



ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND POSSIBILITY OF INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF SELF- GOVERNMENT IS LIMITED IN THE VILLAGE OF KHANDO

On 31 July 2018, lawyers of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association met with local residents of village Khando, Akhalkalaki municipality, Samtskhe-Javakheti region. The village is situated 18 kilometers away from Akhalkalaki in the mountainous part of Georgia. The village, distinguished by its large proportion of population, is mainly inhabited by national minorities (Armenians).

The field meeting has revealed that the problem of access to education and low quality of education deprives the youth of the village of an important choice- to be

able to make decisions related to their future life. Moreover, due to the absence of public transport and poor condition of access roads, the village is virtually cut off from the nearby town, which hinders the involvement of the local population in decision making process at the local level, as well as from benefiting from the services which fall within the competence of the self-government.

The situation in the village of Khando is particularly vulnerable to girls and women living there. The overall challenges in the country in terms of gender equality do not fully reflect the difficulties that exist in the villages similar to Khando. Adequate involvement of women and girls living in Khando in social life, participation in decision making process, political activity and development is far more difficult and inaccessible rather than for women living in cities of Georgia or the villages better liaised with developed centers.

It is noteworthy that civil integration of minorities and provision of equal conditions for development of all individuals is still a challenge for the country. Despite the challenge, there are problems which require special effort or immeasurable expenses from the local self-government, the Ministry of Education or other authorities. However, the problems remain unresolved even locally.

In order to ensure basic public needs for village Khando, GYLA addresses to all competent state bodies for resolving the problems of the local population, namely:

- The Ministry of Education to restore English language classes in the village school, which have been suspended due to the absence of teachers in the recent years.
- The local self-government to ensure full operation of the pre-school institution in the village, as well as to build the road to the village and provide public transport that will connect the village with Akhalkalaki.

GYLA continues field meetings in the villages located away from administrative centers aimed at identifying the issues that local populations have and advocate them with relevant state agencies.