PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs PHASE II REPORT

Georgia

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1 Extended Executive Summary

1.1 Research Project Overview

This research focuses on the public access to information and communication landscapes in 24 countries, with specific focus on public libraries, to understand the information needs of underserved communities, public access to information and communication venues, and the role of ICT.

Through field research in 24 countries conducted by local research partners, and cross-country comparative analyses based on common research design elements (see list of countries and research design overview in Appendix), the project aims to contribute to the knowledge in the field of information and ICT for development. Of particular interest and value are: the comparative look at key venues (libraries and other), and the mix of depth of in-country knowledge with breadth of global comparison to elicit success factors and scenarios to understand how diverse populations can and do access and use ICT to improve their lives. All outputs of this research will be broadly disseminated to interested stakeholders and placed in the public domain.

1.2 Introduction

The executive summary overviews the short descriptions of the characteristics of the country in terms of Geography, economic, political, and social situations in the country preceded by a short history of the latest decades. Special focus is made on the situation regarding public access to information, spread level and usage of ICT infrastructure throughout the country. The summary also covers main inequity variables that affect access to information. The principal information needs of the population of Georgia are defined, distinguishing those of the communities that are perceived as underserved according to the identified inequity variables.

We discuss the reasons for selecting Public libraries, The National Library of the Parliament of Georgia, and Internet cafes as the main venue types providing public access to information, proceeding with short description of situation regarding each of the types and the contribution they nowadays make to informing different categories of population.

The summary also covers the description of the research methodology: in-depth interviews with key informants, FGD, site visits, literature review, and user survey. The methodology description comprises the respondents' selection criteria and procedures for user survey, recruiting participants for FGD for qualitative part of the project and venues for site visits. Special attention is paid to interpreting survey results and the extent they should be generalized to the whole country.

The further parts of the extended summary present the main findings about the existed situation in the studied field and provides recommendations and opportunities on improving public access to information specially in each venue types and in the country in general.

1.3 Country Overview

Situated in the south caucuses Georgia is a small country of about 4,4 million population and 69 700 km². Georgia regained independence after the demise of the Soviet Union in

1990. In its short history of independence Georgia underwent two ethnic conflicts resulting in two uncontrolled regions[1]. As a result of the frozen conflicts and breaking out from entire soviet economy, Georgia faced severe economic crises throughout 1990s and the beginning of 2000s. The period was marked with radical decline in living standards and the economic situation. The economic progress has been hindered by the tensed political relations with Russia as the latter was Georgia's main market of exported products such as whine, mineral waters, and different agricultural products. Thus losing that market was a very serous obstacle for Georgian economy that has not yet recovered from this blow. Eventually the economic crises resulted in huge number of people living below the poverty level.

Due to economic regression Georgia failed to keep up the processes of developing access to information occurring in the World. Thus nowadays our country stays far behind European countries in terms of the level of the access to the information. In terms of ICTs, situation is also far from good. Destroyed infrastructure of telephone lines affects the spread of ICTs in remote areas.

Nowadays Georgia is experiencing significant number of reforms in all fields. These reforms also affect public access to information. The increased financing of the National library of Georgia and public libraries is to be taken into consideration. ICTs are also increasingly introduced in the settlements were they were previously missing. However, providing the whole population of Georgia (or at least its most part) with appropriate access to information requires far more large-scaled activities.

1.4 Research Rationale, Sample, and Methods

On the first phase of the research the venue types making most important contributions to the public access to information were identified. Public libraries, internet cafes, and The National Library of the Parliament of Georgia were defined as the main venues after conducting preliminary interviews with the experts of the field. Then more in depth interview with key informants were conducted to obtain needed information specifically for each venue types. The information presumed to obtain from these interviews included the current situation existed in venue types, latest history and trends, implemented and planned activities, main information needs, categories of the underserved communities, and other sources of the information needed for country assessment, also information on some statistical data, such as number of venues in the country, their distribution across country, etc. 25 conducted in-depth interviews also appeared to be useful in obtaining respondents recommendations and ideas about improving public access to information.

The information gathered through interviews was supplemented by 6 conducted Focus group discussions with venue employees and users. The FGDs gave good insights in the motivations and reasons of users for using specific venues to meet their information needs, their attitudes, and assumptions about the role of the venues. FGDs with employees played key role in enabling understand us the main obstacles the venues are experiencing

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[1] In the beginning of August 2008 armed offensive broke up in the breakaway regions that resulted in full scaled armed confrontation between Russia and Georgia

nowadays and the opportunities of addressing that obstacles. Besides, FGD turned out to be effective to find out information needs of different categories of the population of Georgia.

The participants for FGD were selected with the objective to represent different categories including underserved communities. For this purpose, participants with different ethnicity, age, education, income, residence area and other socio-demographic characteristics were invited.

14 site visits gave us good impressions about the work process of the venues. This method enabled to assess physical attributes of the places, monitor the whole process of service provision at the place and, capturing several other important aspects, such as physical accessibility of the locations, conditions of the materials, performance of employees, etc.

Secondary data analyses in the form of literature review and other survey results conducted in the country by our company also made a significant contribution to enhancing and validating information obtained by above mentioned methods. Secondary data was quite useful to define the frequency and places of ICT usage, availability of public libraries, and various infrastructure facilities in the whole country on deferent level of settlements. The literature review mainly helped to get information on previously conducted activities in the field of our interest.

The data received from the survey with 792 the users of three venue types were important addition to the results of the whole research. For the survey semi structured questionnaire was applied that was developed by the University of Washington, Center for Information & Society and included common questions for 24 countries. In Georgian questionnaire several questions were added to the common questions that also provided important information. The users for the survey were selected in a way to include different categories and especially underserved categories in the sample. The data gathered through this method covers the following: frequency of venue usage, types of information sought at the venues, trustworthiness of the information found at the venues, main factors preventing users from getting better services, ICT literacy level, etc.

1.5   Information Needs of Underserved Communities

- Information on local events – local employment opportunities, local government decisions an initiatives in different spheres like agriculture, infrastructure, etc.
- Information on programs of international organizations aimed at local infrastructure and business development – grants, privileged credits
- Information on civil rights - information about status, rights, responsibilities. They don't know how to access public information even if there is available the piece of information they need.
- People involved in Academic sphere also experience lack of information they need for their education.
- Administrative procedures - this is extremely important in ethnic minority populated regions, where many families have a member, basically men –

property owners, working abroad, and families have to arrange property connected deals while their absence.

- Social networking – chats, forums. In the minority populated regions, where a lot of families have a members and relatives working abroad, these can be important means of communication with them.

- Educational materials on ICT in Georgian language and in languages, spoken by minorities

1.6 Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues

During the soviet period each settlement was supposed to be provided with public libraries with appropriate materials. As a result, nowadays a great part of Georgian settlements, regardless their type, size, and location have their libraries located in the center of the settlement thus making it easily accessible. So the spread library network and the experience they have in providing access to information is one of the main strengths of public libraries. However due to lack of financing since the collapse of the Soviet Union public libraries gradually lost their role as main venues of information provider. The statement is particularly true with the libraries of the rural settlements. During the field work of the user survey our interviewers often faced the situation when they were waiting for the users at libraries in rural areas for several days and only one or two appeared during this period. Such a lack of visitors is caused by extreme lack of new contents together with the lack of financing. Despite this weakness, libraries are still associated with information providing venues and population is expected to start using them as soon as they start to meet their information needs.

Another strength of public libraries is that, unlike Internet cafes, most of them are organized in one institutional structure. This fact makes it easier to perform any kind of initiatives than in other unorganized venues like Internet cafes.

Internet cafes are considered to be main venues that provide public access to the newest information. However the cost of their services is not affordable for the great part of the population. Besides, there are very few ones in rural areas, thus contributing to increasing inequity across urban/rural settlements. Moreover as it was already mentioned internet cafes are completely private owned and are not organized in any kind of network or chains. Therefore it would be difficult to implement any kind of initiatives aiming to affect the level of public access to information through this venue type.

The National Library of the Parliament of Georgia can be considered as the most important venue providing access to information to thousands of population of the capital. For the several last years the National Library enjoys a considerably increased financing, as a result it can afford to offer its users different kinds of newest materials. Although there is still shortage of new foreign content, it provides almost all newest materials produced in the country. Offering ICTs is another strength that the National Library process. Additionally it can be said that its services are completely free since the beginning of 2008.

As for the weakness, in this regard the most important fact is that it offers its services only in the capital. So, the population of other settlements lacks opportunities to enjoy broad variety of services offered by the National Library. Another weakness is the fact that it has very miserable amount of content in the languages of ethnic minorities.

1.7   Salient Findings

The research conducted in Georgia reveal many important features of the situation existed in the country regarding the public access to information. First of all as it was hypothetically presumed before the beginning of the research there is huge difference between urban and rural settlements of Georgia in terms of the level of public access to information. Thus urban/rural distribution emerges as the main inequity variable. Although, the division of the settlements into urban and rural areas does not fully show the differences across different types of settlements. Within urban settlements there is also significant difference between Tbilisi (the capital) and other big cities (there are 5 of them in Georgia). Big cities in turn enjoy better access to information as compared to smaller ones (the centers of the districts).

The location as an inequity variable for rural settlements can be further broken down to high mountainous and other rural villages where the first ones are even more underserved than other villages.

The research identified ethnicity as another very important variable effecting public access to information. There is very little amount of content in the native languages of the minorities and taking into account the fact that majority of them don't know Georgian language it can be concluded that they have very limited access to local content.

Considering location and ethnicity in combination distinguishes ethnic minorities living in remote rural regions as most underserved communities.

Studying Public libraries as one of the venue types revealed that Georgia has 1396 public libraries. It is worth mentioning that rural areas are also provided with public libraries - out of 1396 libraries 1218 are located in rural settlements. In terms of the size and types, public libraries can be divided into two groups: Central public libraries of the districts located in urban areas and smaller libraries of the villages and cities that are under the supervision of the central libraries. As there are 65 districts in Georgia it can be concluded that there are 65 central libraries plus about 123 more libraries located also in the cities that resemble in size to central ones.

Currently the government of Georgia is working on the program of public libraries that aims at returning the key role of information provider to public libraries. As the officials state the main focus will be made on rural and other underserved areas. The program is still under development but as it was found out the program may result in further reduction of libraries. That is uniting several small neighboring libraries into bigger ones. As it was stated in the personal interviews with program initiators libraries will have more financing that will enable them purchase and offer new content to their users.

Regarding Internet cafes, first of all it should be stated that in the country there is no base containing even estimated number of Internet cafes operating on the territory of Georgia. The research reveled that great majority of this type of venues are located in urban areas. The settlement infrastructure survey recently conducted by IPM showed that out of proportionally selected 52 small cities that are also district centers, 35 have at least one internet cafe. While out of 667 surveyed villages only 4 appeared to have this type of venues. As for the big cities, they have several internet cafes.

The research also discovered that the amount that Internet cafes charge for their services is not affordable for a big category of people to use them as a main provider of access to information. Though as some categories of respondents note, internet cafes play important role as they can provide most recent content produced in foreign countries.

Regarding the uses of the different venues, as the user survey showed libraries are mostly used for obtaining information on education, while in Internet cafes the main information sought is personal. As for the National Library, people mainly come here to get both personal and educational information.

The survey also revealed the key obstacles that hinder users in accessing information in the studied types of venues. Almost two thirds of library users named not enough content as one of the three most important obstacles, while in internet cafes the main problem is that the content is not in the right language. The national Library seems to have few problems as more than 64% of its users said that there are no obstacles.

The research also resulted in more interesting findings such as attitudes of users toward the roles of the venues, usage motivations, previously conducted and now planned activities, and other facts that will be discussed below in the main body of the report with already mentioned findings in more detail.

1.8 Key Recommendations

1. Increasing and varying content at public libraries located in underserved communities, providing more new materials.
2. Preparing and translating content available at public libraries in local languages
3. Introducing ICTs at public libraries of underserved communities.
4. Conducting computer training courses for underserved communities.
5. Establishing Non-profit venues in the locations of underserved communities offering ICT services at reasonable prices.
6. Developing ICT infrastructure in rural settlements that would provide possibilities of high speed internet connection.
7. Developing interesting web pages with relevant information for underserved communities

8. Elaboration of legislative basis for ICTs, that would determine further development of the sphere

9. Improvement of the legislative basis for library functioning

10. Providing trainings on information gathering techniques for operators (for example, where and how to search for certain types of information like health, education, etc.)

2 Methodology

While selecting the venues types to be studied as a source of access to information, two important criteria was taken into considerations. The first one was the current or potential role the venue types played or would play in the field of public access to information. Consequently, venue types that were main information providers were identified as a result of consultations with field experts. The second criteria was institutional base of the venue types, that is, the venue should have carried some characteristics of the institution that would allow us to study its features, manner of functioning, users, etc. In case of lack of institutional base it would be difficult to work out recommendations or any kind of initiatives that would be possible to implement with the aim to improve access to information. For example, market places are quite an important source of the different kinds of information a man can find while making shopping, as he meets a lot of people who discuss great number of questions. Though there are no leverages to affect the nature and level of information provision in this kind of places. Besides in rural areas there are places mainly in the center of the settlements where people usually gather and discuss different things. This is quite common practice in the villages this one also was not included in the study for already mentioned reasons.

Eventually screening all possible options, Public libraries, Internet cafes and the national Library of the parliament of Georgia were identified as the main providers of public access to information and consequently selected as the objects of our study.

Public Libraries are the most widespread venue type that is meant to provide public access to information. The Soviet government created a huge network of the public libraries. During that period each settlement of Georgia was provided with public libraries or reading halls (small equivalent to public libraries). The system remained unchanged in Post-Soviet Era. So public libraries continued functioning in almost all settlements until recently. Although due to extreme lack of funding (in some cases absence of any funding) the libraries are now in very poor conditions in terms of volumes (there were no new books supplied for many years until recently), facilities (building conditions, heating, electricity, etc), human resources (for many years there have been no trainings conducted for the employees of the public libraries).

In rural areas public libraries have almost lost their role an information provider. Some of them functions only in the papers that have not had visitors for a long time. However despite these weaknesses they still remained as main objects of our study due to their high potential to be an object of the programs aiming to improve access to information throughout the whole territory of the country.

I. Chavchavadze National Library of the Parliament of Georgia is the biggest and the most important library of the country. There is only one national library in the country but it is relevant to consider it as a separate type of venues because of its size, the manner it is governed, and also because of the fact that apart from being library itself it is main body together with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science that determines policies and key decisions related to libraries. It has 19400 members and with its 13 reading halls it serves over 2000 readers daily. So the contribution it makes to the public access to information deserves much attention.

Internet cafes have been selected because of the different services it offers to its users from those of the public libraries. Offering access to information with ICTs it certainly plays important role for some category of people (those who can afford it and those who can use ICTs).

2.1.1 Venues studied

Enter the details to complete the table based on the venues studied in this country (more details will be filled in other sections):

	Public Libraries	Internet cafe	The National Library	Venue 4
Total number in country				
A. # in urban location	178		1	
% offering ICT	20%	100%	1	
Total # of people served (annual)				
B. # in non-urban location	1218	0	0	
% offering ICT	0,5%	0	0	
Total # of people served (annual)				

Comments (comment especially on definition of urban/non urban in the country):

As it is shown in the table there are much more libraries in rural areas than in urban. During the soviet period the libraries were established per settlements, that is, libraries

were meant to be present in each settlement. Therefore, as there are much more rural settlements in Georgia than urban ones, the number of public libraries is also bigger in villages. However there is also one thing to be taken into consideration, rural libraries are much smaller than those situated in city type settlements.

2.1.1 Other experiences of public access to information that are not quite "venues"

Basic information about other experiences with potential to make a difference to the public access landscape (tea rooms, Wi-Fi hotspots, coffee houses, web information portals) although they are not quite a "public information venue" in the sense defined for this study (see research design document for definition).

Other public access experience #1: The centers of the settlements

Description :

In the villages there are special places were people gather to discuss different issues and spend time together and play some games like dominos. This type of places is in every settlement at small squares of inhabited areas. People gather here to tell news or stories after their arrival form other settlements, government decisions and services are also often discussed in such places. Agricultural issues are also one of the main topics of conversation.

As it was mentioned above this kind of places are in every villages. In bigger settlements there are several of them. So thinking about their number in the country it can be concluded that there are thousands of them. Because of their unofficial character it is difficult to obtain even estimated information on numbers.

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

This kind of places really play important role in the field of public access to information, especially in rural settlements.

Other public access experience #2: NGOs providing hotline services

Description :

There are number of NGOs that provide free hot line services. Though these services are mainly focused on underserved communities and usually provide specific information from their field of activity (human rights, gender issues etc). These NGOs and their services are mainly funded by international projects and are limited in time.

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

2.1.2 Other existing public access venues, not included in this study

Basic information about other public access venues **not** included in the study (e-tuktuk, school or other private libraries not open to the public, health centers, etc), although they could play a role in public access information in the country. Indicate rationale for NOT including them in the study.

Other venue not studied #1: School libraries

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Description of the Venue:

Like public libraries school also are distributed according to settlements, each settlement (with about 5000 population or more, both urban and rural) have their own schools with their libraries open only to pupils. The situation in school libraries is similar to that in public libraries. They experience shortage of new materials. Though the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia started optimization of school libraries. So far there are only implemented pilot projects in a few randomly chosen schools but as the officials state, they are working on a large scale program in this direction.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

Other venue not studied#2: Libraries of the institution of higher education and scientific libraries

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Description of the Venue:

The venues are open only to the student and member of the institutions. They mainly contain educational materials.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

2.2 Inequity Variables

1-2 paragraphs each.

Describe how each variable affects equitable public access to information and ICT in this country, and what you did in this study to make sure each one was addressed (for example, if you visited venues in both urban and non-urban locations).

Also include additional variables of local relevance to your country, as you listed in Form 1, section 1a.

2.2.1 Socio-economic status

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Georgia has undergone several economic crises that produced significant disparity in terms of Social and economic status of the population with high level of unemployment. Up to half of the population lives near or under poverty level. Noteworthy are the IDPs of conflicts of Georgia, whose number is about 300 000 and who are considered to be most vulnerable communities.

Regarding the venues that provide opportunities of searching information and possibilities of meeting information needs (e.g. different types of libraries), they don't charge much for their services and they are affordable for almost the whole population.

In terms, of access to information through ICTs, the variable of socio-economic status has significant effect due to high price of computers and internet providing services. Rich people possess themselves computers connected to internet and have 100% access to internet. People with less income have to go to Internet cafés to get information from internet. However this venues charge considerable price (approximately 1,5$ per hour) that is unaffordable for the majority of the population.

To address this variable in the study, respondents of different socio-economic status were

selected to take part in FG discussions; While in-depth interviews with experts, the impact of the socio-economic status and affordability of venues were discussed as topics of the interview. Socio-economic status was included as one of the variables within the quantitative survey of venue users. The data was examined separately for respondents with different socio-economic status.

2.2.2 Educational level

In Georgia Primary education is obligatory. Therefore literacy level among citizens of Georgia is quite high. This factor increases the level of possibility of acquiring general information through printed media, and different kinds of libraries.

However, as multinational country, Georgia has several ethnic minorities on its territory, who due to different reasons read and write only their native languages or receive primary education in Russian schools. Taking into consideration that most public information in Georgia is available in Georgian; ethnic minorities turn out to be in much less favorable conditions due to the lack of knowledge of Georgian language.

Separately should be noted the level of English language knowledge among the population. As some part of contemporary information is available only in English, therefore the knowledge of this language gains significant role. Despite this, English language knowledge becomes more important due to the fact that computer software are mostly in English. Though the Ministry of Education of Georgia is implementing the project of public school computerization, in the framework of which the translation of basic computer software into Georgian is considered.

The education level in IC Technologies has very significant impact on the public access to information. Until recently, there were no any computers in schools and students were not taught any computer skills. To study using computer was possible only in special computer centers or privately. As the result, only small part of the population possesses the ICT using skills.

As already mentioned above, the Ministry of Education project on public school computerization is in process, which aims to raise the number of computer in schools up to the level of 1 PC per 20 students. Even though this level is reached in several big city schools, on the rest territory of Georgia the process is far from accomplishment.[2]

Education is one of the key factors affecting the equity of public information acquiring possibilities – admit NGO representatives involved in human right protection sphere. Their prerogative is to provide general population with training on how it is possible to require officially the information from governmental, public or private institutions.[3]

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[2] Interview with Merab Labadze, coordinator of "Deer Leap Foundation for the Introduction of Information Communication Technologies in the Education System of Georgia"

[3] Interview with Tamar Gurchiani, coordinator of GYLA project "Freedom of Information"

To address this variable in the study, respondents of different education level were selected to take part in FG discussions; While in-depth interviews with experts, the impact of the education was discussed as one of the topics of the interview. Education was included as one of the variables within the quantitative survey of venue users.

2.2.3 Age

The age can be considered as an important variable, for the following two reasons: first, elder people do not have much knowledge in ICTs, as it was mentioned earlier, computer skills were not taught at schools or any other educational institutions until recently. Second, the level of English language knowledge, which we already named as an important factor for information accessibility, is low among elder population.

In general, in public libraries people are allowed only after 15 years of age, but this fact does not affect the equity of access to information as the information, which can be interesting to people under 15 can be accessed at school libraries and several children's libraries existing over the country.

2.2.4 Gender

This variable is the least important in terms of public access to information. Gender issues is relatively newly introduced to Georgian society but there are several well organized NGOs working in this sphere, who consider gender as an important factor of discrimination in contemporary Georgian society, for example in terms of education. But none of our respondents admitted gender as a variable creating inequity in public access to information. They say that there are no regulations, attitudes, and stereotypes, preventing any gender to access information equally.

2.2.5 Location

This is a good place to offer further details on the urban/peri-urban/non-urban definitions and relevance in your country, among other location variables.

Location is the most important variable creating inequity environment in the country in terms of access to information due to the following reasons:

Unavailability of Mass-media in remote settlements: In mountainous settlements TV and Radio broadcasting is very limited. National channels can be viewed only through satellite antennas. Much worse situation is regarding printed media. In majority of settlements outside Tbilisi there are no newspapers distributed. *"I often had talks with the small settlement library representatives, they say that people are ready to pay for the library to buy newspapers, but this system needs to be adjusted"*[4]

Less developed Libraries network in rural areas; Public libraries in the regions receive much less funding than those in Tbilisi and other big cities of Georgia. For these reasons in

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[4] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

most cases they are not able to meet the information needs of the population. Scientific and international foundation libraries are also concentrated in the cities, in Tbilisi especially. National Library, as a main venue of access to information, is also situated only in Tbilisi. The network of libraries, providing possibility to borrow needed book from more equipped library through the smaller one, in fact does not function in the regions.[5]

Nonexistent ICT infrastructure in the regions. In the regions, especially in rural areas, there are no telephone lines. Consequently there is no access to internet. The absence of telephone lines create difficulties for governmental programs aimed at computerization of state institutions.[6] *"Very few public libraries have computers – there are 10 which have computers, but they don't know for what to use them, they do not have access to internet. They do not have electronic catalogue"*[7]

Taking into consideration all these disadvantages of the remote rural settlements, can be concluded that population of these settlements are most underserved in terms of public access to information, especially through ICTs. *"Imagine, in the mountainous regions one have to walk at list 30 kilometers from the village to the municipal institution to get some official information."*[8]

In sum, to describe the influence of the location on the public access to information it is not enough to divide the country into rural and urban areas. Urban areas are also considerable underserved as compared to the capital city of Georgia. Besides there are inequity also among rural settlements. Therefore more detailed description of the variable that would give clearer impression on its influence is as follow: Tbilisi (the capital) is much better provided with public access to information than any other settlements, then big cities are better provided than any other types except Tbilisi, but in this case the difference with other types is not so significant; then come city type settlements that are district centers (covering about 15-30 villages) that are more underserved than big cities but better served than rural settlements, in turn in rural settlements there is also inequity, high mountainous villages are much more underserved than those located in lower altitudes and nearer to big cities.

To capture the difference in the level of accessibility to information among the settlements with different types and location was one of the prime objectives of our study. Actually this variable was taken into consideration in all stages of the research and in all data gathering techniques. Key informants were asked to speak about the differences between urban and rural settlements while discussing certain questions interesting for our study. Focus groups were separately organized with participant from urban and non urban areas. The number

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[5] *Ibid*.

[6] Interview with Merab Labadze, coordinator of "Deer Leap Foundation for the Introduction of Information Communication Technologies in the Education System of Georgia"

[7] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

[8] Interview with Tamar Gurchiani, coordinator of GYLA project "Freedom of Information"

of site visits were equally divided for the venues located in urban and non urban settlements. For the user survey special quota of respondents were allocated for Tbilisi, cities, rural settlements, and mountainous villages. The analyses of the result in many issues are also accompanied with comparisons among different types of settlements.

2.2.6 Other inequity variables

Other Inequity Variable 1: Ethnicity

Together with Location, ethnicity is one of the most important variables affecting accessibility to information. The main reason for why ethnic minorities are underserved is that they are often found not to know Georgian language, while there is very little amount of content in their native languages. Even The National Library has miserable number of materials in the languages of ethnic minorities. In Georgia ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanians are mainly populated in remote regions, thus ethnic minorities can be considered as underserved according to two main inequity variables: ethnicity and location. Unless a very few exceptions there are no TV or radio programs broadcasted in their local languages, printed media is also not distributed. The lack of knowledge of Georgian language makes it difficult for them to get information from local government offices (as they are meant to operate only in Georgian language) unless the officials there are of the same ethnicity.

Taking into consideration the mentioned facts, ethnic minorities living in remote regions can be definitely considered as one of the biggest underserved communities. The important of ethnicity was foreseen in our study just the same way as location. Special questions about minorities were asked to key informants, site visits were made at the venues located in the settlement were mainly ethnic minorities are populated. In user surveys quotas were allocated for the users of public libraries and internet cafes located in the settlement of ethnic minorities.

Other Inequity Variable 2: **Inequity Variable** (if needed)

Other Inequity Variable 3: **Inequity Variable** (if needed)

2.3 Data Gathering Techniques

Describe the different data gathering techniques you used to conduct this study. Provide specific examples and sample selection criteria.

2.3.1 Literature review

Describe the type and approximate number of documents reviewed. Include detailed references of the most useful ones. Include valid links for all online sources.

21 number of documents reviewed.

In total, 21 documents were reviewed including published and on-line available sources on following issues: documentation on ICT for development and e-government, documentation containing venue-specific information, relevant legislative documentation.

Outcomes of two household surveys conducted by IPM in 2007 and 2008 were reviewed during the research and used as the source of information from the consent of the customers.

Georgian internet portals, created in the framework of "Georgian Development Portal" project implemented by NGO "Georgia Development Gateway Union" were used as the source of information.

2.3.1.1 Most useful bibliography:

ICT Development Framework for Georgia *UNDP Georgia, NCTeam CIMS Consulting;* Tbilisi 2004, available at: http://www.undp.org.ge/news/ICTDFG_geo.pdf

"Sakartvelos Biblioteka" (Library of Georgia) Quarterly magazine published by Georgian Library Association and its partners; available at: www.library.ge

"The Libraries of South Caucasus and Who Is Who in the Library Sphere" – Reference book; Armenian Library Association, Association of Information Specialist of Georgia, Association for Development of Librarianship of Azerbaijan; Yerevan 2003.

http://laws.codexserver.com/863.DOC - Constitution of Georgia;

http://laws.codexserver.com/785.DOC - Law on Library Work;

http://laws.codexserver.com/27.DOC - Law on the Public Library of the Parliament of Georgia

http://laws.codexserver.com/931.DOC - Code of Administrative Law Violations

http://laws.codexserver.com/397.DOC - The General Administrative Code

http://laws.codexserver.com/226.DOC - The Criminal Code

http://laws.codexserver.com/874.DOC - Law on Press and Other Means of Mass Media

Sources available from electronic edition www.navigator.ge
a. "Everything About Tenders and International Aid" – Nata Varsimashvili, available at http://navigator.ge/index.php?info_id=442&lang_id=GEO&sec_id=2

b. "ICT News of 2007 in Governmental and Educational Spheres", available at

http://www.navigator.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=2&info_id=2744

c. "Let's Make Internet Safe and Useful for Children" – Nino Natroshvili, available at http://www.navigator.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=2&info_id=3271

d. "Computer Technologies and Internet in 2004", available at http://navigator.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=2&info_id=431

e. "Internet in Georgian Politic" – Nino Natroshvili, available at http://www.navigator.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=2&info_id=3137

f. Data on Import of Computer Technologies to Georgia, available at http://www.navigator.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=2&info_id=2742

Georgian Internet Portal http://www.georgia-gateway.org

Web page of I.Chavchavadze National Library of Parliament of Georgia http://www.nplg.gov.ge/

"Review of Introduction and Development of Informational Technologies for Teachings", Kakhaber Bitsadze, Teimuraz Chachua, *I.Gogebashvili National Institute of Pedagogical Sciences, Collection of scientific works "Sazrisi"* N14, 2004, pp. 34-39

Electronic Government, Nino Inasaridze, *UNDP Georgia, Gateway Georgia, CIMS Consulting*, Tbilisi 2006, available at httpwww.georgia-gateway.comusers_files1e_gov.pdf

Settlement Infrastructure Survey for Millennium Challenge Georgia Fund, implemented in 2007 July – August

Study of Customer Market of Internet-Telephone Services. Household Survey for Ward Telecom, implemented in 2008 May

2.3.2   Individual interviews

Describe the type and approximate number of individuals you interviewed. Include detailed contact information for the most useful ones (indicate for which topic, if appropriate). Discuss how representative is this sample of people you interviewed in relation to different opinions and perspectives in the country.

15 number of individuals interviewed.

Individual interviews with key informants were conducted in Tbilisi. The key informant interviews provided information about the current situation and explored prospect for the future collaboration in planning interventions Total 15 individual interview respondents were representatives of:

1) Non-Governmental institutions working on ICT for development issues, freedom of information and minority groups in Georgia

2) Governmental institutions in charge of public libraries and reforms in the library sphere, governmental institutions, in charge of facilitation and coordination of e-government and ICT development structural and institutional reforms, definition and monitoring of basic directions in the sphere of communication, post and telecommunication-informational technologies and relevant legislative basis

3) Public access venues

2.3.3 Group interviews and focus groups

Describe the type and number of group interviews or focus groups you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

6 number of group interviews or focus groups.

The FGDs gave good insights in the motivations and reasons of users for using specific venues to meet their information needs, their attitudes, and assumptions about the role of the venues. FGDs with employees played key role in enabling understand us the main obstacles the venues are experiencing nowadays and the opportunities of addressing that obstacles. Besides, FGD turned out to be effective to find out information needs of different categories of the population of Georgia.

The participants for FGD were selected with the objective to represent different categories including underserved communities. For this purpose, participants with different ethnicity, age, education, income, residence area and other socio-demographic characteristics were invited.

2.3.4 Site visits

Describe the number and location of site visits you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

14 number of site visits.

Site visits were made to all studied venues types both in rural and in urban settlements. The visits helped us to observe the following aspects of the venues: Locations, that is, how east it was for the population of the settlement to get to it, was there transport available to get there or not. Determine whether its users could integrate its services into their daily lives, that is, e.g. could a student use the service of the venue if she/he does not miss lectures. Besides the visits gave us possibility to assess the building conditions and facilities, to define whether the venues have enough space or other necessary conditions for proper functioning. Besides site visits turned out to be useful to monitor and get an impression on the work process of the venues. We could watch the entire process the service, that is, we watched how a visitor came in how employees communicated with him/her, etc.

2.3.5 Surveys

Describe the location and number of respondents to surveys you conducted for this study. Indicate their relative distribution across venues (for example, 30% in telecentres, 20% in cybercafés, 50% in public libraries), and how they were selected.

Describe the venues, their locations and the sample size for each:

	Public	Internet	The	Venue 4

	Libraries	cafe	National library
# of **urban** venues surveyed	9	5	1
# of **non-urban** venues surveyed	16	2	
# of respondents in **urban** venues	217	178	96
# of respondents in **non-urban** venues	180	121	

Survey description and comments:

Selections of public libraries:

Initially it was supposed to select three public libraries in rural settlements and three in urban ones. At the same time out of these 6 venues at least three were supposed to be those who offered its services to underserved communities defined in inequity variables, namely location and ethnicity (Other inequity variables could not be taken into consideration as there are no public libraries offering services specifically to underserved people defined by education, gender, age, or socio-economic variables). So discussing Location and ethnicity variables in a country context the following public libraries were selected:

1) Public library in Tbilisi (urban, the Capital)

2) Public library in district centers mainly populated by Georgians (urban, but relatively underserved settlement as compared to that in Tbilisi)

3) Public library in district centers mainly populated by ethnic minorities (urban, considered underserved according to ethnicity variable)

4) Public library in rural settlement mainly populated by Georgian and situated in the neighborhood of a big city (considered underserved according to location variable)

5) Public library in mountainous rural settlement (considered as more underserved than N4 public library according to location variable)

6) Public library in rural settlement mainly populated by ethnic minorities (considered underserved according to urban/rural and ethnicity variables)

For selecting the certain venues, a special database was used that was set up as a result of the Settlement Infrastructure Survey conducted by IPM for Millennium Challenge Corporation and Millennium Challenge Georgia. The base included 723 proportionally selected settlements covering all types of cities and villages defined above by location and ethnicity variables. The base included variables whether the settlements had libraries and Internet cafes. From this base the settlements with functioning libraries were filtered out, then from filtered ones one settlement was randomly chosen for each of the 6 categories mentioned above. Then the selected settlements were discussed with the regional supervisors of IPM to find out if there was any circumstance that would prevent from conducting the field. In some selected settlement it turned out that conducting interviews

was not possible for some reasons like: the library was closed for renovation works, library had very few visitors (just one or two per month), etc. In these cases we again referred to the same base and randomly selected other settlements with public libraries.

At each of the selected public libraries 50-60 users were supposed to be interviewed. However during the fieldwork it turned out that rural and some urban libraries did not have enough number of visitors that would allow us to gather 50 respondents during a reasonable period of the fieldwork. Therefore we had to add more libraries to gather at least 50 respondents for each category. The additions were made in accordance with the selection procedure described above: For example, if a Public library in rural area of ethnic minorities (N6 library) failed to give us 50 respondents we added one or several public libraries that met all the criteria according to which the original library was selected (location in rural areas populated by ethnic minorities).

Selections of Internet cafes:

The selection of the Internet cafes was supposed to be conducted just in the same way as it was done for public libraries. However it turned out from the same database of Settlement Infrastructure Survey that only 4 rural settlements had internet cafes out of which two were temporality closed as we found out later, so again considering this fact and inequity variables the following Internet cafes were selected:

1) Internet café in Tbilisi (Urban)

2) Internet cafe in district centers mainly populated by Georgians (urban, but underserved as compared to Tbilisi)

3) Internet cafe in district centers mainly populated by ethnic minorities (underserved by ethnicity variable, thus more underserved than N2)

4) Both Internet cafes found in rural settlements (underserved by location variable)

As for the National Library of Georgia, as there is only one venue there was no selection made, but it is worth mentioning that as it has several buildings and multiple reading halls interviews were equally distributed among them.

Selection of the respondents:

Selection of the respondents was planned according to the following procedure: As it was presumed that the users who visit certain venues in different week days or in deferent day time might also be different in other characteristics, like age, the purpose of visit, information sought, etc, it was decided to do the interview on different week days and in different day times. More specifically, before starting interviewing the respondents, we asked the venue operators to give estimated percent of visits ussually made on week days from the total number of visits and also the percent of visits made on weekends. Thus obtaining the information about the distribution of visits between week days and week ends we defined the number of interview to be conducted on week days and the number of

interviews to be conducted on Saturday or Sunday. For example: if an operator said that 60% of visits were made on week days and 40% on weekend, the number of interviews to be conducted on week days was 30 (60% of total 50 interviews) and 20 on weekends (40%). Then on the first day of the fieldwork the interviewer did not do interviews, she/he just counted the number of visits made in the morning, afternoon and evening. Having the numbers and consequently percents of visits made separately in different day time, we determined the number of interviews to be conducted in the morning, afternoon and evening reflecting the proportion of the counted visits.

Interviewers were instructed to interview each third visitor leaving the venue.

However the field did not go everywhere exactly the same way it was described above. Due to extremely small number of visitors in some of the public libraries (especially in rural ones) the mentioned procedures turned out to be impossible to follow completely. For instance, some rural libraries had only one visitor per day, in this case it was impossible to apply "every third respondent rule" or distribute the number of interviews per different day times.

Implications on the sample and limitation of the application of survey results

There are several facts to be taken into consideration before conclusions and generalization will be made from the survey results. First of all, it must be noted that all the data shown in charts can not be generalized to the whole country. For example if the charts show that 23% of public library users in rural areas are ethnic Azerbaijanians, it will be incorrect to conclude that 23% of all public library users in rural settlements of Georgia are Azerbaijanians. Such a high number is caused by the fact that we allocated special quotas for underserved communities (venues who offer services to the population of high mountainous villages, and population of the settlement mainly inhabited by ethnic minorities) and these quotas don't reflect the proportion this category have in the universe. For example, there are interviewed 94 users of the public libraries that are situated in the settlements of the ethnic minorities. This is 23,7% of the sample (the quota that we gave to the users of this category of public libraries). The percent does not reflect the share these public users have in the whole public library users of rural areas of Georgia. The same can be said about the quotas allocated for other categories, e.g. we have 60 users of rural high mountainous public libraries- 15.1% of the sample. In reality their share is much smaller and would not have been included in the study had we made proportional selection of the public libraries.

Such lack of representation of the sample will certainly affect many variables of the survey, e.g. "not in the right language" would perhaps have had less frequencies of the answers among public library users had not we given special quota to the venues located in the underserved settlements.

A good way out would be to weight the results according to the shares each category hold in the universe, but unfortunately there are no information available on the numbers of users each category of public libraries or internet cafes serve. So the only way to avoid

mistakes during making the conclusions is to look at the data separately for each categories to which quotas were allocated (6 categories of public libraries and 4 categories of Internet cafes) instead of just looking differences among urban and non urban venues. The data of the survey that is available in SPSS file contain variables of the quotas so the results can be easily shown separately for each quota.

2.3.6   Other data gathering techniques

Other Data Gathering Technique 1: Data Gathering Technique

Other Data Gathering Technique 2: Data Gathering Technique

Other Data Gathering Technique 3: Data Gathering Technique

2.3.7   Most useful contacts

List here some of the most knowledgeable and useful contacts that can provide additional information and insight, in case someone else wants to gather additional information about this topic in the country.

Among most useful contacts following can be named:

Non-Governmental institutions

1. Zaza Chaganava, project consultant, United Nation Development Programme, (tel.: +995 32 25 3166) – ICT for development, ICT Development Framework for Georgia

2. Nodar Napetvaridze, Founder, CIMS Consulting (tel.: +995 32 25 32 03) – ICT for development, ICT Development Framework for Georgia

3. Davit Gogichaishvili, Executive director, CIMS Consulting (tel.: +995 32 25 32 03) – ICT for development, content of information provided through internet, Georgian web pages

4. Zaur Khalilov, Director, Fund of Civil Integration (mob.: +995 77 45 44 37) - Information needs and situation for underserved communities

5. Mikhail Aidinov, Chairman, Assossiation of Russian-speaking Journalists (mob.: +995 93 90 84 88) – Information needs and situation for underserved communities, freedom of information

Governmental Institutions

6. Iza Demetrashvili, Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia (tel.: +995 32 99 04 80) - Public libraries, public library optimization reform

7. Giorgi Akhalaia, Leading Specialist, State Minister's Apparatus in Reform Coordination Issues (+995 32 98 22 49) – information on e-government, ICT development structural and

institutional reforms

8. Vano Gochitashvili, Head of the department, ICT Department of the Ministry of Economical Development of Georgia (tel.:+995 32 93 10 24; +995 32 93 15 55) - definition and monitoring of basic directions in the sphere of communication, post and telecommunication and informational technologies and relevant legislative basis

Public Access Venues

9. Guram Takniashvili, Head of the department, Methodology Department of I.Chavchavadze National Library of Parliament of Georgia (+995 32 36 09 51) – Libraries optimization reform, situation in library sphere

10. Tsiala Kalmakhelidze, Director, Tbilisi Main Library (+995 32 95 97 03; +995 32 95 0157; +995 32 95 89 71) – Public library issues, budgeting

2.4   Research Trustworthiness and Credibility

2-3 paragraphs

Describe any steps you took to minimize your own bias in conducting this study, and to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the results you are presenting.

The information on key issues, that were the main focus of the study, was obtained through multiple data collection techniques. For example, the main obstacles the venues are experiencing in providing access to information were identified through user survey, operator survey, FGDs, and in-depth interviews. The data gathered through all these techniques, were compared to each other. Besides, different sections of our draft report were presented to different field experts, and their feedback was considered. If the experts disagreed with any of the findings of the report, we explained methodology, through which the finding was obtained and asked the expert for possible reasons why the data could be not accurate from his/her point of view. And after this, we continued to get more information to validate or correct the results.

2.4.1   Research limitations

Describe important limitations you encountered in conducting this research, and limitations in drawing generalizations or broader conclusions based on the findings you report.

Survey limitations, described above are to be taken into consideration while discussing the research limitations.

Ongoing reforms in the public library sphere affect significantly the situation. The reform, which aims to create so called "optimal" network of the libraries can result in further decreasing of the number of libraries, increasing of number of public libraries, offering ICT, changes in budgeting and etc. The reform is to some extent described in the study, but the design of it is not finally formulated and even the initiators are not able to determine final outcomes.

2.4.2   Team qualifications

1 paragraph
Description of the research team and its qualifications to undertake this study.

Group of companies IPM was established in 1995. Initially, several individuals worked in the company and they were focused on field activities. Within the years in the process of cooperation with international research institutions and largest corporations small field agency in Georgia turned into the huge marketing consultation company.

Nowadays the group of IPM organizations owns not only the full service research company, but it develops marketing and communication strategies, successfully implements PR projects, conducts business trainings, carries out full range of media research, monitors out-door advertising, TV broadcasting and printed media. IPM applies research technologies of international research institutions in the spheres of media, consumer, trade outlet studies and consultations.

IPM activities are focused on marketing and social studies. In 1998 the organization began to utilize research technique of international standards and in this regard it launched its first standardized product- panel research of TV and radio audience. This product was followed by media monitoring, trade outlet research, out-door advertising monitoring and study, printed media research, Media Marketing Index (MMI), price research and other standardized products. Nowadays IPM applies standards of international research industry that may be proved by research audit conclusions. In 2005 IPM established ISO 9001 quality management standard.

3 Country Assessment

3.1 Overall Country Assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in the country, informed by the results of this research. In 2-3 paragraphs, what is your overall assessment of public access information venues in this country?

Since the main information sources in Georgia are TV and Radio, most population have opportunity to receive basic information despite their economic status. Job places can be considered as another very important source of information, therefore it should be noted that social factor plays considerable role in public information access opportunities. In Georgia unemployed people are most underserved in terms of access to information.

Public libraries were meant to be main venues to provide public access to information throughout the country. The Soviet government created a network of the public libraries. During that period each settlement of Georgia was provided with public libraries or reading halls (small equivalent to public libraries). The system remained unchanged in Post-Soviet Era. So public libraries continued functioning in almost all settlements until recently. But Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Georgia has undergone several economic crises that produced significant disparity in terms of Social and economic status of the population with high level of unemployment. Nowadays, the crisis existing in the library sphere and the education sphere in general, made them less attractive for the population. Due to extreme lack of funding (in some cases absence of any funding) the libraries are now in very poor conditions in terms of volumes (there were no new books supplied for many years until recently), facilities (building conditions, heating, electricity, etc), and human resources (for many years there have been no trainings conducted for the employees of the public libraries).

Georgian communication sphere underwent significant changes in connection with transition to market economy. Existing infrastructure could not satisfy the demands on modern communication technologies, which was determined by the lack of investments and slow modernization of communication system. Structural and institutional reforms in this sphere started to be implemented in 1999 – liberalization and opening for privatization for competitors.

Even though currently Georgian government acknowledges creation and development of informational society and active integration of the country into world's informational space as an important precondition for country development, digitalization of communication system goes on quite slowly and is implemented only in Tbilisi and limited number of big cities. Despite significant positive changes, ICT development in Georgia can be characterized as non-

systematized and uncoordinated. It is more "spontaneous computerization" than systematic, single-minded process.[9]

3.2 Real Access Framework

Summarize the key findings and your assessment of each dimension in the Real Access framework used in this study. You will provide more details later.

3.2.1 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in the country (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Socio-economic status affects differently the access to information through public libraries and internet cafes.

As for public libraries and National library, they don't charge much (most of public libraries offer services for free) for their services and they are affordable for almost the whole population.

In terms of access to information through ICTs, the variable of socio-economic status has significant effect due to high price of computers and internet providing services. Despite the fact that internet is affordable for many private organizations and enterprises, most of the population (especially in regions) can not afford internet services. It must be admitted that relatively low demand on internet services is determined partly by relatively low density of PCs among population. Rich people possess themselves computers connected to internet and have 100% access to internet. People with less income have to go to Internet cafés to get information from internet. However this venues charge considerable price (approximately 1,5$ per hour) that is unaffordable for the majority of the population.

Physical accessibility is one of the most important variables determining "access ecosystem" in the country:

Unavailability of Mass-media in remote settlements; In mountainous settlements TV and Radio broadcasting is very limited. National channels can be viewed only through satellite antennas. Much worth situation is regarding printed media. In majority of settlements outside Tbilisi there are no newspapers distributed.

Less developed Libraries network in rural areas; Public libraries in the regions receive much less funding than those in Tbilisi and other big cities of Georgia. For these reasons in most cases they are not able to meet the information needs of the population.

Nonexistent ICT infrastructure in the regions; There are about 144 companies involved in the activities related to ICT (consultations in ICT sphere, software development, data processing, ICT technical service and fixing and etc.), but most of their offices are located in the capital. In

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[9] Interview with Nodar Napetvaridze, founder, CIMS consulting, UNDP project consultant

the regions, especially in rural areas, there are no telephone lines. By the 1990, 137 822 telephone subscribers were connected to 935 key communicational stations, but currently, due to the damaging of inter-station connections and telephone lines, their number has decreased significantly. In many villages telephone connection does not exist at all. Consequently, there is no access to internet. The absence of telephone lines create difficulties for governmental programs aimed at computerization of state institutions.

3.2.2 Capacity

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in the country (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

In Georgia there was only one library school – that is Library department of former Sulkhan-Saba Pedagogical University, which is nowadays merged with Foreign Languages Institute and renamed for I. Chavchavadze State University. Vast majority of the librarians, working in the public libraries are graduates from this university. Due to not very high popularity of the profession, this department often lacks students – for example, currently there are no students studying on this department. Despite the existence of the higher education in this sphere, post-graduate qualification-rising curses or professional trainings are hardly available for librarians for last 15 years.[10]

The Georgian Library Association is trying to fill in this gap by recently launched training courses for librarians. National Scientific library also provides trainings for librarians. The issues covered by these trainings are: general courses in library services, bibliography standards, classification standards, electronic catalogues, basic computer classes, inter-library exchange system, fund-rising and project writing and etc.

Public libraries suffer from lack of book supply, but also they face the problem of overloading by currently irrelevant content like books of outdated political character of Soviet epoch, books with scientifically outdated information.

As for ICT, more or less high-qualified knowledge in ICT sphere can be received in several universities like Georgian Technical University and Tbilisi State University. There are also several private schools functioning. But technical base and other teaching resources do not meet contemporary demands.

Currently there are more than 2500 web pages, registered in Georgian internet space. Except certain exceptions, most of the web pages are static and are not renewed over the period of time. *"The quality of Georgian web pages can not be compared with even Russian ones... web page construction has its rules and principles; we do not have many qualified specialists in this sphere. There are no logistic managers, content managers".[11]* Most of web pages are on Georgian and Russian. Up till recent times, to use Georgian language in internet was problematic, which

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[10] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

[11] Interview with Davit Gogichaishvili, executive director, CIMS consulting

was connected to the absence of standards for Georgian language in ICT Georgian fonts with different coding systems were used, but after the government conducted standardization of one of the codes, the situation was changed. Currently, the Unicode (www.unicode.org) coding is also successfully used. Different forums, so called "chats" and web pages are developed.

In November of 2006 Georgian government has launched new Georgian Governmental Network GGN project that has to be ended at the end of 2008. (First part of the overall E-Government Project). It considers building the governmental network between state bodies. Utilization of broadband applications and services in Georgian government structures oriented to ensure publicity and transparency of Government decisions and legislative framework will promote the formation of an electronic society in Georgia.

However e-government project in Georgia is in the very beginning of its development. Even though governmental web pages offer certain on-line services, knowledge about this services and opportunity to use them is very scarce. *"These services are very new for our society. People prefer to go and ask personally, than to trust information, provided through internet. We lack experience of this kind; therefore we do not trust it. When people start to use these services and they will see that it is very convenient and time saving, they will start to trust it more. Therefore government needs to make the information about availability of these kinds of services more widely known through different PR activities."[12]* Timelier update of the information on these pages is also necessary.

3.2.3   Environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in the country (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

The libraries of Georgia are united in Georgian Library Association. The efforts of association is aimed at establishing cooperation between libraries, sharing information, raising qualification of employees, however lack of funds don't enable the association to take large scale measures.

Except the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia, which gets significant support from the government, and has outstanding status in general, there was little support to the libraries from the governmental institutions for many years, resulting in extremely bad situation in this respect.

After the collapse of Soviet Union it became clear, that the new government is not able to maintain and support Soviet epoch (with about 8000 libraries of different type and 11000 library workers) library arrangement – and it was actually not really needed. The library network, arranged according to the department and territorial principle collapsed. The libraries faced the difficulties, connected to the period of transition to market economy on the one hand and civil unrest on the other hand. The library network was dramatically damaged in the areas of civil conflicts. Especially severely were damaged the libraries belonging to the system of the Ministry of Culture (these were PUBLICK LIBRARIES in different urban and non-

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[12] Interview with Zaur Khaliliov, Director of Civil Integration Fund

urban areas). By the 2000 their number was decreased from 4200 to 2300. This tendency is maintained today also. The number of the libraries of the Ministry of Education was decreased from 3476 to 2067. Absolutely all libraries of the Trade Unions were closed. Libraries were deprived from the central financing. Their budgeting and management were transferred to the local municipalities (Order N334 25.05.97 of the president of Georgia); The order resulted from the 33 article of "Organic low of Georgia on local municipality and management". The vertical system of library management was changed to the horizontal one, which gave the local municipalities to conduct decreasing, abolishing and consolidation activities regarding the library network. In many regions and cities these measures were conducted to the prejudice of the interests of the population. One by one village libraries were closed, large part of the population remained without library service and consequently -without information.[13]

As for the electronic informational space, the problems in this sphere are determined by several factors. First of all, *difficult social and economic situation*, which is one of the most important barrier. Without overcoming main social problems like unemployment (which is in direct connection to the population's paying capacity) it will be very difficult to talk about forming of informational space. *Education level in ICT* is also affecting the process – currently, large part of Georgian population lack the skills of ICT usage. This segment of the population can conventionally be divided into social-demographical and geographical aspects. Younger people are more acquainted with modern technologies and namely with internet technologies, however vast majority of them live in urban areas. *Demand on Internet recourses* is in direct connection with the education level. *Inexistence of adequate infrastructure* is one of the most important aspects. Enlargement of internet accessibility through improving technical infrastructure is one of the most important technical aspects which needs to be solved in Georgia. *Language barrier* creates additional problem - currently, majority of internet recourses are available in English. Georgia, which during the Soviet period was oriented on Russian segment of information, faced the language barrier. Generation, which get education during the Soviet period (and not only them) turned out to be unable to get information through internet due to this problem.

3.3 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Describe the specific information needs experienced by underserved populations, based on the results of your research. Who could benefit from better public access to information? This could relate to e-government services, health or agriculture information, job training, employment search, among many others. Include reference to the key inequity variables in your country.

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii)   Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

There are lots of aspects of information needs the population of Georgia is experiencing. Information on local events can be considered as one of the main type of information citizens of Georgia lack. TV channels and Radio stations as being main sources of information, either don't broadcast in some of the regions or Georgia or don't pay appropriate attention to the news and problems concerning population of regions of Georgia. The most useful information

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[13] Interview with Guram Takniashvili, head of the I.Chavchavadze National Library of Parliament of Georgia methodology department

would be local employment opportunities, new methods and technologies introduced to agriculture sphere. *"Any type of information, connected to the local problematic starting from water supply problems and cultural events would be interesting. This is equally important for the regions, populated by ethnic minorities and regions populated by the ethnic Georgians".*[14]

Another important type of information is the information on their civil rights, most of the population of Georgia don't have information about their status, rights, responsibilities. They don't know how to access public information even if there is available the piece of information they need. People involved in Academic sphere also experience lack of information they need for their education. School and university libraries don't often provide enough sources.

Administrative procedures is another sphere, where lack of information creates confusion especially in non-urban regions. *"How to take passport - what documents are needed for this, how to arrange papers on land ownership, how to register".*[15] This is extremely important in ethnic minority populated regions, where many families have a member, basically men – property owners, working abroad, and families have to arrange property connected deals while their absence.

Results of the survey conducted within the framework of given study show that users of public libraries, situated in high mountainous region visit the venue basically searching for fiction literature (58,5%) and educational materials (52.8%). While the library users in ethic minority populated regions search basically for educational materials (53.0%).

As for ICT cervices, the basic problem in non-urban regions is the low quality and speed of internet – admits Zaur Khalilov, the director of the Fund of Civil Integration. But there is huge demand on access to social networking among young population. *"There is nothing young person can entertain him/herself. We have 4 offices in these regions [populated by ethnic minorities] and we have internet there. These offices are mainly for local journalists, but different people, mainly young ones come and ask access to internet. They basically search for different chats and forums".*[16]

There is a need for educational materials on ICT in Georgian language and in languages, spoken by minorities – there is very limited number of these kind of studying materials, as there is no national strategy educational informational recourses management. Consequently, is not elaborated the methodology   of quality evaluation of this kind of materials

Source:

- Interview with Mikhail Aidinov, chairman of the Association of Russian Speaking Journalists

- Interview with Zaur Khaliliov, Director of Civil Integration Fund

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[14] Mikhail Aidinov, Association of Russian Speaking Journalists, chairman

[15] Interview with Zaur Khaliliov, Director of Civil Integration Fund

[16] *Ibid.*

- User Survey, conducted in the framework of this project

- ICT Development Framework for Georgia UNDP Georgia, NCTeam CIMS Consulting; Tbilisi 2004

3.3.1   Information sources

4.2b) What are the current sources for this kind of information in the country? Are these sources adequate (current, appropriate to the population, etc.) In sum, does the locally-relevant content exist?

   (i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

   (ii)   Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

As most of our respondents admit, basic source of receiving general information among population is TV, radio and newspapers. But the problem is that in remote regions these sources are restricted due to the broadcasting and distribution problems, the central media pays less attention to the local events, in the situation of inexistence of local broadcasting. Central media sources are less useful for people, not knowing Georgian language – ethnic minorities. *"In the remote regions even central press is hardly distributed, in many places central TV channels have problems with broadcasting – the local TV are recording the central TV programs and transmitting these recordings"*.[17]

During the transition period in Georgia, NGOs were created as an institution, taking feasible effort directed to the spheres underserved by the governmental institutions. The NGOs, meeting the needs of different special groups were created, and some of them turned out to be quite effective. Some of them are offering their target groups free hot-line services.

Apart from the hot-line services, the NGOs are providing consultations on different kind of issues of their specialization. For example, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association offers free legal consultations for everyone; other NGOs provide other relevant consultations.

In general, public institutions are supposed to provide information when being demanded and basically they do so. Information is also available a the governmental web pages, created in the framework of Georgian Governmental Network GGN project that has started in November of 2006 and of has to be ended at the end of 2008. (First part of the overall E-Government Project). The project considers building the governmental network between state bodies.

Source*:*

- Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

- Interview with Davit Gogichaishvili, Executive director of CIMS Consulting

- FGD with participation of venue users conducted in the framework of this project

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[17] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

- User Survey, conducted in the framework of this project

- ICT Development Framework for Georgia UNDP Georgia, NCTeam CIMS Consulting; Tbilisi 2004

3.3.2 Key barriers to accessing the information that underserved communities need

Are the people who could benefit from this information getting access to it? Why or why not (e.g. content exists but not in the right language, print media exists but has not been distributed appropriately, digital media is available but people do not have access points, etc.)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Receiving information from each of above mentioned sources is complicated due to the following problems:

TV, radio and printed media: Problem is that in remote regions these sources are restricted due to the broadcasting and distribution problems, the central media pays less attention to the local events, in the situation of inexistence of local broadcasting. Central media sources are less useful for people, not knowing Georgian language – ethnic minorities. Moreover, the above mentioned media sources are not individually oriented, that is, not providing individually needed information. *"Nowadays TV is the basic source of receiving information; however it is not oriented individually on user... It can turn out that a person does not need 80% of information transmitted through TV channels. Local broadcasting are more appropriate from this point of view".[18]*

Hot-line services: Telephone connections are not spread in the regions, this fact makes it difficult to use this source of information for the population to whom this service is targeted.

NGO information and consultation centers. These centers are few and situated mainly in the regional centers, therefore are difficult to be reached by the most underserved groups (population from most remote settlements).

Governmental institutions. Underserved People often don't know how to access information from these institutions. Moreover they even don't know that they have right to do so.[19]

The main barrier of receiving information through internet is the low quality which is basically reported as low speed of the internet connection. Based on the "Study of Customer Market of Internet-Telephone Services", Household Survey implemented in 2008 May by IPM in big cities of Georgia, out of those respondents who expressed dissatisfaction towards internet connection, 83% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction towards speed. The problem is even more important in non-urban regions.

Based on the survey conducted within the framework of the study, main barriers, affecting access to information at public libraries are: not enough content (35.9%), not enough services

[18] Interview with Merab Labadze, coordinator of "Deer Leap Foundation for the Introduction of Information Communication Technologies in the Education System of Georgia"

[19] Interview with Tamar Gurchiani, coordinator of GYLA project "Freedom of Information"

(12.7%), lack of training (7.1%). For internet cafes, these are: content not in the right language (28.1%), low internet speed (15.2%, lack of training (11.4%), and cost (9.5%). The National Library turned to have the fewest obstacles, as 64.8% of users stated that the venue has no obstacles. However its location was named its most important problem (14.1%)

Source:

- Interview with Merab Labadze, coordinator of "Deer Leap Foundation for the Introduction of Information Communication Technologies in the Education System of Georgia"

- Interview with Tamar Gurchiani, coordinator of GYLA project "Freedom of Information"

- FGD with participation of venue users conducted in the framework of this project

- User Survey, conducted in the framework of this project

- Study of Customer Market of Internet-Telephone Services. Household Survey for Ward Telecom, implemented in 2008 May

3.3.3   Ways users experience different types of public access venues

Based on responses to the open question in user surveys, how do users experience different types of public access venues? Are there any trends or preferences for kinds of information, services or activities in one type of venue over another?

Public libraries are preferred venues mostly for fiction, periodicals and educational materials

National library is also the source for fiction literature, periodicals, educational materials, scientific literature

Internet cafes are basically used for social networking, communication purposes, entertainment, personal use or latest foreign materials

3.3.4   Inequity environment in the country

2-3 paragraphs

What does inequity look like in the country? Using the inequity variables described in section **2.2**, provide a short overview of the main underserved groups, regions and/or other locally-appropriate segments of the population.

  (i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Educational Level. In Georgia Primary education is obligatory. Therefore literacy level among citizens of Georgia is quite high. This factor increases the level of possibility of acquiring general information through printed media, and different kinds of libraries.

However, as multinational country, Georgia has several ethnic minorities on its territory, who due to different reasons read and write only their native languages or receive primary education in Russian schools. Taking into consideration that most public information in Georgia is available in Georgian; ethnic minorities turn out to be in much less favorable

conditions due to the lack of knowledge of Georgian language.

Separately should be noted the level of English language knowledge among the population. As some part of contemporary information is available only in English, therefore the knowledge of this language gains significant role. Despite this, English language knowledge becomes more important due to the fact that computer software are mostly in English. Though the Ministry of Education of Georgia is implementing the project of public school computerization, in the framework of which the translation of basic computer software into Georgian is considered.

The education level in IC Technologies has very significant impact on the public access to information. Until recently, there were no any computers in schools and students were not taught any computer skills. To study using computer was possible only in special computer centers or privately. As the result, only small part of the population possesses the ICT using skills.

As already mentioned above, the Ministry of Education project on public school computerization is in process, which aims to rise the number of computer in schools up to the level of 1 PC per 20 students. Even though this level is reached in several big city schools, on the rest territory of Georgia the process is far from accomplishment.[20]

Education is one of the key factors affecting the equity of public information acquiring possibilities – admit NGO representatives involved in human right protection sphere. Their prerogative is to provide general population with training on how it is possible to require officially the information from governmental, public or private institutions.[21]

Age: The age can be considered as an important variable, for the following two reasons: first, elder people do not have much knowledge in ICTs, as it was mentioned earlier, computer skills were not taught at schools or any other educational institutions until recently. Second, the level of English language knowledge, which we already named as an important factor for information accessibility, is low among elder population.

In general, in public libraries people are allowed only after 15 years of age, but this fact does not affect the equity of access to information as the information, which can be interesting to people under 15 can be accessed at school libraries and several children's libraries existing over the country.

Sex: This variable is the least important in terms of public access to information. Gender issues is relatively newly introduced to Georgian society but there are several well organized NGOs working in this sphere, who consider gender as an important factor of discrimination in contemporary Georgian society, for example in terms of education. But none of our respondents admitted gender as a variable creating inequity in public access to information. They say that there are no regulations, attitudes, and stereotypes, preventing any gender to

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[20] Interview with Merab Labadze, coordinator of "Deer Leap Foundation for the Introduction of Information Communication Technologies in the Education System of Georgia"

[21] Interview with Tamar Gurchiani, coordinator of GYLA project "Freedom of Information"

access information equally.

Location: Location is the most important variable creating inequity environment in the country in terms of access to information due to the following reasons:

<u>Unavailability of Mass-media in remote settlements</u>; In mountainous settlements TV and Radio broadcasting is very limited. National channels can be viewed only through satellite antennas. Much worth situation is regarding printed media. In majority of settlements outside Tbilisi there are no newspapers distributed. *"I often had talks with the small settlement library representatives, they say that people are ready to pay for the library to buy newspapers, but this system needs to be adjusted"*[22]

<u>Less developed Libraries network in rural areas</u>; Public libraries in the regions receive much less funding than those in Tbilisi and other big cities of Georgia. For these reasons in most cases they are not able to meet the information needs of the population. Scientific and international foundation libraries are also concentrated in the cities, in Tbilisi especially. National Library, as a main venue of access to information, is also situated only in Tbilisi. The network of libraries, providing possibility to borrow needed book from more equipped library through the smaller one, in fact does not function in the regions.[23]

<u>Nonexistent ICT infrastructure in the regions</u>. In the regions, especially in rural areas, there are no telephone lines. Consequently there is no access to internet.[24] *"Very few public libraries have computers – there are 10 which have computers, but they don't know for what to use them, they do not have access to internet. They do not have electronic catalogue"*[25]

Taking into consideration all these disadvantages of the remote rural settlements, can be concluded that population of these settlements are most underserved in terms of public access to information, especially through ICTs. *"Imagine, in the mountainous regions one have to walk at list 30 kilometers from the village to the municipal institution to get some official information."*[26]

3.3.5   Freedom of press and expression and the right to information
What is the overall perception of freedom of press, censorship and right to information in this country?

Despite of utter attempts it is still difficult to talk about the quality of media's freedom. The latest scandals between media and authority, which includes trial of Sandro Gvirgvliani's murder, TV broadcast "Imedi" after 7th November and initiator of everything this "Rustavi 2"

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[22] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Interview with Merab Labadze, coordinator of "Deer Leap Foundation for the Introduction of Information Communication Technologies in the Education System of Georgia"

[25] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

during Rose Revolution. Nowadays situation is obvious proof of inter influence among legislative, executive and judicial branches and media.

Modern Georgian mass media faces significant problem, among which should be indicated those important aspects, which are information availability problem; expression tendencies of economic, criminal censure and self censure and relevantly controlling mechanisms by authority on media, also issues of relation between judicial branch and mass media. Another problem is revealed- apparent deficit of journalist's conscientiousness. Due to their ambitions were emerged those magazines, which after first obstacles appeared sheltered under the wings of authority. Consequently the constant complains that media is under governmental pressure, is the logical consequence of so called "fourth branch's" activities, of course notwithstanding some exceptions.[27]

3.4   Charts: Information Needs, Users, and Uses

Based on the results of your research (especially user surveys and interviews with librarians and operators), complete the required data to chart the information needs of underserved communities using the following examples. Provide any explanatory comments as needed.

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[19] Interview with Tamar Gurchiani, coordinator of GYLA project "Freedom of Information"

[27] *Ibid*. and Interview with   Nino Gvediashvili, manager of NGO "Human Rights Information and Documentation Centre"

3.4.1.1 Users, by type of venue

Users profile (Estimated proportion of users in each category, %)		Public Libraries				Int. Cafe				I. Chavchavadze State Library of the Parliament of Georgia				Venue 4			
		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
		General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Gender	Male	21.7	26.7	31.7		71.3	71.3	44.6	44.6	51.0	51.0						
	Female	78.3	73.3	68.3		28.7	28.7	55.4	55.4	49.0	49.0						
Age	14 and under	8.8		21.1		16.3	16.3	12.4	12.4								
	15-35	47.0	70.0	38.9		69.7	69.7	52.1	52.1	79.2	79.2						
	36-60	30.9	20.0	36.7		13.5	13.5	34.7	34.7	19.8	19.8						
	61 and over	13.4	10.0	3.3		0.6	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.0						
Education level	No formal education	0.5		1.7		0.6	0.6			2.1	2.1						
	Only elementary	12.0	3.3	26.7		12.4	12.4	11.6	11.6	5.2	5.2						
	Up to high school	27.2	33.3	40.6		46.1	46.1	41.3	41.3	4.2	4.2						
	College or university	59.9	63.3	31.1		41.0	41.0	47.1	47.1	88.5	88.5						
Income bracket (approx)	High	0.5		0.6		2.2	2.2	1.7	1.7	8.3	8.3						
	Medium	27.6	33.3	20.6		35.4	35.4	22.3	22.3	49.0	49.0						
	Low	66.4	46.7	74.4		39.9	39.9	68.6	68.6	27.1	27.1						
	No answer	5.5	20.0	4.4		22.5	22.5	7.4	7.4	15.6	15.6						
Social status (approx)	High	7.9	3.0	8.9		3.9	3.9	4.1	4.1	1.0	1.0						
	Medium	62.0	87.0	60.0		56.7	56.7	85.1	85.1	76.0	76.0						

	Low	30.1	7.0	28.9	28.7	28.7	5.8	5.8	14.6	14.6			
	No answer		3.0	2.2	10.7	10.7	5.0	5.0	8.3	8.3			
Caste (if appropriate)	Dominant												
	other												
	other												
	other												
Ethnicity (if appropriate)	Georgian (Dominant)	80.6	76.7	67.2	73.6	73.6	98.3	98.3	97.9	97.9			
	Armenian	12.4	16.7	1.7	16.9	16.9	1.7	1.7	1.0	1.0			
	Azerbaijanian	5.5		23.3	6.7	6.7							
	Assyrian	0.5		0.6	0.6	0.6							
	Ossetian			6.7					1.0	1.0			
	Greek				1.7	1.7							
	Russian	0.9	6.7	0.6	0.6	0.6							

Source: User survey

Comments, including comments on other inequity variables.

See survey limitation section

3.4.1.2 Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Int. Cafe				I. Chavchavadze State Library of the Parliament of Georgia				Venue 4			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Education	69.8	69.2	52.3		21.6	21.6	43.8	43.8	38.5	38.5						
Health	10.9	15.4	3.4		2.7	2.7	9.8	9.8	13.2	13.2						
Agriculture	2.1	3.8	4.0		1.8	1.8	4.5	4.5	1.1	1.1						
Government services	5.2	3.8			3.6	3.6	22.3	22.3	1.1	1.1						
Entertainment	12.0	11.5	9.4		34.2	34.2	42.9	42.9	12.1	12.1						
News	12.5	11.5	6.7		12.6	12.6	61.6	61.6	8.8	8.8						
Personal	2.6	15.4	1.3		69.4	69.4	61.6	61.6	81.3	81.3						
Art literature (fiction)	18.8	3.8	47.7		1.8	1.8	6.3	6.3								
Art and culture	2.1	3.8														
Sport	0.5				2.7	2.7										
Tourism			0.7													
Trainings			0.7				3.6	3.6								
Musical journals							0.9	0.9								
Employment					0.9	0.9										
Religion. philosophy	0.5															

Source: User survey

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

See survey limitation section

3.4.1.3 Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Int. Cafe				I. Chavchavadze State Library of the Parliament of Georgia				Venue 4			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Email	11.1	33.3			46.6	46.6	66.1	66.1	88.5	88.5						
Chat	3.3	10.0			36.5	36.5	42.1	42.1	52.1	52.1						
Web browsing	22.2	66.7			37.1	37.1	47.9	47.9	90.6	90.6						
Blogs & social networking	2.2	6.7			5.1	5.1	9.9	9.9	4.2	4.2						
Commerce & business	4.4	13.3			2.8	2.8	3.3	3.3	1.0	1.0						
Phone or webcam					4.5	4.5	5.8	5.8	1.0	1.0						
Games	2.2	6.7			36.5	36.5	44.6	44.6	1.0	1.0						
Office programs	6.7	20.0					5.0	5.0								
Have not used	66.6															

Source: *User survey*

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings not exhaustive, based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

See survey limitation section

3.4.1.4 Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Int. Cafe				I. Chavchavadze State Library of the Parliament of Georgia				Venue 4			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
First visit	5.1	3.3	3.9		18.0	18.0	1.7	1.7	3.1	3.1						
Rarely (less than monthly)	22.1	10.0	40.0		12.9	12.9	7.4	7.4	13.5	13.5						
Occasional (about once a month)	18.0	16.7	19.4		6.7	6.7	10.7	10.7	32.3	32.3						
Regular (about 2-3 per month)	18.9	20.0	20.0		14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	28.1	28.1						
Frequent (about once a week)	21.1	13.3	15.6		21.9	21.9	38.0	38.0	14.6	14.6						
Daily (about every day)	14.7	36.7	1.1		26.4	26.4	28.1	28.1	8.3	8.3						

Source: *User survey*

Comments:

See survey limitation section

3.4.1.5 Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Int. Cafe				I. Chavchavadze State Library of the Parliament of Georgia				Venue 4			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Location, distance	3.0	5.8	32.7		7.3	6.3		4.2	14.1	5.2						
Hours of operation	1.0		3.6				11.6	48.7								
Cost		1.4	0.6		18.2	15.1			1.4							
Lack of skills/training	7.9	1.4	17.6		21.8	19.5										
Not enough services	6.9	4.3	40.6		18.2	15.7			8.5	20.7						
Not in right language	6.4	4.3	12.1		20.0	9.4	86.0	30.3	2.8	1.7						
Not enough content	44.3		84.2		0.9	2.5			1.4	3.5						
Technical/low speed	0.5	13.0			16.4	20.1	32.6	33.6	2.8	6.9						
Absence of computers	12.8	43.5	10.3													
Absence of internet	3.9		0.6													
Lack of space	3.4		15.8						2.8							
Lack of interest among customers	0.5															
Absence of medical literature	0.5															

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Lack of new materials	6.4	6.1						
Lack of time among customers		2.4			1.4			
Old computers	2.9	0.6	0.9					
Absence of reading hall		1.8						
None/No barriers	28.6	1.8	36.4		64.8			

Source: *User survey*

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings not exhaustive, based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

See survey limitation section

3.4.2 Salient initiatives to help meet critical information needs by underserved communities

What are the most salient initiatives in the country (past, ongoing, or planned) that aim to meet the information needs of underserved communities in the country? How important are they? In what ways are they successful or not? Where can more information about them be found?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

3.4.2.1 Past initiatives:

Number of initiatives directed at schools computerization were implemented starting from 2002 initiated by State Informatization Department of Georgia

Initiated by Georgian Government, National Communication Commission, State Informatization Department of Georgia, WB, and UNDP, document "ICT Development Framework for Georgia" was created, which is aimed to created a framework program that will help the government to define information-communication development strategy

Aided by UNDP, 11 e-clubs were created in rural settlements of 5 regions of western Georgia. Preliminary trainings for staff were conducted. Currently, only 2 of these e-clubs are functioning as self-funded internet cafes

More information:

http://www.undp.org.ge/news/ICTDFG_geo.pdf

www.imereti.ge

3.4.2.2 Ongoing initiatives:

Civil Integration Fund together with Caucasian Institute are implementing "Local Media Development" project in two regions populated by ethnic minorities – Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli

Georgian government has launched new Georgian Governmental Network GGN project that has started in November of 2006 and has to be ended at the end of 2008. (First part of the overall E-Government Project) It considers building the governmental network between state bodies. Utilization of broadband applications and services in Georgian government structures oriented to ensure publicity and transparency of Government decisions and legislative framework will promote the formation of an electronic society in Georgia.

The ministry of Culture, National Library of the Parliament of Georgia and Library Association of Georgia are jointly conducting research to study the situation created in the public library sphere to work out the recommendations for improving the situation.

More information:

Civil Integration Foundation. Zaur Khalilov, director. Tel.:(+995 77)4544378

Guram Takniashvili, Head of the department, Methodology Department of I.Chavchavadze

National Library of Parliament of Georgia (+995 32 36 09 51)

http://www.reforms.ge/

http://www.mcs.gov.ge/

3.4.2.3   Historical trends and opportunities to serve information needs

Based on the above, what is the general trend in the country in relation to provision of public access information services? Are there any important upcoming opportunities (for example, upcoming regulatory changes, infrastructure enhancements, etc) that can impact public access information (include services through libraries and other public information venues)?

i.   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Due to economic regression Georgia failed to keep up the processes of developing access to information occurring in the World. Thus nowadays our country stays far behind European countries in terms of the level of the access to the information. In terms of ICTs, situation is also far from good. Destroyed infrastructure of telephone lines affects the spread of ICTs in remote areas.

Nowadays Georgia is experiencing significant number of reforms in all fields. These reforms also affect public access to information. The increased financing of the National library of Georgia and public libraries is to be taken into consideration. ICTs are also increasingly introduced in the settlements were they were previously missing. However, providing the whole population of Georgia (or at least its most part) with appropriate access to information requires far more large-scaled activities.

3.4.2.4   Planned initiatives:

The Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia lunched certain activities, which aims to rehabilitate the library network, to renew the book funds and to equip non-urban libraries with computers.

More information:

http://www.reforms.ge/

http://www.mcs.gov.ge/

3.5   Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment

3.5.1   National and local economic environment

Describe the national and local economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in the country.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

For a long period of economical crisis started in the country since 90s, libraries do not get any funding from the government. The salaries were miserable for the library workers, which caused the flow of the qualified staff to other sectors.

The general crisis in educational sphere caused the lowering of higher education quality of the library departments, depriving country from the skilled professionals in the field.

Lack of further professional trainings and qualification rising courses mentioned above, also deprivation from the processes going on in international library society, resulted in the decline of the sphere.

Trends:

The government is committed to pay a proper attention to library system, for this purpose the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport together with The Library Association of Georgia is planning a reform. Although as the reform is not finally formulated yet, the concrete possible outcomes are not defined yet.

Source: Guram Takniashvili, Head of the department, Methodology Department of I.Chavchavadze National Library of Parliament of Georgia Tel.: (+995 32) 36 09 51

3.5.2   National and local policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of the policy and regulatory framework in the country (and if applicable, locally) that affect delivery and access to information (e.g. censorship, Wi-Fi bandwidth regulation, etc). What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The very first legal act, which gives the guarantees on the freedom of information, is the Constitution, the supreme law of Georgia. According to its article 24, every person is entitled to freely receive or spread information, express and spread one's ideas orally, in a written form or by other means. The mass media is free and censorship is not allowed. The state or individuals do not have right to monopolize the mass media or its spreading facilities. As well, the Constitution of Georgia states the exceptional restriction of the above mentioned right: the rights can be restricted by law, by the conditions that are inevitable, in order to insure the state security, territorial integrity or social safety; avoid a crime; defend others rights and dignity; evading divulgation of the confidentially acknowledged information, or for ensuring the independence and impartiality of the court in the democratic society.

Another important legal act, that regulates the freedom of information is "The General Administrative Code of Georgia", which defines issuing and execution of administrative legal acts by administrative organs, discussion of administrative complaints and applications, preparation, putting and fulfillment of an administrative agreement. The aim of the code is ensuring the protection of human rights and freedoms, public interests and supremacy of law by means of the administrative organs (Article 1, Aims of the Code). The 3rd unit of the code is dedicated to freedom of information and regulates the topics, such are: Accessibility of Public Information; Decision on Classification as Secret of Public Information; Period of Classification

as Secret of Public Information; Rule of Promulgation of Classified Information; Ensuring Accessibility of Public Information; Requesting Public Information; Availability of a Copy of Public Information; Distribution of Public Information; Denial on Distribution of Public Information; Decision on Distribution or on Denial about Distribution of Public Information; Information, Classification of which is not Allowed; Openness of Public Information etc. More specifically, according to the article 2 (Accessibility of Public Information) of "The General Administrative Code of Georgia", "The public information is open, except of the cases foreseen and regulated by law, - regarding the information acknowledged as the state, commercial, or private secret".

As for the "Law on Press and Other Means of the Mass Media" of Georgia, this normative act, as you can see from its name, regulates freedom of press and other means of the mass media, citizens' rights to freely express, spread and get information on the issues of social and state life and prohibition of censorship (article 1 general statements). The law, also, explains the concept and language of the mass media, the exceptional rule of restriction of freedom of mass media, work and spread of the mass media, rights and obligations of citizens as well as mass media and journalists etc.

Regarding the sanctions in the sphere of getting and spreading the information, - they are stated by "The Criminal Code" of Georgia. The last mentioned covers the issues, such are: Illegal Denial on Viewing Information or Presentation of Incorrect Information; Taking the Subject or Document of Historical, Cultural, Scientific or National Importance, for Misappropriate; Violation of Rights of the Possessor of Author's and Adjacent Rights and the Creator of the Data Base; Computer Crime, - Illegal Access to the Computer Information etc.

The second normative act, which states the sanctions regarding the cases of hiding the public information, denial on its distribution, distribution of incorrect information etc. is "Code of Administrative Law Violations".

As for the telecommunication functioning - except the Constitution, the supreme law of Georgia, the second law to mention is Georgian "Law on Electronic Communications". This act establishes legal and economical fundaments for the work by electronic communicational nets and means, creation and regulation of the competitive environment in this field, the functions of the independent regulatory organ (Georgian National Committee on Communications), the rights and obligations of the private and legal entities concerning the ownership, usage and deliverance of services of the electronic communicational nets and means.

The third legal act by importance, that regulates the broadcasting issues is the "Georgian Law On Broadcasting", which according to the principles of freedom of word, freedom of thought, and free enterprise defines the rules of the broadcasting, the creation and work of the independent regulatory organ in this field, the conditions of regulation of the work and rules and procedures of license. The aims of the legal act are: Formation of the social broadcasting, independent from the state intervention; regulation of the work in the field of broadcasting, according to the principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality, by the means of independent regulatory organ; insurance of the freedom of word and expression, stimulation of the competitive environment among the broadcasters, independence and equality of the owners of the license and effective use of the frequencies.

We have to mention Georgian "Law on Freedom of Word and Expression" too. As you can see from its name the legal act regulates the freedom of word and expression, judicial guarantees of its protection, the exceptional cases of the restriction of the freedom, the obligation of protection of confidential information, sanctions for the violation of the last mentioned rule, legal responsibilities for the slander etc.

Georgian "Law on Advertisement", which regulates the legal relationships created on the goods and financial markets during the advertisement implementation, putting and spreading, - the aim of the legal act is the development of the healthy concurrence, protection of the social interests, rights of the advertisement subjects and customers, the avoidance and suppression of the non relevant advertisement.

As it was already mentioned among laws, that regulate the freedom of information are "The General Administrative Code of Georgia", the "Law on Press and Other Means of the Mass Media" of Georgia, "The Criminal Code" of Georgia, "Code of Administrative Law Violations".[28]

Legal Basis for Library Functioning

After gaining the independence it was clear that in order to stop the disorganized, misbalanced cutting down of the library network and for the protection of the population's rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia, the administration of the field of culture needed elaboration of the legal basis. The work on the draft law on the library work started in the years 1994-1995. The specialists of the field and the representatives of the relevant parliamentary services took part in the preparation of the bill. The Parliament of Georgia passed "The Law on the Library Work". The state guaranteed the rights of the citizens of Georgia in the field of the library service by the law, the state was the guarantee in the protection of the libraries' rights (article 4);

The great role in maintaining and development of the main library of the country has played "The Law on the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia" (year 1997). The above mentioned laws as well as "The Law on the Cultural Heritage" (year 1997) are the legal normative acts on the functioning of the libraries;

The issues of maintaining of the library network and raise of effectiveness of libraries' work was discussed on the governmental session (11 January, 2001), where the commission for maintaining the library system was created for elaboration of the many years' programme on the maintaining and development of the library network. "The 2003-2005 Years' Concept on Maintaining and Development of the Georgian National Library Network" was approved by the decree of 7 January, 2003 of the President of Georgia (#246). The concrete activities on maintaining and development of the libraries were described in the document. The document, as well as the main legal acts on the libraries, has not implemented changes in library network's regulation and maintaining work. The decentralization of administration of the libraries has weakened the role of the state structures implementing the library policy. All has

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[28] Prepared by the working team based on information provided by Tamar Gurchiani, coordinator of GYLA project "Freedom of Information" and Nino Gvediashvili, manager of NGO "Human Rights Information and Documentation Centre"

been defined by the economic and social levers. The libraries appeared to be in the conditions of the market economy, and the big share of the librarians – socially unprotected.

According to the 3 July, 2007 resolution #131 of the government of Georgia, the local libraries (municipality (central), village, city) are considered to be institution under the municipality. According to the resolution, the libraries operating in almost all the regions have been changed into the non profitable (non commercial) legal entities;

It's clear that the legal basis of the library work in Georgia needs the essential correction. Twelve years have gone since the first law was passed. The both of the library laws should be amended, the draft law "On the Obligatory Samples" should be elaborated. The gaps in the legal base negatively affect not only functioning of the whole network, but of the single libraries as well.

3.5.3 Regional and international policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of policy and regulatory framework in the region and internationally that affect the delivery of public access to information and communication in the country. What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There are different international organizations' and institutions' recommendations in this direction (UNESCO, IFLA and etc.). In Russia, there is elaborated the model (codex) for public libraries, according to which one library is to be considered for every 500 citizen. According to international norms, in the cities, city library is to be opened for each 28-30 thousand citizens. Distance between the libraries, functioning according to the territorial distribution principle, should be 3-5 km. In the cities, number of other institution libraries (special, national, scientific) has to be taken into consideration. In Georgian reality modernization or so called "optimization" of library network according to these parameters and principles is less possible, admits Guram Takniashvili, Head of the Methodology Department, of I.Chavchavadze National Library of Parliament of Georgia: *"Georgia is mountainous country, sparsely populated areas are situated far from each other. Above mentioned principles of optimization can be used only in lowlands"*

3.6 Collaboration Practices and Opportunities Across Venues

Linkages and collaboration between different types of venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand existing and potential collaboration opportunities and linkages among and between public access venues, and how they can improve the quality and relevance of information access to underserved communities.

i.   Include reference to existing as well as potential collaboration opportunities.

ii. If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Since critical situation was created in terms of library funding and materials supply, the

libraries turned to the private publishing houses for help. Number of publishers or authors permanently gift the newly edited books to certain libraries.

There are cases when different international organizations fund certain library initiatives, but these initiatives are mainly singular and limited in time.

3.7   Buzz Factor: Public and Government Perceptions About What is "Cool"

The "buzz factor", i.e., public and government perceptions about what is "cool" in relation to public access venues, where to invest resources, what places to hang out in, was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these perceptions about what is "cool" offer new opportunities or obstacles to strengthening public access information venues in the country.

Recently, the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia lunched certain activities, which aims to rehabilitate the library network, to renew the book funds and to equip non-urban libraries with computers. The turning point in this direction turned out to be governmental meeting conducted in this ministry on 14th of January 2008. On this meeting the new minister met heads of regional culture service institutions and library managers.

In the regions, where the basic network of libraries was preserved librarians turned out to stay only part-time employed and have only 40-50 GEL salary. Currently the ministry of Culture, National Library of the Parliament of Georgia and Library Association of Georgia are jointly conducting the statistical study of the created situation to work out the recommendations for improving the situation. In the regions, the fate of the libraries was generally decided according to the individual decision of head of local administration.   In the places, where the traditional type of network was preserved, the current attempt of restoring will face les problems, but in the areas, where the libraries were abolished with violation of all normative acts, serious problems will be to overcome.

Despite such a declared attention by the government, librarians still claim that their profession is not properly respected. The evidence of this statement is the fact that very small amount of trainings are available for librarians, it acceptable to work in the library with no special education, very low salary. One can conclude about unpopularity of this specialty according to the fact that in 2008 there were no students admitted on the department of library science.

3.8   Legitimate Uses

The difference between "legitimate" or "non-trivial" uses of information in public access venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. For example, uses of social networking spaces (Facebook and similar), blogs, chat, video games, as well as opportunities to download, install and run open source software applications in public access computers poses new challenges to traditional notions of "legitimate" information needs for development, and "trivial" uses of information for development… Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how local definitions and restrictions based on what is "legitimate" or "non-trivial" information or communication practices offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

In National libraries and in scarce number of public libraries offering ICTs, chats and social networking spaces are regarded as non-trivial and are not welcomed. However it can not be

said that these are prohibited, as the employees of these venues do not usually check, whether visitors use ICT in "legitimate" or "non-trivial" purposes

There are no legitimate or non-trivial uses of ICTs in internet cafes. The only prohibition in some of internet cafes is that users can not install new software without the permission of the operator or administrator.

3.9 Shifting Media Landscape

The ever-changing media landscape and the new opportunities brought about by new media such as mobile phones, SMS, GPS, and even renewed roles for community radio open, was a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these new technologies and media offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

3.9.1 Mobile phones

If appropriate, describe salient uses of mobile phones, text messaging, SMS and similar technologies, in relation to public access information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

Based on Study of Customer Market of Internet-Telephone Services. Household Survey for Ward Telecom, implemented by IPM in May 2008, 47.8% of urban population (age 15+) use mobile phones. Mobile phones are very important also for the rural population, as in many regions there is no fixed telephone lines.

There are two main mobile phone operators in Georgia, who in sum report to have over two million users.

So it can be argued that the role of mobile phones is very important. Though it should be noted that mobile phones are basically used for communication purposes and not for meeting some information needs. For example, according to the study mentioned above, only 0.5% of those who access internet do it through mobile connection.

3.9.2 Web 2.0 tools and use

If appropriate, describe any salient uses of Web 2.0 tools among users of ICT in public access venues. (Web 2.0 refers to evolution of web-based communities and hosted services, such as social-networking sites, wikis, blogs and others. Wikipedia).

3.9.3 Combination of different media

If appropriate, describe creative ways in which different media are being combined to meet information needs of underserved communities, and the ways they affect public access venues. Different media include community radio and TV, other print media, street theatre, songs, etc.

3.9.4 Other shifting media landscape examples

If appropriate, describe other new features and practices in the media landscape that affect public information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

This would be a good place to discuss innovative practices on content creation and production of new

messages, media, information and knowledge that are not described elsewhere in this report.

3.10 Health Information Needs

This is an extra contribution to other research on health information needs going on at the University of Washington, based on willing respondents to last two questions on user surveys at the public access venues.

3.10.1 Sources of health information

Where are people most successful at locating useful health information for themselves or their family (% of respondents across all venues):

29.2 clinic/ hospital	16.3 Friend/ family	46.7 Health worker	1.3 Public library	2.7 Community resource (e.g. herbal medicine store)	1.6 Int. at private location	0.3 TV	0.1 Books	0.1 Ambulance	0.6 Int. cafe	0.1 Teacher	1.0 DK

Comments: See survey limitation section

3.10.2 Types of health information

What types of health information do they have the most difficulty finding (% of respondents across all venues)?

28.3 Disease prevention	8.7 How to locate healthcare	8.8 Child health information	19.2 Remedies/ drugs	0.1 Information on Internal organs' diseases	0.3 Contemporary achievements in medicine	0.3 It is difficult to locate all kinds of information	9.8 All kinds of information can be obtained in many places	24.5 DK

Comments: See survey limitation section

4 Venue-Specific Assessments

Complete one full assessment for each type of venue studied in the country.

4.1 Venue 1: Public Libraries

4.1.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

Public Libraries seem to be the most widespread venue type that provides public access to information. The Soviet government created a network of the public libraries. During that period each settlement of Georgia was provided with public libraries or reading halls (small equivalent to public libraries). The system remained unchanged in Post-Soviet Era. So public libraries continued functioning in almost all settlements until recently.

After the collapse of Soviet Union it became clear, that the new government is not able to maintain and support this kind of library arrangement. The library network, arranged according to the department and territorial principle collapsed. The libraries faced the difficulties, connected to the period of transition to market economy on the one hand and civil unrest on the other hand. The library network was dramatically damaged in the areas of civil conflicts. Especially severely were damaged the libraries belonging to the system of the Ministry of Culture (these were PUBLICK LIBRARIES in different urban and non-urban areas). Libraries were deprived from the central financing. Their budgeting and management were transferred to the local municipalities The vertical system of library management was changed to the horizontal one, which gave the local municipalities to conduct decreasing, abolishing and consolidation activities regarding the library network. In many regions and cities these measures were conducted to the prejudice of the interests of the population. One by one village libraries were closed, large part of the population remained without library service and consequently -without information.[29]

As a result of mentioned reforms, some public libraries have been abolished and united into bigger libraries. Nowadays in all districts of Georgia there are 1396 public Libraries.[30] They are distributed throughout the country in the following way: There is one relatively large library in a district center and several smaller libraries in other settlements of districts. The libraries in district centers have more volumes compared with the smaller ones; however books can be borrowed from central

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[29] Interview with Guram Takniashvili, Interview with Guram Takniashvili, head of the I.Chavchavadze National Library of Parliament of Georgia methodology department

[30] Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia, available at www.mcs.gov.ge

libraries through smaller libraries of the settlements.

Nowadays very few public libraries offer access to information through ICTs. Such services are provided only by libraries located in district centers and their number is paltry (about 5 in Tbilisi and only 5-7 in all other settlements of Georgia: in Gurjaani, Telavi, Gori, Khashuri, Zugdidi, Batumi).

4.1.2   Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Currently in all districts of Georgia there are 1396 public Libraries. They are distributed throughout the country in the following way: There is one relatively large library in a district center and several smaller libraries in other settlements of districts.

Nowadays very few public libraries offer access to information through ICTs. Such services are provided only by libraries located in district centers and their number is paltry (about 5 in Tbilisi and only 5-7 in all other settlements of Georgia: in Gurjaani, Telavi, Gori, Khashuri, Zugdidi, Batumi).

Many public libraries offer their services for free. The rest charge miserable registration fee, that is affordable for almost all population. Based on quantitative survey of library users, cost did not appear to be barrier for library usage.

Based on focus group discussions it can be mentioned that some category of population, do not consider public libraries, due to their out of dated content, worth the efforts and even such a low fee, needed to get their services.

4.1.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Initially public libraries in Georgia and in the whole Soviet Union were meant to provide easy physical access to all categories of the population regardless the place of their residence. Consequently libraries were established in almost all settlements both in the cities and in the villages as well. Villages usually had one public library, as for the urban areas the number of libraries there was proportional to the size of population. Public libraries were usually located in the centers of the settlements were many other government and educational institutions were situated. So it can be concluded that during the soviet period public libraries could be easily physically accessed by population. The statement was true till the middle of the 1990s. This period is marked with significant reduction of the number of public and other types of libraries. This reduction was followed by the decision of the government to deliver the governance of public libraries to local municipalities. The local governments in turn could not support the existing library system due to lack finances. Many local authorities found very easy solution to this problem by simply abolishing libraries. Such cases were especially frequent for high mountainous settlements, where together with libraries schools were closed as well. For this reason the physical access was relatively undermined, though public libraries are still present in major rural and urban areas and remain as most nationally widespread venues

designed to provide public information.

4.1.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In terms of inappropriateness, the main thing to note is the obsolete fund of volumes. Except rare cases libraries have not received new books for many years. Big part of the materials stored in the libraries is very old and are useless for the population. Though there are also books that are never going to be "out of date"[31] . As Library workers mentioned during focus group discussion, there are two types of obsolete volumes – these are literature containing Soviet political propaganda – which was obligatory to possess for every library and the second type is literature, out of date in terms of scientific and educational content.

In many libraries catalogues are not appropriately structured (not only electronic catalogues, but also printed ones). There are public libraries that don't have any catalogue at all. This fact sometimes make it impossible for library users to get a book at this venue even if the book is kept there.

The poor conditions of the facilities are also noteworthy. The depository of the books are not equipped well enough to ensure proper care of the volumes stored there. Besides reading halls lack adequate heating, lightning, elementary equipment (chairs, desks).

These reasons hinder the services public libraries are providing to the population.

4.1.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The price the libraries charge for their services is affordable for almost all the population. 2-3 GEL (1,5-2$) annual fee (for membership) is reasonable price for all categories of the population willing to obtain information from the libraries. Moreover the people at remote settlements are ready to pay more to get updated information.

Many public libraries offer their services for free.

4.1.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

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[31] *Ibid.*

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

One needs to be registered as a library member to gain access to its services. This registration in most cases is valid for one year. And the registration fee is the only charge that has to be paid. All other services are free except some ICT services (for example: photocopying, printing)

Indicate amount in local currency 2-3 GEL

Equivalent in US Dollars: 1,5-2 USD

Date of estimate August 2008

and local currency name GEL (Georgian Lari)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

One needs to be registered as a library member to gain access to its services. This registration in most cases is valid for one year. And the registration fee is the only charge that has to be paid. All other services are free except some ICT services (for example: photocopying, printing) E.g. photocopying of one page usually costs 0,05 GEL (0,03-0,04 USD) and printing out one page costs 0,1-0,2 GEL (0,06 to 0,12 USD)

4.1.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

	Number of facilities in each administrative unit
Tbilisi (capital)	54
Kakheti	259
Mtskheta-Tianeti	116
Shida (Internal) Kartli	186
Imereti	396
Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo (Lower) Svaneti	141
Kvemo (Lower) Kartli	253
Samegrelo – Zemo (Upper) Svaneti	193
Guria	109
Adjara	112
Samtskhe-Javakheti	190
Abkhazia	No data

But after the optimization reform in 2007, the number of libraries was decreased to 1396 and the data on regional distribution of libraries needs to be updated.

	Number of facilities in this type of location	Number offering Digital ICT services
Urban	178	10-12
Rural	1218	0

Urban libraries are much bigger in size, number of volumes, number of staff and number of users.

4.1.2.5.1   Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).

Description of map:

4.1.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

4.1.3   Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

In Georgia there was only one library school – that is Library department of former Sulkhan-Saba Pedagogical University, which is nowadays merged with Foreign Languages Institute and renamed for I. Chavchavadze State University. Vast majority of the librarians, working in the public libraries are graduates from this university. Due to not very high popularity of the profession, this department often lacks students – for example, currently there are no students studying on this department. Despite the existence of the higher education in this sphere, post-graduate qualification-rising curses or professional trainings are hardly available for librarians for last 15 years.

The Georgian Library Association is trying to fill in this gap by recently launched training courses for librarians. National Scientific library also provides trainings for librarians. The issues covered by these trainings are: general courses in library services, bibliography standards, classification standards, electronic catalogues, basic computer classes, inter-library exchange system, fund-rising and project writing and etc.

Public libraries suffer from lack of book supply, but also they face the problem of overloading by currently irrelevant content like books of outdated political character of Soviet epoch, books with scientifically outdated information.

As it was already mentioned above, public libraries of Georgia differ significantly in size. Consequently the number of employees differ also significantly. Libraries can be grouped in three categories: 1) small settlement libraries with 1-2 employees; 2) Central libraries of the districts – 15-20 employees; 3) City libraries – 50 employees and more

4.1.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations; i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The staff size of public libraries varies from 1 part-time employee to 19-20 full time employees. The exceptions are central libraries of big cities like Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, etc. In urban libraries number of employees is 5-6 times as big as that of employees in rural ones.

As for the central libraries of big cities the number are as high as 82 (in Kutaisi central library) and 440 (Tbilisi central library)

4.1.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

In Georgia there was only one library school – that is Library department of former Sulkhan-Saba Pedagogical University, which is nowadays merged with Foreign Languages Institute and renamed for I. Chavchavadze State University. Vast majority of the librarians, working in the public libraries are graduates from this university. Due to not very high popularity of the profession, this department often lacks students – for example, currently there are no students studying on this department. Despite the existence of the higher education in this sphere, post-graduate qualification-rising curses or professional trainings are hardly available for librarians for last 15 years.[32]

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[32] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

The Georgian Library Association is trying to fill in this gap by recently launched training courses for librarians. National Scientific library also provides trainings for librarians. The issues covered by these trainings are: general courses in library services, bibliography standards, classification standards, electronic catalogues, basic computer classes, inter-library exchange system, fund-rising and project writing and etc.

Based on Library operators' survey out of 16 surveyed urban libraries at least 1 employee had on-job training in 9 libraries. While out of 12 rural libraries none turned out to have current trained operators.

4.1.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

	Services Offered	Comments
1.	Access to books (reading halls)	Public libraries differ significantly in terms of number books
2.	Access to magazines and other periodicals	Public libraries differ significantly in terms of number periodicals
3.	Books take out	Rare books or important ones can not be taken out of the library
4.	Providing space for public events	These activities usually are singular or dedicated to some special dates, for example to the "library week" being conducted annually since 2002
5.	Access to internet	Offered only in few urban libraries
6.	Access to electronic catalogue	Offered only in few urban libraries
7.	Photocopying	Offered only in few urban libraries
8.	Printing out	Offered only in few urban libraries
9.		
10.		

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

In operator's survey the librarians were asked to mention all the services, offered by their

venues. Below is the list of all the services, offered by 28 surveyed urban and rural public libraries:

N	Name of the service	Frequency of mentioning
1	Access to internet	2
2	Computer services	3
3	Photocopying	1
4	Access to news	6
5	Access to books	15
6	Services for blind people	1
7	Books take out	9
8	Topic discussions	1
9	Deapartment for fiction literature	5
10	Archive of old periodicals	2
11	Materials on agriculture	2
12	Materials on medicine	1
13	Materials in English language	1
14	Children's club	1
15	Music club	1
16	Reading hall	3
17	Press	5
18	Public events	1
19	Department of Children literature	2
20	Excursions	1
21	TV viewing	1
22	Cartoons	1
23	Videotapes	1
24	Electronic encyclopedia	1

4.1.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All the services, provided by the public libraries, are open to everyone. But the libraries do not have any programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities. Besides, simply being open to everyone regardless his/her gender, ethnicity and etc, does not make the information provided through these libraries appropriate for different groups. For example, lack of books, periodicals or any other information on minority spoken languages is significant problem for public libraries.[33]

4.1.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

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[33] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

The main part of the content at public libraries consists of materials received during the Soviet period including fiction, educational, and scientific materials. As for newer materials, they are mostly supplemented by periodicals.

Other Content Needed:

The research identified several information needs experienced by underserved communities in Georgia. Following can be provided through public libraries:

- Information on civil rights - information about status, rights, responsibilities.
- People involved in Academic sphere also experience lack of information they need for their education.
- Educational materials on ICT in Georgian language and in languages, spoken by minorities

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Since critical situation was created in terms of library funding and materials supply, the libraries turned to the private publishing houses for help. Number of publishers or authors permanently gift the newly edited books to certain libraries.

There are cases when different international organizations fund certain library initiatives, but these initiatives are mainly singular and limited in time.

Source*:*

- FGD library workers
- In-depth interviews

4.1.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Libraries contain materials related to health and education issues however this information is old and does not help the user of the library. There was some pilot project of Open Society – Georgia Foundation, aiming to use public library venues as a provider of information for governmental decisions, but it was directed only to certain libraries and was limited in scale.[34] Therefore, it could not affect the overall situation in the country.

4.1.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

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[34] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

The purposes of the use of public libraries are quite similar in urban and rural settlements. In both types of public libraries education it the most often sought information type. 69,8% of urban library users come to these venue type for education while in rural libraries the share of such users is 52,3%. Fiction literature is the second most often searched materials, though in rural ones its share is much bigger that that in urban libraries (47,7% rural library users and 18,8% urban users). As for the other purposes of use, news, entertainment and health information are worth mentioning among urban users, while rural users are interested in news entertainment and agriculture information.

In terms of ICT service usage, in urban public libraries, most frequently used services are Web browsing (two thirds of the users come to urban libraries for this service), then comes Email with 33,3%. 20% of users use office programs like MS WORD, EXCEL at urban libraries. As for the rural libraries, they are almost never found to offer ICT service to their users.

4.1.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

The survey results showed that more than three fourths of urban public library users are female. The share of female uses is also high among rural users though their advantage in number is not so big in this case (about two third female users).

Regarding the age of the users, it should be noted that big majority of library users are either in 15-35 or 36-60 age groups (47% and 30,9%). As for other age groups, 8,8% is 14 years old or younger, and the remaining 13,4% is 61 years old or older. The age distribution among rural libraries users is similar to that among urban ones to some extent, though it should be noted that there are more young users (21,1% are 14 or younger users). On the other hand the share of old users is considerably less, reaching only 3,3%.

As for the ICT usage, 70% of those respondent that come to public libraries for ICT services are in their 15-35 years, 20% are 26-60 year-aged people and the remaining 10% is 61 years old or older.

40,6% of rural library users have up to high school education, while 31,1 % are graduated from colleges and universities. 26,7% have only elementary education and only 1,7% have no formal education. Urban libraries turned out to have users with higher levels of education. 59,9% have either collage or university education, 27,2% up to high school, and 12% elementary education.

Majority of both urban and rural library users with low income status, but rural users are more often found to have low incomes (74% among rural and 66,4% among urban users). As for the social status majority of users are from middle class comprising about 60% of all users,

considerable share take also users with low status (about 30%).

Public libraries are generally used rarely as the survey results showed that rural library are rarely visited by 40% of their users. Only 1% come daily to these venues, though the number of regular and frequent visitors are also notable (20% and 15,6%). The situation is similar in urban libraries though as compared to rural ones they have less users who come rarely (22,1%) and relatively more who come frequently (21,1%).

4.1.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The literacy level among the population is quite high; therefore, the materials available in the public libraries are understandable for the most part of the population, despite their age, gender, and economic status. This statement is less true for the minorities living on the territory of Georgia. Since the level of knowledge of Georgian language is low, their capacity to use the materials is limited.

In addition, the significant problem is unawareness of the availability of certain services offered in the public libraries, e. g. the existence of subscription to international publications, accessible through scarce internet-entries is unknown for the most part of the population.

It must be considered, that even if ICT technologies were available, very few people would be able to take advantage of it, as the computer literacy level is very low. Among rural population surveyed, 75,6% has no computer skills, and 13,9% has only basic skills, unable to work independently, without other's help. Only 3,9% of rural library users reported very good computer skills, while 6,7 percent's computer skills are not very good, but they can work independently with computers.

Among urban library users the ICT literacy is considerably higher, but 34,1% still have no computer skills and they can not work independently like other 16,1% who reported to have only basic skills.

4.1.3.10 Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: No trainings for users are offered

ICT specific training courses:

4.1.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

When the libraries were established in settlement it was arranged so that population could easily integrate their services into their lives. For these reasons public libraries are generally situated in the centers of settlements and near educational institutions.

4.1.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue…

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In the Soviet period, public libraries were perceived as very important part of public education system. The permanent supply with new materials was provided, starting from the 30s of the 20th century, new library technologies were the issue of scientific debates and research[35]. Nowadays, the crisis existing in the library sphere and the education sphere in general, made them less attractive for the population.

This phenomenon has two aspects: 1. The population is aware that the conditions ate the public libraries are very poor – there is no heating, no funding, no comfort. Therefore they believe that they can not receive adequate information there. 2. It is widespread opinion that due to its low price, the information provided in the public libraries is of low quality.[36]

However this perception is not common – for some part of the population libraries are almost only way of receiving information, or some kind of education. People realize the opportunity that the library can offer in case of sufficient financial and ideological support.

4.1.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If relevant, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Since population use this venue very seldom and almost never for using new technologies, it is extremely difficult to estimate how social appropriation of technologies is changing due to this type of venue.

4.1.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

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[35] Loria, A., Takniashvili, G., *"The Development of Librarianship and Preparing of Library Staffin Georgia in 1921-1990 (Short Historical Summary)"* in Sakartvelos Biblioteka (Georgian Library) quarterly published magazine, , P.16, 02.2008

[36] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

No one doubts the reliability of the information of the Library. It enjoys high level of trust among all the categories of the population. As it is generally perceived the library offers a bit old but completely reliable information.

88% of those public library users in urban areas, who come to search for specific information, admit that they fully trust the information obtained in the venues. Another 10% partially trusts the information and only 1% trusts it less. The situation is similar in rural areas, where 73,8% trusts fully the information obtained and 25,5% trusts it partially.

4.1.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

There is huge information gap at this venues. To play the role of main venue providing public access to information the following items are needed:

- New volumes
- Subscription to all main printed periodicals
- Provide access to internet
- Cooperation with local institutions to provide information of local importance
- Training of librarians
- Materials available on local languages (minorities spoken languages)

4.1.4 Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

There was little support to the libraries from the governmental institutions for many years, resulting in extremely bad situation in this respect. Now the ministries in charge of public libraries state that they are committed to improve situation considerably and return population to libraries through radical reforms. So far there have been no significant activities performed except merging small libraries and reduction of general number of libraries and their employees. Everyone involved in this sphere admits the necessity of reforms; however performed changes caused dissatisfaction of library workers.

4.1.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

For a long period of economical crisis started in the country since 90s, libraries do not get any funding from the government. The salaries were miserable for the library workers, which caused the flow of the qualified staff to other sectors.

The general crisis in educational sphere caused the lowering of higher education quality of the library departments, depriving country from the skilled professionals in the field.

Lack of further professional trainings and qualification rising courses mentioned above, also deprivation from the processes going on in international library society, resulted in the decline of the sphere.

Absence of infrastructure (roads and transportation) and disordered telephone lines. resulting in the absence of internet also affect the functioning of the libraries

4.1.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

After gaining the independence it was clear that in order to stop the disorganized, misbalanced cutting down of the library network and for the protection of the population's rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia, the administration of the field of culture needed elaboration of the legal basis. The work on the draft law on the library work started in the years 1994-1995. The specialists of the field and the representatives of the relevant parliamentary services took part in the preparation of the bill. The Parliament of Georgia passed "The Law on the Library Work". The state guaranteed the rights of the citizens of Georgia in the field of the library service by the law, the state was the guarantee in the protection of the libraries' rights (article 4);

The great role in maintaining and development of the main library of the country has played "The Law on the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia" (year 1997). The above mentioned laws as well as "The Law on the Cultural Heritage" (year 1997) are the legal normative acts on the functioning of the libraries;

The issues of maintaining of the library network and raise of effectiveness of libraries' work was discussed on the governmental session (11 January, 2001), where the commission for maintaining the library system was created for elaboration of the many years' programme on the maintaining and development of the library network. "The 2003-2005 Years' Concept on Maintaining and Development of the Georgian National Library Network" was approved by the decree of 7 January, 2003 of the President of Georgia (#246). The concrete activities on maintaining and development of the libraries were described in the document. The document, as

well as the main legal acts on the libraries, has not implemented changes in library network's regulation and maintaining work. The decentralization of administration of the libraries has weakened the role of the state structures implementing the library policy. All has been defined by the economic and social levers. The libraries appeared to be in the conditions of the market economy, and the big share of the librarians – socially unprotected.

According to the 3 July, 2007 resolution #131 of the government of Georgia, the local libraries (municipality (central), village, city) are considered to be institution under the municipality. According to the resolution, the libraries operating in almost all the regions have been changed into the non profitable (non commercial) legal entities;

It's clear that the legal basis of the library work in Georgia needs the essential correction. Twelve years have gone since the first law was passed. The both of the library laws should be amended, the draft law "On the Obligatory Samples" should be elaborated. The gaps in the legal base negatively appear not only on functioning of the whole network, but of the single libraries as well.

4.1.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

"Libraries have had no serious lobbyist in the governmental structures for the last 15 years. There is no state strategy, or clear understanding of who is responsible for what, and which functions different organizations have, in general, the result is that the system is not functioning properly"[37]

However, it must be admitted that recently, the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia has announced to lunched certain activities, which aims to rehabilitate the library network, to renew the book funds and to equip non-urban libraries with computers. The turning point in this direction turned out to be governmental meeting conducted in this ministry on 14th of January 2008. On this meeting the new minister met heads of regional culture service institutions and library managers. It seems, that the rehabilitation of network has begun and government makes first steps towards repairing and restoring the library network; During the interview we were tolled that 120 village libraries were equipped with computers, buildings were repaired, library documentation funds were renovated. However during the site visits it was discovered that these "newly equipped libraries" are only in the process of building.

Here also must be admitted that in several regions, local municipalities implemented such a radical changes in terms of abolishing the libraries, that reestablishing optimal network and rehabilitation of libraries will need at least 2-3 years. Individual approach is needed; In the regions, where the basic network of libraries was preserved librarians turned out to stay only part-time employed and have only 40-50 GEL salary.

Currently the ministry of Culture, National Library of the Parliament of Georgia and Library Association of Georgia are jointly conducting the statistical study of the created situation to work

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[37] Interview with Nino Suladze, representative of Tbilisi Municipality, department of social issues

out the recommendations for improving the situation. In the regions, the fate of the libraries was generally decided according to the individual decision of head of local administration.   In the places, where the traditional type of network was preserved, the current attempt of restoring will face less problems, but in the areas, where the libraries were abolished with violation of all normative acts, serious problems will be to overcome.

4.1.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

Officially, the system, providing the network connection between the public libraries exists. All public libraries are under the methodological guidance of the National Library and the Ministry of Culture, and under the governance of local municipalities. Structurally, there is one main library in the regional centre, which unites the smaller ones in the region. But as mentioned above, these connections are very vague and in fact either not functioning at all, or functioning with hindrances.

In 2000 the Georgian Library Association was established, which on voluntary basis unites the any types of libraries, archives, museums, informational, library and bibliographical centers, and all organizations or individuals, working in the relevant sphere. The overall aim of the Association is

- To create equal and convenient conditions for all citizens of Georgia for gaining information and knowledge, to work for establishing the democratic principle of overall accessibility

- To establish unite information politic and library system, to assist its effective functioning and its integration to analogical international systems

- To coordinate the Association members' working plans and common projects

- To establish and protect common standards and normative basis

- To assist improving of the legal framework in the sphere

- To protect intellectual, author and other rights of the members[38]

According to the director of the Association, Mr. Irakli Garibashvili, in 2007 the Association united up to 200 members among which 50 were organizations and the rest were different kind of libraries.[39]

Apart from the Georgian Library Association, on its basis, Georgian Integrated Library &

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[38] Georgian Library Association regulations, available at http://www.gela.org.ge

[39] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

Information System Consortium (GILISC) was founded in the same year. As main goals of GILISC activity, introduction of new IT- based services, coordination of activities of Georgian libraries, sharing of resources are defined.[40]

As a sum it must be noted that despite some effort to ensure network existence and functioning, it is very distorted and lacks unite approach.

4.1.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Since critical situation was created in terms of library funding and materials supply, the libraries turned to the private publishing houses for help. Number of publishers or authors permanently gift the newly edited books to certain libraries.

There are cases when different international organizations fund certain library initiatives, but these initiatives are mainly singular and limited in time.

4.1.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

- Absence of infrastructure (roads and transportation)
- Disordered telephone lines. resulting in the absence of internet

4.1.5   For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

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[40] *Ibid.*

4.1.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Public libraries operating in the country are under the supervision of different state institutions. Part of them belongs to the Ministry of Culture, part to the local municipalities. Consequently, budgets for these libraries are allocated from local municipality findings, which are different in each case. That's why it was impossible to determine total budget for all public libraries. Below we give the budget for the 2008 fiscal year for 67 public libraries, located in the capital and its surroundings.

Total Budget for Fiscal Year 2008

Local currency name GEL amount (local currency) 1,4 million

Approx. equivalent in USD 979021 based on exchange rate of 1.43 on date 17.08.2008.

4.1.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget	5 972 677 000	
Education	411 299 700	
Social protection	1 068 685 300	
Healthcare	287 482 300	
Environment protection	26 388 900	
Public libraries		

Other Comments:

4.1.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:	100%	

International donors:
National donors:
User fees/services:
Other (name)
Other (name)
Other (name)

Other Comments:

4.1.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

4.1.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

4.1.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost categories for operation:	Amount in GEL	% of total budget
New volumes/books	49000	3.5
Technology	20000	1.4
Periodicals	49900	3.6
Electricity	48000	3.4
water supply	49000	3.5
Telephone	18900	1.4
Gas supply	40000	2.9
Fuel for transportation	12600	0.9
Stationary	15500	1.1

Equipment	18000	1.3
Transport repairs	11000	0.8
Insurance	10000	0.7
New inventory	49800	3.6
Office costs	80820	5.8
Ongoing building maintanaces	100000	7.1
Costs of business trips	5000	0.4
Salaries	822480	58.7
Total	**1400000**	**100%**

Other Comments:

Given is the budget for the 2008 fiscal year for 67 public libraries, located in the capital and its surroundings, which gets considerably more funding, than other city libraries and rural ones

4.1.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

4.1.6 Case example for public libraries

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Georgia: Libraries are being abolished in Gori

By Saba Tsitsikashvili

Available at http://www.humanrights.ge/index.php?a=article&id=373&lang=ge

06.09.06

"Government doesn't like books in Gori"- Such conclusion are drown by the library employees of Gori city and district. By the official information, the libraries kept in difficult situations in villages are being abolish.

Librarians have applied to "Information and Documentation Center of Human Rights" for help.

Lali Giunashvili (librarian)says: "During the last years a question of abolishing libraries arose several times, among them was our library also. When Levan Berdzenishvili was the director of National Library, he arrived to us and categorically put a question not to abolish the juvenile library of Gori which counts about 40 years. We have kept the unique books for 30 GEL salaries.

We bought new books with our sources. We have planted the bushes and flowers ourselves, but it was all spoiled, trampled down and no one paid attention to us. We don't leave this issue we are going to disturb all the country."

Librarian Tina Tinikashvili says that the employees themselves managed to repair, and store up the new shelves with the help of their family members. And today they are told that there is no necessity of juvenile library in the city.

Tina Tinikashvili (librarian): "The juvenile library is located in the center of the city, on Stalin Street. Here goes many people, among them are pensioners. On the side of the library there is the "People's bank" and the queue of pensioners, while waiting for pensions the old people come and read newspapers. Besides there a University of Gori near this street and students use to come here, we have student users even from outside City."

The employees of juvenile library hope that the local government hasn't information about this issue and will be interested in their problem once they get aware of it. . Librarian Lali Giunashvili says that the issue of abolishing the library must not be decided by Nana Abramdze the head of library union and by Robert Maglakelidze – the head of cultural management. As we have ascertained, the employees of library find them guilt of abolishing the library:

At Gori local governance office we were told that they have a district of the budget. Therefore in near future no increase in financing of libraries is expected while there is a directive to increase minimal salaries to 115 GEL. This can only be achieved through reducing the number of library employees and abolishing some of the libraries.

Gori central library(urban)

These photos are taken before the armed confrontation with Russia. As Gori was in the epicenter of fighting, we do not know how dos the area look like currently and whether the library survived or not.

Village Mejvriskhevi public library (rural)

5 Venue-Specific Assessments

5.2 Venue 2: Internet cafes

5.2.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

Internet cafes are one of the most widespread and consequently important venues offering public access to information to the population of Georgia. They are commonly used to obtain information needed form personal issues. They are also used to gain materials for academic purposes.

In terms of content, the venue type can be considered as an complement to that of public libraries as it provides the type of content that are most lacked by public libraries and even by the National library of Georgia, that is, the most recent information that can be in the forms of online articles, books, announcements on different governmental or non-governmental websites, etc. The statement is particularly true for foreign materials.

Internet cafes are completely private owned. They are not organized in any type of network or even chains. Moreover a big part of internet cafes are not officially registered and therefore there is no official data available on their total number in the country. Despite such independence, internet cafes provide quite similar services and content, that enabled us to consider them as one venue type and study the important characteristics that are common to almost all internet cafes operating in the country.

5.2.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

First of all geographical distribution of internet cafes are to be considered while assessing physical access to the venue type. As it was already mentioned there is no official data on the distribution of the venues according to the administrative units of the country or even according to urban rural areas. Though the results of the recent Settlements Infrastructure Study conducted in 723 settlements (56 urban and 667 rural), selected proportionally according to the population size of the regions, gave us quite a clear picture about geographical distribution of internet cafes. According to the results of the study 35 urban settlements out of 52 have at least one internet café. Big cities (the remaining 4 urban settlements) have several. As for the rural areas only 4 out of 667 turned out to have internet cafes. So it can be concluded that physical access by urban-rural variable varies significantly.

Internet cafes can be considered as one of the most advanced venues in terms of modern technologies. Almost all internet cafes possess appropriate technologies that are necessary to meet information and other ICT needs (printing, photocopying, CD burning, etc) of their users.

As for the affordability, this is the main factor that undermines the accessibility of the venue type. the costs, internet cafes charge for their services are not affordable for a large part of the population.

5.2.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There is large discrepancy between urban and rural settlements in terms of accessibility to internet cafes since they are seldom found in villages while almost all cities and city type settlements have at least one internet cafes. This information was obtained form Settlement Infrastructure Survey conducted at the end of 2007. Out of surveyed 56 urban settlements 52 were district settlements (there are 65 district centers in total) and 35 of them turned out to have at least and mostly 1 internet cafe (positive answer to the question: Is in this settlement a functioning internet café?). The remaining 4 urban settlements are big independent cities that also positively answered to the same question, but there are several internet cafes. As for the rural settlements only 4 settlements out of 667 had internet cafes. So we can conclude that urban population has much more access than those of rural areas. Though we can not say that rural population don't have access to internet cafes at all, as district centers are located in the middle of the districts and the population from neighboring villages can visit venues, but it would take them much more effort and time.

As for the other aspects of physical access, in order to have many users, owners of internet cafes try to have them in the places, convenient for target population. So the venues types are commonly located in the places that can be easily accessed by their users. they are usually found in the centers of the settlements, though not on the mains streets, but next to them.

Internet cafes don't set any limits for any segments of population. People of any age, gender, ethnicity can use these venues if they can afford it. It is also worth noting that internet cafes don't offer special opportunities for blind or physically disabled people (e.g. special entrances for vehicle of invalid people, or employees who would serve blind people).

5.2.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In terms of technologies Internet cafes are most advanced venues which provide public access to information. Photocopying machines, scanners, printers are usually available. Majority of them are using though not latest and highest quality computers but quite good ones. Many users come to internet cafes to play games that need computers with strong capacities. Internet speed is one

of the most important obstacles in internet cafes. This is particularly true while accessing foreign site or downloading materials from foreign servers. The internet connection problems are most significant in the venues located outside Tbilisi.

5.2.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Affordability is the most important factor that excludes a considerable part of the population from the users of internet cafes. The venues charge for quite a high price for their services that makes it impossible to for the population with lower economic status. For just using computers (web browsing, or working in office programs) internet cafes charge hourly and the price varies according to the day time. During night hours service price is usually half of that during day hours.

As focus groups with internet café users showed such a high price resulted in a specific behavior of internet users. If they need to use the venues for the purpose that takes long time, such as reading materials online, they prefer to pay only for the time that is enough to find materials and then get them printed out and take home instead of reading and acquainting with information at the place. Participants also mentioned that due to decreasing prices on technologies some users who need internet cafes regularly may find it more reasonable to buy computers and other technologies themselves instead of spending almost the same amount in internet cafes. For example as one of the participant stated: *"Recently my friend needed to use internet cafes to get materials for his MA thesis and to write it. When it calculated the time and cost he might have needed for it, he found out that for that price he would buy a computer with moderate capacities and would also pay for the internet connection. So he decided to buy a computer."* The situation is particularly true in Tbilisi and other big cities. The number of households with computers and internet connections is increasing very rapidly. So the number of users in big cities is not as high as it was a couple of years ago, though they still remain as important venues.

5.2.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

The main service internet cafes offer is access to computers and internet and they charge hourly. The price per hour varies from 1 to 2 GEL across venues and day/night period.

Indicate amount in local currency   2

Equivalent in US Dollars: 1,4

Date of estimate   15.08.2008

and local currency name   GEL

As for the prices of other services offered by internet cafes, photocopying and printing out materials are most frequent. The price for photocopying per sheet is usually 0,1 GEL (0,07USD)

and 0,2-0,3 GEL (0,14-0,2 USD) for printing out one sheet.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

As it has already been mentioned, there is no data on the total amount of the number of internet cafes in the country, therefore there is not known the geographical distribution of venues. Though according to the same infrastructure survey it was found out that more than half of the district centers that are urban settlements have at least one internet café. The number of districts within regions to some extent proportional to the number of settlements within the region and the size of population. Consequently it can be argued that internet cafes are more or less proportionally distributed across the regions according to their size. In the region that have big cities the number of the venues is bigger as big cities have several internet cafes.

5.2.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

5.2.2.5.1   Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).

Description of map:

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

5.2.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

ICT play important role as they provide access to that types of information that are not accessible through other venues or means. For example, ICT are sometimes the only way to obtain modern foreign academic materials, information on global developments, etc. the importance is continually growing as more and more people start using them and the content available in the internet increases.

ICT play important role as communication means. Georgia as developing country has a lot of citizens, gone abroad either to work or to study. Very often ICT are useful and cheap men of communication (chat, skype, etc)

Internet cafes are the most widespread public venues offering access to ICT.

- Internet cafes provide the services and information, that are most lacked by public libraries – ICT services and information, obtainable through these services

- Internet cafes are located mainly in urban areas, generating inequity across urban and rural settlements

- Internet cafes charge considerably high price that restricts people with low economic status from using the venue services regularly, or even occasionally.

- Internet café operators are not required to have any kind of official education for their position. Though they are almost always found to have good ICT skills.

- ICT literacy level differs significantly across the users of different venue types and across urban-rural settlements. Internet café users and National Library have much higher ICT skills than those of public library users. On the other hand, users of urban venues (both public libraries and internet cafes) have higher ICT literacy level than their counterparts in rural areas.

5.2.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Most internet cafes have one or two operators who work in shifts. Bigger ones or those who operates 24 hours a day have more operators. In bigger venues there are separate employees for other services like photocopying and printing, but in most ones all of the services are administered by one operator.

5.2.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(iii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(iv) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

The main obligation of the venue operators is to provide technical support for users while working with computers. They are expected to solve any problems related to uneven working of computers. They are also obliged to help users with different programs. Therefore operators are required to have good computer skills. Operators are not required and are usually found not to have any official education in this field. However in almost all cases they are skilled enough to deal with the problems that arise during the work process.

5.2.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered	Comments
11. Access to Internet	
12. Computer services (e.g. preparing documents in MS WORD)	
13. Printing	
14. Photocopying	
15. Computer training courses	
16. Searching information	
17. Games	
18.	

19.
20.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

These services, provided by internet cafes do not vary significantly across regions of Georgia. However, urban internet cafes and especially those ones situated in the capital are found to be more advanced in terms of variety and quality of services. In non-urban areas we found a few number of institutions, that ere named "Internet Cafes", but not providing access to internet at all, but offering only games, and photocopying.

5.2.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There are no such programs.

5.2.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

Internet cafes provide access to huge foreign recourses. For years the venues were maily used to obtain foreign materials. Though recently the number of Georgian web sites is also increasing. Currently there are more than 2500 web pages, registered in Georgian internet space. Except certain exceptions, most of the web pages are static and are not updated over the period of time. Most of web pages are on Georgian and Russian. Up till recent times, to use Georgian language in internet was problematic, which was connected to the absence of standards for Georgian language in ICT Georgian fonts with different coding systems were used, but after the government conducted standardization of one of the codes, the situation was changed. Currently, the Unicode (www.unicode.org) coding is also successfully used. Different forums, so called "chats" and web pages are developed.

Other Content Needed:

The Georgian web space lack analytical portals and sites.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Georgian web space is chaotically "filling in" by governmental and private organizations' web pages, informational portals, entertainment and analytical pages, which are often of a very low quality. There are very few specialists, responsible for maintaining these pages – logistic managers, content managers and etc.[41]

5.2.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Almost all state institutions have their web pages that are the main sources of information on health, education, governmental services, accessible through internet cafes. Besides, certain number of NGO, working on civil rights or health issues have web pages with quite significant amount of useful content

5.2.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(ii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

Urban internet café users seek information needed for personal issues. More than two thirds of the users reported to come to urban internet cafes for personal information. Entertainment related information is another popular type among visitors as every third user come to the venues for entertainment purposes. Education is the third most often sought information. 21,6% of users need these venue for academic purposes. News is also important reason for visiting cafes (12,6%). Than come government services, though its share compared to already mentioned information types is relatively small.

As for the usage of rural internet cafes, the same types of information are popular, though it should be noted that frequency of searching news, government services, and education is much bigger than that in urban areas.

5.2.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

More than 70 percent of the urban internet café users are males. Gender distribution is radically different in rural cafes where the majority are female users with 55,4%. In urban settlements more than two thirds of the visitors are 15-35 years old, while in rural venues thir share is 52,1%.

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[41] Interview with Davit Gogichaishvili, Executive director of CIMS Consulting

Quite a big share hold users between 36-60 years in rural settlements (34,7), though in city type settlements theirs share is up to 13,5 percent.

As for the education, about 12 % of users have only elementary education, while almost remaining 88% is divided between the users with up to school education and the graduates of collages and universities.

5.2.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All of the users surveyed appeared to have enough computer skills to obtain information from internet and electronic bases. Though the lack of knowledge of English language considerable undermines internet café users' capacity to use that huge amount of content available in foreign resources of internet.

5.2.3.10 Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses:

ICT specific training courses: Computer training courses

5.2.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Usually, internet cafes are situated in convenient locations, besides, there is no registration, or any official procedures needed to become its user. These factors determine the fact that users can get its services without violating their daily routines.

Some of internet cafes are 24 a day, which makes them convenient to visit.

5.2.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue…

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Until recently, internet cafes were perceived as venues of people who had good computer skills, English language knowledge and certain financial status. However even in this period these venues were not perceived as prestigious, as it was also perceived as entertainment place, where

a lot of kids used to go to play games.

Later, people with relatively high financial status started to purchase PCs, thus internet cafes are not any more associated with venues that are visited generally by population with high income.

5.2.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

During last few years computer literacy level among population of Georgia has increased significantly, particularly among urban population. According to the Study of customer market of internet-telephone service. Household survey, conducted by IPM, showed that 35.8% of 15+ urban population uses internet. This data is increased significantly compared to previous years and still continue to grow. Even though at home usage of internet is taking advantage over usage at internet cafes, the share of usage at internet cafes still remains high.

5.2.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

88,5% of respondents interweaved at urban internet cafes fully trust information obtained through internet cafes and 10,4% trust it partially. Such a high trust may be is caused not by the institution, but by the sources, the information was obtained from.

In rural areas the trust to the information got at internet cafes I also very high – 73,8% fully trusts it and 25,5% trusts it partially.

5.2.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

Urban internet cafes and especially those ones situated in the capital are found to be more advanced in terms of variety and quality of services. In non-urban areas we found a few number of institutions, that ere named "Internet Cafes", but not providing access to internet at all, but offering only games, and photocopying.

5.2.4 Enabling environment

2 – 3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Internet cafes are totally private business organizations. During recent period Georgian government declared to be committed to create business favorable conditions and especially for small businesses. Internet cafes, as small businesses will benefit from this conditions.

There are no special regulatory norms or policy or political will towards concretely Internet Cafes.

5.2.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

5.2.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

5.2.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

5.2.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

No organization or networking.

5.2.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

No partnership among venues.

5.2.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered

above?

5.2.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

5.2.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year

Local currency name   amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD   based on exchange rate of   on date   .

5.2.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget		
Education		
Other (name)		
Public libraries		

Other Comments:

5.2.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:		

	National donors:
	User fees/services:
	Other (name)
	Other (name)
	Other (name)

Other Comments:

5.2.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

5.2.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

5.2.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		

other (name)		
other (name)		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

5.2.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

5.2.6   Case example for venue 2: Internet Cafe

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

There is one internet café in city Akhaltsikhe (Samtskhe-Javakheti region), which is situated on Rustaveli street, which is considered to be one of the central streets of the city and consequently is easily accessible for the population. As there is only one internet café in Akhaltsikhe, 80% of the population of the city uses the services of this venue. There are cases, when people come from the nearby villages of Akhaltsikhe region to use services of this internet café. For example, while the sites visit, there were two users, who came from villages Ude and Andriatsminda.

The internet café is situated in the first floor apartment of housing block. The apartment has four rooms; internet café is situated in one of these rooms. The venue is equipped with five computers and one copying machine. The room is repaired and has sanitary arrangements. But the room is too small for the internet café, very often users have to wait in queue to get access to computers

6 Venue-Specific Assessments (cont.)

6.3 Venue 3: I.Chavchavadze National Library of the Parliament of Georgia

6.3.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

National Library of the parliament of Georgia is the main and biggest library of the country with over 4 000 000 volumes. It also offers access to information through ICTs and is considered as main venue for almost all categories of population. However the disadvantage of this venue is that it is situated only in Tbilisi that makes it difficult for the population living outside Tbilisi use this Library.

The Libraries of International foundations and foreign countries are provided with sufficient funding, they are equipped with modern technologies and facilities. They are comfortable places to get information especially academic one. However their importance is undermined by the fact that their services and materials are mainly in foreign languages, therefore not everyone can take advantage of their services.

6.3.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Physically the National Library is easily accessible for the population of the capital. The only obstacle in this respect is that it has no branches outside the capital of Georgia, so the population from other settlements can not get its services unless they travel specially to the capital. The buildings of the national library are situated in the center of Tbilisi and population can get there by all kinds of public transports.

As a result of increased budget for the last few years the National Library is equipped with modern ICT technologies. An internet club functions within the building of the Libraries, offering its members internet and other computer services. It has also electronic catalogue and electronic archive of e-books. So it can be said that in terms of technologies the National Library is one of the most advanced venue offering public access to information.

As for the affordability of the use of this venue, the Library offers all of its wide variety of services absolutely free to its registered members. Besides there is no registration fee and the library

covers all registration costs itself e.g. costs for taking photos for user cards is also covered by it.

6.3.2.1 Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Library has only one limitation. It does not serve the population under 15 years of age. Though it is also noteworthy that since it is located only in Tbilisi it is difficult to be accessed for the population of other settlements.

It is open every day except the sanitarian days and the services are available during the whole working day (it working day ends two hours later than that of majority of other institutions). The statement is true also with its Internet club. visitors can get its service at any time of the day. Though as it was mentioned above due to small number of computers and large number of visitors, sometimes one have to wait in queue to get the service

6.3.2.2 Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The National Library is the only one to have electronic catalogue that make it very easier of its users to get services in an appropriate manner. It possesses materials including school textbooks and scientific dissertations. Therefore its services are appropriate for all age groups. It also has materials on gender, minority and civil rights issues. So the materials and services are appropriate for almost all categories of the population. The only problem is that materials are not in all the languages the population of Georgia speaks.

In sum, at this venue one can get appropriate information from any field. The only drawback is that the Library is sometimes a bit late to provide newly published literature, especially foreign ones.

The Library has appropriate IC Technology (computers connected to internet, printers copy machines).

6.3.2.3 Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The services of the Library are free for all of the population of Georgia.

6.3.2.4 Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

The services of the Library are free for all of the population of Georgia.

Indicate amount in local currency

Equivalent in US Dollars:

Date of estimate

and local currency name

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

6.3.2.5 Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

6.3.2.5.1   Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).

Description of map:

6.3.2.6 Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

6.3.3   Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Working at the National Library of Georgia is the most prestigious place for the specialists of this field, so it can be said that the qualification of the employees are higher than in any other public libraries. The Library offers increasing number of the trainings form its users. As the director of the Library Boris Gagua stated they have worked out a program under which all of the librarians are meant to undergo professional on-job training courses.

In terms of relative content the national library is most advanced venue among the venues functioning in Georgia. It is the depository of art or scientific works produced in the country even the newest ones. As a result it contains huge amount of locally important content.

The venue enjoys high trustworthiness among its users and the whole population of Georgia. 100% of its user either fully or partially rely on the information obtained at the National library of Georgia.

6.3.3.1 Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In sum, in National Library currently there works 476 full time employees. Besides there are about 15 contractors, whose number varies considerable in time and according to the specific assignments the Library faces.

The Library has also small group of personnel that provide services in ICTs, searching information in Internet, writing CD, printing etc.

6.3.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(v) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(vi) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

The personnel attends several training courses funded by UN and administered by the Training Center of the parliament of Georgia. These courses are: Georgian State Language course, business communications course, personnel management course for managers.

Due to these courses the library have much more experienced and well trained librarians compared with public libraries. There are different training courses administered at the training

center of the parliament for them.

Computer operators of the library are also experienced and well trained. There is also provided computer management course for employees by the same training center.

 In fact there are no cases when user does not get appropriate services because of the lack of capacity of the employees.

6.3.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered	Comments
21. Access to books, magazines, newspapers	
22. Conferences	
23. Public Lectures	
24. Exhibitions of the new books	
25. Audio books	
26. Access to Internet	
27. Access to Electronic base of volumes of the Library	
28. Copying, printing of the materials	
29.	
30.	

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

There is only one this kind of venue in the country, situated in the capital, so there can be no differences across the venues.

6.3.3.4 Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).
If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Library is committed to equally serve all the population without differentiating by age, gender, ethnicity or any other inequity variables. However it efforts are not enough to completely achieve all kinds of equality in its services. For this the efforts from other institutions or individuals are also needed. *"We have employees speaking in minority languages to provide services for ethnic minorities who don't speak Georgian. We have nearly all of the books or articles written on civil rights, minority and gender issues. So we try not to leave any of our users answered. However the situation for them is still less favorable. For example, we have webs site where we place materials in Georgian language. But we don't have any material in minority languages on it. There is only few articles in Russian. We want to improve situation in this respect. We need ethnic minorities to become active and help us themselves, show their demand and contribute to gathering materials in their languages".* National Library also has services for disabled people and it is committed to develop them. It is the only library to have audio books of Georgian classic writers for blind people. But to achieve the aim, the Library needs assistance from the government of the country, form international organizations who have appropriate experience in providing services to disabled people.[42]

6.3.3.5 Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

Books: 3.703.956 units

Magazines: 231.579 annual set

Newspapers: 52.207 annual set

Printed music: 97.050 units

CD/DVD: 3.452 units

The venue possesses almost all content produced in the country. The statement is true for scientific, fiction, educational, and specialized literature as well. Apart from the fact that the National Library has considerable budget allocated for purchasing new volumes, the authors and publishing houses gift their books to it.

Other Content Needed:

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[42] Interview with Boria Gagua, director of the I.Chavchavadze National Library of the Parliament of Georgia

Although the Library purchases new volumes produced in foreign countries, It still lacks foreign materials. Sometimes in the university curriculums students are required to read books that can not be found in the national Library.

6.3.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Library provides large variety of materials. Among them there are many important materials related to health education and other issues concerning human development. Besides, the library hold lectures on different issues for its members. Mainly related to education – new methods etc.

It closely cooperates with the governmental bodies and receives materials related to their latest decision. The Library attempts to possess all locally important materials for example: all important newspapers and magazines, text books that are used at local educational institutions etc.

The website of the Library is periodically updated according to the demands of the users. The visitor can place his/her demand on any material on the website and the Library is supposed to provide the material.

Out of 3,703,956 volumes 11% is in Georgian, 82 % in Russian, and 7% are in foreign languages other than Russian. Such a large share of Russian literature is heritage of soviet period.

6.3.3.7 Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(iii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

The most often sought information in the National Library of Georgia is the information related to personal issues as 81% of its interviewed users responded that they came to this venues to seek this kind of information. Educational information is second most often used information. 38% of the venue users use this venue for this purpose. After Personal and educational education most frequently sought materials are on health and entertainment. It should be noted that in this venue entertainment is mainly associated with information on fiction literature. 8,8% of the users also come to get news, as for other categories of the information, they are seldom sought (a bit more than 1 percent).

6.3.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

The venue has 19400 registered members (yearly subscribed users) and it serves about 2000 users daily. According to the venue operator 60 percent of the venue users are male, while the user survey showed that 51 percent are male against 49 female users. As for the education, as the operator believes that the venues users are well educated people since she stated that the 80% of the users have University or collage education while the other 20% have high education. This estimation turned out to be true to some extent as the user survey showed that 88% had university/college, 4,2 percent have higher education, about 5 percent only elementary and the other 2,8 percent without any formal education. Such a high share of users with higher education may be explained by the fact that the Library does not offer its services to the population under 15. As it is shown from the tables it has no users under 14 years. The great majority of the venues users are young people between 15 to 35 years who comprise 79,2 percent of all it users. 19,8 percent are people between 36 and 60. The old people turned out to come to this place less seldom as only 1 percent of interviewed respondents was older than 60 years.

As for the income level, the operator stated that about 60% of the venue users have low income, while the other 40% medium income. Meanwhile the survey showed that almost half of the users are from medium income level, 27,1% are from low level, 8,3 % with high income level. The other 15,6% refused to tell their income level.

The survey results revealed different distribution of users according to social status. 76,1% stated that they have middle, 14,6 low and only one with high status. 8,4 percent refused to name their social status.

98 percent of the visitors turned out to be ethic Georgians (dominant), Ossetian 1% and Armenian 1%.

Almost one third of the users come to the venue occasionally, 14,6 % frequently, another 28,1% come regularly, 13,5 rarely and 3,1 % visited the Library for this first time. As for the daily users their share is 8,3%.

6.3.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Generally the Library tries to act in accordance with the capacity of its users. It has hired employees to help users in searching information from internet sources for those people who don't have computer skills. But as the user survey showed almost 98 Percent of the users can independently work with computers that is work in internet or with electronic bases.

It abolished fees for its services to make them affordable even for the people with lowest economic status.

The library has no branches outside Tbilisi, therefore location significantly affects users capacity to get its services.

In terms of language knowledge, people who don't know have less capacity to take advantage of

the access of the information.

6.3.3.10 Training Courses for Users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: Training courses: The library hold lecturers to public on important issues mainly related to education and news in information sphere.

ICT specific training courses:

6.3.3.11 Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Library is situated in the center of the city and it is comfortable for majority of its users to get its services without violating their daily routines. For example for students it is quite comfortable to com e to the library after classes as it is near to many educational institutions. It works till 20:00 to be available for the people who can not go there earlier because of the busy schedule. They also work on weekends, so the people who work on week days can also use it.

6.3.3.12 Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The venue is perceived as the main mean of meeting information needs of the society.
It is perceived that The Library is the treasure of the country where is kept all the national intellectual achievements. It is considered to be an unalienable part of the educational process in the country. According to the survey results all of the users either fully or partially rely on the information obtain at the National library.

6.3.3.13 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

One of the apparent indicators to increasing role of digital technologies is that internet sources in more frequently used for almost of kinds of scientific or academic activities. Even older people involved in academic activities find it necessary to use internet sources to validate their scientific works. The curriculums of almost all the educational institutions require that student use internet sources for their work.

Nowadays in Tbilisi nearly at all white-collar jobs it is required that a job seeker possess at list basic computer skills. Therefore in Curriculum Vitae of jobs seekers there is clearly indicated the knowledge of ICTs. These facts indicate that the societies readiness to use modern technologies in their daily lives.

6.3.3.14 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

According to the survey results all of the users either fully or partially rely on the information obtain at the National library.

6.3.3.15 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

The Library is subscribed to many electronic scientific and other types of magazines that would be interesting to many of the library users, however the visitors don't quite often use such materials. According to the director of Georgian Library Association, Mr. Irakli Garibashvili the problem may be that the people to whom these materials are targeted are not properly informed about the existence of this opportunities. The Library needs to make these materials not only available but also inform the interested users about it.[43]

6.3.4 Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

As the director of the National Library states, The Library has serous support from the government. Its budget is increasing. The interest is very big from the government and from the society. The chairman of the parliament is very interested in the details of its functioning and problems concerning this venue.[44]

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[43] Interview with Irakli Garibashvili, president of Georgian Library Association

[44] *Ibid.*

6.3.4.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The majority of the population of Georgia live near the poverty level. Therefore the National Library is considered to be very important source of information for many people who can not afford other sources. As the official data shows the countries economy increased considerably during the last few years. The overall budget of the country has increased. Consequently the National Library now receives more funding thus enabling better services to its users.

6.3.4.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

"Law on the Public Library of the Parliament of Georgia" is legal regulation of protection, keeping and usage of the unique documentary materials, which are gathered in the Public Library of the Parliament of Georgia. It defines the economic, social, administrative and legal bases of the work of the Public Library of the Parliament of Georgia, its status and functions, its place and legal state in the Georgian system of libraries.

The National Library of the Parliament of Georgia has its thesis, in which the objectives, structure, and functions are defined in detail.

The National Library provides the methodological supervision over the whole library system of Georgia. Together with the Library Association of Georgia it heads all inter library cooperation. Most of the government initiatives in this field are worked out and implemented with the participation of the National Library.

The special status of the venues gives it possibility to enjoy considerable attention from government, NGO and private sector.

6.3.4.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Library has serous support from the government. Its budget is increasing. The interest is very big from the government and from the society. The chairman of the parliament is very interested in the details of its functioning and problems concerning this venue.

6.3.4.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

The National Library is the member of International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) since 1991

6.3.4.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The private public houses and authors give the Library their books free of charge. This can be considered as a main way of cooperation. In turn, The Library offers its hall free for the exhibitions of new books, for presentations etc.

The UN development program and the National Parliament of Georgia have fruitful cooperation within the scopes of different projects. First of all, the project "Improving the Efficiency and Transparency of the Activities of the Parliament of Georgia" is to be mentioned. The mentioned project included several complements among which one of the main was the support to The national Library of the Parliament of Georgia. The component was financed by UNDP, Swedish International Agency for development, and the government of Georgia. One of the main outcomes of the project was the multifunctional e-club which offers its free and quick access to information to all interested citizens of Georgia. Also, a new web site was developed under the project that informs the users about the activities of the Library, its resources, and volumes.

6.3.4.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

6.3.5   For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

6.3.5.1 Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year 2007

Local currency name GEL   amount (local currency) 5 500 000

Approx. equivalent in USD 3 850 000 based on exchange rate of 1,43 on date 24.07.2008.

6.3.5.2 Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget	5 972 677 000	
Education	411 299 700	
Social protection	1 068 685 300	
Healthcare	287 482 300	
Environment protection	26 388 900	
Public libraries		

Other Comments:

6.3.5.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:	100	
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees/services:		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other (name)

Other Comments:

6.3.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

6.3.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

6.3.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

As it has been already noted compared to the period several years ago, the situation is quite different, the Library now enjoys sufficient funding to purchase and provided new materials that can be used with academic, personal or other purposes. The government wanted to return to the venue the role of main information provider for the population. So it removed all barriers and fees. As for the future perspectives, as the director of the library said one of their main purposes would be to provide equal access to underserved people, that is, to have more materials in the languages of ethnic minorities and for physically disabled people, meanwhile the venue will continue to keep up with the time and meet the changing needs of its users.

6.3.6   Case example for venue 3: I.Chavchavadze National Library of the Parliament of Georgia

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Georgia: Digital library of the Georgia National Library of the Parliament of Georgia Enables the customer to read complete texts in electronic format

Official Bulletin printed by the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia

Digital Library consists from several projects:

1. Digital collection of printing archives and dissertations – full texts of books and dissertations. Scanned versions of original printed publications and books in PDF format are presented.

Here you can read and download following books: Ivane Javakhishvili Works: - 3 volumes, The History of Georgian Nation, Georgica – 8 volumes, Outlines of the History of Georgia - 8 volumes, History of Georgian Architecture, different publications of the Knight in the Panther's Skin, Analysis of the Knight in the Panther's Skin, Astrology, Theology, The History of Georgian Literature – 5 volumes, Ilia Chavchavadze works - – 5 volumes, and etc.

Full texts of dissertations include all spheres: Natural Sciences and Math, Social and Applied Sciences, Art, Literature.

2. The UNESCO project Green Stone consists from two collections:

a) Library of Georgian Literature digital collection, which incorporates texts and brief biography of all known representatives of Georgian classical literature: it consists of 2,397 compositions of 93 writers. Mentioned material is given in printed version in 20 volumes of "Chveni Saunje" ("Our

Treasure") (1960-1961), Mikheil Javakhishvili works – 8 volumes (1969), Titsian Tabidze (1985), Giorgi Leonidze (1980), Lado Asatiani (1985) and Terenti Graneli (1979) collections.

b) Digital library of Civil Society contains civil education profile literature published in Georgian, with illustrations and appendixes, legal and cognitive information, guidelines, international documents, conventions, declarations and etc.

Each collection is updated systematically. Information on every newly digitalized issue can be obtained from news in the library web-site.

http://www.nplg.gov.ge

You can get acquainted with Digital Library from home (if you have internet at home) or in the library.

In "e-Club" and "IATP-Internet center" at the library (IV building, I floor) the reader can read independently or with assistance of the specialist the full texts of digital library and burn necessary information on the CD.

7 Success Factors and Strategic Recommendations

7.1.1 Information needs

What are the most critical information needs by underserved communities that are currently not being adequately met by public access to information and communication venues?

The research identified several information needs experienced by underserved communities in Georgia. Below the most important ones are listed in bullets:

- Information on local events – local employment opportunities, local government decisions an initiatives in different spheres like agriculture, infrastructure, etc.

- Information on programs of international organizations aimed at local infrastructure and business development – grants, privileged credits

- Information on civil rights - information about status, rights, responsibilities. They don't know how to access public information even if there is available the piece of information they need.

- People involved in Academic sphere also experience lack of information they need for their education.

- Administrative procedures - this is extremely important in ethnic minority populated regions, where many families have a member, basically men – property owners, working abroad, and families have to arrange property connected deals while their absence.

- Social networking – chats, forums. In the minority populated regions, where a lot of families have a members and relatives working abroad, these can be important means of communication with them.

- Educational materials on ICT in Georgian language and in languages, spoken by minorities

7.1.2 Where people go

Where do people go for public access to information and communication in the country, especially underserved communities?

- Mass communication media - basic source of receiving general information among population is TV, radio and newspapers.

- Non governmental organizations - During the transition period in Georgia, NGOs were created as institutions, taking feasible effort directed to the spheres underserved by the governmental institutions. Some of NGOs offer free hot-line services for their target groups

- Local governmental institutions. Information is also available at the governmental web pages, created in the framework of Georgian Governmental Network GGN project that considers building the governmental network between state bodies.

- Georgian web pages – governmental institutions, NGO, private organizations, informational and analytical portals, social networking, available through internet at home, working places and internet cafes.

While discussing the sources of information, urban-rural distribution is an important variable to take into consideration because compared to urban areas, in rural ones internet is almost not available, consequently population can not use web pages that contain useful information. Besides, urban libraries offer wider content to its users; meanwhile rural libraries have almost lost their role as important provider of the information necessary to meet the need specified in 5.1.1. section

7.1.3 How access, capacity, and environment affects public access

How do access, capacity and environment affect public access to information and communication venues in the country? (Refer to details under access, capacity and environment in research design document).

Below are listed main access factors, that affect public access to information and communication venues in Georgia:

- Public libraries are most widespread venues with organized network, providing good physical access – unlike any other public venues of information they are represented in many settlements with considerable number in rural ones.

- Public libraries charge very low price for its services that makes them affordable for almost all population.

- Public libraries, and especially rural ones, significant lack of content. This statement is particularly true with information obtainable through ICTs.

- Internet cafes provide the services and information, that are most lacked by public libraries – ICT services and information, obtainable through these services

- Internet cafes are located mainly in urban areas, generating inequity across urban and rural settlements

- Internet cafes charge considerably high price that restricts people with low economic status from using the venue services regularly, or even occasionally.

- The national library of the parliament of Georgia is the most important venue of information offering; large amount of content in forms of books and periodicals, and also through ICT, is free of charge – no fees and very little effort is needed for registration and for gaining access to all its services.

- The national library of parliament of Georgia is situated only in Tbilisi – capital of the country.

In terms of capacity, following factors worth mentioning:

- I. Chavchavadze State University offers higher education in library science and majority of the librarians, working in the public libraries are graduates from this university. But due to the low popularity of the job, the department often lacks students.

- Qualification-rising curses or professional trainings are hardly available for librarians. Rural librarians are even more underserved.

- National library of the parliament of Georgia is considered to have most qualified personnel.

- Internet café operators are not required to have any kind of official education for their position. Though they are almost always found to have good ICT skills.

- There is high literacy level in the country (almost 100% of population can read and write in at least one language).

- ICT literacy level differs significantly across the users of different venue types and across urban-rural settlements. Internet café users and National Library have much higher ICT skills than those of public library users. On the other hand, users of urban venues (both public libraries and internet cafes) have higher ICT literacy level than their counterparts in rural areas.

Following factors can be considered important while discussing environment impact:

- There was little support to the libraries from the governmental institutions for many years, resulting in extremely bad situation in this respect. Recently the government of Georgia expressed its commitment to deal with the problems in the field and started to plan measures aimed at improving the situation. The measures also imply increased financing which was lacked by public libraries for many years.

- The National library of Georgia enjoys significant support from government and has outstanding status in the society. It is also one of the main decision-makers in the library system of Georgia.

- Basic laws, regulating library functioning are "The Law on the Library Work", "The Law on the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia", "The Law on the Cultural Heritage"

- In November of 2006 Georgian government has launched new Georgian Governmental Network (GGN) project that considers building the governmental network between state bodies.

- E-government project in Georgia is in the very beginning of its development. Even though governmental web pages offer certain on-line services, knowledge about this services and opportunity to use them is very scarce.

7.1.4   Role of ICT

What is the role of ICT in public access to information and communication? What untapped

opportunities exist?

ICT play important role as they provide access to that types of information that are not accessible through other venues or means. For example, ICT are sometimes the only way to obtain modern foreign academic materials, information on global developments, etc. the importance is continually growing as more and more people start using them and the content available in the internet increases.

ICT play important role as communication means. Georgia as developing country has a lot of citizens, gone abroad either to work or to study. Very often ICT are useful and cheap men of communication (chat, skype, etc)

7.2 Success Factors and Recommendations

7.2.1 Where to invest resources

How could additional resources (money, people, time, knowledge) be best used to strengthen public access to information and communication venues and practices in the country? (i.e., solutions that would make it more accessible, affordable, appropriate?)

As it was already mentioned, public libraries have very good potential for providing public access to information. The lack of funding is the main problem that prevents them from doing it properly, so financing public libraries to increase their content, especially rural ones, can considerably improve overall situation in the country. Introducing ICT technologies in rural libraries can be also a good investment to increase accessibility of underserved population to information. There is one thing to be taken into consideration. Rural population and ethnic minorities who are considered to be most underserved large communities, lack computer skills. Therefore to enable them take the advantage of ICTs it will be appropriate to provide measures aimed at rising ICT literacy level (e.g. computer courses).

7.2.2 Key success factors

What are the key success factors for public access to information and communication to meet information needs of the population, especially underserved communities, and especially through digital ICT?

Following main factors can be considered as main determinants of success in providing proper access to information:

- Public libraries with relevant content especially in locations of underserved communities (generally rural areas including high mountainous settlements and ethnic minority populated regions as the most underserved)

- Content in the right language for underserved communities (ethnic minorities) at public libraries

- Public libraries equipped with ICTs

- High level of computer skills among population of Georgia and especially among underserved communities

- Venues offering ICTs (like internet cafes) in rural areas
- Reasonable price for ICT usage at the public venues
- Good ICT infrastructure in rural remote areas
- Considerable number of web pages, containing locally relevant information (analytical articles, academic materials etc.) in local language
- Legislative basis for ICTs, that would determine further development of the sphere
- Improved legislative basis for library functioning

7.2.3 Role of ICT

How can public access to information and communication venues in the country be strengthened to offer more meaningful and equitable access to information, especially using digital ICT?

- Developing web pages with relevant content in local languages that will be accessibly through different venues, providing ICTs.
- Providing high speed internet connection all over the country
- Providing trainings on information gathering techniques for operators (for example, where and how to search for certain types of information like health, education, etc.)

7.2.4 Top ten recommendations

What are the Top Ten recommendations for public access to information and communication venues in your country? Make sure you include policy recommendations as part of them.

11. Increasing and varying content at public libraries located in underserved communities, providing more new materials.

12. Preparing and translating content available at public libraries in local languages

13. Introducing ICTs at public libraries of underserved communities.

14. Conducting computer training courses for underserved communities.

15. Establishing Non-profit venues in the locations of underserved communities offering ICT services at reasonable prices.

16. Developing ICT infrastructure in rural settlements that would provide possibilities of high speed internet connection.

17. Developing interesting web pages with relevant information for underserved communities

18. Elaboration of legislative basis for ICTs, that would determine further development of the sphere

19. Improvement of the legislative basis for library functioning

20. Providing trainings on information gathering techniques for operators (for example, where and how to search for certain types of information like health, education, etc.)

8 Appendices

Please attach on the next pages any other relevant information, resources or materials that can help understand public access information venues in the country.

8.1 List of Countries Included in the Research

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Brazil
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Georgia
Honduras
Indonesia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Malaysia
Moldova
Mongolia
Namibia
Nepal
Peru
Philippines
South Africa
Sri Lanka
Turkey
Uganda

8.2   Overview of Research Design

The Center for Information & Society (CIS), in partnership with the Information School of the University of Washington, has as part of its core mission the investigation of how inequities in our global society can be reduced through improved access to information and communication technologies (ICT). As part of its research activities, CIS has brought together interdisciplinary teams of researchers to examine the needs, readiness and success factors for public access to information and communication venues through digital ICTs in 24 countries around the world.

Project Goal:

- Understand information needs, and opportunities to strengthen institutions that offer public access to information and communication, especially to underserved communities, and especially through the use of digital ICT: What are the needs, barriers, opportunities and success factors for public access to information and communication to help human development in countries around the world? For the purpose of this study, research is primarily focused on Libraries and Other institutional venues for which access to information has a significant role. This research includes understanding venues where digital ICT is currently offered, *and* also where ICT is not currently offered but there is potential and strong institutional support to include ICT (for example, some public libraries where digital ICT services are currently not offered, but there would be strong interest in offering them).

  Libraries include public libraries and other types of libraries that are open to the public. **Other venues** include national initiatives that offer public access to information, either with ICTs (telecentres, cybercafés and the like) or without ICTs (post offices, community centers and similar) and are of significant importance in local contexts.

Project Purpose:

- Inform policy and funding decisions: Inform funders and government decision makers about future program direction and funding allocations

- Contribute to public knowledge: Disseminate results of in-depth country and comparative analyses, including research design and analytical models

To inform project design, CIS adapted the Real Access framework (Bridges.org), analyzing public access to information and communication through a total of 14 research categories grouped under the dimensions of **Access**, **Capacity & Relevance** and **Enabling Environments**. Adaptation was done in consultation with research partners around the world for the purposes of this study.

The implementation of this project is organized as a two-phase process:

Phase 1:   Nov 07 – Feb 15, 2008

During Phase 1, a **Draft Country Report** will be prepared by local research teams in each country. The Draft Country Report includes a Country Profile, a Country Assessment and an early draft of Lessons & Recommendations.

The *Country Profile* is a collection of 50 general descriptive data points drawn from readily accessible sources; CIS pre-populates the reports for each country, and offers them for validation and comments by local teams. Country Profiles provide primarily statistical data that is intended to offer a quick snapshot of each country, including geography, political environment, demographics, economy, education and ICT infrastructure.

Using a common approach to define research processes, local teams will conduct initial fieldwork to inform a *Country Assessment*. The Country Assessment includes both a scan of information needs, especially for underserved communities; and an assessment of public access to information and

communication venues (with or without digital ICT services) and their environment, resulting in a better understanding of gaps, opportunities, and readiness of public access to information initiatives in each country.

During Phase 1, each country team will also complete an early draft of *Success Factors and Recommendations* focused on strengthening public access to information in the country, and identify potential themes and issues for further study in Phase 2.

Phase 1b: Feb 15-Mar 15, 2008

During this period, CIS will conduct a preliminary comparative analysis based on the Draft Country Reports from all participating countries, and suggest feedback and guidance for Phase 2 of the study. The comparative analysis will look for salient trends, emergent themes, patterns, and threads across regions. During this period, next steps will be determined for in-depth country research for Phase 2.

Phase 2: March 2008 – August 15, 2008

Phase 2 will involve a deeper assessment of public access to information and ICTs across all 24 countries. In particular, CIS is interested in deeper probing of the emerging themes and scenarios identified in Phase 1.   A **Final Country Report** will include high level analysis, success factors and recommendations to strengthen public access to information and ICTs in each country. Final comparative analysis across countries, with analytical models and scenarios, will be completed by CIS after receiving the Final Country Reports.

Findings will be disseminated publically through reports, academic publications, conferences and consortiums. Each country team is expected to produce at least one publishable paper on their research and findings, plus additional papers emerging out of the comparative analysis and global findings. Publications will be part of the public domain, with the CIS web site, partners' sites, and other publication channels to be identified.

8.3   Annotated Country Profile (Form 2)

Attach here an updated copy of the annotated Country Profile (Form 2).

Attach other appendices here, as needed.

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION LIBRARIES

7.1 Equitable Access

7.1a) How many facilities (centers, branches, etc) of this type of venue exist in the country? (you had provided an estimate early on; this figure may be adjusted now that you have better information)

(i) What Percentage offer Digital ICT services?

There are 8 major libraries funded by international organizations and foreign countries. All of them are located in Tbilisi. Besides one of them (Open society - Georgia) has branches in other cities of Georgia (Batumi, Telavi).

All of the libraries are equipped with ICTs and provide services to its users.

5.1b) Are the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (ie, national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc). Please describe:

There is no association or other type of organization for specifically these of venues. There is Georgia Library Association operating in Georgia and these libraries can become its members. Currently one of them (British Council Library) is member of this association.

5.1c) How are the facilities in this type of venue administratively distributed (i.e., by county, province, region, state), as defined in the Country Profile? How many exist in each administrative unit?

Administrative unit: Cities

	Number of facilities in each administrative unit	Number offering Digital ICT services
Admin Unit 1 Tbilisi	8	8

	Number of facilities in this type of location	Number offering Digital ICT services
Admin Unit 2, Telavi	1	1
Admin Unit 3, Batumi	1	1

5.1d) What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their location? (note that this may not be the same as the question above):

	Number of facilities in this type of location	Number offering Digital ICT services
Urban	10	10
Rural	0	0
Other significant variable		

5.1e) What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If fees: annual fee

Indicate amount in local currency 10 and date of estimate 15.02.2008

and local currency name GEL
   (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The fees differ in these libraries, for example Open Society – Georgia offers its services completely free. There is even no registration needed while in British Council the annual fee is 60 GEL. As for the other libraries average annual fee is 10 GEL.

5.1f) What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (ie, access to books, magazines; meeting & conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, internet, other). Note any relevant differences across types of venue (size, location, etc). List up to 10 services. Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered	Digital ICT services in particular	Comments
Access to Books, magazines, newspapers		
Exhibitions		
	Access to DVD, CD, Audio, Video materials	The materials can be taken out or used at the venue
	Printing, copying materials	
	Access to electronic base of the books, electronic periodicals	
Cultural events		
Foreign TV channels		
Educational courses		
Films		

(i) Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

In Tbilisi the libraries are larger and have much more capacity to meet all the demands of its targeted users.

5.1g) Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).
   (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Some of them have materials for physically and mentally disabled people. Namely British council and Dumas Center libraries have audio books for blind people. apar from these there is no special project directed to underserved groups.

5.1h) Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?
    (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

About 90% of the materials available at such libraries are in Foreign languages. For example in Dumas Center materials are in French, in British Council, IREX and Open society libraries – in English, In Boell Foundation and Austrian Libraries in German.

5.1i) Physical Access: Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).
    (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

These libraries are located in the centers of the cities thus they are easily accessible in terms of location for the population of these cities because transportation within the cities is not problematic. Libraries are meant to provide services mainly to young people for academic purposes. Therefore they work till late ours to enable students take their services after classes. They also are open on weekend.

5.1j) Appropriate Technology & Services: Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).
    (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The materials offered at these libraries are most latest and reflect the needs of its users. However the fact that materials are in foreign languages hinders many people for enjoying their services.[45]

The libraries have modern computers connected to internet, thus offering 100% access to internet to its users.

5.1k) Affordability: Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).
    (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

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[45] Interview with Tamar Kvachadze, librarian of the British Council library

Despite the fact that some of these libraries charge higher fees than other types of libraries, the price is still affordable almost all the population of the cities.

The libraries don't charge for ICT services separately. They are free for population once they get their members.

5.2 Human Capacity & Training

5.2a) How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations; i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)
    (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Each library have several librarians, besides they are served by other personnel of the centers to which the libraries belong. Their number varies from 10 to 20. As for ICT, the centers have special personnel in charge of digital technologies that are responsible for flawless functioning of technologies and for helping visitors with receiving services through ICTs. For example British Council has 4 such employees.[46]

5.2b) Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

> Training courses: British Council offers two weeks training for Georgian Librarians and library department students, enabling them two work at British Council Library with modern technologies.

> There are multiple training courses such as English, French, German language courses, computer management courses, etc, offered by international centers themselves not by libraries. They need separate enrolment and fees.

ICT specific training courses:

5.2c) Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)
    (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Materials are mainly intended for academic purposes. They aim to provide young people with latest foreign scientific works in different fields and also to acquaint Georgian

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[46] Interview with Tamar Kvachadze, librarian of the British Council library

population with the culture of the country they represent. Therefore it can be said that these venues have content for human development, however these content are not available in local languages.

5.2d) Integration to daily routines: How easy is it for the population to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places; see Real Access – integration into daily routines for more details on this issue)
    (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Students can easily integrate their the services of these types of libraries in to their everyday study process. The registration process is very facts. The libraries offer their services with fastest and most convenient manner. Users can enjoy their services without loosing their time.

5.2e) Social Appropriation: What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).
    (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

People are more and more using foreign works for their education. The demand on internet sources increased significantly. Technologies are frequently used for learning foreign languages. For young people internet became the main source of news.

5.2f) What other information gaps & opportunities exist, that are not being met? (other information / services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

The gap is that the people who don't know foreign language can not access the services. Making these service for these people will be useful things for many people.

5.2g) Training: What is the overall capacity of the staff (ie, librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information & communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The librarians of these libraries periodically undergo professional trainings. All of them skilled in ICT using. However as the librarian of British Council, Tamar Kvachadze mentions, professional trainings are not conducted frequently enough.[47]

5.2h) What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information & communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

As it was already mentioned lack of knowledge of foreign languages reduces population's capacity to enjoy all the services offered by these libraries, especially outside Tbilisi where less people are considered to know English and other foreign languages. Besides the libraries offer taking out DVD and CD for using at home. But as many population don't have DVD and CD players they can not use this service.

5.2i) Use: How many people USE this venue every year, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In Open Society – Georgia Library there is no registration process, therefore it is impossible to count its visitors. But it can be said that its reading hall are usually full of readers.

As for British Council Library, it has registered 16213 visits during the last year[48]. Dumas Center Library had 1100 active registered users in 2007 (those who have yearly subscription) and in these two months they have already 464 members.[49]

5.2j) What is the FREQUENCY of use of this venue, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1a) (indicate frequency as daily or more, weekly, monthly, yearly or less)?

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The frequency of visits to these libraries varies seasonally. As its users are usually student frequency of using these venues is decreased during summer and winter holidays.

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[47] Interview with Tamar Kvachadze, librarian of the British Council library

[48] Interview with Tamar Kvachadze, librarian of the British Council library

[49] Interview with Nana Laliashvili, librarian of the Alexander Dumas French Culture Centre Multimedia Library

5.2k) How many people does each user provide intermediary services for (family members, friends, etc. that might not directly use the venue but gain access to information through the user), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

Student who knows English can provide intermediately service to those who don't know, however it is very difficult how often such service occurs and to how many people it is provided. In some cases it can be the whole class of a student in other cases just one friend or family member of a library user.[50]

5.2l) What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information & services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

- For developing language skills
- For preparing home works given at the institutions or other educational institutions
- For searching materials for their scientific researches
- To get to know to the culture of foreign countries

5.2m) Perceptions: What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the SOCIAL VALUE of the information and services offered in this venue, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

The information and services offered at these places enjoys estimation from its users as most updated, diverse materials adequate to western standards.

5.2n) What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: ie, what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue…

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

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[50] Interview with Tamar Kvachadze, librarian of the British Council library

The values are considered as places for progressive young people, who are willing to get western type of education and those who eager to participate in exchange programs that offer education abroad.

5.2o) What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue, (differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

The services enjoy high level of trustiness from its users. The information provided by them is not subject to judgment.

5.3 Enabling Environment

Overall, how supportive is the national environment for the success of this type of venue to offer public access to information & communication in the country?

○	○ ○ ○	●
1	2 3 4	5
Not supportive		Very supportive

Explain how you came to this conclusion:

These libraries enjoy support from the countries or international organizations they represent and from the government of Georgia as well, because the government recognizes and welcomes the importance of their activity and the values they are fostering in Georgian society.

5.4 Funding & Economic Environment

5.4a) What is the total budget for this public access venue (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year

Local currency name	local currency amount	on date

These venues are most well funded of all the libraries existed in Georgia. Their librarians have highest salaries. They have enough budget for purchasing new materials, subscription to periodicals, purchasing new equipments and for the cost of the facilities.

5.4b) What is the relative distribution of sources of funding for this public access venue?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Funding source details
Government sources:		
International donors:	95%	Given numbers are very tentative
National donors:		
User fees / services:	5%	Given numbers are very tentative
Other (describe):		

5.4c) What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)
(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

- Purchasing new materials
- Subscription to periodicals
- Purchasing new equipments
- Cost of the facilities
- Holding cultural events

5.4d) Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue
(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

British Council Library cooperates with Association of the teacher of English Language through with they provide trainings for teachers from regions. It also provides training s for Georgian Librarians.

5.4e) Describe the national economic environment and how it affects public access to information & communication in this type of venue (refer to & complement economic summary in country profile)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The economic environment has little influence on these venues. Taking into consideration the fact that due to poor economic status of the country, not many Georgians cab afford to possess materials and technologies themselves. Therefore such libraries, as cheap venues enjoy big demand of users.

5.4f) Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

5.5 Case Example

Georgia: The French Culture Centre Serves to Establish Connections

By Nino Lashkhi

Kartuli Universiteti (Georgian University) weekly newspaper 10-16 III 2004

It's already several years that at Tbilisi National Library the Alexander Dumas culture centre is functioning. It was opened in 1998 by the former French ambassador with the financial aid of French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For a long period of time only multimedia library worked here, but since 2002 it has been turned to the culture centre.

The Centre fulfills 3 fundamental missions in Georgia. The first one is the cultural relation which implies different cultural measures – these are music, theater, fine arts and etc. The sound one is the spreading of the French language, which is being fulfilled through the French language teaching courses. The third one is the library, which turned to the multimedia library. Actually, this is the information centre about contemporary France. A person entering the multimedia library finds himself in the French world. She/he sees before her/him the history of French nation, its culture and she/he communicates with all this by means at books, music and films.

As the head of multimedia library Tamar Khosroshvili says, the interested person is able to search for any information here. The multimedia library is the information centre: books, periodicals, CD, video tapes, CD Rom, internet, children centre. It is also possible to take out the documents. The library fund is being filled up with a new literature and this is being done by taking into account some facts. First of all the bibliographical magazine is being checked - what has been published in France, what are the news there, and after this the library subscribes for the new literature.

Nowadays, the main principle of the centre is to renew its materials regarding any sphere annually – on history, art, philosophy etc. There is a special diary offered to visitors, to write down their needs and requests. The library staff tries to meet these needs.

According to initiative of the library's governance, meetings will be arranged in the nearest future, where Georgian readers will discuss and evaluate the works of cotemporary French writers. And one of French writers will visit Tbilisi in June.

The multimedia library, working on the French model, is quite different from the Georgian libraries. The board decided to give opportunity to interested youth to get some knowledge in the sphere of European Libraries management system. Many students are already registered for the training courses. French colleagues, who have arrived to Tbilisi for this special purpose, share their experience with them.

M. Mamardashvili publishing assisting program does exist there at the French Culture Centre. Translation of contemporary French authors once per year is considered within this project. Number of French authors is already translated into Georgian: "Wedding" and "Summer" by Albert Camus, "Return to the Desert" by Bernar Mari Koltes. Currently people fond of the French literature are able to get acquainted with the works of contemporary French authors.

The French Culture Centre responds to the activities, which take place in March in France. This is famous festival – "The Spring of the Poets". While this festival, poetry brochures are for free in the streets, shops and other different places of Paris.

On 11th of March the poetry evening will be held in the French Culture Centre. From morning till evening the employees of the library will be reading the poetry of Jacques Prévert and others accompanied by the music of Yves Montand. So that people attending the event will be participating in the Poetry festival going on in Paris.

Starting from the 20th of March in many countries of the world, International Day for Francophonie days are being celebrated and the French Culture Centre aims to conduct a lot of different events, connected to this date.