



**CHAVCHAVADZE
CENTER**

*Ilia Chavchavadze Center for
European Studies and Civic Education*

Ilia Chavchavadze
Center for European Studies and
Civic Education Report



2019-2020

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NOW THAT WE ARE LITERATE

“You are working for a great cause but I highly doubt you will get to see the results in your lifetime,” a friend told me after attending one of our student events at the Ilia Chavchavadze Center for European Studies and Civic Education (the Chavchavadze Center). Many would see this remark as a backhanded compliment—a sign that we are doing this work in vain. It is somewhat true that tackling long-term objectives in Georgia is very rare. We do not have a culture of step-by-step, goal-oriented work toward distant aims. We almost never plan in advance; we live in the moment and hope that, with the passage of time, one day we will have a better life. And yet, the changing of numbers on the calendar is not enough to bring change. Quite the opposite, there are plenty of examples where countries and even entire civilizations experienced regress, descending into the Dark Ages. A hundred years ago the Social Democrats who ruled Georgia thought that “the times had changed” and Russia would not invade and conquer the country. Similarly, in 2008, Americans were convinced that Russia would not start a war outside its borders since “the times had changed.”

In reality, we are in charge of creating our time and this process is perpetual. The moment we sit back, someone else is busy crafting our time. Individual and national freedom require everyday care and protection. Or perhaps the terms “care and protection” are too worn out. Our freedom calls for routine work and active thinking.

All more-or-less successful societies have an Idea, whether proclaimed or implicit. Let us not call it a “Messianic Idea,” as it was referred to in the years prior to the restoration of independence. What I mean is a simple reflection on who we are and where we want to be, how we may want to differentiate ourselves and succeed in the modern competition of nations and ideas. A vision of what we should no longer be, what stands in the way of our success and what we should change in ourselves.

My generation has lived through some interesting times, on the cusp of centuries, millennia and seismic geopolitical alterations. We were born at the time of the Soviet “zastoi,” which is to say stagnation, grew up in the era of dismantling of the Evil Empire and fighting for freedom and independence. Once we reached maturity, we

were told that all is well and history had ended (although all was as far from well in Georgia as it could possibly be). A decade later we saw that we could shatter centuries-old stereotypes and achieve phenomenal things if we had the will to do so and tried hard enough. Finally, we went back to the permanent Georgian state of mediocrity, in the comfort of our own broken shells.

Through all of these changes, Georgia remained in the role of an observer. It was always the few amongst us who fought. Our society comfortably accepted this role of a victim, idolizing the singular heroes, shifting all of our responsibilities onto them and living vicariously through them (through poems, toasts, etc.). Simultaneously, most people always chose conformism as a way of life.

If we reflect on it, conformism is our main tradition. Many even try to romanticize it and argue that it is precisely conformism that has saved us and brought us this far. This is where the feeble minimalism that characterizes conformism emerges: they say “saved us” where mere survival is seen as an achievement, as enough reason for pride, while everywhere else societies continue to make progress and grow stronger. Even those we thought had not “survived.”

So even if we never see the fruits of our labor, we will not be disheartened if we know that we are on the right path, building a steady foundation which will not be easily ravaged by idiots (in the Ancient Greek sense of the word) and populists...

Now that literacy is no longer a formal issue, Georgian society faces a new challenge: getting rid of prejudices and preconceptions; nurturing critical thinking and practicing daily common sense; understanding what we read, see or experience; promoting the ability to recognize the context and differentiate issues by prioritizing; moderation; pragmatism; civic memory and virtue...

As a result, we have an electorate that is rather easily manipulated and a fertile soil for hostile propaganda. Most of the youth is alienated from the political class and does not/cannot participate in creating a social and political agenda even when it is directly tied with their own future. It is clear that party politics alone, and especially the existing political organizations, are not able to bring about fundamental changes.

Progress is sustainable only when the members of a society are the ones “calling the shots,” not the leader, when the processes take place “bottom-up” rather than “top-down.” We like to complain that “no one cares about an ordinary man.” Well, the fact is that no one will ever care for an ordinary man. We should all take matters into

our own hands and look after our own lives and communities to be able to set broader, more ambitious goals for the future.

“We are a wealthy nation,” my Dutch friend once said, and I caught myself feeling quite jealous. Jealous not so much about the wealth he referred to, but rather the careless, matter of fact way he stated it, demonstrating that such state of affairs was a given fact for Dutch mentality.

And what is a given fact for our mind-set? The fact that 40 years ago(!) we won the UEFA Cup Winners’ Cup? At a time when the Emirates were essentially still a desert, China did not matter economically and Turkey was poorer than Georgia? What have we achieved since then?

Every great journey begins with a single step. The Chavchavadze Center wishes to address not only the deficiencies left as part of our “Soviet legacy,” or the issues that we have accumulated over the past 30 years as we “go round and round in circles,” but first and foremost the vices that have accompanied our long history and which have defined the centuries-old misery of our people. Our ambitious vision is that we be a modest reincarnation of the Society for the Spread of Literacy, the first and the largest Georgian NGO, which was founded over 140 years ago. The Center’s aim is to encourage a fundamental change in Georgian society through civic education, the spread of critical thinking and an increased awareness about citizenship. The Center supports and promotes democracy, civic engagement and making political processes more rational. The Center’s long-term vision is to help establish a standard of basic common sense in our mostly irrational and emotionally explosive society and support the creation of a mainstream civil and political agenda based on such a standard.

...in 1776, Thomas Paine, an Englishman who had recently immigrated to America, published one of the most influential political pamphlets of the 18th century, entitled Common Sense, which ended up playing a significant role in the United States as it gained its independence. The second US president, John Adams, is believed to have said “Without the pen of Paine, the sword of Washington would have been wielded in vain.”

“Common sense” doesn’t translate quite directly into Georgian. In broader terms, this concept can be translated as “reason,” as a basic thinking skill, part of an inherent survival instinct. Few seem to know that in 1832, Georgians who were plotting a rebellion against Russia wrote a charter entitled “Act of Reason,” which may also be translated as “common sense.” It seems like a logical title in a country where imprudent, unintentionally malevolent or self-destructive behavior is no surprise to anyone.

The Chavchavadze Center was founded in 2018. We held our first presentation at the end of that year and began our activities in May 2019, which means we have only really been operating for about a year and a half. The Center bears the name of the symbol of Georgian enlightenment, Ilia Chavchavadze. Our logo represents a sketch made unconsciously while thinking; in it yellow represents the color of sun, of reason, of light. The Chavchavadze Center belongs to anyone and everyone who believes in Georgia.

Of all the things we have done so far, our most rewarding achievement has been engaging in hundreds of Socratic discussions with as many youth. These discussions awakened in them a concern about such issues and ideas, which may have otherwise remained dormant. The discussions broadened their horizons and boosted their trust in their own abilities.

This is the Chavchavadze Center's biennial report for 2019-2020, which is but a modest reflection of the efforts and labor we have invested in pursuing the above-mentioned ideas for the past year and a half.

Sincerely,



Zaza Bibilashvili
Chairman of the Board



DIRECTOR'S ADDRESS

Two years ago, when the Chavchavadze Center was taking its first steps, we could hardly have imagined wrapping up 2020—a year full of global challenges and local pitfalls—with such gratifying results: meeting hundreds of passionate youths; engaging with scores of high school students burning with new ideas and even more university students who are evolving into opinion leaders and trend-setters in their own regions or academic environments; working with people of all ages and occupations, who enthusiastically partake in the Center's activities; creating an ever-expanding team of bright, like-minded individuals; conducting research studies on crucial topics that are largely ignored; publishing popular articles and publications on topical issues... And this is but a fraction of all the achievements that the Chavchavadze Center has made during this truly exceptional and challenging year.

One of the main reasons behind our team's initial, modest success story was our faith in the principle that there is no such thing as democracy with “permitted” freedoms, rules and opportunities dictated or bestowed from above, life with readily available instructions and recipes. We believe that democracy is a lever in the hands of active citizens, a lever which ensures meaningful engagement in the governance of their own affairs by citizens who acknowledge the fact their fate lies in their own hands. Therefore, as our primary aim, we have created a center for intellectual and civic growth. The Center is open for those who wish to be co-creators of societal processes rather than passive hostages of decisions made by groups motivated by self-interest or stereotypes established by the “elites.”

On the second anniversary of our founding, we present this report of our labors to date to all those who share and support our values and stand beside the Chavchavadze Center. We look forward to receiving your valuable feedback (including criticisms, suggestions and new ideas) and cooperating in the future for the betterment of our society.

Sincerely,

Nino Kalandadze
Director, the Chavchavadze Center

ABOUT THE CENTER

Our Vision

The Chavchavadze Center is the first civil society organization in Georgia modeled after European political foundations.

The Center is an independent and nonpartisan institution with an ambitious, long-term vision of transforming Georgia through enlightenment, the spread of critical thinking and the cultivation of a sense of individual responsibility in order to create a stable foundation for the country's consistent and irreversible progress.

The Center aims to increase civil awareness and civic involvement, encourage rational political processes, combat the influence of anti-Western propaganda and, ultimately, cultivate the set of skills necessary for pragmatic civil decision-making.

While the Center works with various groups in Georgian society, its primary focus is on the youth and those Georgians who are currently less exposed to the West.

Mission and Goals

The Chavchavadze Center's mission is to contribute to raising public awareness on political, security, economic, social and educational trends as well as potential challenges taking place on the local, regional and international levels; promoting Euro-Atlantic principles and values; and supporting political methods based on those values. The Center aims to achieve its goals by empowering active citizens, offering an innovative platform to the next generation of opinion-makers, promoting ideas of individual responsibility and critical thinking, and detecting and acting against anti-Western propaganda and Russian disinformation.

The Center aims to foster a well-informed, rational class of citizens who are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to influence public opinion and policymaking. Such a society is less likely to become a victim of populist manipulation and hostile propaganda. The Center is committed to engaging motivated, ambitious young people and offering them a platform for effective engagement and co-operation, which is lacking in the current limited political system and media environment. These actions aim to produce a new stratum of educated, responsible youth, which will bring new qualities to the table in the process of forming the future Georgian democracy. Our aim is to form a democratic society based on liberal values, the cornerstone of which is strong citizenry who are able to control the levers of the political entities.

Special attention is paid to engaging the young people who feel left out of political and civil processes due to their background, where they live or other objective circumstances, and those who are deprived of social and career opportunities. The focus on young people is also motivated by the understanding that they gain unique potential to become the driving force for the establishment of sustainable democratic processes and institutions.

BACKGROUND

At dawn of the 21st century, by the standards of civilized societies, Georgia was a failed state with some of the highest rates of crime and corruption in the world. Extreme poverty, absence of institutions and an inability to make political changes created a sense of dread and hopelessness. Following the Rose Revolution, Georgian society went through a radical transformation, leading to the establishment of a functional state and sustainable democratic institutions based on Euro-Atlantic values.

Though Georgia's post-Rose Revolution transformation has been described as "phenomenal," the results proved to be fragile and incredibly challenging to sustain. The reason may be simple: while the reforms were mainly designed and implemented with a top-down approach, maintaining and advancing democratic institutional accomplishments require the active participation of society. The long-term stability of the system depends on empowered, active citizens and a bottom-up approach to political processes.

Georgia's current political challenges attest to shortcomings in public engagement, which is due to the lack of sufficient information and skills. These deficiencies make Georgian society vulnerable to fake news and Russian propaganda. The lack of public awareness about various policy issues and policy processes, as well as the absence of the skills necessary to filter and objectively assess information, are creating fertile ground for populism and manipulation and have become a determinant factor in the political process in Georgia. Thus, to maintain and advance Georgia's post-Rose Revolution achievements, it is necessary to strengthen grassroots civic engagement, stress the importance of democratic institutions and enhance public demand for democratic practices. These actions will contribute to a bottom-up, rather than top-down, development processes.

The founders and the researchers of the Chavchavadze Center have accumulated decades' worth of experience across a variety of fields and specialties. The Center is proud of its wide network of committed professionals with shared values and principles, all mobilized to contribute to the process of promoting evidence-based policy discussions, rational decision-making and critical thinking among the Georgian population.

The presentation to launch the Center was held on November 19, 2018.



**CHAVCHAVADZE
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*Ilia Chavchavadze Center for
European Studies and Civic Education*

**IN 9 REGIONS
MORE THAN 1000**

PARTICIPANTS

12

COMPETITIONS AND MASTERCLASSES

15

ONLINE TRAININGS AND DISCUSSIONS

35

EXPERTS

3

WEBINARS

10

VLOGS

3

STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

4

COLLABORATION AGREEMENTS

20

MOVIE SCREENINGS AND DISCUSSIONS



**CHAVCHAVADZE
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Our Projects

A ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DEDICATED TO THE 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE SPREAD OF LITERACY AMONG GEORGIANS



On May 15, 2019 the Chavchavadze Center for European Studies and Civic Education hosted a round table discussion dedicated to the 140th anniversary of the founding of the Society for the Spread of Literacy among Georgians. The event, which was held at the Tbilisi Marriott Hotel, was organized with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation South Caucasus.

Participants spoke about the importance of the establishment of the Society for the Spread of Literacy, its historical context, values and founding principles as well as their influence on the formation of the modern Georgian state. Speakers underscored that the challenges Georgia faced 140 years ago have transformed but have remained largely relevant to this day. Discussion centered on the role of education and critical thinking, especially in the context of the threats posed by the propaganda and disinformation campaign targeting the fabric of Georgian society.

Chavchavadze Center founders Zaza Bibilashvili and Nino Kalandadze made opening remarks at the event, followed by speeches by Ghia Nodia, Giorgi Mshvenieradze, David Paitchadze, Mariam Gersamia, Simon Janashia and Gia Japaridze. Members of the media and civil society as well as notable academics and leading specialists participated in a lively discussion moderated by Zaza Bibilashvili and David Aprasidze.

The discussion resulted in an initiative to continue to the tradition of marking the anniversary, and cover more topics at future events.



PROJECT “COMMON SENSE: CIVIL SOCIETY VIS-À-VIS POLITICS” (THE FIRST PHASE)

The Project “Common Sense: Civil Society Vis-à-Vis Politics” was launched nationwide in July 2019.



Director of the Chavchavadze Center Nino Kalandadze:

“This is quite a big-scale project, which involves improving civic engagement and which, for the most part, is aimed at the younger generations who live in the provincial regions. These youths have high-level civic consciousness, as well as a sense of civic responsibility but no appropriate space where they can develop. They need a platform for that. The project’s key aim is to discover active youths who need support and provide them with opportunities to join various civic projects.”

Co-Founder of the Chavchavadze Center Zaza Bibilashvili:

“Each one of us is capable of playing a significant role in changing our immediate environment, and that is often connected with civic will and raising common sense standards. Being a citizen is a great challenge and responsibility. The aim of this meeting is to strengthen civic awareness, highlight the role of civic memory and reaffirm the civic confidence within the youth.”



Participants were chosen from regions and towns nationwide to attend lectures and masterclasses/workshops on a variety of topics, including:

- Georgia's Contemporary Foreign Policy, Eastern Partnerships and Euro-Atlantic Integrations Prospects
- Why the West? – Values, Obligations/Duties and Historical Perspective
- The Challenges of Changing Global, Regional and National Security and Stability
- The European Union, Democratic Institutions and Sustainable Development
- Law and Order – the Present and the Future of the Georgian Judicial System
- Economic Policy – How to Encourage Rapid and Socially Aware Economic Growth
- Media Psychology, Information Literacy and Civic Education
- Culture and Identity
- Communication with Donors
- Public Speaking and The Art of Debate

Each meeting included an introductory segment about the aims of the Center and the project, lectures, masterclasses and practical workshops. After the session on public speaking, the participants were invited to join mock debates, where they were able to discuss the topic most relevant to their regional challenges.



"Common Sense" in Georgian Regions



The project launched on July 27 in Gori and the concluding session was held in Kachreti on December 21. There were 10 meetings in total, with more than 200 participants from across the country.

The "Common Sense" project was held nation-wide (excluding the occupied territories):

- Shida Kartli, Gori – July 2019
- Samtskhe-Javakheti, Akhaltsikhe – July 2019
- Ajara, Batumi – August 2019
- Kakheti, Telavi – September 2019
- Imereti, Kutaisi – October 2019
- Samegrelo, Zugdidi – November 2019
- Tbilisi – December 2019
- Kvemo Kartli, Rustavi – December 2019
- Kakheti, Kachreti – December 2019

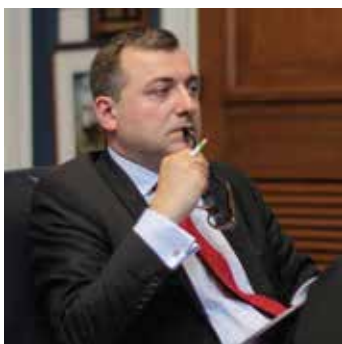
As part of the project, the Center’s team of representatives and highly qualified experts held sessions on a variety of topics, including:

Center Co-Founder Zaza Bibilashvili led the sessions “Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics”; “Things to Know about Russian Propaganda.”



Center Director Nino Kalandadze led the session “Georgia’s Foreign Policy: The Pro-Western Orientation, Current Risks and Challenges on the Euro-Atlantic Path.”

Center Co-Founder Sandro Bibilashvili led the session: “The Freedom of Expression and Modern Judicial Practice in Georgia.”



University of Georgia Professor Gaioz Japaridze led the session: “Georgia’s Contemporary Foreign Policy, Eastern Partnerships and Euro-Atlantic Integrations Prospects”



Economist Gia Jandieri's led the session: “How can Georgia Become More Economically Competitive?”

Art critic David Bukhrikidze led the session: “The Role of Culture and Education in Georgia’s European Choice”



Georgia’s Democratic Initiative Founder Giorgi Mshvenieradze led the session: “From Honor to Rights: Why Do We Need Freedom?”

Professor Mariam Gersamia led the session: “Media Psychology: Media Interactions and the Art of Debate”



Georgia’s Institute of Politics Founder Professor Korneli Kakachia led the session: “Georgia’s Foreign Policy: the Pro-Western Orientation, Current Risks and Challenges on the Euro-Atlantic Path”



Ilia State University Professor Ghia Nodia led the session: “Why the West?”



Head of the International Republican Institute Office in Georgia John DiPirro led the session on: “The Development of Parties and the Civic Engagement in Georgia”



Education Expert and Staff Member of Guivy Zaldastanishvili American Academy Simon Janashia led the session on: “What is Educational Policy Lacking in Georgia?”





Journalist and Newton Free School teacher David Paitchadze led the session: “What is the Message of Russian Propaganda?”

Center’s Fellow Lika Sanikidze led the session: “The project funding and Communication with Donors.”



At every session, participants discussed regional problems and presented possible solutions. Each of Zaza Bibilashvili’s sessions dedicated a significant amount of time to discussing issues such as the improvement of civic engagement in policy decision-making, the role of decentralization, the risks of hybrid war and the civic memory. “Our aim should be not only the detection of the Russian propaganda, but also its active confrontation using factual and ideological communication and strategic vision,” he said in comments about the rising importance of civic engagement and the volatile challenges of Russia’s hybrid war.



Anna Sichinava, a project participant, said:

“Each citizen should face politics with fortitude.”

Another participant, Tsitsino Shengelia, a representative of the “Civic Engagement and Equality Center,” noted:

“I think that women’s engagement in the decision-making process and women’s participation in civic life is absolutely vital. Often it is women’s voices that remain unheard, which should certainly change. I hope that women themselves will show more interest in the subject. Samegrelo, for example, stands out as a region with strong female political involvement, which is possibly influenced by its historical legacy.”



Nuca Gurgenidze, a project participant, said:

“One of the things that makes the Chavchavadze Center really stand out is the fact that they realize projects like this in various provinces of Georgia. We, regional youth, rarely get the chance to attend these kinds of events. With the Center’s help, I gained experience and became more confident. Even more importantly, I met a lot of sensible people who taught me new things. To me, this project and the Chavchavadze Center as a whole represent a necessary, pleasant environment to experience personal and civil progress and to become the best version of yourself.”

Natia Mikhelidze, a project participant, said:

“Civic education is something that gives me more faith in myself. The Chavchavadze Center’s project “Common Sense” has convinced me that a citizen can sometimes do more individually than an entire crowd of people. During the training period, with the help of mock debates, discussions with experts and other activities, I had an opportunity to put the theory I learned to practice. This project has shown me a way to be an active, responsible citizen.”



Center Director Nino Kalandadze:

“We are fighting for the empowerment of each citizen so that every person has both the desire and opportunity to have an impact on society and the political order.”



**ჭავჭავაძის
ცენტრი**

ილია ჭავჭავაძის სახელობის ევროპული
კვლევებისა და საპოქალაქო განათლების ცენტრი

**საღი აზრი - სამოქალაქო საზოგადოება
პოლიტიკის პირისპირ**

პროექტი ხორციელდება კონრად ადენაუერის ფონდის სამხრეთ
კავკასიის წარმომადგენლობის მხანდაჭერით



"The Future is Yours" – The Concluding Meeting in Kachreti

The final meeting of "Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics" was held in Kachreti on December 21, 2019. The meeting, which was held under the slogan "the future is yours," was attended by over 150 of the project participants. Together with representatives of international and local organizations, they discussed the growing importance of civic activism in Georgia.



The project "Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics" was made possible by support from the Konrad-Adenauer South Caucasus Foundation.



The event was attended by the experts who participated in the Center’s Civic Engagement Project, including David Paitchadze, Ghia Nodia, Giorgi Mshvenieradze, Gia Jandieri, Korneli Kakachia, Gia Japaridze, and Buba Kudava.



“Citizen’s Role in Building a Democratic State” – at the event under this title, the Ilia Chavchavadze Center summed up the Civic Engagement Project, which was ongoing throughout the year in the regions of Georgia. Meetings and masterclasses were held in Tbilisi, Akhaltsikhe, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Batumi, Rustavi, Gori and other cities within the framework of the project “Common Sense – Civil Society Facing the Politics”.

The closing event, “Citizens’ Role in the Building of the Democratic State,” was opened by co-founder Zaza Bibilashvili. The Center’s nation-wide civic engagement project was supported by the South Caucasus Bureau of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.



Zaza Bibilashvili said: “The Ilia Chavchavadze Center was founded in 2018. To sum up our aim in one statement, we want to really establish the idea of being ‘citizens.’ An idea that rather than being just the ‘populace,’ as we have grown accustomed to being referred to since the Soviet times, we are citizens of a democratic republic. To acknowledge that we are individuals, who are aware not only of our personal role and responsibility but also the importance of civic well-being.

If the main issue at stake for the first non-governmental organization founded in the 19th century Georgia by Ilia Chavchavadze was to spread literacy amongst the population, our main issue today is to boost civic literacy, rationalism and critical thinking.

It is not a coincidence that we entitled our project ‘Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics.’ Nowadays, it is not uncommon to encounter a view of dissatisfaction with the real state of things; that there simply is not enough supply to satisfy the demands on the political market. Our challenge, as citizens, is to change that.

The Chinese have a curious curse, ‘May you live in interesting times!’ Many might wonder—what is so bad about living in an interesting time? Perhaps, it is because while living in an interesting time, one might become so taken with pleasure and hedonism that they detach themselves from problems around them. That is when most of the global cataclysms and geopolitical shifts take place, when great panic and chaos ensues. People have to fight for something which should be their natural state of being, whether a dignified life, or personal and national freedom.

Freedom ends the moment citizens choose to place their fate in somebody else’s hands and wash their own hands of their own responsibility—in the best-case scenario, until the next elections. So, my wish would be that you do not live a passive and comfortable life but rather a life filled with civic consciousness and victories. The future is ours!”



During the concluding event, the Center’s Director Nino Kalandadze addressed the project participants and guests:

“I would like to welcome you all and start my comments with this quote by Irish philosopher Charles Handy: ‘Citizenship is a chance to make a difference in the place where you belong.’ It sets the tone for the final evening of our project which revolves around the topic of citizen’s role in democracy, democratic institutions and their consolidation process.

We have just concluded the first phase of the ‘Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics’ project. We are proud to say that this project is unique both in its format and content and has encompassed six regions in Georgia as well as the capital. With this project, our newly-formed friendship with hundreds of like-minded individuals and our united struggle for a better future has only just begun.

When we were discussing the idea behind the project, we did not know who these like-minded individuals would be, but three things were clear:

1. This project would reflect the Chavchavadze Center’s vision and passion and would not be simply a ‘project for project’s sake.’
2. Its main hero and protagonist would be an average citizen and not a small, elitist group.
3. It would be aimed at and belong to everyone, regardless of their status as a citizen or their political leanings.

With time, it becomes more and more obvious—there is a clearly established pattern—that the existing civic and political instruments do not adequately address the needs and challenges of contemporary society. It is clear that there is a need to widen the reach of civic engagement. This is exactly what led us to launching a discussion and calling the project “Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics.”

And who better to spread civic awareness and education with than these exceptional individuals, who perfectly understand the challenges of today’s age and are willing to serve, populism aside, the great aim that is civic education. We have our experts to thank for that.

No one understands the role of political education and the importance of civic participation better than the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, with whose support we were able to realize our project and to whom we are very thankful!

In particular, we would like to thank the Head of South Caucasus Bureau of the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, Dr. Thomas Schrapel, who, and we mean it without any flattery, understood precisely what our project was trying to achieve and its importance and supported us in our commitment. We would like to thank his wonderful team for their tireless dedication and genuine solidarity.

We also owe particularly warm thanks to all of you, the participants who met us every weekend, at 10 a.m. in the auditorium. This continues to empower, encourage and convince us that the future really is ours! Once again, thank you everyone!”



The speaker of the event was Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Germany to Georgia Hubert Knirsch.



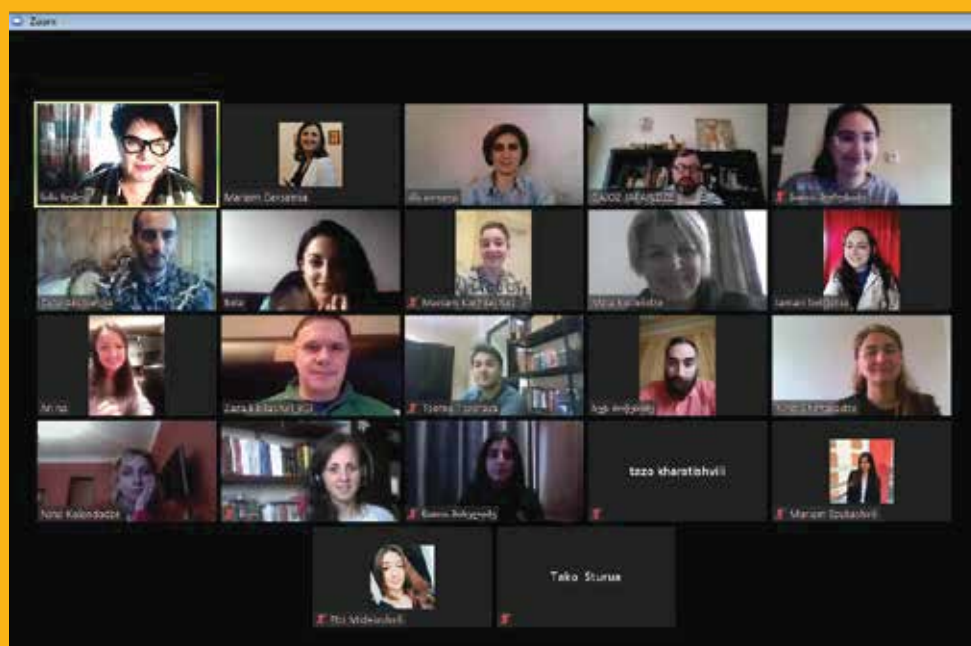
The event also featured a speech made by one of the Center’s key partners, the Head of South Caucasus Bureau of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Dr. Thomas Schrapel.

Facing the Pandemic: New Challenges

The Chavchavadze Center quickly adapted to the new challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic and, based on safety recommendations, transitioned to working online in March 2020. The Center successfully tested various online platforms, which ensured that participants could interact and engage as effectively as possible. The platforms included Zoom, Jitsi, Mentimeter, Sli.do and Padlet, all of which allow participants to hold discussions online regardless of their location.

In March, the project’s participants took part in the intensive online-training “The Use of New Technologies in Critical Situations.” During the online training, they learned how to use the platforms, which helped them continue their studies.

“This virus, for the first time in our lifetime, demonstrated in an utterly natural and tangible way that all of us—all of humankind—are in the same boat. It showed us that we are, from a cosmic perspective, a little provincial planet, in the same way we regard the outskirts of small villages. It showed us that all of us today, all 8 billion of us, are part of one ‘cluster,’” said Zaza Bibilashvili.



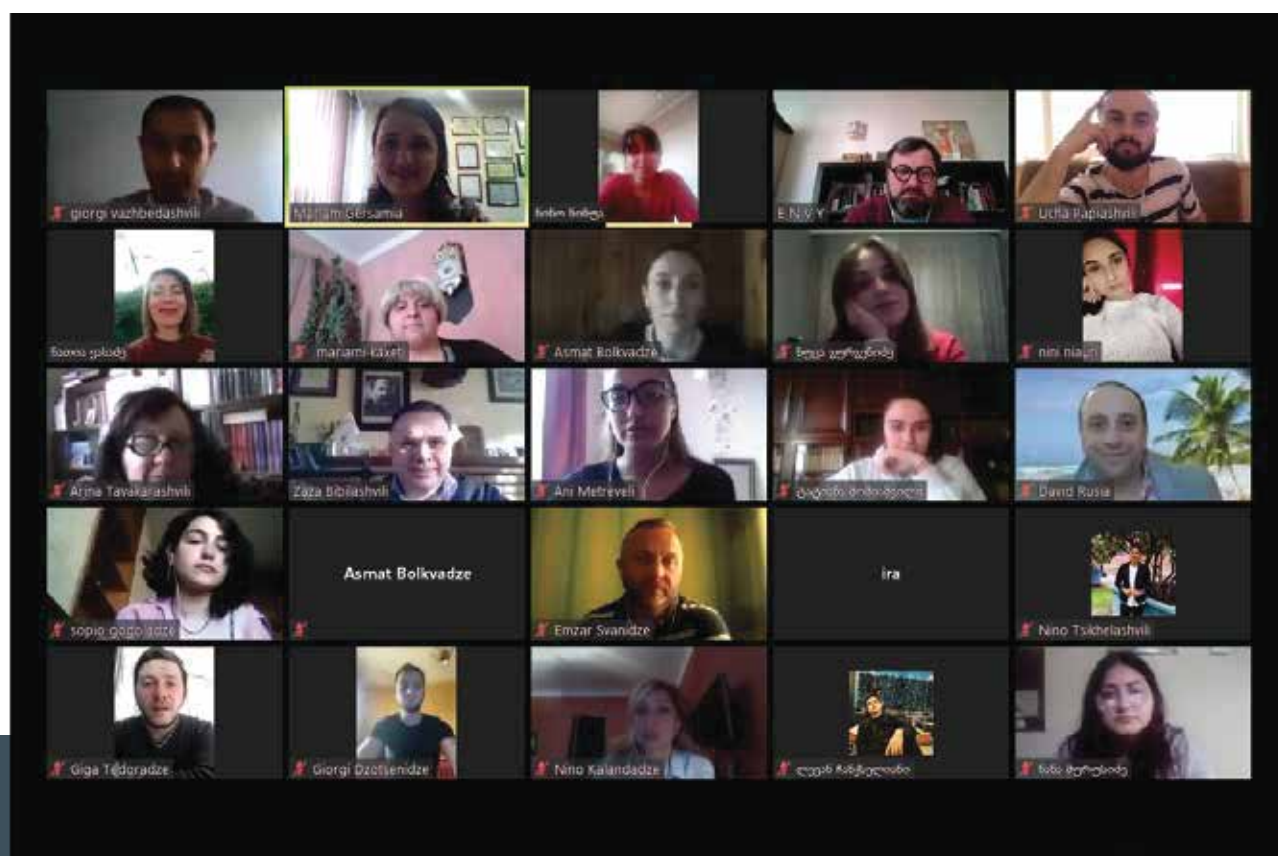
AGORA – DISCUSSION CLUB



The second phase of “Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics” project has ended, including the work of the AGORA Discussion Club.

The AGORA Club was an innovative project of the Chavchavadze Center. It took place in a virtual space with the aim to create an environment for lively, intellectual discussion to generate ideas, as well as test and analyze them. The AGORA Club sought to empower active citizens, opinion leaders and civic activists. The meetings were held on a variety of topics and included lectures, trainings and practical workshops. The participants gain practical knowledge and skills, which will help them in their everyday lives and in their careers, be it the private sector, the public sector or politics.

The online platform meant that Club participants, the founders of the Chavchavadze Center and guest speakers could join the discussions from anywhere.



Topics discussed on the platform included:

- The influence of COVID-19 on global and regional economy
- The use of new technologies in critical situations
- The challenges faced by regions and the hybrid war
- Political and economic ideologies
- Elections and intra-party democracy
- Reaction to crises and interactions with media
- Property and economic independence as rightful citizen's fundamental components

The AGORA Club meetings have brought together participants from across the country. Students studying abroad also sometimes joined the discussions.



The club's first session was held in March 2020. The thematic sessions were preceded by the training "The Use of New Technologies in Critical Situations." Chavchavadze Center Co-Founder Zaza Bibilashvili, a researcher on Russian propaganda and counterpropaganda, led the sessions "How does the Russian propaganda work and what aims does it serve?"; "How to detect Russian propaganda?"; and "How to counter it in order to win the 21st century hybrid war?"

The session "The challenges of the intra-party democracy and election systems" was led by the center's senior researcher, Gia Japaridze, who is a professor at the University of Georgia.



During one online meetings, the editor-in-chief of Forbes Georgia, Giorgi Isakadze, spoke about global and regional economic challenges during and following the pandemic.

The online session "Intra-Party Democracy and the 2020 Elections" led to an extensive discussion and generated many ideas.

Other online sessions included:

“Domestic policy and the occupied territories” (Speakers: Zaza Bibilashvili, a co-founder of the Center, and Nikoloz Vashakidze, a diplomat and a political scientist)

“Contemporary Turkey and Georgia” (Speakers: Gia Japaridze, a professor and senior researcher at the Center, and Tornike Sharashenidze, a professor at GIPA)



On August 7, 12 years after the last Russo-Georgian conflict, representatives of the Chavchavadze Center met with young people in Gori as part of the project “AGORA – Discussion Club.”

They hosted the lecture “...till De-occupation.” given by guest-speaker Arina Tavakarashvili, an assistant-professor at Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University.



As part of the “AGORA Club” project, a webinar on “Intra-Party Democracy and the 2020 Elections” was held on July 30. Representatives of the Chavchavadze Center were joined by the Executive Director of the Eastern European Centre for Multiparty Democracy (EECMD), Levan Tsutskiridze. The webinar covered several topics, including:

- Why is the development of the intra-party democracy vital to the functioning of a democratic political system?
- What are the qualities that define intra-party democracy in Georgia vs abroad?
- What are the conditions hindering intra-party democracy development in Georgia?
- What can every citizen do to influence political reality and to make their voices clearly heard?

Students, representatives of various academic fields, parties and non-governmental organizations took part in an active discussion.



Another webinar and discussion, “Karabakh’s Conflict and the Geopolitical Changes in the Caucasian Region,” was held on November 17. It was attended by 225 people, a record high for the Center’s webinar series. The main speaker was Beka Kobakhidze, the co-supervisor of Ilia State University’s master’s program in modern Georgian history. The webinar was moderated by Chavchavadze Center senior researcher, Gia Japaridze, and concluded by the Center’s co-founder, Zaza Bibilashvili.



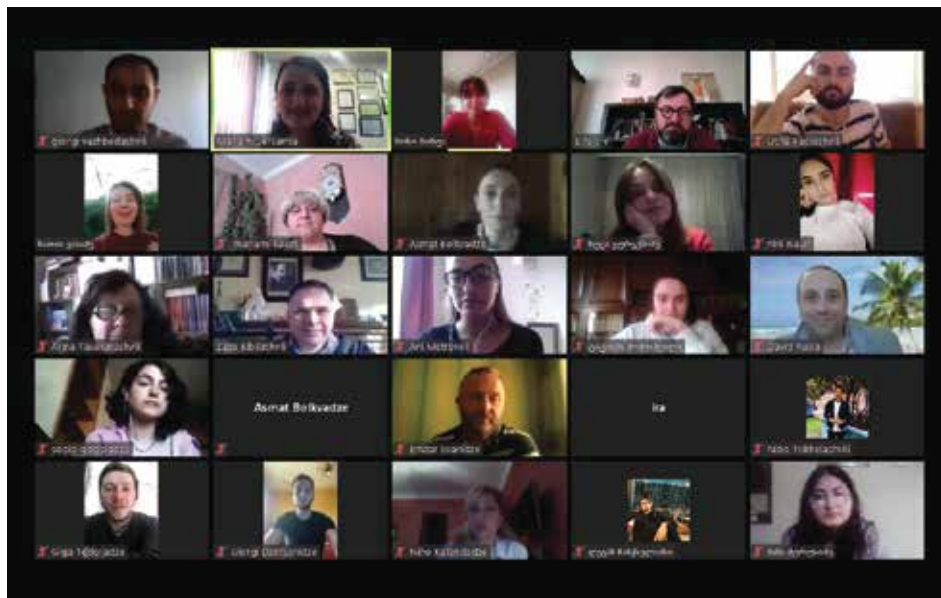
The last 2020 webinar was “The Assessment of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections” and was attended by more than 100 participants. The webinar was moderated by Chavchavadze Center Director Nino Kalandadze. Center co-founder Zaza Bibilashvili spoke about the expectations created during the pre-election period and assessed the post-election situation. Gia Japaridze, the Center’s senior fellow, spoke about the necessary changes to the campaign funding system and the international context. The role of media in the pre-election period was evaluated by Tbilisi State University Professor Mariam Gersamia.





Center co-founder and lawyer Sandro Bibilashvili spoke about the errors in the pre-election records. The founder of the “Gnomon Wise,” Ani Khurtsidze discussed the judicial environment.

More than 500 people joined the AGORA Club online discussions in 2020. The Chavchavadze Center plans to continue hosting online discussions in 2021.



The project “Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics” was made possible with support from the Konrad-Adenauer South Caucasus Foundation.





ბედნიერი ერი
Quo Vadis?



The Chavchavadze Center announced an essay competition “Happy Nation – Quo Vadis?” in the spring of 2020. The aim of the competition was to assess and provide a critical analysis of the progress made by Georgia starting with its independence in 1991 and up to this day; to identify the key challenges for contemporary Georgian society from a historical and geopolitical perspective; and, finally, to provide concrete views and solutions for Georgian society. It was expected that participants would identify historical parallels; assess foreign countries’ interests and the role of their local allies; and detect recurring challenges and provide specific recommendations, which could become part of a public discussion and, eventually, be a basis for political formation in the future.

Essays covered a variety of topics, including:

- Foreign relations and security
- Economic policies
- Justice system
- Media
- Culture, health and social policy
- Education, culture and sports policy
- Western values and Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic choice

The participants had an opportunity to reflect on these topics, highlight specific issues and offer practical solutions to those issues. The essay should display not only its author’s critical thinking and argumentation skills, but also their problem-solving skills and vision of the future developments within the topic.



The Chavchavadze Centre selected three winners for its essay competition “Happy Nation – Quo Vadis?” (Tamar Akubardia, Ana Arutunian and Eka Lomia) in May and awarded them with certificates and symbolic gifts. The winners’ essays were published on the Center’s website. Following the competition, the Center started receiving and publishing well-written essays on a variety of topics on its website.



Tamar Akubardia, Pupil



Eka Lomia, Doctoral Student



Ana Arutunian, Student

Vlogs – On the Intra-Party Democracy

In order to increase societal awareness about intra-party democracy and to encourage people to help improve the system, representatives of the Chavchavadze Center have prepared vlogs, which can be found on the Center’s website, YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Vlogs – Information Security and Literacy

Experts from the Chavchavadze Center made vlogs on a variety of topics concerning civic education, including video lectures about intra-party democracy and Russian propaganda.

The project “Common Sense and Citizenship Vis-à-Vis Politics” was made possible by support from the Konrad-Adenauer South Caucasus Foundation.



**ჭავჭავაძის
ცენტრი**

ილია ჭავჭავაძის სახელობის ევროპული
კვლევებისა და სამოქალაქო განათლების ცენტრი

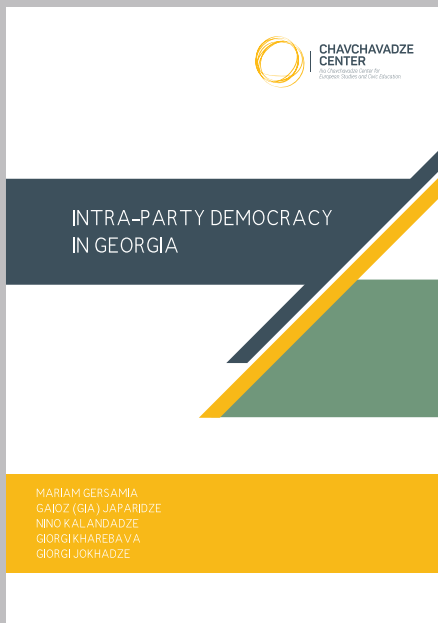
**სადი აზრი - სამოქალაქო საზოგადოება
პოლიტიკის პირისპირ**

პროექტი ხორციელდება კონრად ადენაუერის ფონდის სამხრეთ
კავკასიის წარმომადგენლობის მხარდაჭერით



OUR PUBLICATIONS

"Intra-Party Democracy in Georgia"



Authors: Mariam Gersamia; Gaioz (Gia) Japaridze; Nino Kalandadze; Giorgi Jokhadze; and Giorgi Khaberava

In 2020, the center conducted a study assessing the state of intra-party democracy in Georgian political parties. The study concluded that Georgian political parties severely lack intra-party democracy and offered some solutions. This research was part of the "Intra-Party Democracy" project. The publication has been translated to English and is available online via the following:

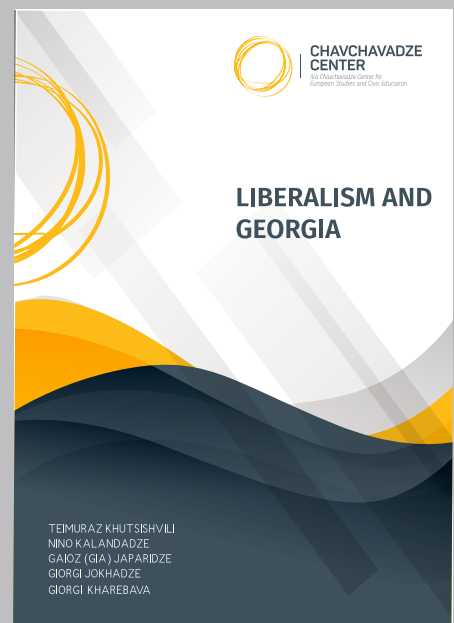
www.chavchavadzecenter.ge

Liberalism and Georgia

Authors: Teimuraz Khutsishvili; Nino Kalandadze; Gaioz (Gia) Japaridze; Giorgi Jokhadze; Giorgi Kharebava

The research covers liberal ideology and the history of its birth and evolution in Georgia. It discusses the origins of liberalism; continental differences; "Ilian" liberalism as a foundation for liberal democracy; the challenges that the formation of "Ilian" liberalism faces in the contemporary Georgian society; and the reasons for its possible misinterpretation. The publication has been translated to English and is available online via the following:

www.chavchavadzecenter.ge



“YOUTH FOR JUSTICE” WITH ZAZA BIBILASHVILI



For two years, the Chavchavadze Center has implemented its “Youth for Justice” project, under the guidance of the center’s co-founder, lawyer and publicist Zaza Bibilashvili. Under this project, a number of discussions and film screenings on civic duty and justice have been held in various Georgian regions and educational institutions.

The project collaborated with universities, colleges, private and public schools and local non-governmental organizations.

THE PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED BY THE DUTCH D66 AND IDI.



In 2019-2020, more than 300 university and high school students attended film screenings and participated in the discussions. The film screenings were held in Batumi, Zugdidi, Kutaisi, Bulachauri, Gori, Kareli and Tbilisi.



The students were shown the following films:

- Sydney Lumet’s “12 Angry Men”
- Jessie Nelson’s “I Am Sam”
- François Truffaut’s “Fahrenheit 451”
- Akira Kurosawa’s “Rashomon”
- Peter Weir’s “The Truman Show”
- Richard LaGravenese “Freedom Writers”

The guest speakers featured in the discussion were:



Nino Eremashvili, the head of the civic education sector at Georgian Democracy Initiative



Gia Japaridze, professor at the University of Georgia and a senior researcher at the Chavchavadze Center

Arina Tavakarashvili, assistant professor at Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University



Ketikurdo vanidze, critic and journalist

Mariam Gersamia, professor at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and a senior researcher at the Chavchavadze Center



Nodar Ladaria, writer

Zaal Samadashvili, writer





Chiora Taktakishvili, guest-lecturer at Ilia State University's School of Law and senior researcher at Policy Daily

Dimitri Dzagnidze, lawyer



Natia Kapanadze, lawyer and media law expert

Shavlego Gegechkori, journalist and psychologist



Giorgi Mshvenieradze, chairman of Georgia's Democratic Initiative

SANDRO BIBILASHVILI

Born on December 19, 1980, in Tbilisi, Georgia, Sandro Bibilashvili is a dual-qualified international lawyer, licensed to practice law in Georgia as well as the State of New York, USA. He has been in private practice since 2002, focusing on major regional and international mandates. Since 2014 Sandro has been a partner of BGI Legal, Georgia's leading independent full-service law firm, which has been top ranked in every service area by every leading international legal directory that covers the region since 2005. In 2012 Sandro was accredited as a mediator by the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) and serves as a licensed mediator at Tbilisi City Court. He is also a visiting professor at Free University of Tbilisi and serves as the Chair of the Commercial Law Commission at ICC Georgia, Georgian National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business organization. He also serves on the Board of the Association of Law Firms of Georgia. In 2001, while studying political science at the University of Vermont, Sandro interned for the then-Congressman Bernie Sanders. Sandro earned law degrees from Tbilisi State University (JD equivalent, 2003), Central European University (LL.M. in International Business Law, 2004) and Duke University School of Law (LL.M., 2011). Sandro is an Edmund S. Muskie fellow, a fellowship program of the US Department of State.

In collaboration with Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, both undergraduate and graduate school students, including foreign students, prepared diaries based on the film screenings. Some students also wrote blog posts, and the best entry was published on the center’s website. As a result of the keen interest displayed by the students and the success of the project, the university has included this activity in its curriculum.



Mariam Kachkachashvili, a project participant:

“Peter Weir’s ‘The Truman Show’ leaves us with an important question: Where does the line between reality and an artificially manufactured, made-up world lie? Truman Burbank decided in favor of truth and freedom, which he was able to accomplish by altering his routine and challenging some deeply rooted fears. By doing this, the main protagonist managed to gain control over his own life. In my opinion, we, journalists, make this choice between comfortable illusion and truth, not only when we choose how to present the information to our viewers but also when we make this choice for ourselves.”

ახალგაზრდები
მართლმსაჯულებისთვის
ზაზა ბიბილაშვილთან
ერთად

Youth for Justice
With Zaza Bibilashvili

კავკასიის
მხედრი
ერთი კავკასიის მხედრობის უნიკალური
პროექტები და სემინარები კავკასიის ქვეყნებში

პროექტის
მხარდაჭერა

D66
International

Eter Midelashvili, a project participant:



“Peter Weir’s ‘The Truman Show’ seems even more relevant now and raises more questions than it did 20 -22 years ago, when it first came out: What would happen if every detail in our lives was recorded using 5000 cameras and broadcast to millions of people? What would happen if I were to be the only ‘real’ person left in a phony world? If my entire life was simply a figment of one TV director’s imagination? The film and the discussion that followed it made me think about how, if the people behind the TV screens want to, they can easily create a pseudo-reality and it is only up to us whether we want to join in on the endless pretending or escape from the clutches of media manipulation.”

Writer Zaal Samadashvili gave the most active participants of the discussion books. November 18, 2020

To mark the 182nd anniversary of Ilia Chavchavadze’s birth, the Chavchavadze Center hosted a film screening and discussion on November 8 at the University of Georgia for students of the School of Law.



On November 14, 2020 Zaza Bibilashvili visited the Bulachauri Green Camp as part of the Center’s work with CENN, a non-governmental organization.



On October 25, 2020 the film screening of Akira Kurosawa’s “Rashomon” was held at the Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University. A discussion was held afterwards. On

September 26, the Center organized a film screening in EECMD’s Gori office.

On November 17, 2019 local high school students were invited to Zugdidi’s Center for Civic Engagement. They attended the film screening of François Truffaut’s “Fahrenheit 451.”



CONFERENCE: “FUTURE OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP POLICY”

On June 25, Chavchavadze Center co-founder Zaza Bibilashvili made a speech at a conference in Hague, which was organized by the Dutch party D66. His speech—“Future of the Eastern Partnership Policy: How far does the European identity extend?”—centered on issues such as the sanctity of the law, identity issues and attitudes of the youth toward Eastern partner nations. Zaza Bibilashvili devoted the most significant part of his speech to the topic of Russia’s return to the European Council’s Parliamentary Assembly and the ongoing anti-oligarchy protests in Georgia. Other speakers on the panel included Lithuanian, Ukrainian, British and Dutch politicians and scholars.

Our Partners

KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION SOUTH CAUCASUS

<https://www.kas.de/web/suedkaukasus/home>

D66 INTERNATIONAL / IDI

<https://internationaal.d66.nl/>

The Center continues to collaborate with local non-governmental organizations and companies:

EASTERN EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY (EECMD)

<http://eecmd.org/>

NEW ECONOMIC SCHOOL

<https://nes-g.org/ka/>

GEORGIAN STRATEGIC ANALYSIS CENTER (GSAC)

<http://gsac.ge>

PUBLISHING HOUSE “ARTANUJI”

<https://www.artanuji.ge>

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH CENTER

www.mcerc.ge

The Chavchavadze Center has signed collaboration agreements with several Georgian universities as part of its efforts to work closely with academia. Future plans including holding seminars and conferences; implementing research and educational projects; enabling students and professors to take part in scientific and research-based projects; working jointly on publications and many other activities.

The Center currently works with these universities:

TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY

www.tsu.ge

CAUCASUS UNIVERSITY

www.cu.edu.ge

ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY

<https://iliauni.edu.ge/ge>

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

<https://www.ug.edu.ge/>



Nino Kalandadze: “I hope that our collaboration with the University of Georgia will be useful and productive, including creating better opportunities for student internships/employment and ensuring a better environment for professional growth.”

Our Team

OUR FOUNDERS

ZAZA BIBILASHVILI

Zaza Bibilashvili was born on August 16, 1974 in Tbilisi, Georgia. For the past two decades, Zaza has been one of the most highly acclaimed international lawyers in Georgia. In 2005, Zaza founded BGI, the leading law and consultation firm in Georgia. Prior to BGI, Zaza was a director of Ernst & Young's legal services arm, EY Law Georgia, as well as the director of its predecessor, GCG Law Office, an affiliate of Andersen Legal—both were dominant players on the Georgian legal services market at the time. In 2013, following the party's defeat in general elections, Zaza joined the United National Movement and became a member of its board. He separated from the party in May 2018 to concentrate fully on the Chavchavadze Center and officially resigned from his position and party membership on February 6, 2020. Before moving to private practice, Zaza worked with the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations in New York. Zaza graduated from Tbilisi State University, Department of International Law, earning his law degree with high honors. Zaza also holds a degree in international relations from Canisius College, a Jesuit school in Buffalo, New York. A founding member of the Georgian Bar Association, Zaza served on the Executive Board of GBA between 2009 and 2013, where he chaired the Commercial Law Committee. One of the original founders of the Association of Law Firms of Georgia, Zaza served on the Board of ALFG between 2014 and 2017, where he headed Georgia's first ever pro bono initiative. Zaza is currently serving his 4th term on the board of ICC Georgia, the National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business organization, where he used to chair the Arbitration Commission. Zaza was an arbitrator at the Court of Arbitration of the European Chamber of Commerce and has acted as ICC arbitrator in London and Vienna. Between 2009 and 2010, Zaza served as a member of the State Constitutional Commission. At various times, Zaza has served on the boards of Poti Seaport Corporation (Georgia's largest port), Teliani Valley (Georgia's largest winemaker), Foundation for Democracy and Development, American Friends of Georgia (a US charity), and the Georgian Vine Foundation. Zaza is a founder of the Georgian Richard Wagner Society, which unites Georgian connoisseurs of the great composer and engages in various educational activities. In 1995 he was named Paul Harris Fellow, the highest award of Rotary International. In addition to his native Georgian, Zaza speaks fluent English and Russian, and has a fair command of French and Spanish.

NINO KALANDADZE

Nino Kalandadze was born on March 11, 1977 in Tbilisi. From 2008-2012, Nino served as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, overseeing bilateral relations with 45 European countries. She served as a principle liaison of the Georgian government; contributed to the elaboration and implementation of the non-recognition policy on the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; facilitated the implementation of Steinmeier's Plan, which aimed to integrate the breakaway regions into Georgian political processes; led EU-Georgia Talks in 2008; managed and supervised the Consular Department and internal and external communications; served as a Parliamentary Secretary and was an official Ministry spokesperson. In 2012-2013, Nino served at the Administration of the President of Georgia as advisor and Parliamentary Secretary. In 2004-2008, Nino was a MP and served as Deputy Chairperson of the Legal Affairs Committee. In this capacity she coordinated legislative efforts to reform Georgian Administrative Law; co-authored and initiated the draft Administrative Code of Georgia; and represented the Parliamentary delegation to the Council of Europe. She also served as a member of the High Council of Justice and the Georgian Pardoning commission. Prior to joining the public sector, Nino worked as a legal expert for the German International Cooperation (GIZ). Since 2013 Nino has been actively engaged in civic and academic life. She is a dean and associate professor at Caucasus University and a member of the Georgian Bar Association. She holds a diplomatic rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. Nino is a co-author of the Manual on the General Administrative Code of Georgia and co-founder of the online analytical magazine Iveria.biz. Nino graduated from Schule Birklehof, a German high school. She studied law at the University of Mannheim, Germany and Tbilisi State University, Georgia. She received a master's degree in International Relations at Tufts University, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Nino is fluent in Georgian (native), English, German and Russian.

EKA TKESHELASHVILI

Eka Tkeshelashvili previously served as Georgia's Vice Prime-Minister, State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration. In this position she oversaw the implementation of state policy on the occupied territories of Georgia and the national policy on minority integration. She has also served as Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia, heading the national strategic review process, and as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. In addition, Eka previously worked as the Prosecutor General of Georgia and the Minister of Justice of Georgia. She also held the position of the Chairperson of Tbilisi Appeals Court. In this capacity she headed the Appeals Court, led the judicial reform and was a member of the High Council of Justice of Georgia. Earlier in her career, she also served as the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and Deputy Minister of Justice of Georgia, where she was mainly responsible for international legal relations. Before joining the government, Eka was a Deputy Chief of Party at IRIS Georgia, leading programs on the rule of law, legal aid and human rights. She also worked as a Field Officer in the International Committee of the Red Cross, where she was responsible for programs concerning the national implementation of international humanitarian law. Prior to that, Eka worked as an intern at the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (Netherlands) and at the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (USA). Eka has also worked in academia; as an associate professor she taught courses on public international law and accountability for human rights atrocities at various Georgian universities. She has a master's degree in international human rights law from Notre Dame Law School (USA), a certificate in human rights lawyering and human rights advocacy from Oxford University (UK), and a law degree from Tbilisi State University.

SANDRO BIBILASHVILI

Born on December 19, 1980, in Tbilisi, Georgia, Sandro Bibilashvili is a dual-qualified international lawyer, licensed to practice law in Georgia as well as the State of New York, USA. He has been in private practice since 2002, focusing on major regional and international mandates. Since 2014 Sandro has been a partner of BGI Legal, Georgia's leading independent full-service law firm, which has been top ranked in every service area by every leading international legal directory that covers the region since 2005. In 2012 Sandro was accredited as a mediator by the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) and serves as a licensed mediator at Tbilisi City Court. He is also a visiting professor at Free University of Tbilisi and serves as the Chair of the Commercial Law Commission at ICC Georgia, Georgian National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business organization. He also serves on the Board of the Association of Law Firms of Georgia. In 2001, while studying political science at the University of Vermont, Sandro interned for the then-Congressman Bernie Sanders. Sandro earned law degrees from Tbilisi State University (JD equivalent, 2003), Central European University (LL.M. in International Business Law, 2004) and Duke University School of Law (LL.M., 2011). Sandro is an Edmund S. Muskie fellow, a fellowship program of the US Department of State.

MARIAM GERSAMIA

Mariam Gersamia is a media psychologist and full professor at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU, Georgia); Mariam graduated from TSU earning her doctoral degree in Journalism Studies (2004). Mariam also has post-diploma education in body-oriented psychology (2018). With 20 years of experience in academia, she was a head of journalism and mass communication department and programs; she was an elected member of the academic council (2010-2015). She worked in local and international organizations, was head of PR department and minister's adviser at the Ministry of education and Science (2006-2009) and executive director of the national Science foundation of Georgia (2009-2014). Mariam was a Majoritarian candidate from UNM in Tbilisi during 2017 local-governmental elections. From 2017-2019 she was a member of the political council. Mariam is a member of the several scientific associations and editorial boards. she has been awarded for the best scientific publication. She is an honorable citizen of Louisville (USA). Currently she is a head of the English taught graduate program "media psychology and communications" at TSU and senior fellow at Chavchavadze Center for European studies and civic education. Her major fields of interest are media psychology, political communications, public relations, and education.

GAIQZ (GIA) JAPARIDZE

Gaiqz (Gia) Japaridze is a former Georgian Diplomat. Current professor at the University of Georgia's Department of International Relations and Political Science of the School of Social Sciences; Former Senior Fellow at GRASS (Georgia's Reforms Associates); Senior Fellow at GSAC (Georgian Strategoc Analysis Center) and Ilia Chavchavadze Center for European Studies and Studies and Civic Education. He also teaches in Georgian Politics and Governance at Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA) and Caucasus University (CU). As a former Diplomat, Japaridze represented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia in numerous capacities during a distinguished career: Consular officer and Counselor of the Embassy of Georgia to the Hellenic Republic; Counselor, Department of European Affairs, Division of Balkan States; Charge d'Affaires and Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Georgia to the Republic of Portugal; Charge d'Affaires and Head of the Diplomatic Mission of Embassy of Georgia to the Republic of Cyprus. Japaridze graduated from Tbilisi State University in 1996 and the University of Athens, Athens (Greece) in 2007. His formal studies include classical philology, international relations, political theory, international law, European integration and United States foreign policy.

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CHAVCHAVADZE CENTER

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European Studies and Civic Education*



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