



# NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE POPULATION RESIDING ALONG THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARY LINES IN GEORGIA



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**Cover photo:** Children gathering to play in the evening.  
Perevi Village, Sachkhere Municipality, 2019.

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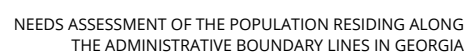
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## Map of Communities along the Administrative Boundary Lines



## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>ABK</b>	Abkhazia
<b>ABL</b>	Administrative Boundary Line
<b>BMSB</b>	Brown Marmorated Stink Bug
<b>CRRC GEORGIA</b>	Caucasus Research Resource Centers Georgia
<b>GEOSTAT</b>	National Statistics Office of Georgia
<b>ICG</b>	International Crisis Group
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>PDO</b>	Public Defender's Office
<b>SMR</b>	Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality
<b>SO</b>	Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conflicts in Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia in the 1990s and 2008 left several hundred thousand people displaced in Georgia. Aside from the internally displaced, the communities living along the administrative boundary lines (ABLs)<sup>1</sup> with each region face significant social, economic, and security issues on an ongoing basis. Communities along the ABLs experience a broad range of security and economic issues as a result of the conflicts. These issues include those surrounding:

- Markets
- Agricultural lands
- Firewood
- Gas
- Irrigation water
- Potable water
- Cattle issues and herding lands
- Lack of land registration
- Access to information
- Compensation for the destruction of property
- Education, including access to schools and kindergartens
- Lack of access to medical care and pharmacies
- Road quality
- Restrictions on freedom of movement
- Human security

To support efforts to help these communities deal with the persistent challenges, UN Women commissioned CRRG Georgia to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the population residing along the ABLs in Georgia. In this regard, the study's research questions include:

- Which communities are in the greatest need in terms of social, economic, and security issues?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that the municipalities most affected by the conflict face?

To address these research questions, the organization carried out a mixed methods study of the communities along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia in September 2019. This included a score-carding activity and focus groups in six of the municipalities that are along the ABLs. The six municipalities were selected as they have large populations affected by the conflict. The score-carding activity took place in 112 villages, including 30 villages along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and 82 villages along the ABL with Abkhazia. It specifically included questions on:

- Infrastructure
- Access to services
- Human security
- Impacts of the conflicts

To address the needs identified by the study, it was equally important to take a closer look at the opportunities of the concerned municipalities and identify opportunities that communities can take to improve post-conflict reconstruction and recovery. Therefore, focus groups were conducted in Dusheti, Gori, Kareli, Kaspi, Tsalenjikha, and Zugdidi municipalities with larger populations affected by the conflict and its aftermath. The focus groups took the form of a SWOT analysis, asking participants to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that their communities face.

The study has classified communities by their relative level of needs, which are summarized in the table below. The table shows that the highest level of needs are present in communities along the ABL with Abkhazia. However, community needs are still high for many communities, and all of the communities within the study showed clear needs..

<sup>1</sup> Administrative Boundary Line is used in the report corresponding to standard international usage in line with the United Nations Secretary-General's 2019 report on the status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia (2019). A/73/880. Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/73/880>.

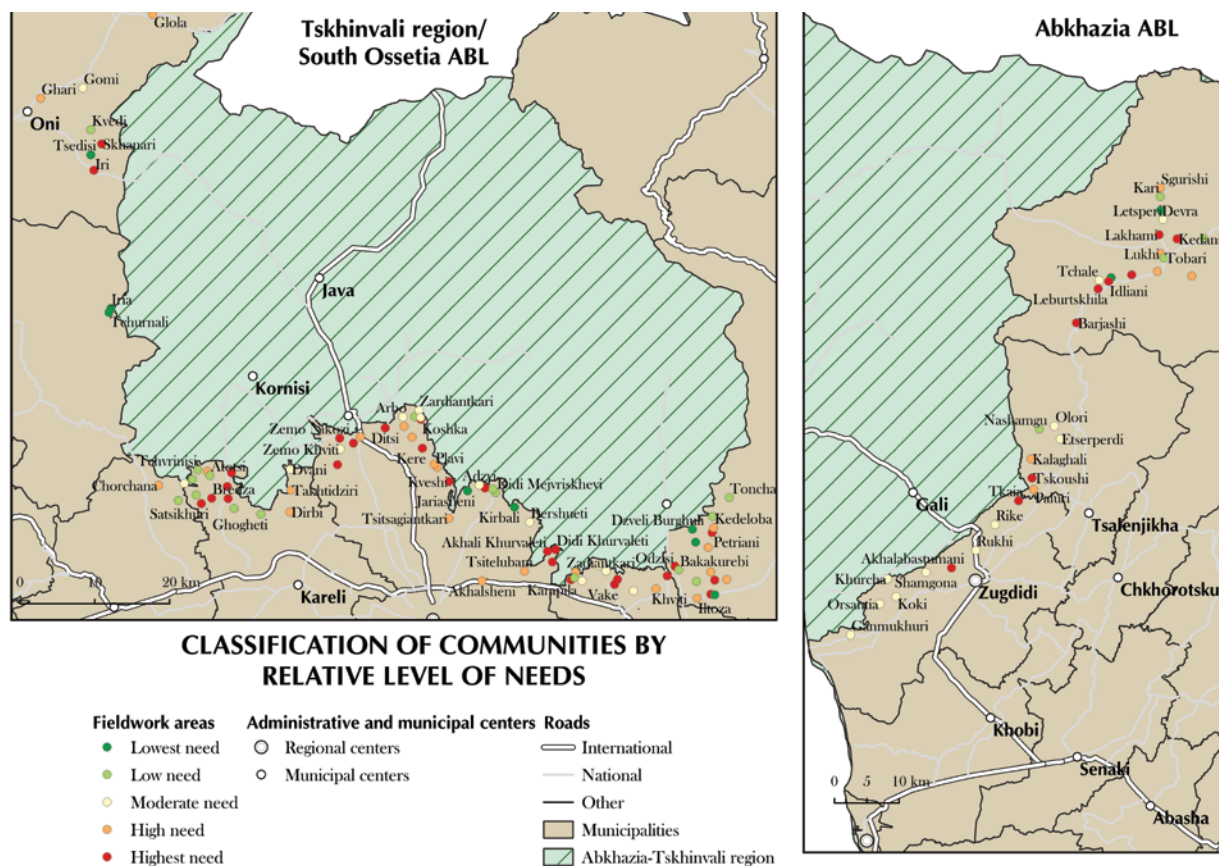


**FIGURE 1:**  
**Geographic distribution of villages by the level of needs**

NEED LEVEL	NUMBER OF ISSUES	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES OVERALL	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES ALONG ABK ABL	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES ALONG SO ABL
Highest need (5)	55-65	30%	40%	27%
Highest need (5)	48-54	24%	20%	26%
Moderate need (3)	40-47	23%	10%	28%
Low need (2)	31-39	17%	23%	15%
Lowest need (1)	23-30	5%	7%	5%

The level of need of each community within the study is illustrated on the map below.

**FIGURE 2:**  
**Classification of villages by the level of needs**



In addition to the classification of the overall level of need, specific needs were also defined for each community. A number of the indicators available from

the study are provided in the table below, in order of prevalence:

**FIGURE 3:**  
**Frequency of indicators by geographic areas**

RANK	ISSUE	OVERALL (%)	ABK ABL (%)	SO ABL (%)
1	Lacks veterinary pharmacy	98	100	98
2	Lacks shop with agricultural inputs	96	100	94
3	Lacks sports fields or field is inadequate	92	80	96
4	Lacks access to landline telephone	91	83	94
5	Roads generally are not paved	91	97	89
6	Community lacks pharmacy	90	83	93
7	Lacks library	86	77	89
8	Most people have issues accessing firewood	85	77	88
9	Lacks police station	83	97	78
10	Lacks irrigation water from channel	82	100	76
11	Irrigation water does not come from irrigation system	82	90	79
12	No drainage or ineffective system	79	88	76
13	Lacking potable piped water	76	93	70
14	Some in village have not been compensated for damages resulting from military actions	76	97	68
15	No landline Internet	71	87	65
16	Lacks kindergarten/preschool	70	43	79
17	Lacking piped water	67	93	57
18	Land is not legally registered	66	57	70
19	Lacks lighting on most roads	63	97	50
20	Many households face food insecurity	61	73	56
21	Community experiences brownouts/blackouts	58	57	59
22	Lack of medical facilities	57	70	52
23	Most people do not have motorized transport	56	30	66

24	Lacks access to at least one telephone service provider	55	47	59
25	Lack of covered minibus station	54	47	56
26	Lacks access to radio	51	37	56
27	Lacks school	50	47	51
28	Detentions in past five years	48	13	61
29	Lacks outdoor lighting	41	93	22
30	Lack of village doctor	41	50	38
31	Lack of village nurse	38	43	35
32	Lacks trash collection	38	63	29
33	Village is not gasified	36	70	23
34	Irregular mobile Internet coverage	34	23	38
35	Lacks police patrol	34	40	32
36	Irregular access to public transport	32	30	33
37	Lack of telephone service throughout the community	28	7	35
38	Lacks veterinarian	21	43	13
39	Russian/Abkhaz/Ossetian forces have appeared in the village in the past 12 months	13	0	17
40	Women deliver babies at home	4	0	5
41	Lacks access to television signal	4	3	5
42	Does not have 24 hours of electricity	1	0	1

The above needs are sorted by prevalence, rather than intensity or importance. In general, when deciding what issues to attempt to tackle in communities along the ABL, consideration should also be put into the relative importance of needs: clearly the abduction of community members is more pressing than the lack of lighting on the main roads of a community even though fewer communities have faced abductions than lack lighting on their roads. In this regard, future research should look into community priorities rather than enumerating community issues alone.

Although the study does not enable a quantification of priorities relative to others, it does provide a quali-

tative sense of what communities think is important. This is achieved through the SWOT analyses conducted within the study of six of the municipalities along the ABLs. The SWOT analyses conducted within the study suggest that communities primarily see opportunities in agricultural development. The analyses also highlighted a number of weaknesses related to agriculture, including issues with the water supply. Aside from security threats from Russia, agricultural issues (BMSB, land registration, etc.) dominated the conversation on threats. In this regard, it can be concluded that the communities surrounding both ABLs would likely be interested in participating in agricultural development programming.

**FIGURE 4:**  
**Results of SWOT analysis of six municipalities**

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Dusheti</b>	Animal husbandry; dairy farming; infrastructure for gas, electricity, and Internet	Conditions of rural roads; lack of potable and irrigation water resources; access to medical care; access to public transport; access to firewood; lack of convenience stores	Dairy farming	Depopulation; price of land registration; process of land registration
<b>Gori</b>	Fruit farming; human resources	Access to affordable public transport; trash collection; conditions of community roads; access to irrigation canals; affordability of agricultural machinery; price and quality of plant protection measures	Agriculture and traditional horticulture	Russian occupation; human security issues
<b>Kareli</b>	Agriculture; human resources	Conditions of rural roads; access to public transport; streetlights	Agriculture	Russian occupation; human security issues
<b>Kaspi</b>	Access to Georgia's main highway	Gas supply; internal community roads; access to potable and irrigation water; lack of public transport; access to agricultural machinery	Agriculture	Russian occupation; human security issues
<b>Tsalenjikha</b>	Agriculture, including hazelnuts, kiwi fruit, cattle husbandry, beekeeping	Lack of agricultural machinery; lack of knowledge and know-how in agriculture; lack of industrial-grade nut driers; lack of or inappropriate pesticides for BMSB	Agriculture	Russian occupation; human security issues; BMSB; lack of centralized network of potable water
<b>Zugdidi</b>	Agriculture, including hazelnuts, citrus, kiwi fruit, cattle husbandry, beekeeping; access to hazelnut drying factory	Lack of agricultural machinery; lack of medical professionals; lack of pharmacies; lack of centralized network of potable water	Agriculture; State-supported agricultural cooperatives	Russian occupation; human security issues; BMSB; fungal disease; seasonal floods of Enguri River



While the above data and analysis provides general tendencies, the study suggests that both the levels of need and the types of needs vary considerably between communities. The data presented above, as well as the supplementary community profiles this project produced, enable targeted intervention in 112 of the 116 communities along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia. Given the availability of data, it is recommended that:

- Interventions be planned on the basis of the community profiles provided within the scope of the project.

Although every effort was made to collect accurate data, there are surely errors in the data given the limited amount of data collected within the project. In this regard, caution is warranted, and prior to interventions taking place, it is recommended that:

- Actors hold validation workshops in communities prior to implementing programming to ensure that the programming responds to community needs.

# INTRODUCTION

The conflicts in Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia in the 1990s and 2008 left several hundred thousand people displaced in Georgia. Aside from the internally displaced, the communities living along the ABLs with each territory face significant social, economic, and security issues on an ongoing basis. To support efforts to help these communities deal with the persistent challenges, UN Women commissioned CRRRC Georgia to conduct a needs assessment of the population residing across the ABLs in Georgia in September 2019.

The study's overarching goal is to provide an overview of the needs and opportunities of the communities on the government-controlled side along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia that are generally accessible. In this regard, the study's research questions include:

- Which communities are in the greatest need in terms of social, economic, and security issues?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that the municipalities most affected by the conflict face?

To address these research questions, the organization carried out a mixed methods study of the communities along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. This included a score-carding

activity and focus groups in six of the municipalities that are along the ABLs. The score-carding activity took place in 112 villages, including 30 villages along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and 82 villages along the ABL with Abkhazia<sup>2</sup>. It specifically included questions on:

- Infrastructure
- Access to services
- Human security
- Impacts of the conflicts

Focus groups were conducted in Dusheti, Gori, Kareli, Kaspi, Tslenjikha, and Zugdidi. The focus groups took the form of a SWOT analysis, asking participants to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that their communities face.

This report provides an overview of the results of the study. The next section of the report provides background on the situation along the ABLs, followed by an overview of the study's methodology. Next, the study's findings are presented, first with a discussion of the needs of communities along the ABLs, and then moving to a SWOT analysis of the six municipalities where focus groups were conducted. The final section of the report provides conclusions and recommendations. A bibliography follows.

2 Score-carding was not conducted in four villages: Kveda Kardzmani, Kobi, Zeda Tsvirmindi and Kedani. In Kveda Kardzmani, the police did not allow the interviewer access, reporting that it was on the other side of the boundary line. In Kobi, the police did not allow the interviewer to go to the village as they reported that there were Russian forces present. In Zeda Tsvirmindi and Kedani, the interview team reported that there are no households currently inhabiting the villages, and therefore no interview attempt was conducted.

# BACKGROUND

In the 1990s and 2008, conflicts in Georgia resulted in the effective control of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia by the Russian Federation. Aside from the internal displacement of approximately 6-7% of the population (World Bank 2016), the 2008 conflict has led to the militarization of the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia. In recent years, the so-called *borderization*<sup>3</sup> process and expanding the territory controlled by de facto authorities in Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia in particular have led to a deteriorating quality of life in communities along the ABL. In the 116 villages along the ABLs, 2014 census data suggests there were approximately 46,000 individuals living in communities adjacent to the ABLs (GEOSTAT 2015).<sup>4</sup> This section of the report provides brief background information on the issues that communities face based on available research and policy documents on these issues.

## ISSUES FACED BY ABL COMMUNITIES

Communities along the ABLs experience a broad range of security and economic issues as a result of the 1990s and 2008 conflicts. These issues include those surrounding:

- Markets
- Agricultural lands
- Firewood
- Gas
- Irrigation water
- Potable water
- Cattle issues and herding lands
- Lack of land registration
- Access to information
- Compensation for the destruction of property
- Education, including access to schools and kindergartens
- Lack of access to medical care and pharmacies
- Road quality
- Restrictions on freedom of movement
- Human security

All these issues are highly interconnected, with hard security issues damaging the economic situation and, in turn, harming human security. This section of the report provides a brief overview of these issues, grouped into access to markets, agricultural issues, heating, access to education, human security, and access to legal rights. The background here is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to provide a high-level overview of important issues. In this regard, interested readers are encouraged to view the sources cited for extensive coverage of the issues.

## Access to Markets

Many of the communities along the ABLs previously traded with communities currently outside the control of the Government of Georgia. The most prominent example of this is the lack of access to the Ergneti market. The market was shuttered in 2004 in an attempt to combat illicit trade (Civil.ge 2004). Although the local population generally agreed that the market was a source of smuggling and tax evasion, it also served as a point of inter-ethnic contact and an important place of commerce for the region. Although the most prominent example of ABL communities losing access to markets as part of the conflict, it is not the only one. The Tskhinvali market was also important for the communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

Similarly to the situation on the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, the conflicts have hurt communities along the ABL with Abkhazia in terms of access to markets. The restrictions on freedom of movement between Abkhazia and Samegrelo regions inhibit the flow of goods across the ABL and particularly between Gali and Zugdidi markets, where goods are cheaper than those generally available in Abkhazia (ICG 2018).

As well as the direct loss of access to markets, a number of other issues lead to a low quality of access to

3 So called Borderization refers to the process surrounding the installation of razor and barbed wire fences along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia.

4 This is based on the report author's own calculation, using the 2014 census results.



*Photo 1: Once a week the households swap the mandarins they have grown in their yards for other products. After the spread of stink bug, it is difficult to grow hazelnuts in the village. A large segment of the population is left without the sources of income. They are unable to find jobs in Anaklia as well. The unemployment is the main problem in the village. Ganmukhuri Village, Zugdidi Municipality, 2019.*

markets for communities along the ABLs. Poor road quality is a common issue in Georgia, creating a barrier to market access. The communities along the ABLs are no exception to this pattern, with road quality often being poor and causing issues with transportation of goods to market (SMR 2018).

## Agricultural Issues

While access to markets is critical if goods are to be produced and sold, the ability to engage in agricultural production (the main form of employment along both ABLs) is severely hindered through the loss of agricultural lands for communities along both ABLs. In many villages along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, barbed wire has cut through individuals' fields. Moreover, entire fields have been cordoned off on the other side of the boundary line with barbed

wire. As a result, individuals have lost the ability to farm their fields.

Access to irrigation water is a structural barrier to the development of agriculture in Georgia (IFAD 2017). As a result of the conflict, sources of irrigation water were cut off for the communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (Tavakarashvili 2016, PDO 2016, PDO 2018, SMR 2018, Patariaia and Wood 2011). Given that agricultural production is the main form of employment along the ABLs, this represents a key barrier to economic development. It further presents a food security issue for residents given that much of the agriculture in Georgia is subsistence-based. In Georgia, drinking water and irrigation water often come from the same water source, and this is sometimes the case in the communities along the ABLs. Thus, the loss of access to irrigation water



has also often resulted in a loss of access to sources of drinking water (Tavakarashvili 2016, PDO 2016, PDO 2018, Tsagareishvili 2019, SMR 2018).

Pasture land is another important issue in Georgia (Raaflaub and Dobry 2015). The lack of access to pasture land represents a structural barrier to herd expansion in Georgia. The ABL communities that were often engaged in cattle husbandry have been disadvantaged by the loss of access to pasture lands. This issue aside, cattle often cross the ABLs. Farmers are not allowed to cross the ABLs, and as a result, many have lost cattle, a significant asset in rural settings in Georgia (Tsagareishvili 2019, SMR 2018, Pataria and Wood 2011).

## Heating

A number of reports and policy documents highlight that there are issues with heating within communities along the administrative boundary line. In Georgia, a large share of rural communities heat their homes and cook using wood-fired ovens (Winrock Georgia 2008). The communities along the administrative boundary lines are no exception in this regard. Due to so-called borderization, wood is harder to find because areas from which wood traditionally would have been harvested are no longer accessible (Council of Europe 2018) or it is unsafe to gather wood due to the potential for de facto authorities to illegally detain individuals (ibid). Aside from the lack of access to firewood, many of the villages along the ABLs (like other rural communities) do not have access to piped natural gas.

## Access to Education

Access to education is often problematic in rural areas in Georgia. The communities along the ABL are no exception. Many communities do not have schools or kindergartens (Tsagareishvili 2019). The lack of educational facilities means that young people must travel using public transport, where available, to access education (Tsagareishvili 2019). This presents an additional burden on children in accessing education.

## Human Security

Above all, the communities along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia face ever-present human security issues. Abductions along both ABLs take place on a regular basis. The Abkhaz, Ossetian, and Russian forces, particularly along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, regularly install barbwires and other artificial barriers.

## Access to Legal Rights

In addition to the clear human rights violations in communities that occur on an ongoing basis, including the lack of freedom of movement, abductions, and deprivation of property due to lands being inaccessible, a number of rights issues are also present with regard to the authorities in Tbilisi. First, many individuals lack legal registration of their lands (Tavakarashvili 2016, PDO 2016). Second, many households have not been compensated for damage to their property from the military conflicts (PDO 2017, PDO 2018, SMR 2018).



*Photo 2: Seven-year old Saba cycles several kilometers to school every day because the school bus does not serve his home village. Zardiaantkari Village, Gori Municipality, 2019.*

# METHODOLOGY

The study uses a mixed methods approach to understand the needs and opportunities along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia. In this regard, the analysis used a score-carding approach together with focus groups. This section of the report provides details of the study's methodology.

## Score-carding

Score-carding is a common approach to assessing needs and prioritizing both issues and locations for intervention. For this study, the score-carding was conducted in every settlement along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia that was accessible at the time of fieldwork. Within villages, interviewers selected individuals that were well informed about the communities (e.g. teachers, school principals, doctors, etc.). After selecting such individuals, interviewers conducted a group interview with the selected individuals. In most cases, four individuals took part in the group interview.

During the group interview, individuals were asked to provide information about the state of affairs regarding a number of issues in their communities. The list of issues included:

- Drinking water
- Irrigation water
- Sewage
- Drainage
- Electricity
- Outdoor lighting
- Heating and cooking
- Natural gas
- Firewood
- Cars and fuel
- Roads
- Phone service
- Internet
- Public transport

- Medical facilities and pharmacies
- Mental health services
- Waste management
- Educational facilities
- Veterinary and agricultural services
- Access to markets
- Cultural facilities and entertainment
- Sports facilities
- Meeting spaces
- Access to land
- Legal rights to and control of assets
- Access to financial services
- Food security
- Security

Following data collection, CRRC Georgia analysed the data using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and cross-tabulations. The data analysis was conducted with two specific goals in mind:

- To understand the relative intensity of needs to enable a service-provision targeting strategy
- To define the needs of specific communities to enable targeted intervention

To achieve the first goal, the organization constructed a needs index. To construct the needs index, the organization gave one point to a community for each need identified in the survey out of 86 possible needs. For instance, one point was added to the index if the community did not have access to the centralized network of potable water, or if the village did not have access to piped gas, etc. Next, the organization used the Jenks Natural Breaks algorithm to classify communities into five groups of need:

- Highest need
- High need
- Moderate need
- Low need
- Lowest need

The Jenks Natural Breaks algorithm was used as it provides a rigorous way of setting boundaries between groups on indexes.<sup>5</sup> Below, communities are presented by the above level of need to provide a rating. In addition to providing a rating, which provides a general level or grouping of need, the data is also presented using an absolute index score, enabling a ranking of need. Rankings, as opposed to ratings, provide a listing from the highest to lowest score on a given index.

The data collected has a number of clear limitations. First, the data collection was not conducted with randomly selected individuals, something that is needed to calculate a margin of error. Rather, the organization relied on groups of people to provide information about their communities. The questions on the survey were intended to be as straightforward as possible in order to ensure that participants could provide accurate information about their communities. Nonetheless, there is certain to be errors as a result of this process. In this regard, caution in using the information is warranted and policy makers should carry out validation workshops in communities of interest prior to acting on the information presented below.

As well as looking at the overall needs of individuals, the report also provides an enumeration of the prevalence of different needs and an overview of which issues are more prevalent along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia separately.

## Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

Within the study, CRRC Georgia conducted six focus group discussions. The focus groups took the form of a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. The goal of the SWOT analysis was to focus on how the communities along the ABLs could develop economically. In total, 47 individuals participated in the focus groups, all of whom were women. To ensure that the analysis was tailored to local conditions, one focus group was conducted in each of the following municipalities:

- Dusheti
- Gori
- Kaspi
- Kareli
- Tsalenjikha
- Zugdidi

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5 For a detailed description of the algorithm, see: George F. Jenks, "The Data Model Concept in Statistical Mapping", International Yearbook of Cartography, vol. 7 (1967), pp. 186–190.

# FINDINGS

This section of the report describes the findings of the study. It first lays out how the demographics of the communities along the ABLs have changed over the years. It then proceeds to discuss community needs, starting with the overall picture of need and

moving on to describe the different issues that communities face. Moving from needs to opportunities, the second component of this section describes the results of the SWOT analysis conducted in each municipality of interest.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The communities along the ABLs have experienced a significant population decline since 2002.<sup>6</sup> While the 2002 census suggested a population of 69,724, the 2014 census suggests a population of 46,620, a 33% decline. When broken down by gender, the data suggest that the male and female population have declined by similar degrees (30 and 34% respectively) overall. The population decline has been much larger along the ABL with Abkhazia (47%) than along the

ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (23%). When broken down by gender, no notable patterns emerge in terms of the decline. When considered in terms of the overall census, the decline in population is still notable. Georgia's population declined by 15% between the 2002 and 2014 censuses. The decline being twice as large along the ABLs suggests migration due to the harsh nature of the post-conflict reality.

**FIGURE 5:**  
**Population trends along the ABLs**

INDICATOR	GROUP	2002	2014	ABSOLUTE CHANGE	DECLINE RATE
Population	SO ABL	40,049	31,017	-9,032	-23%
	ABK ABL	29,675	15,603	-14,072	-47%
	Both ABLs	69,724	46,620	-23,104	-33%
Female Population	SO ABL	19,734	15,480	-4,254	-22%
	ABK ABL	15,674	7,975	-7,699	-49%
	Both ABLs	35,408	23,455	-11,953	-34%
Male Population	SO ABL	19,294	15,537	-3,757	-19%
	ABK ABL	14,001	7,628	-6,373	-46%
	Both ABLs	33,295	23,165	-10,130	-30%

<sup>6</sup> Data from the 1989 census does not appear to be reliable for the communities along the boundary lines. Thus, the point of reference for the present study is the 2002 census.



The above figures come with a number of caveats. First, the 2002 census is known to have overestimated the population size. Therefore, the degree of decline is likely smaller than calculated above. Second, of the 116 communities along the ABLs, data for only 108 are available in the census. Third, the sex disaggregation

of the data was conducted using the numbers presented in the census data. The data appears to have not identified the gender of all individuals within the communities as the total number of men and women does not equal the total number of community members in the census data in all cases.

## NEEDS

To understand which communities are in the greatest need of support along the ABLs, an index was created that grouped communities into different levels of need using 86 indicators. The index scores were based on the number of issues that were found through the score-carding activity. The raw index scores for communities varied from 23 to 65. The average score on

the index was 48. Communities were then grouped based on their level of need using the Jenks Natural Breaks algorithm. The table below provides the cut points for the different levels of need in the index, the share of communities in each category overall, and the share of each ABL in each category.

**FIGURE 6:**  
**Level of need along the ABL**

NEED LEVEL	NUMBER OF ISSUES	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES OVERALL	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES ALONG ABK ABL	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES ALONG SO ABL
Highest need (5)	55-65	30%	40%	27%
High need (4)	48-54	24%	20%	26%
Moderate need (3)	40-47	23%	10%	28%
Low need (2)	31-39	17%	23%	15%
Lowest need (1)	23-30	5%	7%	5%

The results of the above data analysis lead to the following classification of communities in terms of need.



**FIGURE 7:**  
**Level of need in different communities along the ABL**

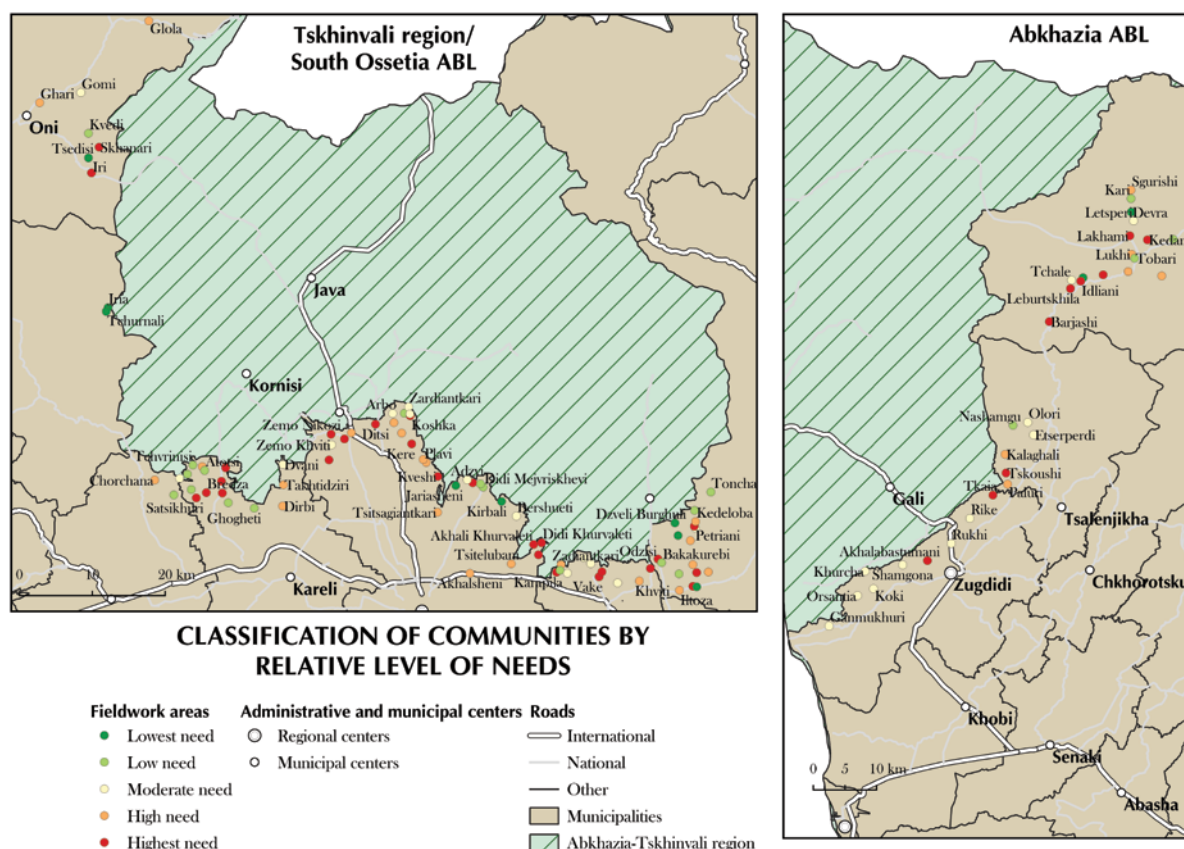
Settlement	Need level	Raw score
Tsigriaantkari	5	65
Karkushaani	5	64
Dzveli Burghuli	5	64
Gaghma Khaishi	5	64
Gomi	5	63
Kvitkiristskaro	5	63
Akhali Burghuli	5	62
Tobari	5	61
Toncha	5	61
Gulikaantubani	5	61
Zemo Kodistskaro	5	60
Chvrinisi	5	60
Gugutiaantkari	5	59
Leburtskhila	5	59
Barjashi	5	59
Kvemo Kodistskaro	5	59
Skhanari	5	58
Chorchana	5	58
Lakhami	5	58
Sakorintlo	5	58
Petrian	5	58
Lukhi	5	58
Kedeloba	5	58
Churnali	5	58
Nashikhvi	5	58
Idliani	5	57
Jorkvali	5	57
Kvedi	5	57
Etserferdi	5	57
Skormeti	5	57
Bakakurebi	5	56
Nashamgu	5	56
Zardiaantkari	5	55
Tsedisi	5	55
Akhalshena	4	54
Koshka	4	54
Abano	4	54
Goraka	4	53
Chale	4	53
Zemo Shuakhevi	4	53
Flavismani	4	53
Tskoushi	4	53
Kari	4	52
Karafila	4	52
Saribari	4	52
Kirbali	4	51
Sgurishi	4	51
Zadiantkari	4	51
Bershueti	4	51
Pantiani	4	51
Ghogheti	4	50
Jria	4	50
Tsitsagiaantkari	4	49
Flavi	4	49

Tsaghvli	4	49
Atotsi	4	49
Kvemo Shuaxevi	4	48
Letsperi	4	48
Koda	4	48
Bojami	4	48
Khurcha	4	48
Sacikhuri	3	47
Knolevi	3	47
Khurvaleti	3	47
Devra	3	47
Kere	3	46
Vake	3	46
Chasha	3	46
Kalaghali	3	46
Avlevi	3	46
Jariasheni	3	46
Kodistskaro	3	45
Iri	3	45
Paluri	3	45
Iltoza	3	45
Zemo Khviti	3	44
Khviti	3	44
Ergneti	3	44
Glola	3	44
Takhtidziri	3	44
Mikeliani	3	43
Ghari	3	43
Perevi	3	42

Tvaurebi	3	42
Adzvi	3	42
Zemo Nikozi	3	40
Tsitelubani	3	40
Akhali Abastumani	2	39
Koki	2	39
Dvani	2	39
Kordi	2	38
Arbo	2	38
Bredza	2	37
Tseronisi	2	36
Kvemo Nikozi	2	36
Akhalubani	2	36
Karbi	2	36
Tamarasheni	2	35
Kvemo Khviti	2	35
Ganmukhuri	2	35
Tkaia	2	34
Odzisi	2	33
Shamgona	2	33
Rike	2	31
Olori	2	31
Kveshi	2	31
Ditsi	1	30
Dirbi	1	29
Rukhi	1	28
Mereti	1	25
Orsantia	1	25
Mejvriskhevi	1	23

The above results are also illustrated on the map below.

**Figure 8:**  
**Map of needs along the ABLs**



It is important to note that the communities with the lowest scores still have significant issues. If they were without issue along all the dimensions looked at in the study, the community would score 0. In fact, the lowest-scoring community scored 23.

## Drinking Water

The score-carding activity collected information on whether piped water was available to households, whether that water was potable, and what the primary source of drinking water in the village was. The main source of drinking water was spring water (45%), followed by piped water (33%) and well water (29%). Overall, 33% of the communities along the ABLs have piped water. Of those communities with piped water, 73% have potable water.

The ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia generally has better access to piped and potable water. Along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, 43% of communities have piped water, while 7% have piped water along the ABL with Abkhazia. Among the communities with piped water, all of them have potable piped water along the ABL with Abkhazia, while 71% do along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

## Sewage

The study also asked participants about toilet use and waste disposal. When it comes to toilet use, the majority of communities along the ABLs use pit latrines (98%). The 2% of communities using flush toilets are along the ABL with Abkhazia. This generally resembles the situation in rural areas of Georgia. Nonetheless, it remains a public health concern.

## Drainage

The study asked whether communities had a drainage system; if so, whether it was effective at preventing streets/yards from flooding during heavy rain; and if the community did not have a drainage system, whether it needed one. The data suggest that 18% of communities along the ABLs have drainage systems. Of these, 75% effectively prevent damage to streets and yards during heavy rain. Among those communities that did not have a drainage system, 96% reported that their community required a drainage system. The need for a drainage system did not vary between ABLs.

## Waste Management

The score-carding activity included questions about whether there were trash collection services available in the community, what type of services were available, how often trash collection occurs, what communities without trash collection services do with the waste, and how long they would have to travel to dispose of their waste. The results suggest that 62% of communities have trash collection services available in their community. Of those with trash collection services, 76% deliver trash to a general dumpster, while in 26% of communities, trash is collected from individual



*Photo 3: Tsitsino Elikashvili surveys fire damage to her home sustained during the conflict. She says that five or six houses remain burnt-down in the village, and the other ones are too damaged to live in. After the war, up to 30 inhabitants returned to the village.*

*The roofs of their houses still need to be fixed. The main income of the locals is the agriculture. Part of the land plots owned by the locals are either on the other side of the ABL, or lack irrigation and soil fertility due to limited care. Having returned to the village, locals took out loans from the banks to cultivate the land plots. Almost the whole harvest of this year has been destroyed by the hail in the village. Zardiaantkari Village, Gori Municipality, 2019.*



households. The majority of communities with trash collection services (91%) report that trash collection occurs weekly.

Communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia have better access to trash collection services than the communities along the ABL with Abkhazia: while 37 of communities along the Abkhaz ABL report they have trash collection services, 71% of the communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia do.

In communities without formal trash collection, equal shares burn trash (35%) or dump it in a centralized location (33%). The next most common ways of disposing of trash are dumping it in another location (19%) or dumping it in a river or on a riverbank (7%). Burning trash is more common along the Abkhaz ABL (54%) than the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetian ABL (17%). In contrast, dumping trash along the riverbank is only prevalent along the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetian ABL (13% of communities, compared with none along the Abkhazian ABL).

The differences between communities with and without trash collection services are large when it comes to how much time someone would have to travel to dispose of her/his trash in an appropriate location. In communities with trash collection services, a person travels eight minutes on average to dispose of trash in an appropriate location, versus the 23 minutes someone would need to travel to properly dispose of her/his trash in a community without such services.

## Electricity and Lighting

The score-carding activity also looked at access to electricity and lighting. With regard to access to electricity, all communities reported having access to electricity from the power grid. All but two communities reported having 24 hours of electricity (Kvitkiristskaro and Karkushaani). In the communities along the ABL, blackouts and brownouts were reported to take place in 58% of communities at least once a year. These are relatively rare, however, with 6% of communities reporting brownouts and blackouts 10 or more times per year.

When it comes to lighting, 59% of communities reported that they have outdoor lighting. Among those

that did, 64% reported that there was lighting on most of the roads in the community. There is a rather stark difference between ABLs in terms of access to outdoor lighting: while 78% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia have outdoor lighting, only 7% of communities along the ABL with Abkhazia do.

## Heating Fuels

The score-carding activity also collected data on issues related to heating fuels, including access to natural gas, wood, heating systems, cooking fuel, and hot water. Overall, 64% of villages have piped gas. Most other communities have access to gas through delivery in one form or another. Only 10% of villages do not have access to gas through either delivery or piped gas. There is weaker access to piped gas along the ABL with Abkhazia, with only 30% of communities there having piped gas, compared with 77% of villages along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

Overall, 91% of villages primarily use wood to heat their homes in the winter, while 9% use natural gas. All of the communities that use natural gas are along the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetian ABL. When it comes to cooking fuel, 58% use gas and 41% primarily use firewood.

To access firewood, most people either purchase it outside the village (66%) or collect it within the village (24%). Fewer people collect wood outside the village and transfer it home (6%) or purchase the wood within the village (2%). Collecting within the village is much more common along the ABL with Abkhazia (40%) than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (18%). Purchases outside the village are more common along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (70%) than along the ABL with Abkhazia (57%).

Access to a sufficient amount of firewood is problematic for a large majority of communities along the ABLs: only 15% of communities report that most households in the village can get enough firewood to meet family needs. This issue is more acute along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, where 12% of villages report that most families have sufficient firewood, compared with 23% of communities along the ABL with Abkhazia.



*Photo 4: The bus that serves the village of Khurcha in Zugdidi municipality is so old that it often breaks down. Besides, if locals miss the bus, they will have to walk few kilometers to return to the village. The bus does not run at all on Sundays. Khurcha Village, Zugdidi Municipality, 2019.*

Given that many communities have difficulties in accessing heating fuel, it is not surprising that the majority of communities also report difficulties with access to hot water for bathing, cleaning around the house, and for washing clothes: only 17% 15%, and 18% of communities reported having hot piped water for each of these activities respectively. This issue is more problematic along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia than along the ABL with Abkhazia. Along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, 10% of villages have hot bathing in most households, 6% of villages have hot water for cleaning around the home in most households, and 10% have hot water for washing clothes in most homes. By comparison, 37% 40%, and 40% of villages report the same along the ABL with Abkhazia.

## Transportation (cars, public transport, roads)

The score-cards contained questions about car ownership, access to fuel, public transport, and roads. The results suggest that owning a car is common in 44% of communities along the ABLs. Ownership is more common along the ABL with Abkhazia, where car ownership is common in 70% of communities. In contrast, most households have cars in 34% of villages along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. To obtain gasoline, most people travel outside their village along both ABLs (97%). A similar share reports the same for obtaining liquefied natural gas for vehicles (98%).



The score-card also asked a number of questions about how people generally travel from the village to its centre, to the municipal centre, to the regional centre, and to Tbilisi. The results suggest that people generally walk to the village centre (91%) and take a marshrutka to the municipal centre (73%), regional centre (76%), and the capital (87%).

While most people use marshrutka to travel from their villages, only 68% of communities can access minibuses from their villages, and only 46% of villages have a covered minibus stop. These issues are equally problematic along both ABLs. On average, people without access to public transport in their village must walk 5.4 kilometres to reach public transport. This is partially affected by a number of outliers. However, the median is still 3 kilometres.

In most villages, the roads generally are not paved. Only 9% of communities along the ABL generally have paved roads. This problem is greater along the ABL with Abkhazia, where only 3% of communities generally have paved roads, compared with 11% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. In communities that generally do not have paved roads, 57% have gravel roads for the most part, and 42% mostly have dirt roads. Gravel roads are very common along the ABL with Abkhazia (93% of communities without paved roads), while dirt roads are more common along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (56%).

## Communications

The study also collected data on access to communications, including telephone and Internet access. Only 9% of communities reported that there was access to landline telephones in their community. However, most communities generally have access to at least one mobile phone service provider. The vast majority report that Magti covers their community (96%), and most communities have coverage from Geocell (72%). By comparison, Beeline coverage is relatively weak, with coverage in 51% of communities. Koda was the only community that reports not having cell phone coverage from any of these providers. Although communities generally have coverage, in 38% of communities some households have difficulties accessing cell service from home. This is an issue in 35% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South

Ossetia, compared with only 7% of communities along the ABL with Abkhazia. Few communities (3%) use Russian telephone networks as a coping strategy for this issue.

Compared to telephone coverage, Internet access is weaker. Only 33% of communities along the ABLs have access to DSL or other landline Internet access. This issue is more acute along the ABL with Abkhazia, where only 13% of communities have landline Internet, compared with 35% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. When it comes to mobile Internet, 66% of communities reported being able to access coverage, with only small differences between ABLs. About a quarter of communities (23%) report having access to neither form of Internet connection. This was equally common between the ABLs.

## Public Health Issues

The score-carding activity also asked about issues with access to health care. Overall, 2% of communities report having a hospital in their community, 1% a polyclinic, and 45% a basic clinic. People report that the clinic meets basic needs in 72% of communities. Specifically, people along the ABL with Abkhazia are more satisfied with the clinics (82%) than people along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (69%). In communities without medical facilities, 26% have a village doctor, and a further 6% have a village nurse. In total, 38% of communities have no medical services in their community. The issue is slightly more problematic along the ABL with Abkhazia, where 43% of communities have no medical services in their community, compared with 35% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. The study also looked at whether women are giving birth at home. This was reported in 4% of communities.

In addition to medical care facilities, the study asked individuals about pharmacy access. Only 10% of communities reported having access to a pharmacy in their community. There is relatively better access to pharmacies along the ABL with Abkhazia (17% of communities) than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (7%). In communities that did have pharmacies, study participants were asked whether the pharmacies provided for basic needs. In all but one of the communities, the participants reported that they did.

## Education Facilities

The study also asked participants about access to pre-schools, kindergartens, and schools. Only 30% of communities reported having a kindergarten or preschool. This was much more problematic along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. In these communities, only 20% of communities have access to a kindergarten, compared with 57% of communities along the ABL with Abkhazia.

In addition to kindergartens and preschools, the study asked participants about a number of indicators of the infrastructure of the facilities, including the presence of an indoor bathroom, piped water to that bathroom, regular access to soap and toilet paper in the bathroom, whether the kindergarten/preschool serves food, and whether it has adequate heating in winter. A quarter of the preschools/kindergartens (25%) have an indoor bathroom, 22% lack piped water to the bathrooms, 23% lack soap, 12% lack toilet paper, 4% do not serve food, and 4% have inadequate heating during winter. All of the issues related to lavatories are more prominent along the ABL with Abkhazia than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. The other issues do not show large differences between ABLs.

The score-carding component also collected data on schools. Half of the communities reported having schools, while half reported not having schools. The presence and lack of schools was more or less equally divided between ABLs. Overall, 63% of the schools go up to grade 12, and a further 30% go up to grade 9. More schools along the ABL with Abkhazia go up

to grade 12 (75%) than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (58%).

Questions were also asked about school infrastructure, similar to those that were asked about kindergartens and preschools. In contrast to the preschools and kindergartens, relatively few schools have appropriate lavatories. A quarter of schools (25%) are reported to have indoor bathrooms. Half of schools (52%) have piped water to the lavatories, and half do not (48%). This issue is particularly acute along the ABL with Abkhazia, where only 18% of communities report having schools with piped water to lavatories, compared with 65% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. Similarly, half of schools (50%) reportedly have soap in the bathrooms and half do not. Again, this issue is more problematic along the ABL with Abkhazia, where 6% of community schools reportedly have indoor bathrooms, compared with 68% of schools along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. Similarly, 59% of communities report that toilet paper is regularly provided in school bathrooms. Again, this issue is more problematic along the ABL with Abkhazia than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia: while 31% of schools along the ABL with Abkhazia reportedly have toilet paper in the bathrooms, 70% of the schools along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia reportedly do. When it comes to food being served in schools, 20% of schools reportedly serve food. Along the ABL with Abkhazia, 31% of schools do so, compared with 15% of schools along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. When it comes to heating, 93% of schools have enough heat during the winter according to the study participants, with no large differences between the ABLs.



*Photo 5: An elderly couple travel on foot to collect their pensions. Lack of private or public transport means they also have to walk five kilometers to reach the nearest medical service, which is in a neighbouring village. Karpila Village, Kaspi Municipality, 2019.*



## Agricultural Services

Most of Georgia's population works in agriculture, particularly in rural areas. The ABLs are largely rural. Therefore, understanding access to agricultural services is an important aspect of understanding the needs of the communities along the ABLs. In this vein, the study looked at access to agriculture-related goods and services; the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) infestation; irrigation water; access to land; and access to markets.

When it comes to goods and services, the first set of questions asked about access to animal pharmaceuticals such as vaccines. Only two communities (2% of all communities along the ABL) have access to animal pharmaceuticals in their community, both of which are along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. The average travel time to reach such facilities for communities without them is one hour, with a median time of 45 minutes. The travel time is higher for communities along the ABL with Abkhazia on average (76 minutes) than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (54 minutes).

Access to veterinarians is another related issue for many along the ABLs. One in five communities (21%) report their community does not have access to a veterinarian. This is more problematic along the ABL with Abkhazia, where only 57% of communities have access to a veterinarian, as opposed to 87% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. In communities without access to a veterinarian, people travel 75 minutes on average (a median of 48 minutes) to access one. Travel times are significantly higher along the ABL with Abkhazia, as opposed to the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (an average travel time of 107 minutes versus 36 minutes; a median travel time of 120 minutes versus 40 minutes).

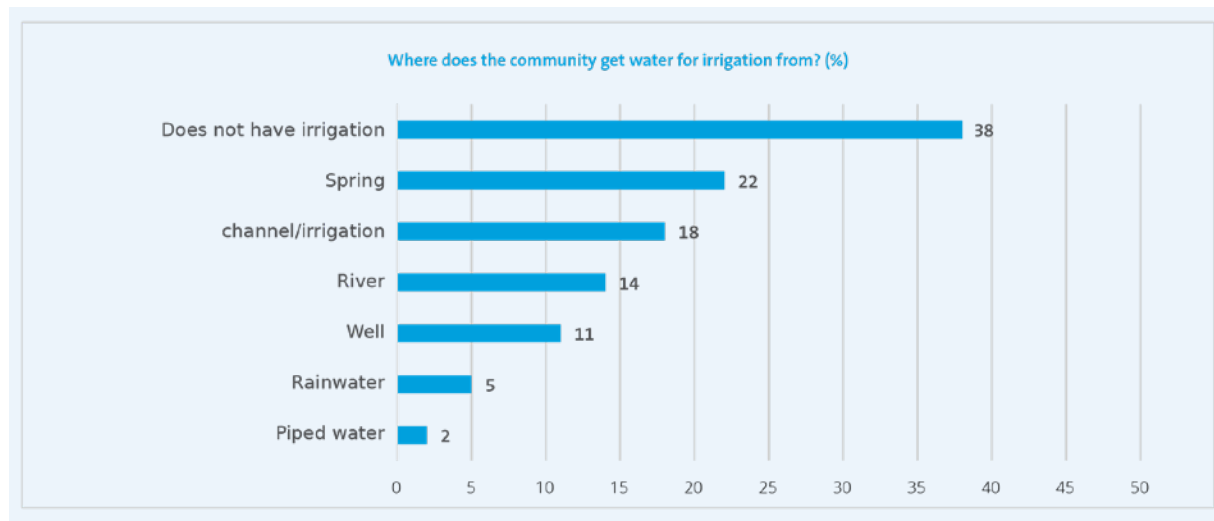
When it comes to shops selling fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, and other common agricultural goods, only 4% of communities report that they have this type of shop in their community. All of the communities reporting having this type of shop are along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. Among those who do not have access to agricultural inputs in their community, the average travel time is one hour, with a median time of 45 minutes. As with access to a veterinarian, the mean travel time is higher for those along the Abkhazian ABL (76 minutes) than those along the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetian ABL (54 minutes).

With agricultural extension services, 11% of communities report having access, with equal shares having access along both ABLs. The average time it takes to access such services is 48 minutes, and the median time is 38 minutes. As with previous indicators, those along the ABL with Abkhazia must travel a much greater time on average (84 minutes) than those along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (35 minutes).

When it comes to the BMSB infestation, 36% of communities report that their community was affected. Among these, 97% of communities along the ABL with Abkhazia reported that BMSB affected their communities, compared with 13% along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. While 36% of communities were affected, only 16% report that their community benefited from government spraying services. This included half of the communities along the ABL with Abkhazia (50%) and 4% of the communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

The study also looked at access to irrigation water. Only 18% of communities reported that they have irrigation water from an irrigation system. A plurality of communities (38%) reported they do not have any irrigation.

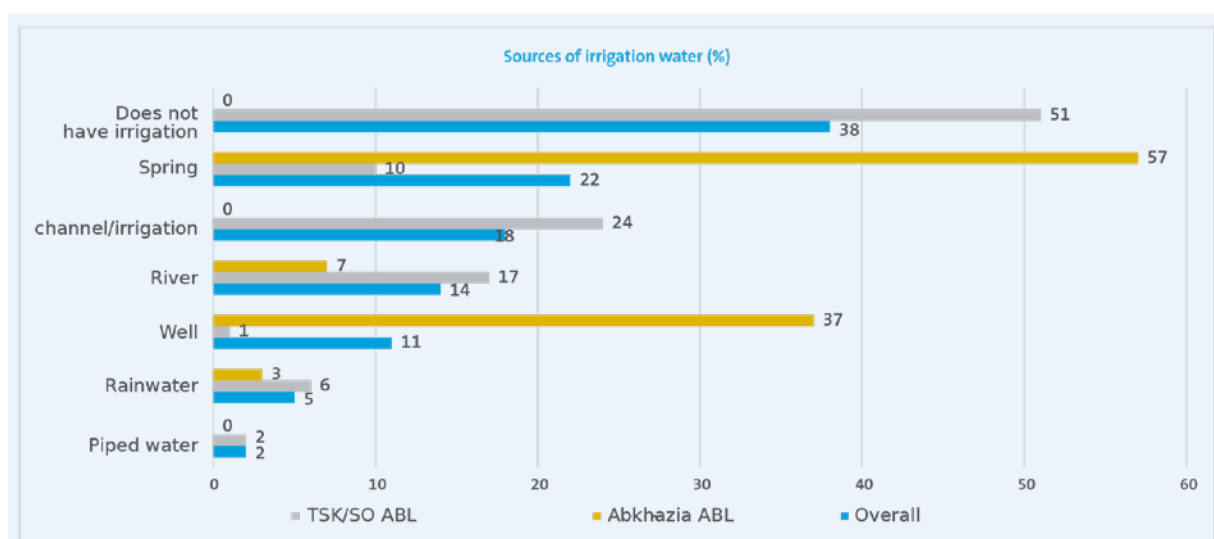
**FIGURE 9:**  
**Sources of irrigation water**



On this issue, there is a relatively complex pattern between the ABLs. On the one hand, none of the communities along the ABL with Abkhazia reported having no access to irrigation water of any kind, compared with 51% of the communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. At the same time, none of the communities along the ABL with Abkhazia reported having access to an irrigation sys-

tem, while 24% of those along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia did. This suggests that along the ABL with Abkhazia, the development of irrigation systems should be a priority, while along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, it is important to provide some form of irrigation to those communities without, if not an actual irrigation system itself.

**FIGURE 10:**  
**Sources of irrigation by ABL**

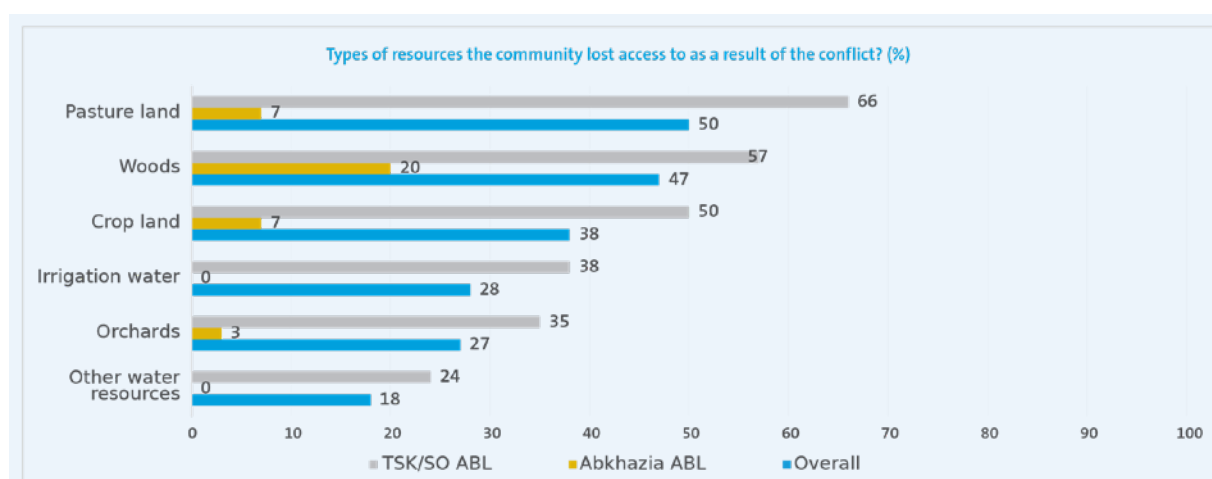


In communities that have irrigation water, participants in the study were asked whether the irrigation water lasts throughout the growing season. About one third of communities that have irrigation water (36%) report a sufficient water supply throughout the season. While this figure stands at 13% along the ABL with Abkhazia, it amounts to 53% along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. Communities were also asked whether or not the water generally met the community's agricultural needs. Of those with irrigation water, 29% reported it does. The situation was better along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, where 43% of communities reported that the water was sufficient, while in communities along the

ABL with Abkhazia, 10% reported that the irrigation water is sufficient for agricultural needs.

The study also looked at whether communities had lost access to agricultural lands and other resources as a result of the conflict, including crop land, pasture land, fruit trees, woods, irrigation water, and other water resources. The results suggest that the communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia have lost significantly more resources than those along the ABL with Abkhazia. For example, while two thirds of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia lost pasture land, 7% of communities along the ABL with Abkhazia did. The pattern is generally similar for all types of resources asked about in the study.

**Figure 11:**  
**Types of resources lost as a result of the conflict**

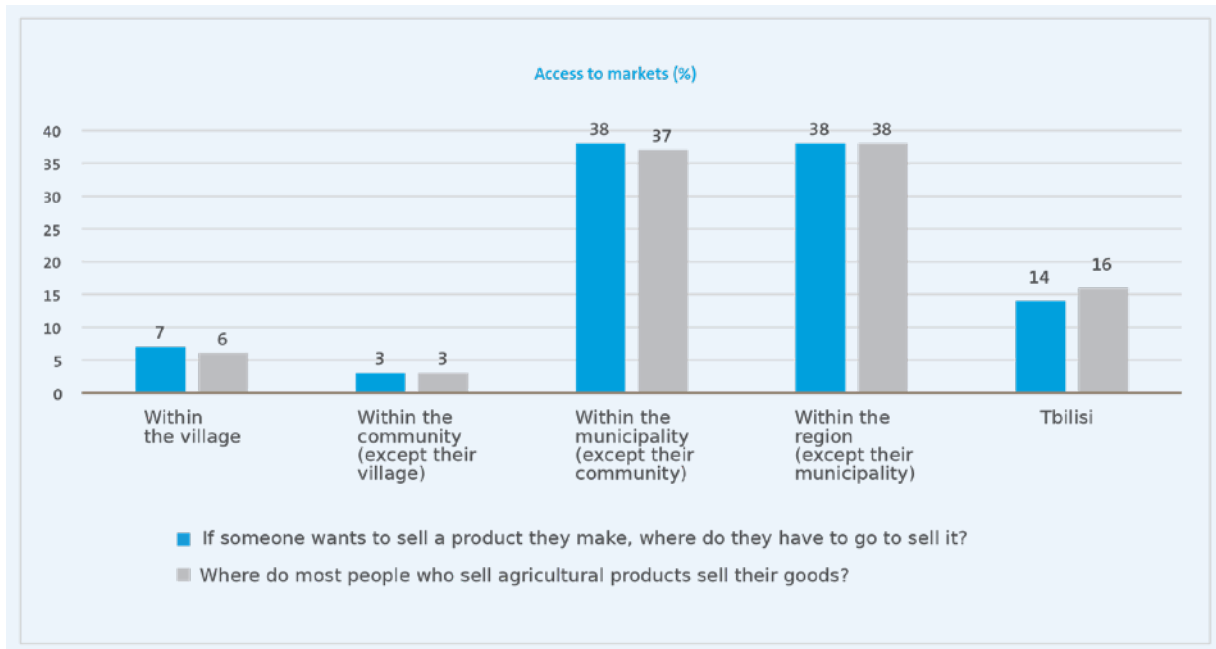


In addition to access to the above resources, the study also looked into access to markets. To do so, participants were asked about where people go to sell the non-agriculture products they make and where they go to sell their agricultural products specifically. The

results suggest that most people sell their goods either in the municipal centre or regional centre. Relatively few sell goods in Tbilisi, their village, or their community.



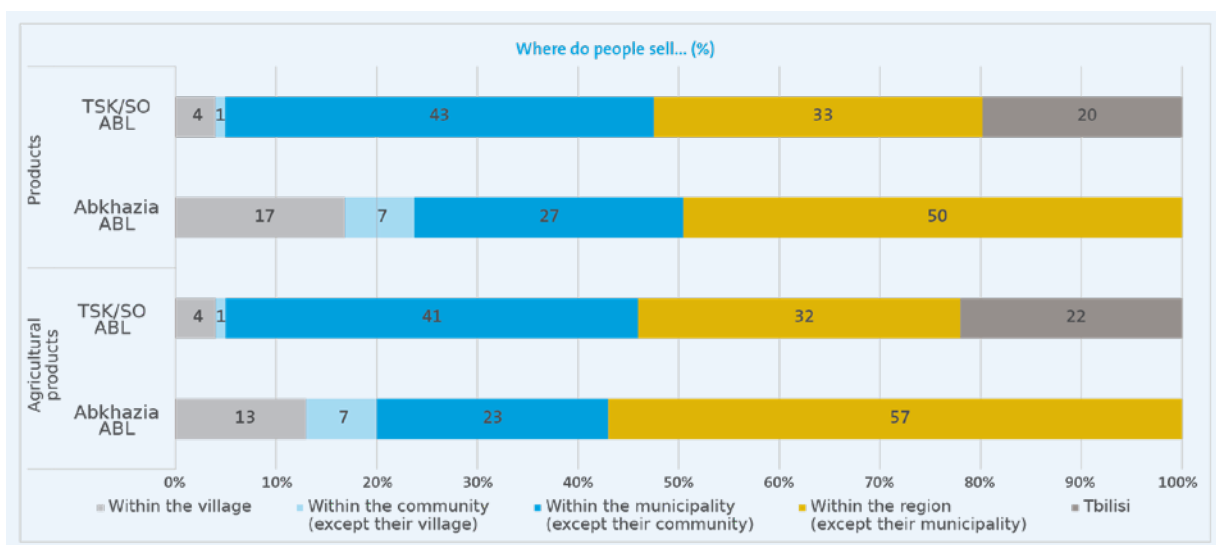
**FIGURE 12:**  
**Access to markets**



People along the ABL with Abkhazia are more likely to sell both types of products within their village than people along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South

Ossetia. Most people sell products within their region or municipality regardless of the ABL.

**Figure 13:**  
**Access to markets by ABL**



## Culture, Entertainment, and Leisure

Questions related to culture, entertainment, and leisure were also asked within the score-carding activity. Questions were asked about television and radio as they represent primary forms of entertainment for many in Georgia. Overall, 96% of the communities participating in the study reported that most members of the community have a television and access to a TV signal. Along the ABL with Abkhazia, most people (90%) have satellite television, while along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, TV primarily comes from set-top boxes (74%). Access to radio is weaker among the communities along the ABLs. Only 49% of communities report that most members of the community have a radio and access to a radio signal. Access is stronger along the ABL with Abkhazia (63% of communities) than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (44%).

The study also looked at access to libraries, houses of culture, and clubs and circles. The data suggest that 14% of communities have a library, 7% a house of culture, and 13% clubs or circles. All of these are more common along the ABL with Abkhazia than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. Along the ABL with Abkhazia, 23% of communities have a library, 20% have a house of culture, and 20% have clubs of some variety. By comparison, along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, 11% have a library, 2% have a house of culture, and 11% have clubs or cultural circles.

The study also looked into sports facilities. Only 18% of communities reported having a sports pitch that could be used for more than one sport. While 30% of communities along the ABL with Abkhazia reported having such a pitch, 13% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia reported the same. Among those communities with a sports pitch, 45% reported the pitch was in good enough condition for children to use it, while 55% reported that it was not. Reporting that the pitch was in good enough condition was more common along the ABL with Abkhazia than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

The study also asked about access to gymnasiums. Overall, one in seven communities (14%) report having access to a gymnasium. Access was mainly along the ABL with Abkhazia (40% of communities) versus along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (5% of communities with access).

The study also asked about access to meeting spaces and the loss of access to communal spaces as a result of the conflict. The data suggest that 43% of communities have access to meeting spaces. Access was equally split along the ABLs with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia. When it comes to access to cemeteries, the study suggests 7% of communities have lost access to them, with an equal split across the ABLs' adjacent communities. Aside from cemeteries, access to churches was lost in 20% of communities. This issue was more problematic along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, where 26% of communities lost access to a church compared with 3% along the ABL with Abkhazia.

## Access to Financial Services

The study looked at access to pay boxes and banking services more generally. Only 26% of villages reported having access to a pay box. Access was slightly more common along the ABL with Abkhazia (37% of communities) than along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (22% of communities). When it comes to accessing either an ATM or bank branch, 18% of communities along the ABLs have access to a bank within five kilometres of their community's centre. While this is true of 25% of communities along the ABL with Abkhazia, it holds for 15% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. Study participants were also asked about whether a mobile bank branch comes to their communities. Overall, 63% of communities report that there is a mobile bank branch that comes to their community. This is more common in communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (78%) than along the ABL with Abkhazia (23%). In 93% of communities that have access to a mobile bank service, it comes once a month.

## Food Security

The study also looked into food security, including access to a grocery store and whether or not most households have enough food to meet their needs. In 46% of communities, there is a grocery store. There is not a large difference between ABLs in terms of access to a grocery store. In terms of whether or not most members of the communities have enough to eat, only 39% of communities report that there is enough to eat for most households in the village. Food insecurity is more common along the ABL with Abkhazia, with 73% of communities reporting that most households do not have enough to eat, compared with 56% of communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

## Security

The survey also asked about a number of hard security issues including whether the ABL goes through the village; whether Russian/Abkhaz/Ossetian forces appeared in their village during the past year; whether the village had been borderized; whether anyone from the village had been detained in the past five years and what share were women; whether the community has a police station; and whether the community has a police officer that regularly patrols the community.

Overall, 43% of communities along the ABL report that the dividing line goes through their village. This is much more common along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (55%) than along the ABL with Abkhazia (10%). One in five villages along the ABL report that they have been borderized (20%). These are entirely along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (27%). In 13% of communities, the Russian, Ossetian, or Abkhaz forces have appeared in their community in the past year. This again has only occurred along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. During the past five years, however, half of the communities have had members abducted (48%). This is

much more common along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (61% of communities) than along the ABL with Abkhazia (10%). In all but one community (from which participants reported that one woman had been abducted), the majority of individuals abducted were men.

When it comes to police presence, 17% of communities report having a police station of some form or another. This is more common along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (22%) than along the ABL with Abkhazia (3%). However, two thirds of the communities report that a police officer regularly patrols the communities, with little difference between ABLs.

## Legal Rights to and Control of Assets

The last subject covered by the quantitative component of the study included questions about legal rights to and control of assets. Participants were asked if community members generally had their land legally registered. Only 34% of communities reported that this was the case (43% along the ABL with Abkhazia versus 30% along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia). When it comes to receiving compensation for damages that resulted from military actions during the conflicts, only one in five communities report that everyone in their community was compensated. More communities along the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia (26%) were compensated than communities along the ABL with Abkhazia (3%).

## Overall Prevalence of Issues

The above provides an overview of the prevalence of different issues along the ABLs with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. The following table provides an overview of the relative prevalence of the primary issues discussed above, with figures also broken down by ABL.



*Photo 6: Natia is 30 years old and has 3 children. She cannot afford to have a gas supply installed in her house and is unable to take on paid work due to childcare responsibilities. Perevi Village, Sachkhere Municipality, 2019.*



**FIGURE 14:**  
**Frequency of indicators by geographic areas**

RANK	ISSUE	OVERALL (%)	ABK ABL (%)	SO ABL (%)
1	Lacks veterinary pharmacy	98	100	98
2	Lacks shop with agricultural inputs	96	100	94
3	Lacks sports fields or field is inadequate	92	80	96
4	Lacks access to landline telephone	91	83	94
5	Roads generally are not paved	91	97	89
6	Community lacks pharmacy	90	83	93
7	Lacks library	86	77	89
8	Most people have issues accessing firewood	85	77	88
9	Lacks police station	83	97	78
10	Lacks irrigation water from channel	82	100	76
11	Irrigation water does not come from irrigation system	82	90	79
12	No drainage or ineffective system	79	88	76
13	Lacking potable piped water	76	93	70
14	Some in village have not been compensated for damages resulting from military actions	76	97	68
15	No landline Internet	71	87	65
16	Lacks kindergarten/preschool	70	43	79
17	Lacking piped water	67	93	57
18	Land is not legally registered	66	57	70
19	Lacks lighting on most roads	63	97	50
20	Many households face food insecurity	61	73	56
21	Community experiences brownouts/blackouts	58	57	59

22	Lack of medical facilities	57	70	52
23	Most people do not have motorized transport	56	30	66
24	Lacks access to at least one telephone service provider	55	47	59
25	Lack of covered minibus station	54	47	56
26	Lacks access to radio	51	37	56
27	Lacks school	50	47	51
28	Detentions in past five years	48	13	61
29	Lacks outdoor lighting	41	93	22
30	Lack of village doctor	41	50	38
31	Lack of village nurse	38	43	35
32	Lacks trash collection	38	63	29
33	Village is not gasified	36	70	23
34	Irregular mobile Internet coverage	34	23	38
35	Lacks police patrol	34	40	32
36	Irregular access to public transport	32	30	33
37	Lack of telephone service throughout the community	28	7	35
38	Lacks veterinarian	21	43	13
39	Russian/Abkhaz/Ossetian forces have appeared in the village in the past 12 months	13	0	17
40	Women deliver babies at home	4	0	5
41	Lacks access to television signal	4	3	5
42	Does not have 24 hours of electricity	1	0	1



# OPPORTUNITIES

To understand the opportunities that communities are most interested in pursuing to strengthen their economic standing, focus groups were used to conduct a SWOT analysis of six of the municipalities

along the ABLs with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia, including Dusheti, Gori, Kareli, Kaspi, Tsalenjikha, and Zugdidi. This section presents the results. All 47 focus group participants were women.



*Photo 7: Much of Irakli's pear crop was destroyed by hail, which affected many other growers in Gori Municipality. His village has no regular water supply. In general the village does not have an access to potable water. Gugutiantkari Village, Gori Municipality, 2019.*

## Dusheti Municipality

Informants from communities adjacent to the ABL in Dusheti municipality highlighted very few strengths that were possessed by their communities. The focus group participants underlined that animal husbandry and dairy farming were the strongest assets of these communities. As interviewees mentioned, almost every other household in ABL-adjacent communities owns cows. While focus group participants listed utilities such as electricity, gas, and the Internet as strengths, understandably these do not create unique opportunities for communities along the ABL.

The precarious condition of rural roads, the lack of potable and irrigation water resources, and difficulties with access to medical care and public transportation were named as the key weaknesses of communities along the ABL. Respondents also listed restricted access to firewood and the lack of shops as problematic for the villages on the ABL.

Respondents linked the problems with accessibility to a lack of investment, as no one would be interested in visiting villages with no roads or regular public transportation. In such conditions, village residents have to pay to hire cars for transport, which puts further pressure on already tight household budgets.

The ABL communities of Dusheti municipality also suffer from a lack of potable and irrigation water resources. Residents try to build wells themselves. However, this does not necessarily solve challenges

related to water supplies. Uncertainty related to the security situation on the ABL also amplifies water issues as the sources of irrigation canals are located beyond the territories controlled by the Georgian government.

Participants unanimously agreed that increased dairy farming could create significant opportunities, as the outputs could be sold to tourists and hotels in neighbouring Aragvi Gorge. Nonetheless, respondents think that the lack of milk collection stations is a significant obstacle. Informants believed that either the municipal government of Dusheti or the central government of Georgia should address this issue by opening or subsidizing milk collection stations.

Focus group participants from Dusheti's ABL-adjacent communities highlighted several key threats to development. One is depopulation, a challenge which has been a long-standing issue for the mountainous Dusheti municipality. Respondents also highlighted that the price and the process of land registration represent a significant threat as they create unnecessary obstacles, thus discouraging residents to actively engage in agriculture.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats highlighted by the focus group participants who live along the ABL in Dusheti municipality are summarized in the table below.

**FIGURE 15:**  
**SWOT analysis of Dusheti municipality**

Dusheti Municipality SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal herding</li> <li>• Dairy farming</li> <li>• Presence of gas, electricity, and Internet infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions of rural roads</li> <li>• Lack of potable and irrigation water resources</li> <li>• Access to medical care</li> <li>• Access to public transport</li> <li>• Access to firewood</li> <li>• Lack of convenience stores</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dairy farming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depopulation</li> <li>• Price of land registration</li> <li>• Process of land registration</li> </ul>

## Gori Municipality

Informants from communities along the ABL in Gori municipality suggested agriculture is the strongest asset in their communities. Respondents highlighted that traditional horticulture, specifically fruit growing, is an area of competitive advantage for the communities. Focus group participants unanimously agreed that the people from the ABL communities, with their hard-working and resilient characters, also put these communities in an advantageous position.

When it comes to weaknesses, the access to and affordability of public transportation emerged as the most acute problem. While almost all of the communities are covered through privately owned public transportation services, prices are high. Among other communal services, respondents listed trash collection and the quality of community roads as weaknesses.

While agriculture is a key economic sector, respondents named a number of weaknesses or barriers to the development of the sector in Gori municipality. Specifically, participants named access to irrigation canals, affordability of agricultural machinery, and the prices and quality of plant protection measures as the key weaknesses.

Existing knowledge of traditional horticulture is considered as a key opportunity for the communities along Gori's ABL. In terms of translating existing strengths into opportunities, respondents highlight that government help is crucial. Participants felt that providing incentives such as vouchers for agricultural machinery and grants (from either local or central government) would be crucial for the economic advancement of the communities. The interviewees mentioned that opportunities that international donor organizations provide, such as training and small grants, are already improving the livelihoods of local communities. The participants also noted that providing scholarships for residents of the communities along the ABL would incentivize more students to obtain higher education.

Participants perceived security issues as the main threat to the stability and prosperity of their communities. Uncertainty associated with unclear situation between the territories controlled by the government of Georgia and territories beyond its control pushes people to limit their activities in nearby areas.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats highlighted by the focus group participants who live along the ABL in Gori municipality are summarized in the table below.



**FIGURE 16:**  
**SWOT analysis of Gori municipality**

Gori Municipality SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit farming</li> <li>• Human resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to affordable public transport</li> <li>• Trash collection</li> <li>• Conditions of community roads</li> <li>• Access to irrigation canals</li> <li>• Affordability of agricultural machinery</li> <li>• Prices and quality of plant protection measures</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture and traditional horticulture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian occupation</li> <li>• Human security issues</li> </ul>



*Photo 8: This couple's house was badly affected by fire during the 2008 conflict. Since then they have lived in one room, which serves as a kitchen, bedroom and living room. Zardiaankari Village, Gori Municipality, 2019.*

## Kareli Municipality

Respondents from Kareli, another Shida Kartli municipality adjacent to the ABL with Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, named human resources and agriculture as key strengths of their communities. Similar to informants from Gori, Kareli residents highlighted that their hard-working and resilient people are ready to advance their own communities. Notwithstanding the loss of fertile land plots due to the conflict, locals still manage to grow tomatoes, potatoes, and beans and to sell their produce to customers across Georgia.

Community roads, access to public transport, and streetlights were identified as key problems in the communities along the ABL in Kareli municipality. Several villages do not have kindergartens; therefore, residents either have to take children to other settlements with kindergartens or care for them themselves. Other communities lack convenience shops, while others complained about the lack of medical professionals.

Similar to Gori residents, Kareli respondents saw opportunities in agriculture. Participants asserted that supporting traditional economic activities would create more jobs for locals and contribute to Georgia's

economy. While none of the respondents mentioned private initiatives, they unanimously agreed that help from the municipal and central government could help turn village strengths into opportunities. Focus group participants highlighted that the provision of machinery and fertilizers were key to their potential success in advancing agricultural production.

Focus group participants from Kareli pointed out several threats. Interviewees agreed that security issues such as the kidnappings accompanying the process of so called borderization significantly hinder the economic prospects of their communities. As these villages live under a continual threat from Russian and Ossetian troops, very few residents risk starting a business or investing in infrastructure. The participants also highlighted problems with government programmes as well as obstacles to registering land plots among potential threats.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats highlighted by the focus group participants who live along the ABL in Kareli municipality are summarized in the table below.

**FIGURE 17:**  
**SWOT analysis of Kareli municipality**

Kareli Municipality SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agriculture</li><li>• Human resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conditions of rural roads</li><li>• Access to public transport</li><li>• Streetlights</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agriculture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Russian occupation</li><li>• Human security issues</li></ul>

## Kaspi Municipality

Focus group participants from Kaspi municipality named fewer strengths in their communities than participants from other municipalities did. While access to Georgia's key highway and well-paved roads put Kaspi's communities in an advantageous position, focus group participants had little to say about how these strengths could help create opportunities for their communities. Respondents viewed newly established berry and nut farms as strengths along with traditional horticulture such as vegetable growing.

Among challenges faced by the communities, Kaspi residents listed the gas supply, community roads, and access to potable and irrigation water as key weaknesses of their communities. While the municipality has direct access to the country's east-west highway, which runs across its territory, communities along the ABL lack public transportation to municipal and regional centres. They highlighted that access to agricultural machinery also represents a significant challenge.

At some level, participants were reluctant to name agriculture as a community strength. Nonetheless, they perceived agricultural production as something that might create opportunities for communities along the ABL. At the same time, they suggested that without agricultural machinery and subsidies from the State, individual private initiatives aimed at increasing agricultural production might prove futile.

Just like the respondents from other ABL-adjacent communities, Kaspi residents perceive the Russian occupation as the most significant threat their communities face. Participants recalled that before the 2008 war, residents of predominantly Georgian and Ossetian villages had conflict-free relations, and they further highlighted that Russian military forces bar the communities from coexisting peacefully.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats highlighted by the focus group participants who live along the ABL in Kaspi municipality are summarized in the table below.

**FIGURE 18:**  
**SWOT analysis of Kaspi municipality**

Kaspi Municipality SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Georgia's main highway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas supply</li> <li>• Internal community roads</li> <li>• Access to potable and irrigation water</li> <li>• Lack of public transport</li> <li>• Access to agricultural machinery</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian occupation</li> <li>• Human security issues</li> </ul>



## Tsalenjikha Municipality

Similar to other rural municipalities across Georgia, residents of communities along the ABL in Tsalenjikha perceive agricultural production as their key strength. Hazelnuts have become a key cash crop for Tsalenjikha's ABL communities. Kiwi fruit, a relatively new crop for the region, has also proven successful as an export crop. Farmers engage in cattle herding and corn farming simultaneously, with the latter used as fodder for animals. Finally, beekeeping, another traditional activity, was also named as a strength for the communities along the ABL.

The key weaknesses of Tsalenjikha municipality's ABL communities are associated with the lack of equipment and know-how in agricultural production. Respondents highlighted that even though hazelnuts are the most important crop, farmers do not own the necessary equipment and resources to properly pre-process nuts. Industrial driers and pesticides used against BMSB were also either not available or are of a low quality. While the government has introduced campaigns against BMSB, the participants noted that the pesticides that were used have also killed off bees. As a result, several villages did not process their land plots.

Another important setback for the ABL-adjacent communities is the lack of knowledge of modern agriculture. Focus group participants pointed out that even though the government and several non-profits conducted trainings on pesticide use in agricultural production, often the information was insufficient. Respondents highlighted that the lack of collection

points for agricultural produce were an important weakness for Tsalenjikha municipality.

Participants generally thought that agricultural production is the key opportunity for Tsalenjikha's ABL-adjacent communities. Focus group participants believe that the State should provide support to farmers by offering financial incentives and vouchers for purchasing agricultural machinery, pesticides, and training. The participants thought that the establishment of collection points for agricultural produce could help solve issues they experience with unsold product. The respondents overwhelmingly believed that the State should provide help in this regard. They also highlighted that business people are less interested in creating opportunities for their communities.

Tsalenjikha's ABL-adjacent communities face similar security threats from Russian military forces and the de facto authorities as other villages located on the ABLs. Focus group participants indicated that Russian and Abkhaz security forces have detained some of their community members, who were freed after paying a ransom. In addition to hard security threats, focus group participants highlighted that stink bugs hinder the development of agriculture. Finally, the lack of a centralized supply of potable water is a significant threat for Tsalenjikha's communities along the ABL.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats highlighted by the focus group participants who live along the ABL in Tsalenjikha municipality are summarized in the table below.

**FIGURE 19:**  
**SWOT analysis of Tsalenjikha municipality**

Tsalenjikha Municipality SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture, including hazelnuts, kiwi fruit, cattle husbandry, and beekeeping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of agricultural machinery</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge and know-how in agriculture</li> <li>• Lack of industrial-grade nut driers</li> <li>• Lack of or inappropriate pesticides for BMSB</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian occupation</li> <li>• Human security issues</li> <li>• BMSB</li> <li>• Lack of centralized network of potable water</li> </ul>



*Photo 9: The flooded stadium of Public School #2 in Pakhulani Village, Tsalenjikha Municipality, 2019.*

## Zugdidi Municipality

Respondents from the ABL-adjacent communities of Zugdidi municipality named traditional crops such as hazelnuts and citrus as key strengths. Other agricultural activities such as beekeeping and growing kiwi fruit and blueberries were also considered assets for these communities. Focus group participants agreed that access to a hazelnut drying factory created a comparative advantage for hazelnut farmers as now they are able to sell better produce for higher prices. According to interviewees, the main weaknesses of Zugdidi's communities along the ABL are problems related to agricultural machinery and supplies, as well as services such as the lack of medical professionals and potable water. Respondents highlighted that as there are almost no trained agricultural professionals in the villages, farmers find it hard to properly administer pesticides. As villages do not have their own medical practitioners, residents need to go to medical centres in the city of Zugdidi or elsewhere in Georgia. The lack of a centralized water supply was also consid-

ered a weakness as existing water wells cannot deal with the current demand for drinking water.

Focus group participants noted that the State-funded blueberry programmes created opportunities for the communities along the ABL. The programme incentivized several farmers to create cooperatives. Among other options, offering accessible loans and vouchers for purchasing pesticides as well as grants for establishing small and medium-sized agricultural ventures were believed to be the best options for improving the conditions in ABL-adjacent communities in Zugdidi municipality.

Similar to other municipalities alongside the ABLs, Zugdidi residents named security as the key threat to their communities. Respondents also pointed out that BMSB and fungal diseases greatly threaten hazelnuts, their key cash crop. While several villages already have disaster risk reduction structures to contain flood threats along the Enguri River, seasonal floods still remain an important challenge.

**FIGURE 20:**  
**SWOT analysis of Zugdidi municipality**

Zugdidi Municipality SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture, including hazelnuts, kiwi fruit, cattle husbandry, and beekeeping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of agricultural machinery</li> <li>Lack of knowledge and know-how in agriculture</li> <li>Lack of industrial-grade nut driers</li> <li>Lack of or inappropriate pesticides for BMSB</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Russian occupation</li> <li>Human security issues</li> <li>BMSB</li> <li>Lack of centralized network of potable water</li> </ul>

The SWOT analyses for each municipality is summarized in the table below. While there are specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for each municipality considered, there are also a number

of overarching themes. Agriculture in one form or another was considered a strength, everywhere besides Kaspi. Similarly, the communities considered agriculture to be the main opportunity, even in Kaspi where

the community did not name agriculture as among the main community strengths. When it came to opportunities, another common theme was government support of the agriculture sector. In general, the SWOT analysis suggested that relatively few people had high hopes for private sector support of agriculture in their communities. At the same time, many communities pointed to agriculture-related issues

as weaknesses even though the specific issues varied from community to community. Water, both for drinking and irrigation, was also a common concern. When it comes to threats, Russia's occupation and the concomitant security threats were named by all the communities, besides Dusheti. Furthermore, agriculture-related issues related to infestation were also commonly highlighted.

**FIGURE 21:**  
**SWOT analysis of the municipalities along the ABLs**

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Dusheti</b>	Animal husbandry; dairy farming; infrastructure for gas, electricity, and Internet	Conditions of rural roads; lack of potable and irrigation water resources; access to medical care; access to public transport; access to firewood; lack of convenience stores	Dairy farming	Depopulation; price of land registration; process of land registration
<b>Gori</b>	Fruit farming; human resources	Access to affordable public transport; trash collection; conditions of community roads; access to irrigation canals; affordability of agricultural machinery; price and quality of plant protection measures	Agriculture and traditional horticulture	Russian occupation; human security issues
<b>Kareli</b>	Agriculture; human resources	Conditions of rural roads; access to public transport; streetlights	Agriculture	Russian occupation; human security issues
<b>Kaspi</b>	Access to Georgia's main highway	Gas supply; internal community roads; access to potable and irrigation water; lack of public transport; access to agricultural machinery	Agriculture	Russian occupation; human security issues
<b>Tsalenjikha</b>	Agriculture, including hazelnuts, kiwi fruit, cattle husbandry, beekeeping	Lack of agricultural machinery; lack of knowledge and know-how in agriculture; lack of industrial-grade nut driers; lack of or inappropriate pesticides for BMSB	Agriculture	Russian occupation; human security issues; BMSB; lack of centralized network of potable water
<b>Zugdidi</b>	Agriculture, including hazelnuts, citrus, kiwi fruit, cattle husbandry, beekeeping; access to hazelnut drying factory	Lack of agricultural machinery; lack of medical professionals; lack of pharmacies; lack of centralized network of potable water	Agriculture; State-supported agricultural cooperatives	Russian occupation; human security issues; BMSB; fungal disease; seasonal floods of Enguri River





*Photo 10: Due to the occupation of their land, villagers are no longer able to raise cattle, grow produce or collect chestnuts from the local forest. In case they do so, they might be detained, fined or taken to Tskhinvali by Russians or Ossetians. Perevi Village, Sachkhere Municipality, 2019.*



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above study leads to a number of conclusions and recommendations.

The study has classified communities by their relative level of needs, which are summarized in the table below. The table shows that the highest level of

needs are present in communities along the ABL with Abkhazia. However, community needs are still high for many communities, and all of the communities within the study showed clear needs.

**FIGURE 22:**  
**Geographic distribution of villages by the level of needs**

NEED LEVEL	NUMBER OF ISSUES	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES OVERALL	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES ALONG ABK ABL	SHARE OF COMMUNITIES ALONG SO ABL
Highest need (5)	55-65	30%	40%	27%
High need (4)	48-54	24%	20%	26%
Moderate need (3)	40-47	23%	10%	28%
Low need (2)	31-39	17%	23%	15%
Lowest need (1)	23-30	5%	7%	5%

In addition to the classification of the overall level of need, specific needs were also defined for each community. Needs were sorted by prevalence, rather than intensity or importance. In general, when deciding what issues to attempt to tackle in communities along the ABL, consideration should also be put into the relative importance of needs: clearly the abduction of community members is more pressing than the lack of lighting on the main roads of a community even though fewer communities have faced abductions than lack lighting on their roads. In this regard, future research should look into community priorities rather than enumerating community issues alone.

Besides community needs, the study also included a SWOT analysis for six of the municipalities along the ABLs. The SWOT analyses conducted within the study

suggest that communities primarily see opportunities in agricultural development. The analyses also highlighted a number of weaknesses related to agriculture, including issues with the water supply. Aside from security threats from Russia, agricultural issues (BMSB, land registration, etc.) dominated the conversation on threats. In this regard, it can be concluded that the communities along both ABLs would likely be interested in participating in agricultural development programming.

While the above data and analysis provides general tendencies, the study suggests that both the levels of need and the types of needs vary considerably between communities. The data presented above, combined with the supplementary community profiles this project produced, enable targeted intervention in

112 of the 116 communities along the administrative boundary lines with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. Given the availability of data, it is recommended that:

- ▶ Interventions be planned on the basis of the community profiles provided within the scope of the project. This will enable policymakers to address specific community needs in a timely and efficient manner.

Although every effort was made to collect accurate data, there are surely errors in the data given the limited amount of data collected within the project. In this regard, caution is warranted, and prior to interventions taking place, it is recommended that:

- ▶ Actors hold validation workshops in communities prior to implementing programming to ensure that the programming responds to community needs.

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