



Save the Children

# GROWING UP IN GEORGIA

## Young Voices for a Sustainable Future

Child Led National Voluntary Review – Georgia 2024

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT **GOALS**



# BACKGROUND

Recognizing that children are not merely beneficiaries but active rights holders, this child-led report supported by Save the Children International presents child perspective on Georgia's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Children's Scorecard methodology was utilized to empower children to directly collect and share data on their experiences of inequality, access to rights, and essential services, aligning with seven key SDGs. To gain insights into children's lived realities, focus group discussions (FGDs) led by trained child facilitators were organized.

The overall goal of the initiative was to empower children to directly collect and share data on their experiences of inequality, access to rights, and essential services aligned with seven key SDGs, whereas the specific objectives were as follows:

- **Amplify Child Voices:** Provide a platform for children to express their lived realities and experiences related to the SDGs at the international level through enabling them to create a child-led report.
- **Identify Gaps in Progress:** Uncover areas where national progress on the SDGs fails to translate into tangible improvements for children, particularly those facing vulnerabilities.
- **Inform Policy and Practice:** Generate data-driven insights to inform policy decisions and program design, ensuring a more child-centered approach to achieving the SDGs.
- **Promote Accountability:** Hold stakeholders accountable for upholding children's rights and delivering on promises made under the SDGs.



# THROUGH OUR EYES: Children's Voices on Georgia's Sustainable Development Goals

To understand children's experiences in relation to SDGs, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) led by child facilitators trained on the Children's Scorecard Approach were organized. These discussions ensured a safe and inclusive space for children to express their perspectives.

A total of 78 children participated in the FGDs, representing a diverse range of backgrounds. Slightly more than half (42 children, 53.8%) came from rural areas, with the remaining participants residing in urban areas (36 children); 5 children represented ethnic minorities, 9 children with disabilities. Gender representation was balanced, with 50 girls and 38 boys participating. The age range spanned from 13 to 17 years old.

The Scorecard incorporated five key principles that provide a deeper understanding of the progress made:

- **Universality:** Does everyone have equal access to the benefits of the SDG?
- **Leave No One Behind:** Are the most vulnerable children being included?
- **Interconnectedness and Indivisibility:** How do the SDGs work together to create a better future for children?
- **Transformation:** Are there fundamental changes happening to ensure long-term progress?
- **Partnerships:** Are children, communities, and authorities working together effectively?

By evaluating each SDG through these principles, children gained a nuanced understanding of the challenges and successes related to their rights.

The final step involved filling out an anonymous questionnaire based on the Scorecards. This allowed children to express their honest opinions without fear of judgment. Once all the forms were collected, the results were analyzed by a group of 7 Child Facilitators to create a comprehensive picture of children's perspectives on SDG progress in their country.





# THROUGH OUR EYES: CHILD-LED ASSESSMENT OF SDG 1 IN GEORGIA

SDG 1

From children's perspectives, rising prices and poverty affected rural areas the most and hampered access to essentials like food, education, and healthcare. They advocated for more transformative change through programs that empower families and equip them with skills to break the cycle of poverty. Overall, children rated Georgia's progress as a slight decline, emphasizing the need for a more comprehensive approach to fight poverty, particularly in rural areas



# UNIVERSALITY: A FAIR SHOT FOR ALL?



40%

While 40% of child participants of the FGDs felt efforts to reach all children nationwide were stagnant (0 points),



60%

many of them (60%) noticed a decline (-2 points) in poverty reduction. They feel that the rising prices outpace wages and pensions, making it harder for everyone to get by, especially children in rural areas who felt forgotten.

We talked about the steps taken to overcome poverty – but they don't seem to affect us as much as we'd like to. State is supporting families, but with rising prices, we have to find another sources of income, which is quite hard.

**Nino\*, 14**

# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: BRIDGING THE GAPS



**23%**

While some children (23%) observed improvements (1 point) in social assistance programs reaching vulnerable populations,



**77%**

most (77%) reported a decline (-2 points) in addressing poverty among those who need it most. Price increases disproportionately impacted those with limited resources.

In my neighbourhood, I see families struggling to put food on the table, even though some of them do get state support.

**Natela\*, 15**



# INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INDIVISIBILITY: WHEN POVERTY HOLDS US BACK



**63%**



From the perspective 63% of children, rising prices and poverty hampered access to essentials like food (SDG 2), education (SDG 4), and healthcare (SDG 5) (-1 points). This situation could even force some children into labor or early marriage (SDG 5).

**37%**



37% of children assigned the score equal to zero to emphasize little to no progress in terms of this principle.

“With everything getting more expensive, it’s harder for families to afford healthy food. It must be affecting children’s health, development, happiness.”

**Giorgi\*, 14**

“Even though schoolbooks are provided free of charge, many of my classmates can’t afford new school supplies or decent clothes. It not only affects their studies, but their self-confidence as well – they feel embarrassed, even though there’s nothing to feel embarrassed about. I cannot help them – even if I could, they would not accept it.

**Eka\*, 15**

# TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE



**31%**



The third of children (31%) felt support systems lacked a long-term vision (-1 score),



**69%**

whereas the 69% of children assessed the progress through the lens of the principle at 0 points. They felt that current programs focused on financial handouts instead of empowering families and equipping vulnerable children with skills and knowledge to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

“Families and children need help learning skills so parents can get jobs and support themselves in the future. Teach the families to catch a fish, rather than giving them one every day or month.”

**Nika\*, 17**





# PARTNERSHIPS: WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHANGE



**82%**



Children analyzed the government's collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that yielded the most significant results in overcoming the poverty. In terms of collaboration with the civil society, 82% of children considered that the government's efforts led to a progress(2 points),

**18%**



a portion (18%) reported a decline (-3 points) in government cooperation with children and vulnerable groups.

“Whenever we are talking about the progress in terms of SDGs, especially SDG 1, I can't help but think about the CSOs, particularly the local ones. They provide skills for employment, nonformal education and employment opportunities that allow us to overcome the poverty ourselves”

**Natia\*, 16**

“We should have a say in decisions that affect our lives – I know that we're just kids, but age does not mean that I cannot say what concerns me and how I see a solution”.

**Dato\*, 14**

# OVERALL RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, children rated Georgia's progress towards SDG 1 at -1 with around 15% assessing the progress on SDG 1 at 1 point and remaining 85% at around - 0.

While some areas saw slight improvements, most felt the fight against poverty needed greater focus.

- The government should expand social protection to effectively reach all children nationwide, with a particular focus on rural populations. This can involve mobile service delivery units and increased collaboration with local NGOs.
- The government, in collaboration with CSOs and vulnerable communities, should conduct a comprehensive review of social assistance programs to identify gaps and ensure targeted support reaches those who need it most.
- The government should prioritize policies such as creating employment opportunities in rural areas and promoting skills development programs. The government, in collaboration with the private sector and civil sector, should expand access to vocational training and life skills development programs for vulnerable families.
- The government should establish formal mechanisms for regular dialogue with children and youth groups on issues related to poverty reduction. This can involve creating child councils or advisory boards with designated representatives. Additionally, fostering stronger partnerships with CSOs working on child rights issues is crucial.



# CHILD ACTIONS:

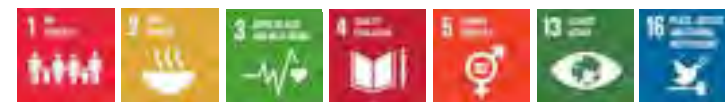
- Creating online tutorials and organizing peer-to-peer learning groups to share valuable skills that can help their peers in employment later on.
- Children interested in specific soft skills that can help them in employment later on can advocate for after-school programs or workshops focused on those skills within their schools or communities and liaise with local CSOs or other organizations.
- Children can organize meetings with local authorities to present their assessments and recommendations for addressing poverty.



# A CHILD'S LOOK AT FOOD SECURITY IN GEORGIA: CHILD-LED ASSESSMENT OF SDG 2 IN GEORGIA

SDG 2

This chapter delves into the experiences of Georgian children as they assess their nation's progress towards achieving SDG 2: Zero Hunger. Through the lens of the five core SDG principles, children offer valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities surrounding food security and agriculture system in Georgia. Their unique perspective shows gaps in current strategies and provides recommendations for a more inclusive and sustainable approaches.



# UNIVERSALITY: A NATIONWIDE EFFORT WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

2 ZERO HUNGER



24%

While 24% of children participating in the FGDs observed efforts to reach all children nationwide (2 points),

76%

a significant portion (76%) expressed concern about access to nutritious food (-1.9) average score. Children, particularly those in urban areas with limited access to fresh produce, highlighted the challenge of ensuring quality and accessibility of healthy food across the country. The total average score for the universality principle was a slight decline of -0.9 points.



Due to the prices, families can't always afford healthy food, seasonal fruit and vegetables. I've heard of the prices in other countries – it's much cheaper, even though people are wealthier there”.

**Veriko,\* 15**



# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF FOOD INSECURITY

2 ZERO HUNGER



53%

Over half (53%) of children reported stagnation (0 score) in addressing food insecurity among vulnerable populations. However,

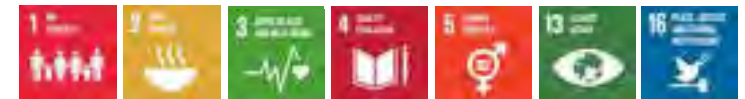


47%

nearly half (47%) indicated a decline (-2.8 average score) due to rising food prices, reliance on imported goods, and a decline in quality. Children from lower-income families often rely on cheaper produce, which may be high in pesticides and chemicals, further impacting their health. With the total average score of -1.3, children noted a decrease in assessing the Leaving No One Behind approach.

“Since everything is more expensive, people can’t afford to think about the quality. They have to buy cheaper fruits, vegetables and meat. During the meeting we talked about the instances where people boycott shops and manufacturers that are not climate conscious or violate labour laws by abusing their employees. I would love my family and community to do the same, but we simply cannot afford thinking about that – we have to stick with the cheapest options, without considering the ethics, environmental impact, the social consciousness of the enterprises”.

Data,\* 14



# INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INDIVISIBILITY: THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF HUNGER

2 ZERO HUNGER



17%

While 17% of children observed progress (1 point) in connecting food security with other SDGs,



83%

the majority (83%) expressed concern about the negative impact of hunger on education (SDG 4) and healthcare (SDG 5) (-1.4 average score). Children noted how malnutrition affects the ability to concentrate in school and can lead to health problems (-1 average score).

“When I’m hungry, it’s hard to focus in class. I don’t have the energy to learn. I know about the initiative that requests the government to fund the school meals, but I am not sure that schools even try to contract decent caterers who won’t be cutting corners to get more profit instead of thinking about quality meals for children. That is why I am not sure whether I support this initiative or not.”

Gia,\* 17

# TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: INVESTING IN SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

2 ZERO HUNGER



89%

Approximately 89% of children saw decline in terms of a transformative approach (-2 average score), emphasizing the need for state and municipal programs that incentivize local farmers to adopt sustainable and efficient agricultural practices. They believe this will not only increase food production and employment rates but also create export opportunities and drive down food prices.



11%

11% of children stated that nothing has changed during their lifetime (average 0.8 points). The average score across this principle was -1.6.

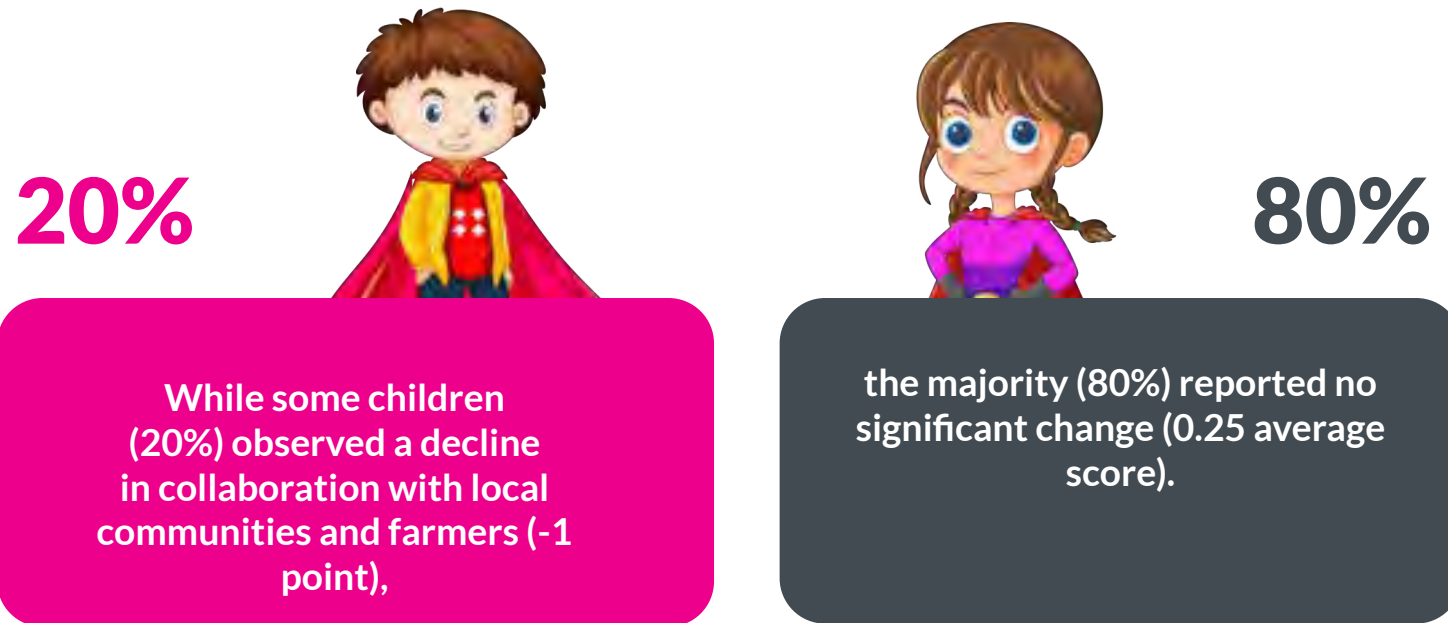
“They say that Georgian produce is the best in quality and we have to avoid buying imported goods. I don’t think so. Most farmers have to use excessive amount of chemicals, because they don’t know what else works. If the government taught them or supported organizations that will empower the farmers, they could grow more quality food here, it would be cheaper and healthier for everyone”.

**Keta,\* 16**



# PARTNERSHIPS: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR A FOOD-SECURE FUTURE

2 ZERO HUNGER



# OVERALL RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With an overall score of -1, children expressed concern about Georgia's progress towards achieving SDG 2. They emphasized the need for a more comprehensive approach that prioritizes access to affordable, nutritious food for all children, invests in sustainable agricultural practices, and fosters stronger partnerships.

“with prices going up and the quality of affordable produce being so low, I cannot say that the country is progressing. I am not saying that nothing is done, but the reality is that we don't feel major changes. Without significant progress, I feel that we are going back, since everything is progressing and we are frozen in place – this means that we have to take double the efforts just to get closer to the rest of the countries.”

Giga,\* 14

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Children suggest introducing voucher system for school children for school meals and improving quality control for school meal programs to ensure children receive nutritious meals that support their learning.
- Implement educational and financial support programs that educate farmers on sustainable and efficient agricultural practices alongside with providing them with tools to implement said practices to reduce their reliance on chemicals and improve food quality.
- Strengthen collaboration between government agencies, local communities, CSOs and farmers to develop solutions that address specific needs.





# CHILD ACTIONS:

Children believe that they can still play a significant role in promoting food security if supported by local and national decisionmakers and CSOs.

- Children can advocate for food security issues by sharing their own experiences and needs of their families, friends, and teachers at the municipal and national levels.
- If the educational and financial support programs for farmers are introduced and strengthened, they can act as awareness raising champions within their communities by accentuating the need for environmentally conscious farming practices and their positive impact on health, efficiency and environment.
- If healthier and price conscious food options are introduced, children can advocate for the benefits of the healthier produce.

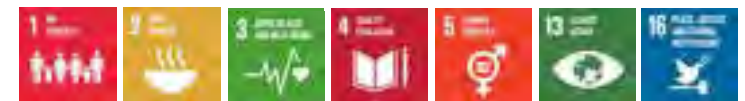


# A CHECK-UP ON PROGRESS: CHILDREN ASSESS GEORGIA'S HEALTH (SDG 3)

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Children assessed their experiences to evaluate their nation's progress towards achieving SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Through the lens of the five core SDG principles, children offer insights into the accessibility, affordability, and equity of healthcare services in Georgia. While acknowledging the introduction of Universal Healthcare and regulated medication prices, children highlighted remaining concerns. These included high medication costs, especially for rural families, and a lack of emphasis on preventative care. They underscored the interconnectedness of health with other SDGs like poverty and hunger, and the need for stronger partnerships that include children's voices. Overall, children rated progress modestly positive, urging actions like addressing medication costs, improving rural access, and promoting preventative healthcare education.



# UNIVERSALITY: A STEP FORWARD, BUT MORE MILES TO GO

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



88%



While 88% of children acknowledged progress (average score 2.2) with the introduction of Universal Healthcare Coverage and regulated medication prices, some concerns remained.

12%



The remaining 12% highlighted the ever-increasing cost of medication and disparities in service quality across regions (-1.2 average score).

The new healthcare system is good, but some medications are still too expensive for my community. Not everyone can afford everything they need – we see many posts on social media with critically ill children requesting funding from people. I don't think that Georgia cannot afford funding of proper treatment of oncological patients.”

**Nato,\* 14**

Children emphasized the need to address the root causes of high medication costs to ensure true universality.

“Medicine shouldn't be so expensive here. The government should figure out why it's cheaper in other countries”.

**Inga,\* 15**

Children acknowledged the progress in terms of meeting the universality principle by indicating the slight progress of 1.7 points.

# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: BRIDGING THE RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



Approximately 70% of children observed progress (average score 2) in ensuring access to healthcare for rural populations through Universal Healthcare and price regulation. However,



30% of children (average score 0.5) acknowledged lesser positive impact of healthcare reforms on rural families. The average score in terms of approaching the Leaving No One behind Principle in relation to SDG 3 was close to 1.6 points.

Giorgi, 14: “It’s still harder for children with disabilities to get the care they need, especially in rural areas.”

**Giorgi,\* 14**

“It’s easier for my family to get medical help now, even though we live in a village, but I don’t get why prices shall be artificially regulated and still be more costly than in other countries. It seems that all pharmaceutical companies agree on a certain price. I don’t know much about how the state shall support competition in pharmaceutical sector, but I know that it shall start doing it.”

**Dato,\* 15**





# INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INDIVISIBILITY: A HEALTHY START FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



Children acknowledged a score of zero for this principle. While progress on SDG 3 was observed, children highlighted its connection to other SDGs, particularly poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2). They expressed concern that issues like malnutrition and financial hardship compounded with the environmental concerns could limit access to preventative and long-term healthcare (average score – 0)

“The air quality in the city is bad, with all the constructions going on, the size of green areas is declining. We cannot afford healthier food options – and, to be honest, don’t even know which food options are healthier, we breathe the polluted air. This surely affects our health. Shouldn’t the government be working on both healthcare and cleaning up the environment?”

**Nika,\* 16**



# TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: BEYOND SIMPLE ACCESS

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



55%

Approximately 55% of children reported stagnation (0 score) concerning transformative change. While Universal Healthcare provides access, children expressed concern about the system's long-term impact on overall health outcomes.



45%

Some (45%) noted a decline (-1 score) due to a lack of emphasis on preventative care and public health awareness campaigns. With an overall score close to zero (-0.5 points), children express concerns:

“Universal Healthcare doesn’t solve everything. People still self-medicate and avoid regular checkups. It can be caused by the fact that they don’t trust the quality of local hospitals and doctors and can’t afford visiting doctor after doctor – spend money on travel and waste time. In a way it is also caused by the fact that they don’t know about the importance of regular checkups. Their knowledge and attitudes don’t change over time, because nobody is educating them properly.”

**Mariam,\* 15**



# UNIVERSALITY: LISTENING TO THE VOICES THAT MATTER MOST

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



70%



Similar to the transformative principle, children reported a slight decline (-0.5 points) in partnerships. While they acknowledged the importance of international and national partnerships in improving healthcare infrastructure, many (70%) felt their voices and those of vulnerable populations were not adequately considered. Strengthening partnerships and ensuring the inclusion of children and vulnerable groups is essential for creating a more equitable healthcare system.

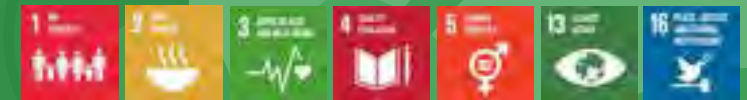
“I want to become a doctor. To learn more and become a qualified specialist in my region, I need all the support from the state and organizations. I believe that we have to work more closely with other countries to learn more about treating patients, particularly women and people with disabilities.”

Ana,\* 17

# OVERALL RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall score for SDG 3 was a modest improvement (average 0.4 points) on SDG 3. Forty-five percent of children perceived slight decline (-1 point), while 55% acknowledged moderate progress (average 1.5 points). As for the recommendations, children developed a list of actions that can support Georgia's progress across the SDGs:

- The government should identify and analyse the root causes of high medication costs. The solutions should be developed and implemented with the support of the civil society and general public.
- Mobile healthcare units and outreach programs, as well as exchange programs for the healthcare professionals should be supported to improve access to services in rural areas.
- The interconnectedness of health with other SDGs, such as poverty, hunger and healthy environment should be analysed and addressed properly with the participation of civil society and general public, particularly – children.
- Preventative care education must be included more strongly into school curriculums and public health awareness campaigns shall be launched to empower individuals to make healthy choices.
- Child and youth councils at municipal and national levels should be established to ensure that voices of children and vulnerable populations are heard in decision-making processes regarding healthcare.



# CHILD ACTIONS:

- Encouraging schools to teach them more about healthy habits and preventative care.
- Supporting non-formal education opportunities that focus on healthy life style
- Acting as awareness raising group to educate their communities about the importance of regular checkups
- Meeting with national and local decision makers to help them understand the needs of local communities and shape targeted measures.

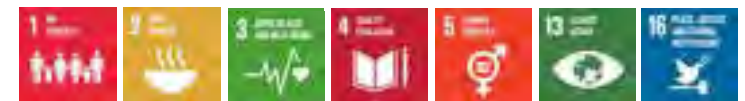




# SHAPING THEIR TOMORROW: A CHILD'S LOOK AT EDUCATION IN GEORGIA (SDG 4)

SDG 4

Children assessed their experiences to evaluate their nation's progress towards achieving SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Through the lens of the five core SDG principles, children offer insights into the accessibility, affordability, and equity of healthcare services in Georgia. While acknowledging the introduction of Universal Healthcare and regulated medication prices, children highlighted remaining concerns. These included high medication costs, especially for rural families, and a lack of emphasis on preventative care. They underscored the interconnectedness of health with other SDGs like poverty and hunger, and the need for stronger partnerships that include children's voices. Overall, children rated progress modestly positive, urging actions like addressing medication costs, improving rural access, and promoting preventative healthcare education.





# UNIVERSALITY: BUILDING MORE, REACHING FURTHER

4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



81%

While 81% of children acknowledged a positive trend (average score 1.0) with the construction and renovation of schools and preschool facilities,



19%

19% expressed concern about the needs of children with disabilities (CWDs) and ethnic minorities being overlooked (0 score). Children highlighted the need for improved physical access for CWDs, a shortage of qualified special education teachers, and language barriers faced by ethnic minorities. The overall score for this principle was 0.8 points, suggesting a need for a more comprehensive approach to ensuring access for all children.

“I haven’t gone to class for years now – there is no ramp at my school. I tried to attend another school, but it’s too far away.”

**Niko,\* 16**

# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: BRIDGING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP

4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



70%

Approximately 70% of children reported slight progress (average score 1.0) in efforts to ensure equal opportunities for all. However,



30%

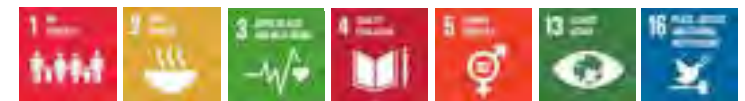
30% felt that progress was stagnant (0 score). The overall score of 0.7 points reflects the need for further targeted interventions to leave no child behind.

“It’s about the accessibility and about the quality. In the big cities we get to obtain slightly better education than in rural areas, but private schools are at another level. Why do my parents have to pay extra to get the medium quality of education I should be getting anyways? It’s not like we’re asking for the Oxford-level education, we just want decent schoolbooks, teachers and materials.

**Eka,\* 15**

“My brother is 11 – he still makes presentations on paper and is not asked to make a verbal presentation. He just shows the paper – teachers are not accepting PowerPoint presentations. How are his public speaking or computer skills supposed to evolve?”

**Dato,\* 17**



# INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INDIVISIBILITY: A HEALTHY START FOR A LEARNING MIND

4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



Children assigned a score of -0.3 to this principle, reflecting their concerns about the quality of education in Georgia despite observing some progress towards SDG 4 (Quality Education).

They emphasized the interconnectedness of education with other SDGs, particularly poverty (SDG 1), hunger (SDG 2), and health (SDG 3). They pointed out how malnutrition and health problems can hinder a child's ability to learn effectively. Additionally, they expressed concern about a lack of safety in schools due to bullying.

The information provided suggests that teachers and school administration often turn a blind eye to bullying, with some even contributing to the problem by making insensitive remarks about certain students. This environment negatively impacts children's sense of security and can impede their learning.



26%

Breaking down the children's assessment further, 26% perceived a decline in quality education (-1 score),

64%

while 64% felt no significant change (0 score).



Nana, 14: "With the type of attitude we get from teachers when we're not on par with other schoolmates, I don't even want to imagine how they would treat someone with a learning disability. I am not talking about being reprimanded for not studying hard enough - I'd get that. I am talking about open insults that insinuate that girls care more about our appearance than about the studies."

Nana,\* 14

# TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: BEYOND BRICKS

4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



38%

Approximately 38% of children perceived a decline (-2 average score) in the transformative nature of education reforms. While acknowledging the construction of new schools, and expressed concern about a lack of improvement in learning outcomes based on PISA results and the challenges mentioned under Universality principle.



62%

A large portion of children (62%) felt the quality education had not changed, and that education systems lacked long-term improvement efforts (assigned a score of 0). Children emphasized the need for transformative changes that address teacher training, reduce harsh disciplinary practices, and foster a more inclusive learning environment, with the average score for this principle being -0.8 points.

“While we see flags of countries or logos or organizations on the doors of classrooms that were refurbished thanks to them, the environment beyond these doors hardly changes. We focus on memorizing the material by heart, rather than learning the applicability of the learning and acquiring skills based on this material. Take, for example history class – it’s not only what happened, but also why it happened, what was the global or regional context, what were the mistakes made and how we can avoid the same mistakes now. Teachers seldom allow us to debate or even think about these issues. Now I know the dates, the kings and queens, the wars by heart – but did I ever reflect on causes and consequences?”

**Elene,\* 15**



# PARTNERSHIPS: LISTENING TO THE VOICES OF THE FUTURE

4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



79%

Similar to the Transformative Change principle, children reported stagnation (0 average score) in partnerships. While acknowledging the importance of collaboration, 79% expressed concern that their voices and those of civil society were not being heard effectively (0 points),



21%

whereas 21% assigning the score of -1.5 manifesting in fewer workshops and training sessions allowed by schools if they were organized by the CSOS. The children also accentuated the weakening position of the school child councils by accentuating that they have some power over planning entertainment, but not school policies.

# OVERALL RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, decline on SDG 4 was minimal, with an average score of only -0.1 points. While roughly 45% of children perceived slight progress (average score of 1 points), the remaining 55% reported a decline of -1 point.

Based on their assessment, children recommend the following actions to accelerate progress on SDG 4:

- Conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to ensure all schools are accessible and inclusive for CWDs and children from ethnic minorities.
- Increase investment in training of qualified teachers and ensure revision of curriculum and teaching methodologies to promote critical thinking, creativity, and social-emotional learning.
- Revise the school funding system to encourage competition among schools. One approach could involve issuing vouchers to students and their families, allowing them to choose the best school for their needs (including private schools). This system would incentivize schools to compete for qualified teachers and high-quality learning materials by attracting students with those resources.
- Strengthen partnerships with civil society and establish effective mechanisms for children's voices to be heard in decision-making processes regarding education.





# CHILD ACTIONS:

Children if provided with relevant platform, can become active participants in shaping the future of learning. Here are some ways children in Georgia can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable education system:

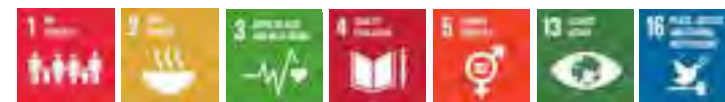
- Organize peer-to-peer learning groups to support classmates who may be struggling.
- Advocate for the strengthening of student councils and ensure their voices are heard by school administration.
- Partner with local CSOs to participate in workshops and training programs that promote tolerance and inclusion.



# BRIDGING THE GAP: A LOOK AT GENDER EQUALITY IN GEORGIA THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES (SDG 5)

SDG 5

While some progress is evident, Georgian children's experiences paint a mixed picture of the country's efforts towards achieving SDG 5. Examining the five core SDG principles, children highlight both positive developments, such as increased acceptance among older generations of gender equality, and persistent challenges, including a lack of outreach initiatives in rural areas and the continued prevalence of traditional gender roles in schools and families. These findings underscore the need for more comprehensive strategies to promote gender equality across Georgia, with children themselves offering valuable suggestions for improvement.





# UNIVERSALITY: REACHING ALL CORNERS OF GEORGIA



## 36%

While 36% of children reported progress (average score 1.6) on the principle of universality, with some highlighting an increased acceptance of gender equality among older generations due to awareness-raising activities,



## 64%

64% expressed concern about the lack of new initiatives to reach all populations (0 score). These findings suggest a need for more comprehensive outreach strategies that consider regional differences and ensure everyone in Georgia understands and embraces the principles of gender equality.

“Not everyone knows about gender equality – for some reason it is associated with the notion that women require more rights or privileges than men.”

**Gigi,\* 15**

“Women are trying to fit the standards of obedient housewives – they don’t support each other, even their family members experiencing bullying or violence because of their gender. Maybe gender equality is noticeable in big cities, but as for the rest of Georgia, we still have to think about not irritating passers by our appearance, not be “too active or aggressive for a girl” when playing sports.”

**Nina,\* 16**

# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: CLOSING THE OPPORTUNITY GAP

5 GENDER  
EQUALITY



15%

Although 15% of children observed progress (average score 2.0) in terms of support for girls from teachers and families,



85%

These positive experiences are overshadowed by the observations of a significant majority (85%) who assigned a stagnant score of 0. This data underscores the persistence of traditional gender roles that continue to hinder equal educational opportunities.

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The gap between the experiences of the **15%** and the **85%** underscores the uneven progress, with 0.3 points of progress being an average score.





# INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INDIVISIBILITY: A RIPPLE EFFECT

5 GENDER  
EQUALITY



36%

Children in Georgia recognized the interconnected nature of the SDGs, highlighting how progress on SDG 5 (gender equality) is hampered by challenges in achieving other goals. 26% of children reported a decline (-1 point) due to perceived regress on SDGs 1 (poverty), 2 (hunger), and 3 (health). Poverty and malnutrition disproportionately affect girls' access to education and healthcare, hindering overall progress.



64%

The remaining 64% observed stagnation (0 points), underscoring the need for a holistic approach to sustainable development that tackles these interconnected issues, with the average score highlighting slight progress – 0.4 points.

“While the attitudes are gradually changing, with families not prioritizing boys to pursue higher education, it’s still harder for women and girls to prove that they can perform as well as men. Female-led households tend to be poorer, because women have to take care of children and house alongside with working.”

**Nino,\* 16**

# TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

5 GENDER EQUALITY



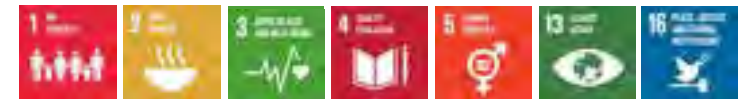
77%



While acknowledging the importance of transformative change, 77% of children felt current efforts lacked focus (0 points). They expressed concern that initiatives aimed at strengthening gender equality did not adequately address the needs of female-led households or tackle the issue of femicide. These concerns highlight the need for interventions that address underlying power imbalances and create a culture of respect for all genders. The overall negative score (-0.2 points) on transformative change underscores the urgency for more impactful approaches.

“Femicide is still a thing – it goes as strong as ever. Families are reluctant to protect their married daughters from their husbands. Some of them try to protect their family name, others are afraid of the violent in-laws – we’ve heard of some perpetrators who worked at a police, had close friends there or the law-enforcers simply ignored the survivors of the domestic violence complaining about the threats of their ex-partners, which allowed the perpetrators to commit the crimes. The stronger women become in terms of trying to overcome the traditional gender roles, the more severe is their punishment. That is why I think that we have to educate boys and men, including men who have been violent to women before”.

Nata,\* 16





# PARTNERSHIPS



91%

Similar to the Transformative Change principle, children reported mixed results on partnerships. 91% indicated slight improvement (1 points), suggesting a lack of progress in collaboration.



19%

19% noted a slight decline (-1 point), expressing concern about weakening partnerships with civil society organizations. The overall score of 0.7 points suggests there is room for improvement in fostering stronger partnerships.

“Participants of this group are lucky enough to have continuous access to the trainings and workshops organized by the CSOs – most of the awareness that we’ve acquired are through these activities. The same goes for the policy and legislation as well – a number of CSOs not only help survivors of violence against women, but also tries to improve the legislation. As always, girls and children overall, seldom have opportunities to participate in decision making activities at the municipal or national levels.”

Keta,\* 17

# OVERALL RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, progress on SDG 5 was minimal, with an average score of only 0.4 points.

74%



While roughly 74% of children perceived slight progress (average score of 1 points),

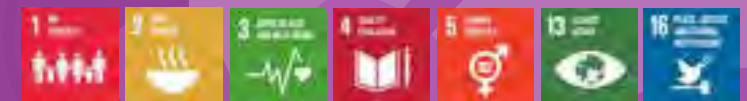
36%



the remaining 36% reported a stagnation of 0 point.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Developing closer partnerships with survivors of violence against women and children. Women in general and girls can support development of needs-based prevention and support programs for girls and women;
- Strengthen the education and awareness programs for general population and for the boys and men, particularly those who have been violent towards women;
- Support CSO's awareness raising activities.



# CHILD ACTIONS:

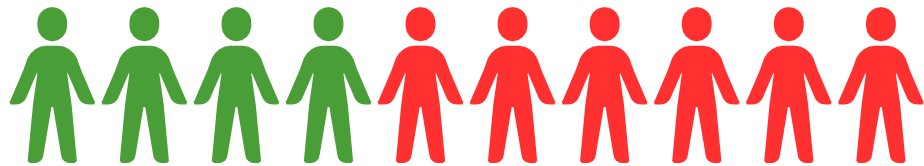
- Child-led groups can be engaged in raising awareness of general population on gender equality at schools and beyond;
- Children can engage in charity activities to fundraise for survivors of the violence against women and survivors of domestic violence;
- Children can work with the municipal and national decision makers to provide their input on the needs of girls and boys in their communities to tailor more targeted measures promoting gender equality.



# THROUGH YOUNG EYES: GEORGIA'S PROGRESS ON CLIMATE ACTION (SDG 13)

SDG 13

This chapter explores the perspectives of Georgian children on their nation's efforts towards achieving SDG 13. Being guided by the five core SDG principles as a framework, children offer insights into the current state of climate action in Georgia, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for advancement.



# UNIVERSALITY: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

13 CLIMATE  
ACTION



15%

The principle of universality emphasizes the inclusion of all populations in achieving the SDGs. While 15% of children acknowledged a lack of new outreach initiatives on climate change (stagnation – 0 points), a more concerning trend emerged.



85%

Another 85% reported a decline (-1 point) due to worsening air quality and uncontrolled construction leading to deforestation. The observations of children, with an average score of -0.85 points, highlight the need for comprehensive outreach strategies that address the diverse environmental challenges faced by different regions of Georgia.

“The air is getting harder to breathe in the city, and I see fewer trees every year. We need to find ways to protect our environment for everyone, with the news about the desertification, increased frequency of heatwaves, we have to act.”

Nika,\* 14



# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

13 CLIMATE ACTION



26%

Leaving No One Behind, the second SDG principle, underscores the importance of prioritizing those most at risk. 26% of children assessed Georgia's progress at stagnation (0 points),



74%

while a significant majority (74%) perceived a decline (-1 point). Children expressed concern that climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, such as children with disabilities and those living in mountainous regions.

“As we were discussing various impacts of climate change in Georgia and elsewhere - from messing up nature and farming to making it harder to learn in school or even stay healthy, I started thinking about the people who already have it tough. We know of people having to move because their homes weren't safe anymore, like ecological migrants and have witnessed the Shovi tragedy. I don't know if the Shovi landslide was climate change's fault, but it sure seems like we're not prepared for these disasters. I mean both the knowledge and the resources that could have saved lives.”

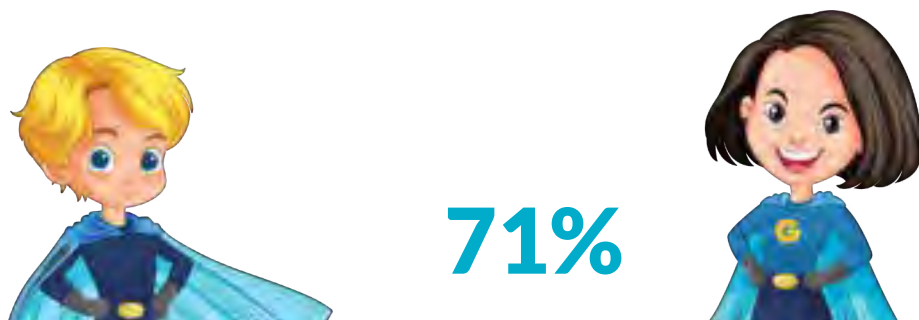
**David,\* 16**

The average score of -0.7 points underscores the urgency felt by children in addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations in the context of climate action.



# INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INDIVISIBILITY: CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE WEB OF SDGS

13 CLIMATE ACTION



The concept of interconnectedness emphasizes the complex interplay between the SDGs. 71% of children assessed a decline (-1 point) in terms of the SDG 13's impact on SDG 5 (Gender Equality) due to the perceived negative impact of climate change on SDGs 1 (Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), and 3 (Good Health and Well-being). The average score of -0.5 points on interconnectedness highlights the need for a holistic approach to sustainable development that tackles climate change alongside other critical goals.

# TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: EDUCATING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Transformative change, the fourth principle, emphasizes the need for systemic shifts to achieve lasting progress. Unfortunately, the average score for this principle was -1 point, with children reporting a lack of educational initiatives on climate action for both children and adults. These observations underscore the importance of integrating climate change education into the national curriculum and raising public awareness about environmental issues.

“We haven’t learned much about climate change in school. I think everyone needs to understand the problem and how we can fix it.”

**Luka,\* 15**

“We learn about climate change in classes, but it feels more like memorizing facts than actually figuring out what we can do about it. I wish we had lessons that teach us skills like how to research solutions, advocate for change, or even just reduce our own impact. Maybe if our schools can’t get those resources, they could team up with environmental groups and hold workshops to teach us these things.”

**Levan,\* 16**



# PARTNERSHIPS: WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREENER GEORGIA

13 CLIMATE  
ACTION



The final SDG principle, partnerships, emphasizes the importance of collaboration in achieving the SDGs. Similar to the Transformative Change principle, the average score for partnerships was 0 points. Children expressed a lack of opportunities to participate in decision-making processes related to climate action. Fostering stronger partnerships with children and youth is crucial for ensuring their active participation in building a more sustainable future.

“We learned today about all the things the government is doing to fight climate change – plans, strategies, even a new law they’re working on. That sounds great, but here’s what worries me: are they thinking about everyone? Will girls and kids with disabilities get the same help as everyone else? What about people living up in the mountains, where things might be worse? Does this law teach communities how to act when there’s a disaster? If not, then just making plans isn’t enough. We need to make sure everyone’s included and knows what to do to fight the climate change and its consequences.”

**Lika,\* 17**

# OVERALL RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS



26%

With the overall score of -0.6 points, with around 60% of children noticing a decline across the SDG 13,



74%

and around 40% of children recognizing the stagnation (0), the following recommendations were developed:

- Develop and implement outreach strategies on climate change that address the diverse needs of all regions in Georgia.
- Prioritize the needs of vulnerable populations in climate action plans and policies.
- Integrate climate change education into the national curriculum for all age groups.
- Launch public awareness campaigns to raise society's understanding of climate change and its impacts.
- Establish strong partnerships with children and youth organizations to ensure their active participation in decision-making processes related to climate action.





# CHILD ACTIONS:

- Supporting state and CSOs to raise awareness of local population on climate change;
- Create local Disaster Risk Reduction groups to support coordination of locals in case of disasters;
- Participate in the local and national level decision making.



# A CALL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE: GEORGIAN CHILDREN ASSESS SDG 16

SDG 13

This chapter reflects the perspectives of Georgian children on their nation's progress towards achieving SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. While some acknowledge a growing awareness of safety measures (Universality), a perceived rise in unaddressed crimes remains a worry. Children emphasized the need to protect vulnerable groups (Leaving No One Behind), highlighting a lack of progress, especially regarding bullying. A call for transformative change resonated throughout, with children advocating for stronger child protection and participation in decision-making. Similar sentiments were echoed regarding partnerships (average score 0), with children emphasizing their desire to collaborate with adults to build a safer and more just future.



# UNIVERSALITY: ENSURING SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL



26%

The principle of universality emphasizes ensuring the rights and safety of all citizens. Here, children presented a mixed picture. While 26% acknowledged a better understanding of safety and security measures among the general population (1 average score),



74%

74% expressed concern about a rise in unpunished crimes (regress -1 point).

“Lately, I’ve been too scared to walk home alone after dark. With all the news about violence against women, my family and I just don’t feel safe anymore. Even coming back from tutoring the other night, cars kept pulling up next to me asking if I needed a ride. It was really creepy, especially when one car wouldn’t leave me alone until I got to a busy street. I shouldn’t have to be this scared just walking home.”

**Natia,\* 14**

The average score of -0.5 points on universality underscores the need for effective law enforcement and a justice system that upholds the rule of law for all.

# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN



79%

The Leaving No One Behind principle emphasizes the importance of prioritizing those most at risk. 79% of children indicated stagnation (-1 point) in this area,



21%

while 21% observed a slight regression (-1 point). Despite the latter group acknowledging some improvements in access to protection mechanisms, overall, children felt their rights were not adequately protected. The average score of -0.6 points underscores the need for stronger systems to address all forms of violence against children, including bullying.

“Bullying is still a big problem at school – tactics are less noticeable than before. While the school security is quite active, you cannot just approach them and tell everything – you will be launched at by peers for “snitching””

Gigo,\* 15





# INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INDIVISIBILITY: A COMPLEX WEB OF CHALLENGES



The concept of interconnectedness emphasizes the complex interplay between the SDGs. While children were unable to identify specific positive developments (0 point average score), they highlighted the challenges faced by marginalized communities. Their observations suggest that without addressing issues of poverty, inequality, and discrimination, achieving peace and justice for all in Georgia will remain elusive.

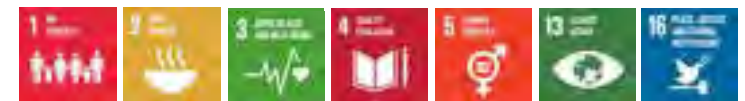
# TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: BUILDING A CULTURE OF RESPECT AND PARTICIPATION



Transformative change, the fourth principle, emphasizes the need for systemic shifts to achieve lasting progress. Unfortunately, the average score for this principle was -0.7 points, with children reporting a lack of effort in protecting children from abuse and mainstreaming their participation in decision-making processes.

“We rarely get a chance to voice our opinions on matters that affect us directly. Adults don’t seem to think our ideas are important.” These observations underscore the need for stronger child protection mechanisms and increased opportunities for children to engage safely and meaningfully in decision-making processes that impact their lives.

**Luka,\* 15**





# INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INDIVISIBILITY: A COMPLEX WEB OF CHALLENGES

16 PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



Similar to the Transformative Change principle, the average score for partnerships was 0 points. Children expressed a lack of opportunities to partner with adults and authorities on issues related to peace and justice.

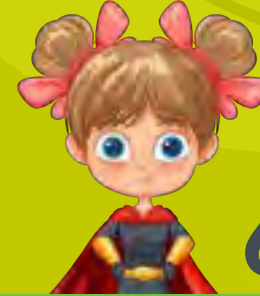
“How can children think of equal access to justice, when most of decision makers do not even want to listen to us?! We’ve talked about the child’s right to access justice system, the child-friendly legal forms, the possibility to reach out to the Child Rights Committee. But how are kids supposed to know about all that? And what if they’re worried about getting in trouble for using these options? Because let’s be honest, that’s a real fear. Creating forms is great but what we really need is to spread the word, make kids feel empowered, and give them someone to turn to if they have nowhere else to go.”

**Nina,\* 15**

# OVERALL RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS



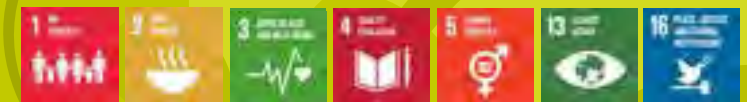
With 38% of children recognizing the stagnation across the measures taken to approach the targets of SDG 16



62%

and around 62% issuing an average score of -1.7, the overall score for the SDG 16 is -1.1 showing a perceived decline on progress. With these findings in mind, children developed the following recommendations:

- Strengthening reporting mechanisms that protect victims from retaliation and fostering a culture of unacceptance towards bullying.
- Improved street lighting, more police patrols, and stricter enforcement of laws.
- Given the strong linkages between SDG 1 and SDG 16, working towards empowering societies to overcome poverty could contribute to a safer environment for all.
- Creating platforms for children to participate in discussions and decisions that impact their lives, such as school and community safety measures or anti-bullying campaigns.
- Establishing open communication and collaboration channels between children, authorities, and civil society organizations.



# CHILD ACTIONS:

- Children can organize and support campaigns in schools and communities about safety precautions, especially for vulnerable groups with support of municipal actors and civil society;
- With the support of schools and civil society, children want to advocate for and co-lead anti-bullying workshops and initiatives within schools, encouraging bystander intervention and promoting empathy.
- Children are willing to organize meetings or workshops with local authorities to discuss safety concerns and propose solutions



# CONCLUSION

The children's assessments and recommendations in this report offer a unique perspective on Georgia's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Their voices reveal the realities of children's lives, highlighting both the progress made and the challenges that persist.







**Save the Children**

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

