

What particular measures are necessary to stamp out corruption?

- First and foremost, improve the national legislation and carry out co-ordinated reforms in all spheres simultaneously.
- Let's begin with "half-clean" pages: arrests of the culprits, mainly high-profile bribetakers, continue for a limited period; afterwards, we turn a clean page. However, this method has been already applied in Georgia but it caused widespread fears, as people were afraid that they would be arrested anyway. So I have contradicted myself – these two approaches seem incompatible.
- Every method must be adapted to the country and its specifics. I think that the idea of the "islands of honesty" is the most acceptable one. Given our realities and mentality, I give it a priority. It is impossible to tackle all problems simultaneously. I am pleased that a lot of reforms have been already carried out from this viewpoint, for instance the national matriculation exam.
- Detecting corruption does not mean fighting corruption. There is not legislation in the country to prevent, for instance, massive misappropriation of reserve funds.
- Anti-corruption struggle is not an end in itself. It is a tool to wipe out corruption completely. The task requires a complex of measures: a modern and efficient state management system, developed legislation and effective law-enforcement system, and public education programs implemented by the civil sector.
- First of all, introduce the jury into the legal system and abolish the institution of the presidency.
- Include a special subject on corruption in the curricula of educational institutions, explaining specifics of the problem and offering a comparative analysis of the corrupt and uncorrupted systems (this method was tested in Italy).
- A system of awards for law-abiding citizens will serve as a powerful incentive for the others.
- Employ professional and experienced cadre, do not sack them.
- Develop long-term national anti-corruption ideology. For instance, it would be very useful to make people aware that corruption is one of the major reasons of high child mortality.
- Creation of an efficient credit system would be a step in the right direction.
- It is obvious to everybody, except a few people in lucrative posts, that the government is unable, or unwilling, to do anything about corruption. That is why NGOs, which still have some competent people, must work out a comprehensive anti-corruption action plan. The civil sector institutions must join forces and do their best to make the government act.

- I still support the first model. I think that it is a fair approach. I would like to recall Hegel's words that the law is where is lawlessness. The law must be enforced just because there is corruption and lawlessness.
- The election administration must become one of the "islands of honesty". The people's will and choice should be protected and respected right from the beginning, before politicians come into power.
- Create a system, say an anti-corruption centre, with completely new recruitment policy. Its personnel should be selected by society, not the government, and it must have higher authority than the prosecutor's office, the judiciary and the interior ministry.

Final conclusions

Despite a great variety of the proposed ideas, the overwhelming majority of the participants of the forum specified three main principles, which should form the basis of the anti-corruption struggle, and political processes in general, in Georgia.

These principles are listed below in the order of priority:

- 1) The government's policies are spontaneous. It either does not have any action plans or, at best, keeps them secret from the public. It is necessary to develop general strategies with respective concepts and action plans and put them forward for public debate in order to reach some sort of consensus in society.
- 2) There is no independent judiciary in the country. That is why the government is able to violate fundamental human rights with impunity. We must force the government to take necessary steps towards the creation of an independent judicial system, which will defend citizens from any unlawful actions, first of all from the government's tyranny.
- 3) The Georgian government, like any other government, will be never able to achieve positive results by means of the centralised management system. Real progress can be made only if the decentralisation process is successfully implemented in the country and the present-day political establishment abandons its current move towards the maximal centralisation of power.

Appendix 1. Extracts from the forum discussions

The following extracts from various forums can illustrate the atmosphere of the discussions.

Gori, February 23, 2006

First male participant: I think that everybody should be measured individually. We should distinguish a petty theft from a serious crime and punish the culprits accordingly.

First female participant: The society must clean up itself.

Second male participant: I wonder how it could be cleaned up. Over the last 15 years the country has had either a highly incompetent government or no government at all. By the way, if passiveness can be regarded as a form of corruption, every Georgian citizen should be arrested on corruption charges.

Second female participant: If I am sacked today, I will go home readily, as I have already raised enough money.

Third male participant: The “jail-them-all” model needs a systemic approach. Selective anti-corruption measures must be ruled out.

First male participant: In the Georgian reality any anti-corruption program will inevitably fall under political influence and may lead to political repression.

Fourth male participant: Is the forgiving attitude better? This approach can do harm to entire society and place people in unequal start-up conditions.

First female participant: I am in favour of the idea of “honesty islands”. There was a similar model in the past, a monastery, which allowed people to live secluded from the outside world.

First male participant: It is a liberal method of achieving a particular result.

Fifth male participant: Well, I can invite all of you to come with me. I work in the Gori police department and I am surrounded by such people that I really feel myself on an “island”. Every island can be invaded easily – where there’s a will there’s a way.

Tbilisi, March 1, 2006

First female participant: It’s hard for me to formulate my opinions in a word. I think that more severe punishment can hardly help solve the problem, since control over the law enforcement is too weak. It is hard to maintain justice in a country dominated by fear.

First male participant: There is more injustice in the country today than in Shevardnadze time.

Second female participant: Do you really think that the anti-corruption struggle is an easy affair? I wonder what you would do, if you were in the government. The fight against corruption resembles Galaktion’s poetry: “Stand where storms are raging”. As to particular proposals, the government needs support. Good deeds must be backed; bad deeds should be disapproved and corrected. The entire society must stand by Saakashvili. I’d like to emphasise once again – the entire society, including the opposition and NGOs. The trade unions should play a greater role in the anti-corruption program.

Second male participant: I think that the economic aspect is of paramount importance. Georgia does not have a “clean” economy. As the popular saying goes, “Never ask a millionaire where and how he or she raised the first million”. They will tell you everything about the next millions but not about the first one. Nevertheless, it would be really interesting to find out how our current oligarchs, who are trying to teach us business and morale nowadays, obtained their first millions.

Second female participant: I agree that corruption is only the tip of the iceberg. “Black economy” is the root of the problem.

Akhalsikhe, March 7, 2006

First female participant: If all bribetakers are jailed, there will be more respect for the rule of law in society. If young generations are brought up in such atmosphere, they will surely become law-abiding citizens.

First male participant: This method can contribute to the rise of totalitarianism in the country. There is a real danger, well justified by the real-life experience, that the anti-corruption campaign may turn into a tool of selective political revenge.

Second female participant: Indeed, it can really become instrumental in selective political revenge and may serve as a PR tool. The rule of law and human rights are often neglected in the anti-corruption fight.

Third female participant: The “Let’s begin from scratch” principle can remove corrupt public servants from office and help create new jobs.

First female participant: The “Let’s begin from scratch” model is a chance, not a hope. It will increase social injustice, erode public confidence in the government and, respectively, impede the country’s development.

Second male participant: The principle of “honest islands” seems better. It must be taught at an early age, beginning in schools.

Second female participant: Fair and democratic elections are the prerequisite for a successful anti-corruption program.

Fourth female participant: The principle of “honest islands” can strengthen social injustice. I doubt that it will work in the current reality. It requires reviewing and significantly improving the national legislation.

First male participant: The anti-corruption struggle may open the door to Bolshevism. There is enough evidence that in the post-revolution period a lot of old, corrupt clans have been simply replaced with new ones.

Kutaisi, April 10, 2006

First female participant: As a journalist, I wrote some articles about corruption in the past. But I have dropped the theme for fear that the government may persecute my children or me. There is a lot of evidence to justify my fears.

First male participant: It's not necessary to go too far. Every problem of the refugees is connected with corruption.

Second female participant: Do you mean trafficking? There are lots of cases and each of them can be viewed as a corruption case. It is also the cause of deaths and suffering.

Second male participant: The greatest importance should be given to the rule of law. Illegal money should be confiscated only after a respective court ruling. It does not make me very happy when new thieves "confiscate" money from their predecessors as a result of backstage bargaining. The rule of law must be respected. It will not make much difference if Shevardnadze's money is simply transferred to Mishiko's pockets.

Third female participant: Nepotism is still rather strong and affects even arrests of criminals. No doubt, selective punishment of corrupt officials can bring about only negative effects.

Third male participant: Let's take stock of our businessmen. It is common knowledge that fools cannot make money. That is why we should find ways of using the potential of these corrupt but clever people for the public good.

Fourth female participant: The "Let's begin from scratch" approach will increase social injustice. Not everyone has the right to begin from scratch.

Fourth male participant: The "islands of honesty", as well as high motivation, can be maintained only by respective salaries.

Fifth female participant: Although the ministers are paid 3000 GEL a month, they continue stealing anyway. They have a share in various businesses, for instance wine business, their relatives own factories. They are parvenus, who came into power, as Dumbadze once put it, with only one boot. The "islands of honesty" should be oriented towards the civil society. There is no confidence without control.

Fifth male participant: Well, let me say a word. We are all corrupt all along. My grandson does not kiss me good night, if I do not give him a candy. Young generations are brought up with this spirit. You say there are schools. And what? "The dragon-fly and the ant" should not be taught in school. The problem continues in the high school. Universities have the highest level of corruption. There is awful corruption in Kutaisi University. And don't argue with me. I am a university teacher and students have "arranged" with me about getting good marks, and so did my relatives.

Sixth male participant: There is a popular saying – "If you want to change the world, change your mind at first". If I decide to challenge corruption, I should "reform" my mind first of all.

Ozurgeti, April 12, 2006

First female participant: Unless the government has the political will to fight corruption to the end, nothing will change and they will always pull the wool over our eyes.

First male participant: What? Who will fight corruption? Vano Merabishvili's father, who was a nobody yesterday, is roaming around Akhaltsikhe in a new jeep today, before people's very eyes. What can you say about that? Where did I get the information? I have a relative there and visit him frequently. And I am not blind. Besides, it is not necessary to visit the place to know what is going on there.

Second male participant: People are afraid of speaking to each other. You can be fired, if you say something wrong.

Third male participant: As the popular saying goes, "Things are not all right in the Danish Kingdom". Our society is profoundly corrupt. There is a question therefore – "Who will be the judge?"

Fourth male participant: If you can improve Kote Gabashvili, a man who made the Georgian nation kneel down in front of Shevardnadze and is now teaching moral to people, you can believe in everything and fix everything.

Second female participant: Let's be serious. Despite all problems, there have been certain achievements. Successful reforms in one sphere will pave the way for reforms in another one, won't they?

Third female participant: It is very important to create a class of honest public servants. Otherwise, the "islands of honesty" will sink in the "ocean of corruption".

Fourth male participant: The "islands of honesty" may "knock out" the society.

Fifth male participant: Well, I do not understand what you mean speaking about "achievements". Can you explain me?

Second female participant: The situation has obviously improved in our district in the fields of land registry and passport service. Pochkhidze has done a good job.

Fifth male participant: The prosecutor's office, the judiciary and the police remain locked in a vicious circle.

Sixth male participant: That's right. The number of corrupt public servants has reduced in the post-revolution period. However, corruption has climbed to higher echelons and bribes have swelled to unprecedented levels.

Seventh male participant: I suppose we are speaking about principles here. About jailing them all, not about Hitler's or similar principles.

Third female participant: I wonder whether a "peninsula of honesty" may be better than an "island of honesty". Let's not break away from our native, corrupt, Georgian environment.

Fifth male participant: Be careful! You can die out in that island with your honesty.

Fifth male participant: Is it possible to send our government to that island?

Seventh male participant: The three approaches should be combined to get any results.

Third male participant: These ideas are good. But I think that the forgiving approach is wrong. The deadline for “clean pages” expired in March 2004. There was an amnesty, wasn’t it? Can you say that the government does not get illegal incomes today?

Second female participant: Yes, a lot of crimes have been committed. Nevertheless, I think that the government still has an opportunity to implement all three models. But right priorities should be set this time.

Batumi, April 13, 2006

First male participant: The principle “All bribetakers must be jailed” is fully justifiable. The law is not moral. That is why it is not an excuse that you do not know the law. Nobody is above the law and corrupt people should be punished by law.

First female participant: It is important to identify what stage of development the society has reached. The use of these principles depends on the stage.

First male participant: All steps must be taken to ensure that no crime will go unpunished.

Second female participant: Let’s not forget that it is much easier to prevent crime than arrest all corrupt people. Evidence to prove corruption is very hard to obtain.

Third female participant: Is it better to forgive all of them? I mean the principle of “clean page”. You know that this principle can fuel the sense of social injustice and insecurity in society.

Second male participant: Anyhow, it seems better than the principle of “honesty islands”. Individuals cannot win a war, armies do. That is why this approach will hardly succeed.

First female participant: Although this approach will not bring about immediate results, it is important to make sure that the results will be guaranteed.

Third male participant: This method will create a differentiated social approach. For instance, I am a colonel and I have been in military service for 25 years. I am paid 120 GEL. Ordinary policemen, who joined the patrol police only yesterday, receive 400 GEL. Is it right?

Third female participant: If people have been corrupted by bribes, they will never change their behaviour.

Fourth female participant: It is necessary to adopt a law on lustration of corrupt officials. We should reduce, not eliminate, corruption.

First female participant: If the principle “Every bribetaker must be jailed” is applied, the respect for the rule of law will strengthen in society. But do we really need another Gulag Archipelago?

Third female participant: If I am sacked today, I will go home readily as I have made enough money already. Yes, I agree that every bribetaker must be jailed but this method requires a systemic approach. Corruption should not be tackled selectively.

Second male participant: Well, in the Georgian reality any anti-corruption program will always have a political dimension and may result in political repression.

Fifth female participant: People are free only when they are confident of their actions. From this viewpoint, the “clean page” principle gives the corrupt public servants a chance. This approach can damage the entire society and create unequal start-up conditions.

Sixth female participant: I think that the model of “honesty islands” is more justifiable from the strategic perspective than the two others.

Fourth male participant: These “islands” can have covert corruption, can’t they?

Fifth male participant: The reform must be vertical and rotating at than. It should not be separated from society. Firstly, the authority of the authors of the reform should not give them absolute power. Secondly, the three models should be fused together to form a new, fourth approach, which must inherit all positive aspects from this trio.

Zugdidi, May 4, 2006

First male participant: I wonder whether all corrupt public servants have been arrested already. Have they jailed them all after the revolution?

Second male participant: The government is dominated by dilettantes.

Third male participant: They are not dilettantes, that’s for sure. Corruption has moved upwards. You no longer have to pay two Lari to the police, but what about other bribes. We must be able to distinguish between elite corruption and everyday backhanders.

First female participant: Prior to the revolution, by the way, Gogichaishvili attempted to find out how Rcheulishvili made his first million. After the revolution, Maia Rcheulishvili has featured in Gogichaishvili’s show as one of the main heroines. Nobody asks her about the origins of the money she is giving out to amateur businessmen.

Second female participant: Elite corruption should be challenged by “islands of honesty”. The “liberty islands” approach has proved to be the only successful model for Georgia so far. For instance, there are “black sheep” in NGOs too, but the interior ministry is beyond compare.

Third female participant: Selective justice should be eliminated. But it is the new government's credo, isn't it? The case of Zugdidi market will suffice to illustrate what I mean. People have won two lawsuits but the market is still closed. I think it is clear to everybody whose supermarket is going to be built there.

Poti, May 5, 2006

First male participant: We hear a lot of words about the need to defeat corruption but see few deeds. Illegal money transactions are still widespread in Georgia.

Second male participant: Then justice minister's decade-long experience of legal reforms is a perfect illustration of the anti-corruption "struggle".

First female participant: All bribetakers must be jailed, that's for sure.

Fourth male participant: I was in charge of election "trust funds" in the gamgeoba. I have seen two revolutions – Gamsakhurdia's and Rose. They seem to have something in common. There was no corruption in the country for six months after Gamsakhurdia came to power. Afterwards it erupted into a large-scale corruption. Now it has been at a standstill for a month and a half. On the other hand, corruption has reached unprecedented levels.

Second female participant: And who are the judges and prosecutors? They are corrupt themselves.

Third female participant: Well son, there is almost no confidence in the government today. Our hopes were so high. No sooner Misha called for a rally than we rushed to Tbilisi.

Fifth male participant: The law will remain on paper, unless the public moral increases. Theft and bribery should be treated as forms of worldview.

Sixth male participant: The system of corruption looks like a dragon biting its own tail, and thus fighting itself. The president signed Decree 377 in 2005 on the anti-corruption strategy. I wonder whether it is practically applied.

Second female participant: The situation in Poti is a good illustration of the proverb "The man in front paves the way for those behind". Three mayors were arrested in succession here, all of them on corruption charges. For instance, 600 thousand GEL have been allocated for cultural activities in this year's budget but the expenditure is not broken down and no particular programs are specified.

Third female participant: In Misha's words, the government must listen to the people. But in reality it does not. The government is blind and deaf. The atmosphere of fear will ruin the country.

Fifth male participant: The dilemma of this approach is a choice between professionalism and loyalty.

Second male participant: The "jail-them-all" approach will not work in Georgia. Arsena Marabdeli has been an example to our generation and, therefore, the "whistleblowing" is doomed to fail in our country.

Fourth female participant: The same people have dominated the local government in Poti before and after the revolution. Only shipowners can reach your "honesty islands". Today part of our "island's" residents are Friday's and the others are Robinson Crusoe's.

Appendix 2. Questionnaires

Pre-discussion questionnaire

1. Which model do you like?

- Number #
- No answer
- I am not sure
- It is not listed here

2. Do you think that the discussed measures are necessary?

3. Is my favourite method the best one?

- Fully agree
- Agree
- No answer
- Disagree
- Fully disagree

4. There are other solutions to the problem

5. Personal information:

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Professional experience (governmental structure, NGO, private company, educational institution, pupil/student, household farming, unemployed, other)

Post-discussion questionnaire

1. Which model do you like?

- Number #
- No answer
- I am not sure
- It is not listed here

2. Do you think that the discussed measures are necessary?

3. Is my favourite method the best one?

- Fully agree
- Agree
- No answer
- Disagree
- Fully disagree

4. There are other solutions to the problem

5. What kind of new knowledge did you get at the forum?

Appendix 3. Results of the interviews

Before and after the forums their participants anonymously answered questions of the questionnaires. Although the interviews are not the results of a full-fledged sociological survey and are not representative to some extent, they give enough materials to identify certain tendencies and make respective conclusions.

Part of the participants did not answer the questionnaires. On the whole, 275 questionnaires were filled (some of them only partly). It is noteworthy that although participants of the forums tried hard to maintain their views during the discussions, the questionnaires showed that part of them (109 questionnaires or 39.6% of the total did change their stance.

Before analysing the results of the survey, let's take a glance at the demographic data.

Table 2. Demography¹

Region	Respondents	%
Imereti	58	21.1
Samegrelo	49	17.8
Tbilisi	45	16.4
Shida Kartli	39	14.2
Guria	35	12.7
Ajaria	35	12.7
Samtskhe	14	5.1
Total	275	100

Gender	Respondents	%
Men	131	48.2
Women	141	51.8
Total	272	100

Age groups	Respondents	%
17 years old and younger	3	1.1
18-29	127	46.5
30-49	97	35.5
50-64	36	13.2
65 years old and above	10	3.7
Total	273	100

Education	Respondents	%
Secondary	18	6.6
Technical	5	1.8
High	245	90.1
Other	4	1.5
Total	272	100

Spheres of activity	Respondents	%
Private business	21	7.8
State structures	46	17.0
NGOs	94	34.8
Educational institutions	34	12.6
Pupil/student	41	15.2
Household farming	3	1.1
Unemployed	15	5.5
Other	16	5.9

¹ Note: the difference in the number of total respondents between different tables (region, gender, age, etc) is due to the fact that some respondents declined to specify their respective age, gender, etc

Total	270	100
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The pre- and post-forum data.

1. General situation

As a result of the forum, the number of supporters of the models I and II has reduced. While the three models had almost equal approval rating before the forum, the number of supporters of the model I has shrunk drastically at the end. At the same time, the number of respondents, who favoured a combination of all three models, i.e. the development of a completely new method, has increased. So did the number of respondents who had no answer, maybe because the discussion brought to light both positive and negative aspects of the proposed models and, respectively, made the right decision harder to reach.

Table 3. General situation

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	Total	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	21.46	16.7
Approach II – “Let’s begin from scratch”	24.72	20.0
Approach 1 – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	24.36	25.1
Let’s look for alternative approaches	7.63	11.3
A combination of the three models	6.88	10.5
No answer	14.88	16.4

2. Results of the survey in accordance with the regions

Unlike the general situation, the model I gained more supporters in Ajaria, the model II in Shida Kartli, while the number of supporters of the model III dropped sharply in Shida Kartli and Tbilisi. Fewer respondents decided to advocate alternative methods in Guria, and the number of respondents with no answer declined in Ajaria, Guria and Samegrelo.

The data from Imereti is very interesting. In contrast to the general situation, the change of opinions was the smallest there – 13.8% (in comparison with 39.6% regarding the general situation).

The model I lost a considerable number of supporters in Shida Kartli, the model II in Samtskhe and Samegrelo, while the model III in Tbilisi. The number of supporters of a combined approach climbed up significantly, while the number of respondents with no answer dropped drastically in Ajaria and at the same time soared in Tbilisi.

Table 4. Regions

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	Ajaria		Guria		Imereti		Shida Kartli	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	14.30	17.1	31.43	25.7	22.43	17.3	17.98	7.7
Approach II – “Let’s begin from scratch”	20.04	14.3	22.86	14.3	20.67	20.7	12.83	15.4
Approach 1 – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	22.86	28.6	22.86	31.4	32.76	31.1	33.35	25.7
Let’s look for alternative approaches	11.39	17.1	5.74	2.8	3.46	6.9	10.22	15.4
A combination of the three models	8.49	14.2	2.83	14.3	6.88	6.9	12.76	20.4
No answer	22.86	8.6	14.30	11.4	13.75	17.3	12.76	15.4

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	Samtskhe		Samegrelo		Tbilisi	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	28.48	21.4	20.43	18.4	19.98	13.3
Approach II – “Let’s begin from scratch”	28.48	7.1	42.82	30.6	24.44	24.4
Approach 1 – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	7.07	21.4	12.23	20.4	26.64	15.6

Let's look for alternative approaches	14.34	14.3	4.04	12.2	11.12	13.3
A combination of the three models	14.34	14.1	4.10	4.0	4.40	6.7
No answer	7.07	21.4	16.28	14.2	13.32	26.7

3. Results of the survey in accordance with gender

The number of supporters of the model II has dropped significantly in the group of male respondents, while the model III became much less popular among female respondents. At the same time, a substantially larger number of female respondents began to favour alternative and combined approaches.

Table 5. Gender groups

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	Men		Women	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	20.39	19.6	21.74	14.0
Approach II – “Let's begin from scratch”	30.21	18.9	19.64	21.0
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	20.39	25.7	28.07	23.1
Let's look for alternative approaches	11.32	12.8	4.21	9.8
A combination of the three models	6.02	8.3	6.98	12.6
No answer	10.55	13.6	18.25	18.2

4. Results of the survey in accordance with age

The change of opinions in age groups was almost the same as with regard to the general situation. At the same time, there was a greater reduction of the number of supporters of the model II in the middle-age group, and of the model I among the elderly. In both these age groups more respondents began to favour a combination of all approaches.

It is noteworthy that if compared with other age groups, the youth (especially students) had firmer beliefs and did not change them easily.

Table 6. Age groups

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	17 years old and younger		18-29		30-49	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	32.76	99.2	25.02	19.5	16.38	13.3
Approach II – “Let's begin from scratch”	32.76	0.0	25.02	22.7	30.71	22.5
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	0.0	0.0	21.88	21.1	21.50	24.6
Let's look for alternative approaches	0.0	0.0	7.82	12.5	9.2	13.3
A combination of the three models	32.76	0.0	6.23	6.2	7.12	15.3
No answer	0.0	0.0	13.28	17.2	14.33	10.2

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	50-64		65 years old and above	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	16.53	8.3	29.76	19.9
Approach II – “Let's begin from scratch”	13.8	11.0	0.0	0.0
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	38.60	35.9	39.59	39.6
Let's look for alternative approaches	2.73	2.7	9.83	9.8
A combination of the three models	2.73	13.8	9.83	9.8
No answer	24.72	27.5	9.83	0.0

5. Results of the survey in accordance with education

In accordance with the education groups, the number of supporters of the model III has increased in the secondary education group, in comparison with the general situation. So did the number of supporters of the model I, while the number of supporters of a combined approach reduced sharply, in contrast to the general situation.

The number of opponents of the model I increased among the respondents with high education in comparison with average data. It is noteworthy that like students, respondents with high education rarely changed their opinions.

Table 7. Education

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	Secondary education		Technical education		High education		Other	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	21.91	38.5	19.58	0.0	20.18	14.1	49.64	74.1
Approach II – “Let’s begin from scratch”	11.03	5.4	0.0	0.0	25.83	21.8	49.64	0.0
Approach 1 – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	16.47	27.5	19.58	19.6	25.43	25.0	0.0	0.0
Let’s look for alternative approaches	16.47	11.0	19.58	19.6	6.86	11.3	0.0	0.0
A combination of the three models	16.47	5.4	19.58	19.6	5.64	10.9	0.0	0.0
No answer	16.47	11.0	19.58	39.2	14.93	15.7	0.0	24.5

6. Results of the survey in accordance with the spheres of activity

The numbers of opponents of the model I and supporters of alternative approaches increased among respondents from private business structures, in comparison with average data. The number of supporters of the model II reduced, while the number of supporters of a combined approach increased, if compared with average data, in the group of public servants.

The number of supporters of the model I dropped considerably, while the number of supporters of alternative approaches increased among respondents from NGOs. The number of respondents with no answer also grew in this group.

The number of supporters of the model III and a combined approach rose among the personnel of educational institutions, while the number of respondents with no answer declined.

The numbers of opponents of the model I and supporters of the model III rocketed in the group of the unemployed. The number of supporters of a combined approach increased, in comparison with the general situation, while the number of respondents with no answer reduced, similar to the personnel of educational institutions.

Table 8. Spheres of activity

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	Private businesses		Public service		NGO		Educational institutions	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	18.64	4.6	8.51	4.3	22.98	15.7	8.66	8.7
Approach II – “Let’s begin from scratch”	14.01	18.6	29.88	21.4	25.08	20.9	31.76	28.9
Approach 1 – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	32.79	28.0	23.48	27.8	26.11	23.0	23.11	28.9
Let’s look for alternative approaches	4.63	14.0	8.51	17.1	5.23	10.5	8.66	5.8
A combination of the three models	9.26	14.0	8.51	12.8	9.39	13.6	2.86	11.6
No answer	18.64	18.5	19.19	15.0	9.39	14.6	23.11	14.4

Approaches/before the forum/after the forum %%	Students		Housewives		Unemployed		Other	
Approach I – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	31.15	35.9	32.4	32.4	39.24	26.1	24.47	30.7
Approach II – “Let’s begin from scratch”	23.97	19.2	0.0	0.0	13.14	13.1	18.39	6.1
Approach 1 – “Every bribetaker must be jailed”	14.36	14.4	65.70	32.4	13.14	26.1	30.71	36.8

Let's look for alternative approaches	11.99	9.5	0.0	32.4	6.48	6.5	12.32	12.3
A combination of the three models	4.81	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.5	0.0	0.0
No answer	11.92	12.0	0.0	0.0	26.1	19.6	12.15	12.3

The above-specified results are based on the analysis of 550 questionnaires filled by participants of 15 forums, which were carried out in six regions (eight cities) of Georgia. It should be noted once again that much more forums must be usually held to examine the dynamic of civil participation and public opinion. Our project was a pilot study and its results are hard to extrapolate to the entire society. However, the project has provided enough data to draw certain conclusions.