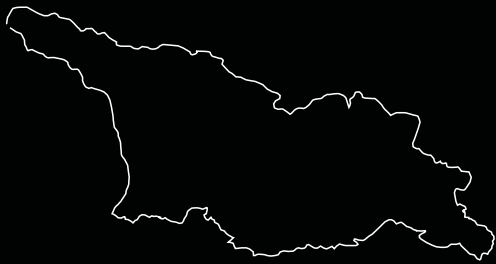




IOM International Organization for Migration



GEORGIA

MAPPING EXERCISE
LONDON, OCTOBER 2007



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The aim of this Mapping Report is to guide IOM's outreach activities and communications strategies. The report does not purport to be exhaustive. The mapping consultant who conducted the exercise and wrote the report on behalf of IOM has taken every effort to ensure accuracy in his/her reporting and the views expressed in this report are his/hers. IOM cannot be held responsible for any omissions or inaccuracies.

INTRODUCTION

AIM OF THE MAPPING EXERCISE, TARGET GROUP, AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the mapping exercise conducted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was to identify the main channels of information used by potential beneficiaries of IOM's voluntary return programmes, which are open to asylum seekers and irregular migrants. It also sought to establish the locations and size of their communities in the UK. The ultimate goal of the mapping exercise is to help IOM to improve its communications with foreign language communities in the United Kingdom through publications, advertisements and presentations to community groups.

The first mapping exercise was undertaken in December 2005. It covered the Brazilian community in the UK. Subsequently, more than twenty similar projects have been carried out by IOM. A few are in the course of being completed. The mapping exercise for the Georgian community in the UK was completed between September and October 2007.

As with previous projects, this mapping exercise aims to establish:

- the approximate size and geographical spread of the Georgian diaspora communities in the UK;
- their preferred media, such as TV networks, radio stations, newspapers and magazines, as well as the role of Internet-based information sources;
- the languages in which they would like to receive IOM information materials;
- the institutions, such as libraries, religious centres, and shops, which could be used to display information about IOM voluntary return programs; and
- what community organisations exist and who are the community leaders to whom members of the public turn for advice.

The mapping exercise was undertaken with the help of a questionnaire which was divided into two sections with twenty-five questions in total. The first section focused on the media and other channels of information available to members of the Georgian diaspora in the UK. It also asked about the community organisations and institutions that they use in order to meet their compatriots. The second section of the questionnaire asked for baseline data from each respondent about their age, gender, and length of residence. It is important to emphasise that the anonymity of the respondents was fully respected and that no personal information, such as name and address, was collected.

A Russian national was recruited to undertake the mapping exercise and to finalise the results in this report. The mapping consultant's inside knowledge of the Georgian community and his wide range of contacts with its members in the UK proved to be an essential resource for this mapping exercise.

The first phase of the project involved translating the questionnaire into Georgian and adapting its contents. The primary research was carried out using a number of approaches to data collection. Information was gathered by distributing questionnaires, and through qualitative fact-finding and in-depth interviews with multipliers¹.

Extensive networking was carried out to identify media, organisations, churches, and individuals that interact with Georgians. Fifty questionnaires were collected between September and October 2007.

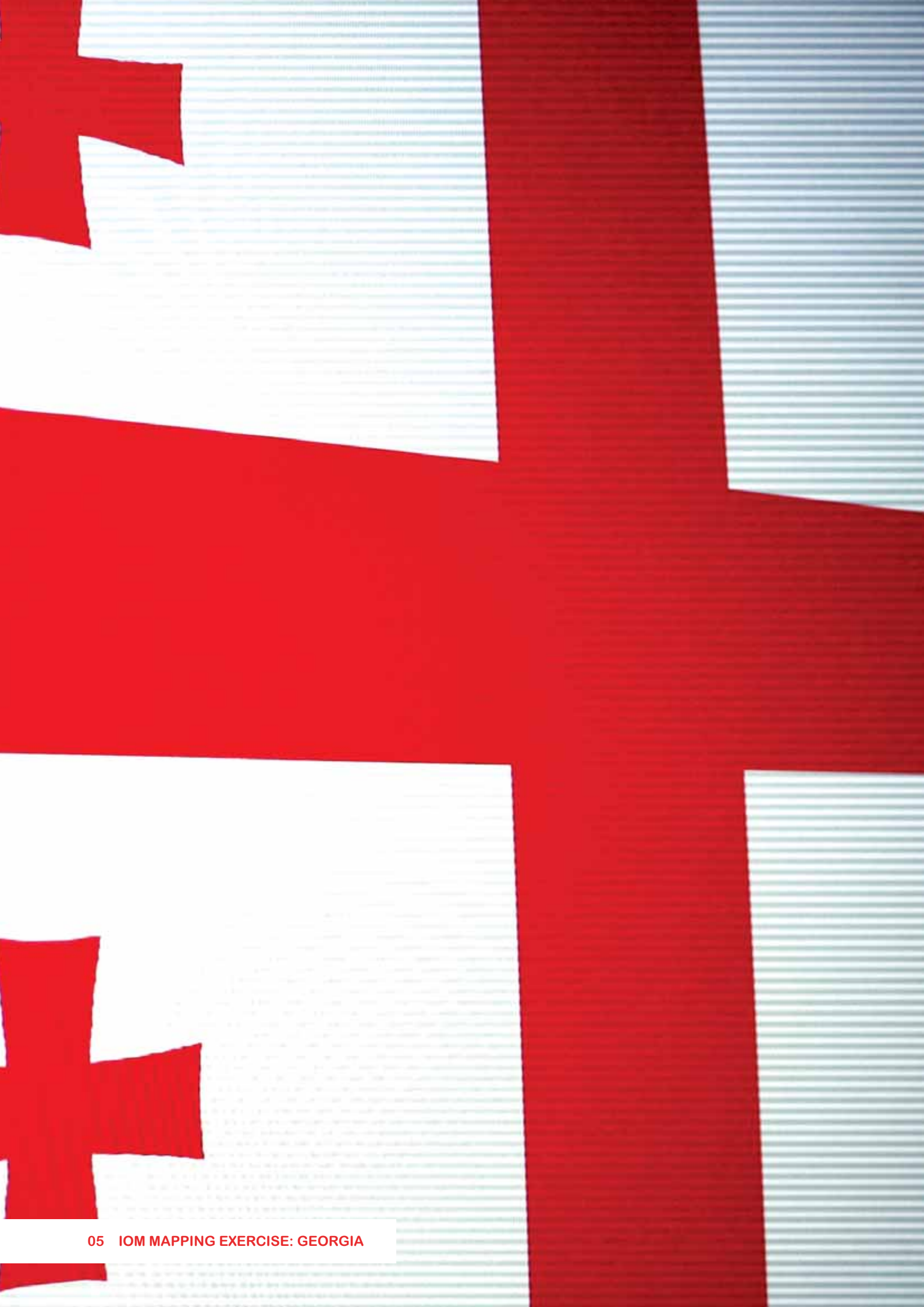
The mapping exercise was largely conducted in the Greater London area, because the majority of Georgians live there. There are growing numbers of Georgians in other major cities as well, primarily in Bristol and Manchester, but there are hardly any community organisations outside the capital and most of the research was therefore confined to it. The consultant met with the representatives of the Georgian expatriate community, members of British-Georgian organisations and visited several establishments frequented by Georgians. It enabled him to create a more complete and comprehensive view of existing networks and made the questionnaire answers more accurate and representative.

This report includes charts and tables based on the information obtained from the questionnaires. Additionally, a list of contacts was created which merges data gathered directly from completed questionnaires with the results of the consultant's own fact-finding, as well as the information provided by the multipliers during in-depth interviews. This database will be used by the Information team at IOM in their outreach work².

It is important to emphasise that the mapping exercise relied on a network of contacts and that the questionnaire was completed by those who selected themselves to be part of this small study. It is not possible, therefore, to generalise from the data about the population of Georgian nationals in the UK. On the other hand, the wide range of individuals that helped to facilitate the mapping exercise constitutes a broad and diverse sample.

¹ This term is used to indicate individuals or organisations that are well-known among diaspora groups and could therefore play a key role in delivering information.

² This document is confidential and does not form part of this report.



1 GEORGIANS IN THE UK

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE GEORGIAN COMMUNITY IN THE UK

History

Georgian immigration to the UK began early in the twentieth century. The first documented evidence of Georgians in the UK is a record of several hundred families settling in London in about 1921. They were fleeing the civil war in their country and its subsequent incorporation into the USSR. The first community centre was also set up in London. Many of these migrants assimilated completely into British culture. The number of Georgians living in the UK remained very low until the end of 1980s, as was the case with others groups coming from the USSR. It was virtually impossible to leave the former Soviet Union freely. With the political changes in the East, culminating in the break up of the USSR and the arrival of capitalism, the number of Georgian-speaking newcomers has been increasing rapidly. Recent counts indicate that nearly 600,000 East European migrants have come to the United Kingdom in the past two years³; it is estimated that around 1,000 are Georgian nationals⁴.

The Home Office estimates that most Georgians currently living in the UK are family reunification migrants or irregular migrants. Many of them are here as visitors or contract workers, some are classified as highly skilled migrants and businessmen. There were 45 Georgian citizens seeking asylum in 2003, 12 in 2004 and 15 in 2004. Asylum, exceptional leave or humanitarian protection was refused in almost all these cases⁵.

Number of Georgian Citizens

Gathering accurate information about the size of the Georgian diaspora in the UK has proved as difficult as it did in mapping other ethnic groups. There is no up-to-date information or statistics on the number of any foreign nationals in the UK. The figures in the 2001 Census were approximate in the first place but even they have now become obsolete, bearing in mind the influx of East Europeans over the last few years. Moreover, it is commonly the case that the only basis upon which a person's nationality can be established with complete certainty is by reference to their passport. There are many cases of mixed marriages and people of Georgian origin have traditionally lived in the Russian Federation and Ukraine in large numbers. Many of them have become Russian citizens (or may have dual citizenship since Georgian law has not been consistent about this). It is estimated that the Georgian diaspora in Russia alone amounts to 1 million.

Another important issue relates to the political developments after the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Georgia gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and a period of political instability and severe economic crisis followed. Two regions of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, declared their own independence from the country, which led to widespread inter-ethnic violence and wars. Around 250,000 Georgians were said to be ethnically cleansed from Abkhazia in 1992-1993 and more than 25,000 are alleged to have left South Ossetia. Both regions have *de facto* independence and have formed close ties with Russia across their borders. Most of the Abkhazians and Ossetians have been granted Russian citizenship at the same time as renouncing Georgian rule and affiliation.

³Independent Immigration Advice 'Work Permit', *UK Immigration News* 16 December 2006.

⁴Interview with Zaza Gongandze, Press Officer at the Georgian Embassy in London.

⁵*Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2005*, Home Office, HOSB 14/06, p.34, 39.

This has many effects on perceptions of national identity and the characteristics of the community. Russian was, for example, the prevailing tongue in the old society, which means that many Georgians see it as their second language. There are many mixed marriages and some Georgians who have worked and lived in Russia might not distinguish between the two nationalities. It means that an individual who only speaks Russian, and who is seen as “Russian” by others, might come from Georgia and consider it his home country. He might not, however, turn to the Georgian media or get involved in Georgian community organisations. Of course, this applies to only a certain proportion of Georgian nationals. It is by no means a general rule. Establishing how important this minority is, let alone determining their formal nationality, has presented major challenges. On the other hand, responses about information channels and community organisations, for example, were not at all irrelevant since they could be used in relation to other diasporas, if not this one.

The 1991 UK census only recorded citizens of the former USSR but the 2001 census records 1,308 Georgian citizens living in the UK.

Figure 1: Breakdown according to age

| Age | Citizens |
|-------------|----------|
| 0-14 | 66 |
| 15-29 | 297 |
| 30-44 | 491 |
| 45-59 | 396 |
| 59-74 | 47 |
| 75 or older | 11 |

There is no doubt that these figures have risen significantly during the last few years. The age breakdown is also likely to have changed since most of the newly arrived Georgians are younger than 45 years old.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) estimated that there were 1,479 Georgian citizens in the UK in 2001⁶. However, even these figures are out of date, given the developments in recent years.

Current official estimates suggest that approximately 20,000 Georgians (or those who consider themselves as such) currently call Britain their home, with a very noticeable surge of approximately 5,000 in the past two years. The numbers are, however, highly approximate and are not formally confirmed by any authority, including the Home Office. The estimates are produced on the basis of other figures relating to other aspects of migration. One analysis uses numbers of issued visas, approximate numbers of Georgian citizens returning to their country (giving a rough figure for how many have overstayed), and numbers of asylum applications approved and refused⁷. In 2000, for example, 9,000 visas were granted to Georgians; by 2003 the number had increased by 25%⁸.

⁶ *Counting the Uncountable*, James Rather (IPPR Publications, 2007), Appendix.

⁷ Interview with Z. Gongadze, see above.

⁸ “National Statistics Acceptances for Settlement by Nationality” in *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, (ONS, 2000-2002).

1.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND SPREAD OF THE GEORGIAN COMMUNITY

The lack of officially verified and up-to-date statistics is also apparent when it comes to a breakdown of the number of Georgians living in different parts of the UK. Representatives for both the British authorities and Georgian diplomatic staff agree on one thing: nobody really knows how many there are. The spokesman for the Georgian Embassy in London accepted that, although there are just 3,000 Georgians officially registered with them, in reality many more have settled in the UK. There is no requirement for Georgians to register formally with the Embassy. Few people do so unless it is required for some official purposes, such as business or marriage. A significant number of Georgians have come to the UK on family reunion grounds, and others are here illegally. No one can give even approximate estimates of how many there are⁹.

Georgian Embassy London

The Georgian Embassy also believes that the vast majority of Georgians have settled in London. The unofficial assessment is that around 85% now live in the capital. Like other migrants from the old Soviet countries, Georgians tend to live all over Greater London, although the London Boroughs of Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham and Haringey are their favourite destinations.

Bristol was said to be the second city of choice, with around 2,000 (10%) of the members of the diaspora living there, followed by Manchester with a little less than 1,000 (5%).

Mapping Questionnaire Data and Other Sources

Respondents were asked whether they knew areas with significant numbers of Georgians in the UK. 21 questionnaires did not give any answer to that question. The rest largely confirmed the data above. Most respondents gave answers like “Bayswater” or “Tottenham” and there was a clear view that the vast majority of Georgians currently live in the capital. This is consistent with the information provided by the Home Office and the 2001 Census.

Like other citizens from the old Soviet Union, Georgians do not tend to settle down in a particular area either of London or the UK. The mapping exercise suggested that there are almost no examples of areas where the concentration of Georgians could be described as high or considerable. It is rather more the case that there are certain parts of Greater London where you are more likely to hear Georgian spoken, or perhaps to see a local establishment, like a food store or a restaurant. However, the existence of such establishments is sporadic and does not depend on the fact that many expatriates actually live in a particular neighbourhood. This is in sharp contrast to many other ethnic groups, perhaps partly because they are larger communities and have had a presence in the UK for longer. In general, the composition of the Georgian diaspora can be described as rather loose.

⁹ Georgian Embassy, London, interview for IOM, 10 September 2007.

2 MAPPING EXERCISE OUTCOMES

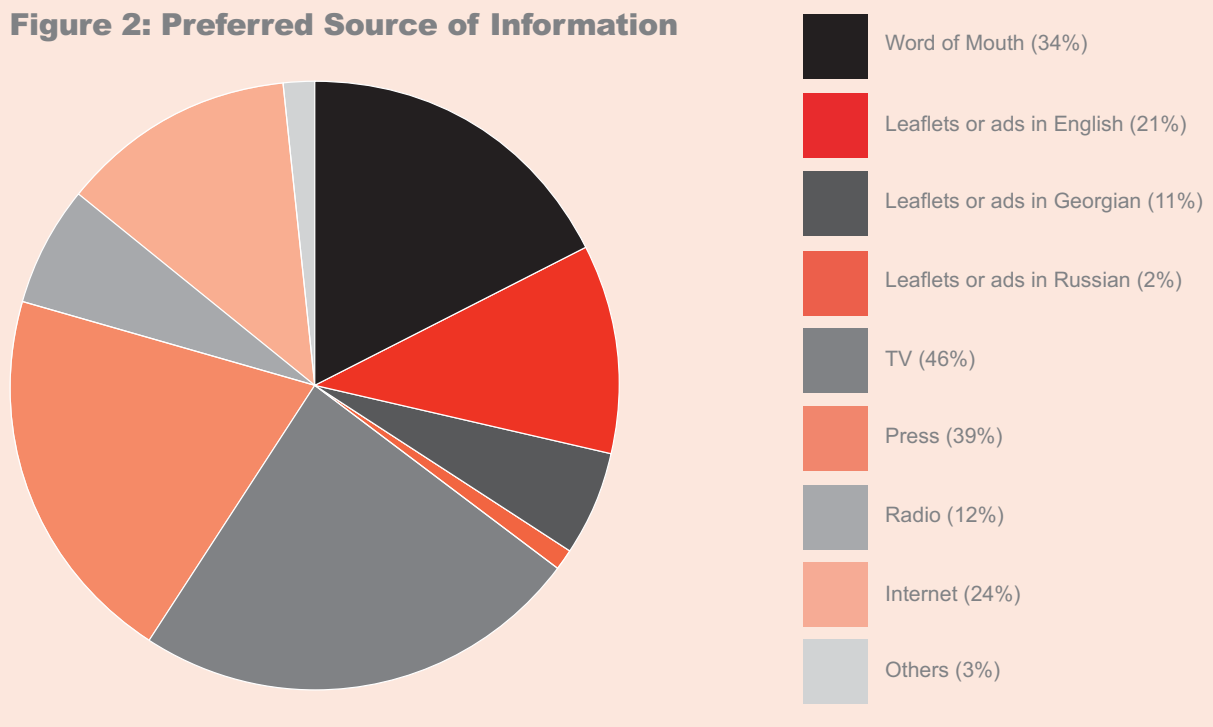
INFORMATION CHANNELS

2.1 PREFERRED SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Information Sources

Respondents were asked how they normally obtain information on political, social, cultural and entertainment matters. Figure 2 displays the responses.

Figure 2: Preferred Source of Information



A few respondents suggested using communal billboards and notice boards in shops and workplaces as a means of obtaining information.

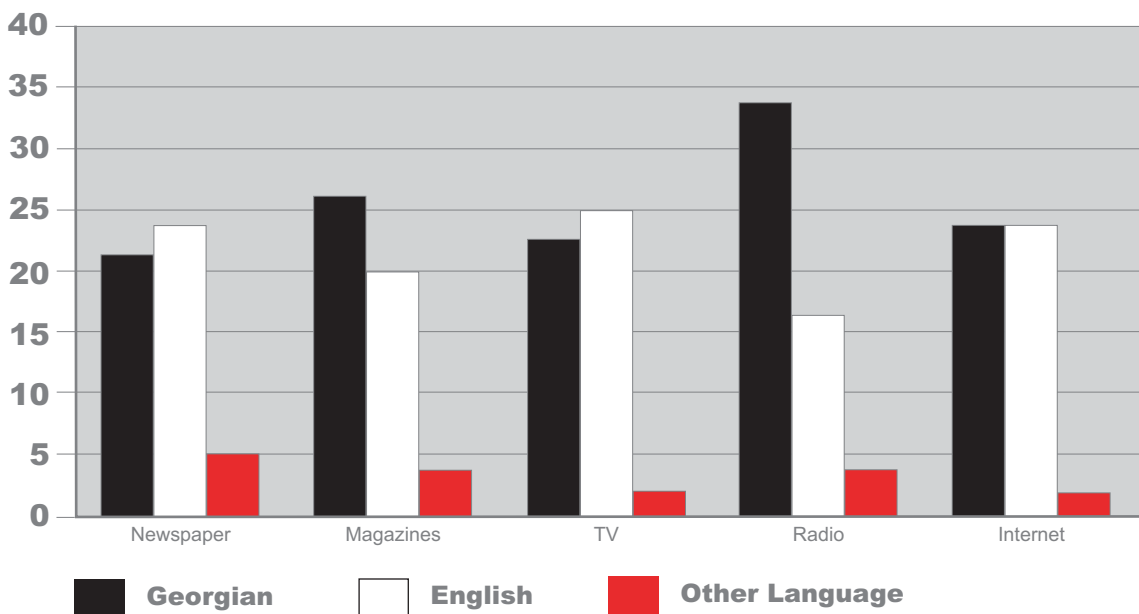
2.2 MEDIA

The first section of the questionnaire was designed to identify the main channels of information used by Georgians in the UK. It was divided into three main categories: media; other sources of information; and community groups and organisations. All the relevant information, including contact details provided by the respondents and the interviewees, was included in the list of contacts. to the list will serve as a basis for IOM's work in establishing links with the Georgian community. It is not designed to be an exhaustive register of media and organisations.

Media Comprehension

Respondents were asked in which language they prefer to obtain information from different media. Figure 3 below presents the outcome.

Figure 3: Media Comprehension

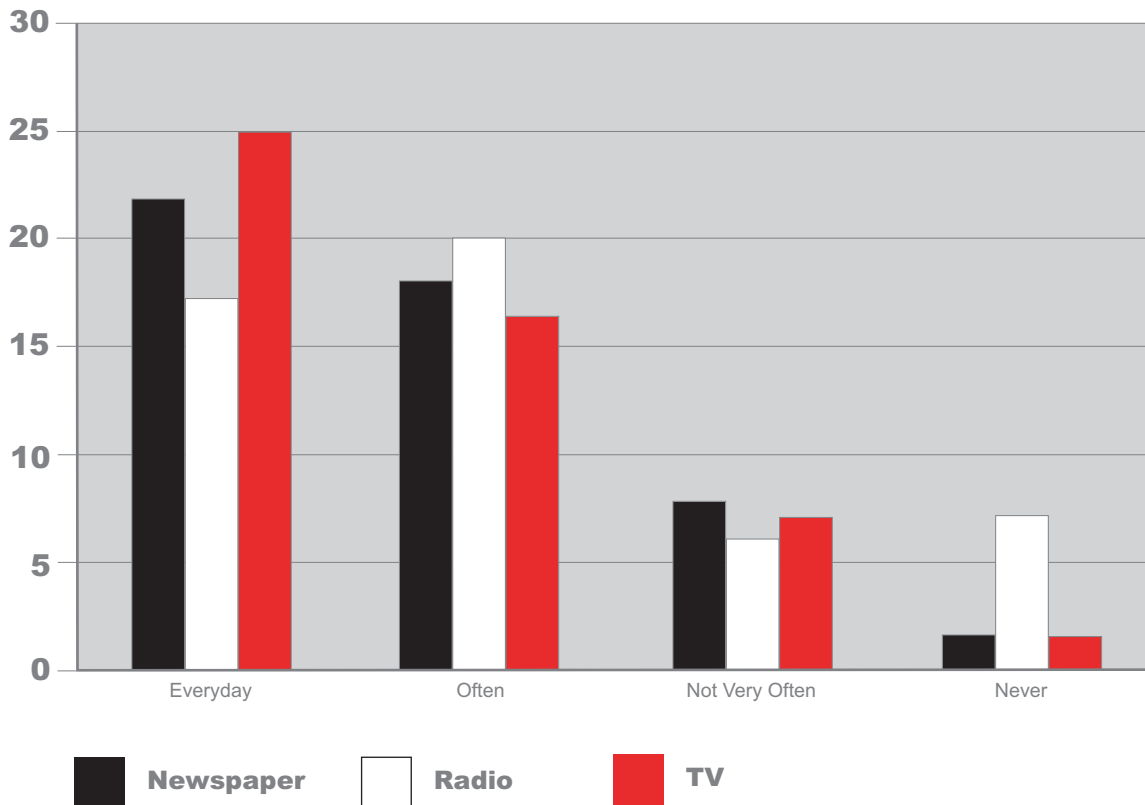


Unsurprisingly, Georgian is the language of choice when it comes to some media, but English is in the lead in other categories, such as newspapers and TV. Most of the respondents do consult English-language media, something that is evidence of their relative youth and a high degree of integration into British society. Some Georgians understand and consult Russian-language media if they find any available (it is mainly Russian-language media that is listed as “other”). Availability is the major issue. Georgian media are in very short supply in Britain. Respondents turn to Georgian media originating in their home country rather than coming from Western Europe. A significant number of Georgians do not usually go to Russian media but others in the community do consult them occasionally.

Frequency of Media Consultation

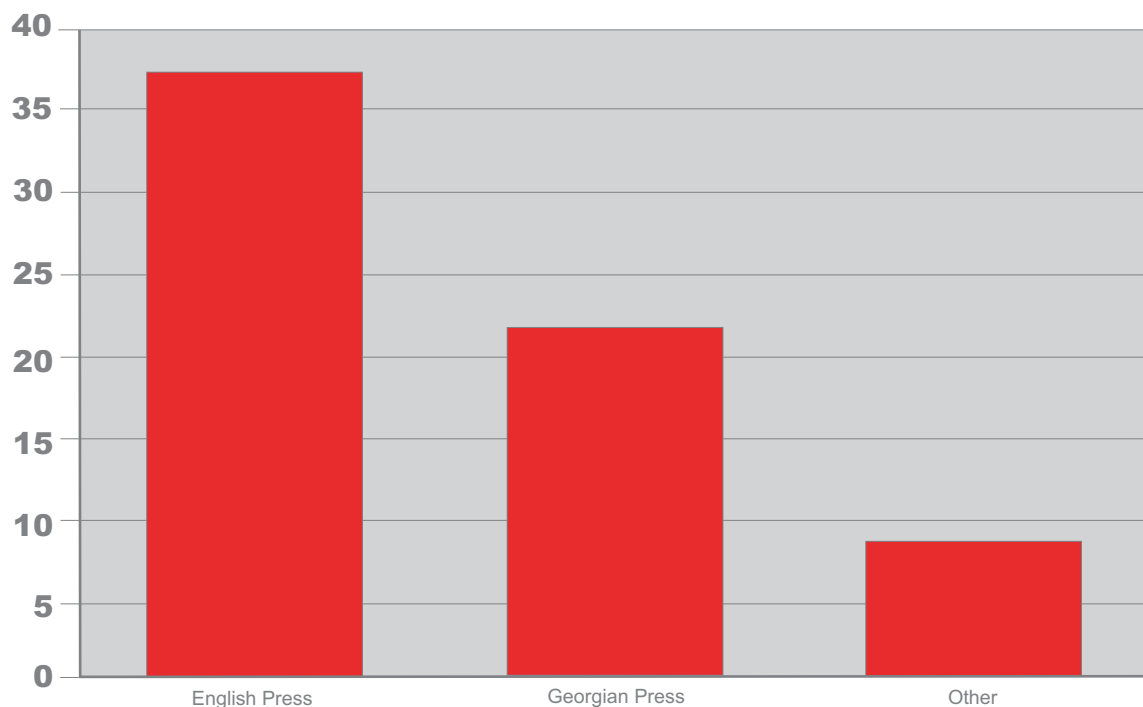
Most respondents said that they read newspapers, watch TV, or listen to the radio every day. The vast majority of people said that they read daily free newspapers, such as *Metro* or *The London Paper*, which are handed out on the streets and on public transport in major cities. Most of the respondents pointed out that “every day” tended to refer to their consultation of the English media. “Often” tended to refer to people reading Georgian publications or listening to Georgian radio stations at home. In some cases, it refers to reading Russian daily and weekly publications.

Figure 4: Media Consultation



Newspaper Readership

Figure 5: Preferred Newspapers and Magazines

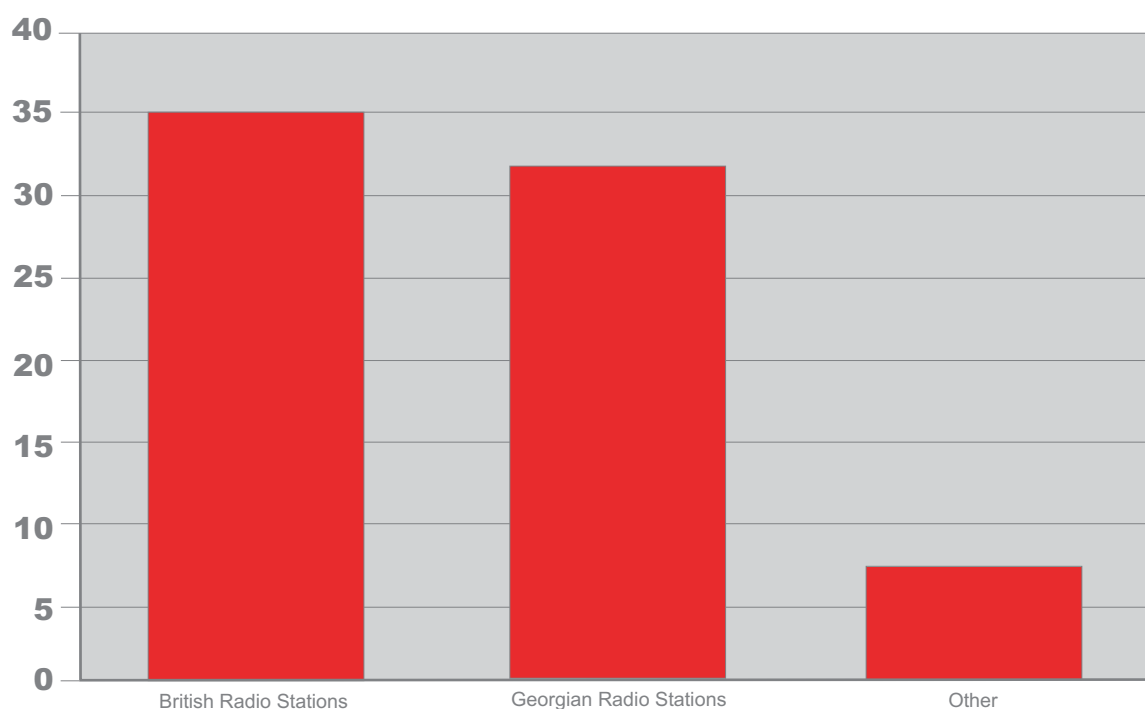


The mapping consultant did not learn of any widely available publications in Georgian that are produced in Britain. Some respondents mentioned some religious newsletters, which are circulated in churches, as well as leaflets, handouts, and similar information material, often produced for a specific event or holiday. The mapping exercise did not learn of any weekly or monthly periodical magazine in the Georgian language regularly published in Britain. There are, however, a number of weekly newspapers which are published in Georgia but sold throughout Europe. They include the *Georgian Times* and *Georgia Today*, as well as a daily newspaper, *Georgian Messenger*. With almost no exceptions, all the magazines listed in the survey were either English-language periodicals or published in Georgia. It is clear that the Georgian press in the UK has not yet established itself. The vast majority of Georgians turn to newspapers and magazines from their home country.

17 respondents said that they occasionally read Russian-language newspapers such as *Russian Courier* (4 respondents), *Russian London Info* (3 respondents), *Pulse UK* (2 respondents) and *Anglia* (3 respondents). 5 respondents in total confirmed that they occasionally read Russian publications from Russia itself. *The Times* (18 respondents) and the *Guardian* (22 respondents) were the most popular British newspapers.

Radio

Figure 6: Radio



There is a similar lack of Georgian radio stations broadcasting from the UK or Western European countries. However, radio stations like *Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe* and *Voice of America* have news and programmes in Georgian. They are still very popular with older members of the community and with Georgians who have been resident in the UK longest. They used to be the radio stations for dissident listeners and were the only way people in the old Soviet Union could get information from the West. They still maintain their impartiality and independence of any government or financial interests in the former Soviet countries.

The BBC has special language services in Russian and Ukrainian, but not in Georgian. However, radio stations broadcasting from Georgia are popular and they are often accessible online. *Georgian Public Radio* and *Radio Imeda* are the stations that were named most often in the survey. The mapping consultant learnt of some other radio stations broadcasting from Georgia. They were not contacted but it may be possible to discuss outreach activities with them.

Television

The vast majority of respondents (36) watched British TV channels. Only five respondents said that they had access to Georgian TV. Some members of the community cannot afford satellite dishes or digital boxes; some live here temporarily or in shared accommodations. All the main Georgian TV networks, such as *Rustavi TV*, *Imeda 2*, and *Georgian Public TV*, have offices in London and their broadcasts are specifically designed for Georgians living abroad. Advertisements on these networks focus on goods and services that can be obtained abroad, rather than in Georgia. The mapping consultant was advised that Russian TV broadcasting to Germany runs information about visas and legal services in relation to immigration. This suggests that there is an opening for IOM to approach the TV networks and discuss cooperation with them.

Internet

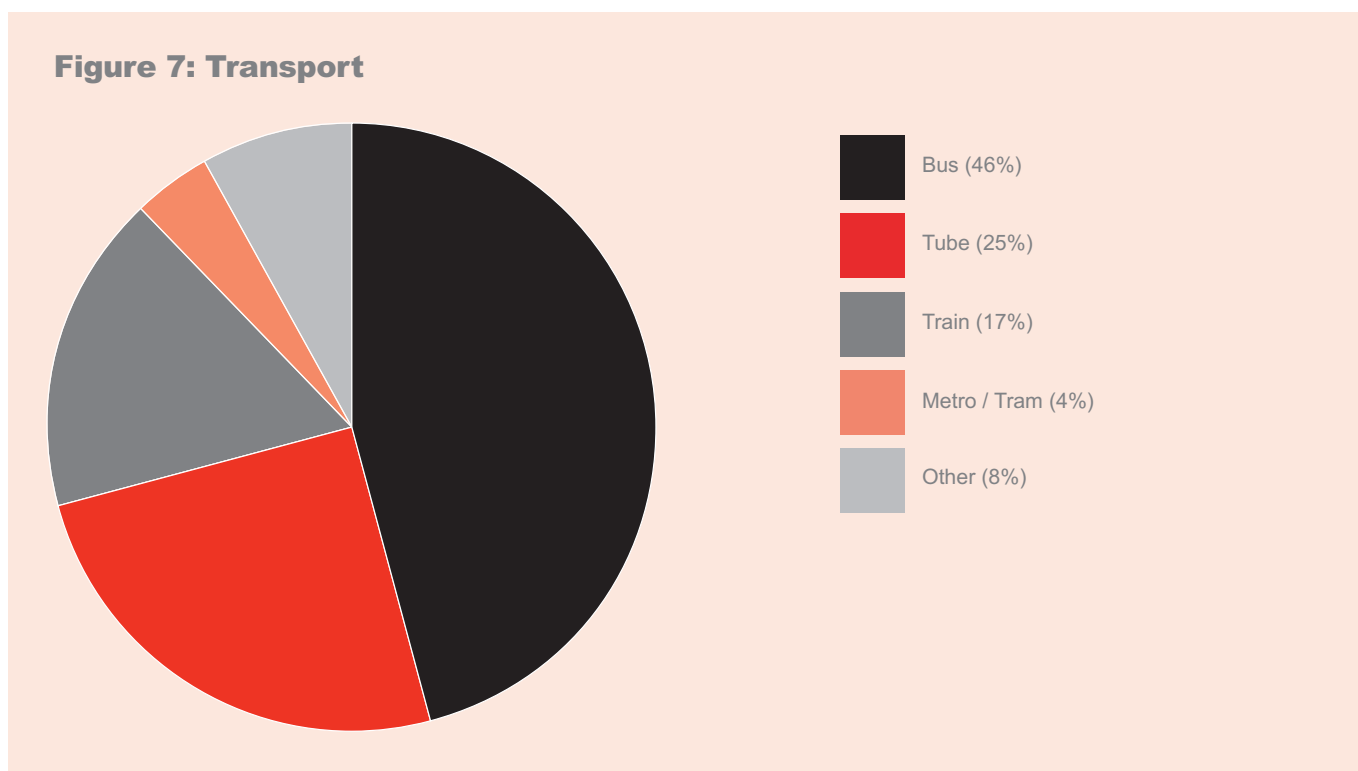
More than 50% of the respondents used the Internet regularly at home or at work for business and leisure. It became clear during the survey that it is the only medium which allows daily access for many people to news in Georgian, especially younger people. Websites based in the UK are <http://www.georgians.co.uk/> and www.goclp.org.uk, as well as the Georgian Embassy's website <http://www.geoemb.org.uk/>. The consultant did not discover any other Internet sites outside Georgia. Even these resources were not very well-known or widely used by respondents. Most of the respondents preferred either British websites or news online from the home country on www.messenger.com.ge, www.geotimes.ge, www.georgiatoday.ge, or www.svobodnaya-gruzia.com (in Russian).

Conclusion

There is an evident shortage of Georgian publications, radio and Internet resources in the UK, particularly produced in this country. Most Georgians use media originating in their home country. English and Russian media are used to a considerable extent.

2.3 USE OF SERVICES

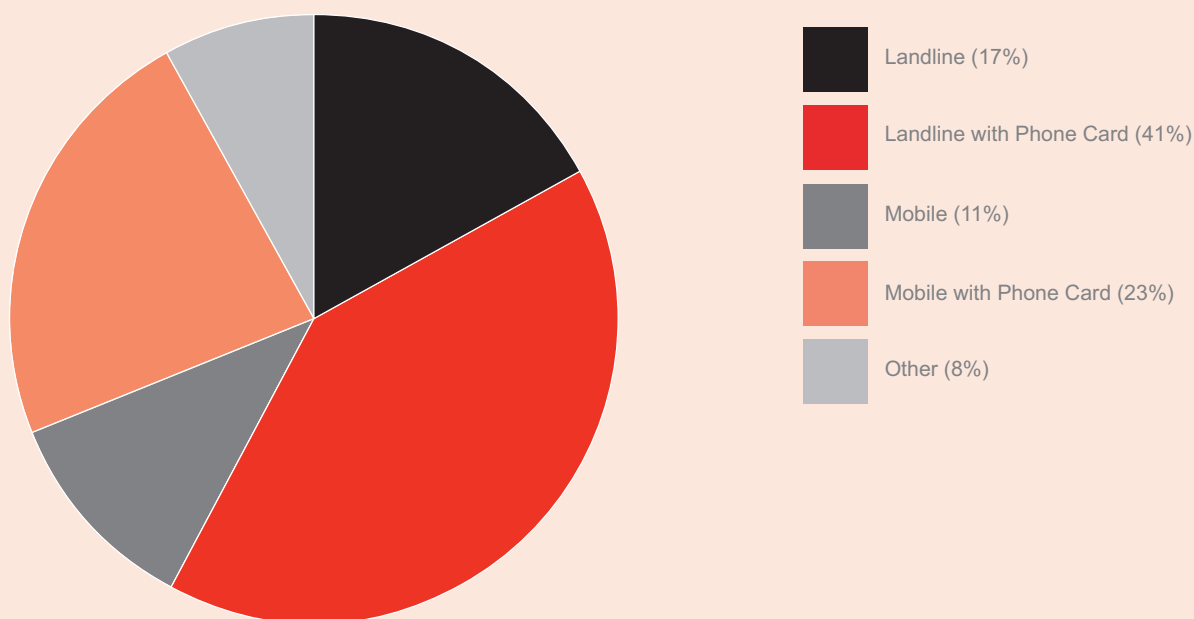
Means of Transport



Most respondents lived in London and their daily means of transport was usually the bus or the Underground. Mainline trains were mainly used by Georgians living in Greater London or in other cities and towns. "Other" generally referred to the respondent using his or her own car, or perhaps worker transport services. Irregular migrants, for example, who work in the agricultural sector, removals or on building sites, are sometimes picked up in a lorry or a van and taken to a location and then taken back after the working day.

Phone Calls

Figure 8: Phoning Abroad



The survey clearly indicated that most people used calling cards to minimise their costs. Most of the respondents said that, if they do not use a calling card, it is simply because they do not have one in their pocket at the time. There are several specialised calling cards, for example *IDT Eastern Europe*, *Eastern Tel* or *Tele-Tsar*, with preferential rates for calls to Eastern Europe. They are sold in most convenience stores, kiosks and markets.

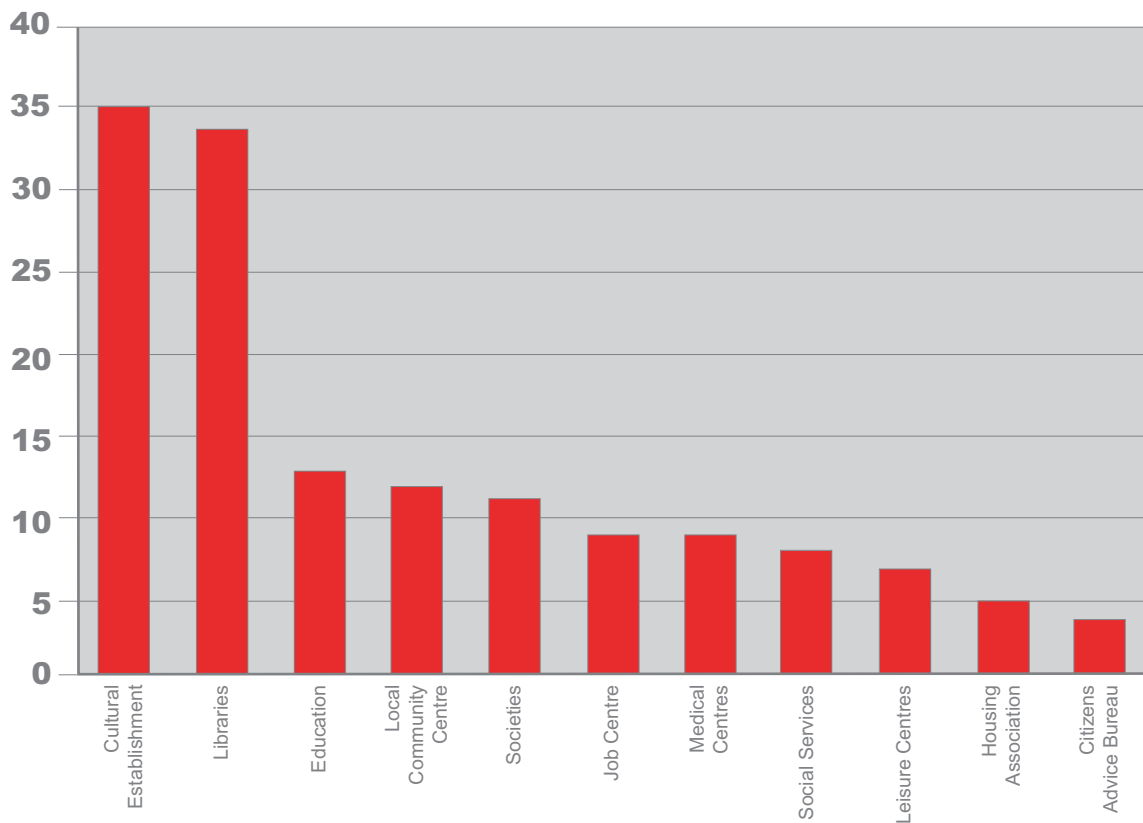
Local Services

Figure 9 shows which local services are commonly used by the respondents. Many of the respondents ticked several different options but libraries and cultural establishments were generally most favoured.

Many Georgians in the UK enjoy cultural activities. They also use libraries frequently, particularly the older respondents. Much of the communal activity involves the arts or entertainment and many Georgian associations revolve around cultural events or undertakings.

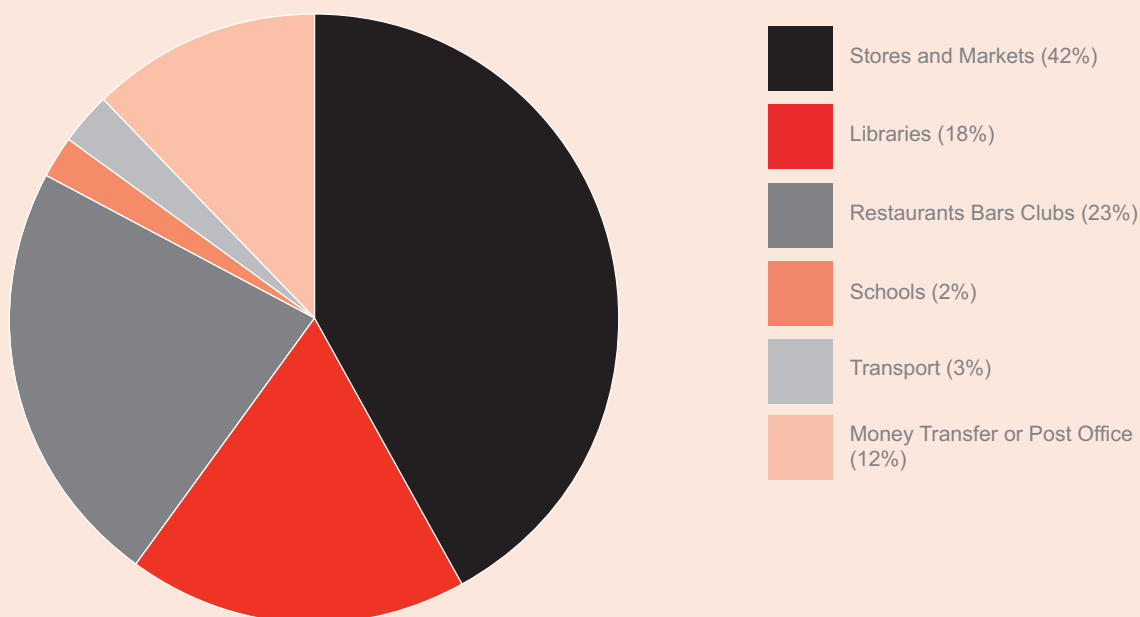


Figure 9: Use of Services



Respondents were also asked where they thought information should be displayed to have most impact.

Figure 10: IOM Materials Location



Conclusions

Buses and London Underground are the most common means of transport which makes them an obvious choice for advertisements. On the other hand, Georgians do not tend to concentrate in a particular area. They tend to live in areas where many ethnic groups are represented and it may be most productive to display advertisements in these places in a number of languages, among them Georgian.

Phone cards are popular. There are several cards from different companies that are designed for calls to Eastern Europe, with distinct Eastern European and Georgian symbols and images on them. These phone cards have adopted different ways of carrying advertisements in recent years. IOM should approach the makers and distributors of these cards and advertise on them or use the promotions which are part of the calling arrangements.

Libraries and shops selling books, music and DVDs from Georgia and former Soviet countries are immensely popular with members of the Georgian diaspora. The number of grocery stores selling Georgian and Eastern European foods is growing quickly. IOM should consider advertising in these places.

2.4 COMMUNITY GROUPS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The results of the survey suggest that a considerable number of Georgians consult Georgian- and Russian-language media, visit Eastern European food stores and participate in events organised by Eastern European or Russian societies. These places tend to attract not only Russians but many others coming from the old Soviet Union. Despite the recent increase of Georgians in Britain, their number in total remains relatively low. The mapping exercise did not learn of many associations in the UK that are distinctly Georgian. Their formation appears to be rather informal, they are often unknown to Georgians and they do not have an extensive membership base. They are also quite unknown to other ethnic societies. They are often based around a clear concept of Georgian national identity, as opposed to a “Soviet” or post-Soviet trans-national outlook. Not surprisingly, the main focus of their activity is the uniqueness of Georgian culture and history. They can appear slightly more politicised than other community organisations.

Some Georgians are affiliated to these organisations and participate in their activities but far fewer subscribe to full membership or become actively involved in them. This was definitely confirmed by the questionnaires and during in-depth interviews with the community leaders and general public. Unlike many other ethnic groups, Georgians have been reluctant to organise themselves into societies. They rely on individual contacts and smaller, more informal, networks. People build “mini-communities” of friends, acquaintances, and colleagues but avoid becoming involved more fully in larger associations. 39 respondents said that friends and colleagues, or simply people they know, were their point of contact if help or consultation were needed. These contacts need not be Georgian but there are usually things in common like language or customs. They are therefore likely to be from the old Soviet Union or from Eastern European countries.

Georgians do tend to unite around major events, such as Orthodox New Year, or a music festival. They are normally advertised through Russian Internet forums and media as well. The Georgian Orthodox Church is also a focal point for meetings and spreading information. Otherwise, a typical Georgian society will be unofficial and consist of around a dozen participants. They meet occasionally for a small concert by a Georgian pianist or to organise a small exhibition of a countryman’s work. Events are organised on a small scale and informally. At the same time, the number of advice centres, legal practices and charities that assist people from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union or specialise in working with them is growing rapidly. The number of businesses and establishments is also increasing rapidly, including bookshops and video stores, restaurants, social clubs, schools, nurseries, music schools and cultural associations.

A comprehensive listing of community organisations, institutions and enterprises has been included in the list of contacts together with recommendations for action. A brief list of some of the more significant is as follows.

- Georgian Community in the UK: social networking and organisation of cultural events. Publishes leaflets, newspaper-like materials and information materials.
- British Georgian Society: an official organisation with links to the Georgian Embassy and British Council. Organises cultural events, seminars, and forums in Georgia and Britain.
- Georgian Orthodox Church: important meeting point for many Georgians in Britain.
- Georgian Supplementary School and Education Centre (Association of Georgians in Great Britain – Manchester branch): centre of Georgian life in that city.
- Russian Immigrants Association: provides help in asylum matters and integration for those from the former USSR who were granted leave to stay in the UK.
- Russian Refugees Aid Society: assistance and support for asylum-seekers, refugees and irregular migrants from the former Soviet countries.
- Russian Annual Festival in London: usually takes place in Trafalgar Square at the beginning of January. It is supported by the City of London and several prominent political and corporate figures. It attracts vast numbers of Georgians, people from former USSR and other Londoners. It is by far the biggest and the most important social event of the year.

Conclusions

Community organisations and centres for the Georgian people are still few and they tend to be event-based. Nonetheless, they attract a large number of visitors and tend to be a focal point of contact for many. These events offer a real opportunity for establishing communication networks and promoting ideas.

3 MAPPING EXERCISE OUTCOMES

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The second section of the questionnaire was designed to gather baseline data from the respondents about their age, gender, and length of stay in the UK. Its aim was to establish the characteristics of the mapping exercise's sample. The information here is more personal but confidentiality was respected and no data that would allow individuals to be identified was collected.

3.1 GENDER

19 respondents were women and 31 were men. Male respondents were more willing to be interviewed and more of them are to be found in Georgian community centres and businesses. However, the mapping exercise did manage to obtain a reasonable balance between genders.

3.2 AGE

Figure 11 largely confirms both empirical impressions drawn from discussions with members of the Georgian community and some well-known facts. A considerable proportion of the Georgian community are fairly young. The following table also confirms the fact that most Georgians have not lived in the UK for a long time.

Figure 11

| Age group | Number of respondent |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Under 18 | 0 |
| 18 -24 | 5 |
| 25 – 34 | 15 |
| 35 - 44 | 21 |
| 45 - 54 | 7 |
| 55 - 64 | 2 |
| 65 and over | 0 |
| No answer | 0 |

Total: 50

3.3 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Figure 12: length of residence in the UK

| Length of residence | Number of respondent |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Less than 12 months | 4 |
| 1 year but less than 3 | 19 |
| 3 years but less than 5 | 22 |
| 5 years but less than 10 | 4 |
| 10 years or more | 1 |
| No answer | 0 |

Total: 50

4 CONSTRAINTS

The mapping exercise did not encounter any major difficulties and experienced no obstacles from either private individuals or from the representatives of any organisation. There were a few instances when people asked why a Georgian mapping exercise was being conducted by a Russian but this factor did not impede the project or affect it in any adverse way.

Most people were positive about the exercise and very helpful. Some people preferred to speak Georgian or English but both sides were able to understand each other. As with other surveys, people were often slightly cautious and a few declined to participate in the exercise. Lack of time or interest was the cause in most instances. Cases of open suspicion and mistrust were rare. There is no doubt, though, that the degree of willingness to participate in the survey was higher among respondents whose personal situation in this country was settled and secure.

It needs to be emphasised that, in order to ensure the smooth progress of the questionnaires, the consultant decided to interview participants and fill in their answers himself, rather than leave it to them. This also helped to ensure that most of the questions were actually answered and that the responses were more precise. It was possible for the consultant to go back over questions and elaborate on particular issues. This approach also helped significantly in discovering societies and organisations in general.

There were some complaints that the questionnaire was too long and that some questions were repetitive. This applies mainly to the media section. Some respondents thought that many of the answers to questions about community organisations were self-evident. They pointed out that everyone goes to the bank or Post Office every now and then, and almost everyone in London uses different kinds of transport. IOM should look into how this criticism can be addressed.

Finally, it needs to be stressed that, although the number of Georgian organisations in the UK is growing, many of them have just been established. Many of them have not been active for very long and this may have affected how much people know about them. The consultant believes that this situation is changing and that Georgians have become more aware of their associations.



5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Characteristics of the Georgian Diaspora

The mapping exercise clearly showed that, as with other communities from former Soviet countries, the Georgian community in the UK cannot be described as a traditional diaspora. The size of the Georgian population in the UK is growing but it appears that there are almost no groups, societies or organised social networks in this community.

Most of the participants in the mapping exercise say that they know nothing about any Georgian community associations, or they have little interest in participating in them. Most Georgians involve themselves occasionally but almost always in connection with a major celebration or social event. Most of the respondents certainly did not perceive such institutions as places where they could get advice or assistance. It appears that Georgians prefer to build small networks of relatives, friends and acquaintances, which would typically include different nationalities.

Georgians seem to be less organised than others as a community because they tend to participate in cross-national networks with other migrants from the former Soviet Union. These were extensively covered in the mapping report on the Russian diaspora in Britain. “Russian” is often merely a label that can cover anyone from Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Only a small proportion of Georgians reject such societies because they are not distinctly Georgian or because they prefer not to speak Russian.

Despite this seemingly individualist attitude and scepticism about community- building, Georgians do engage in communal activity occasionally. Many participate in big cultural and social events. One important characteristic of Georgians and other migrants from the old Soviet countries is that their links to the home country are to a very great extent based on culture and the arts. The mapping exercise established that libraries, bookshops and video stores are extremely popular. Most associations and societies are either formed on the basis of some cultural activity or at least organise many events of that kind. Many respondents stressed the importance of expressions of cultural identity in bringing the community together. Films, books, concerts, exhibitions, the role of the Orthodox Church, and festivals like Easter and Christmas were all mentioned repeatedly during the course of the survey.

Recommendations of the Mapping Exercise

The aims of the mapping exercise - establishing the characteristics of the Georgian community in the UK - have been achieved. The consultant has also collected information about the size and geographical spread of the Georgian population in the UK.

The following recommendations have emerged from the exercise.

- There is a lack of Georgian publications in Britain. IOM should approach Georgian newspapers currently published in Georgia and advertise in their paper and online editions.
- IOM should approach existing Georgian web-based forums, such as <http://www.georgians.co.uk/>, and discuss placing advertisements there, especially in the e-newsletter that they send out to their subscribers.
- IOM should approach existing Georgian societies and organisations, such as Georgian Community UK and The British Georgian Society, and discuss participating in their events. IOM might have a stand and distribute leaflets or outreach staff could give presentations.
- IOM should advertise in Russian-language media, societies and establishments which are specifically aiming at CIS nationals rather than Russians. These sources of information are not just consulted by Russians. The Russian mapping exercise report lists all the relevant contacts in this field.
- IOM should contact commercial establishments, such as shops, restaurants and bars, like Tbilisi, Erebuni and Little Georgia, and discuss putting up posters there and leaving flyers and leaflets.
- IOM should liaise with the main multipliers identified in the list of contacts in order to promote IOM's programmes with existing societies and associations.

The mapping exercise has raised awareness of IOM and its programmes among community leaders and the general public. A range of contacts were established and strengthened and IOM should act on these recommendations immediately in order to take advantage of them.

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