

Annual Report of Equality Movement

2025

Letter from the Executive Director

Writing the introduction to Equality Movement's annual report comes at a particularly difficult time. The fate of non-governmental organizations, the civil sector, independent media, and all institutions that define the democratic nature of our country has never been so uncertain.

Last year was fraught with challenges due to anti-democratic, homophobic, and transphobic censorship legislation, often referred to as the "Russian Law." Nevertheless, in 2025, Equality Movement — like many other non-governmental organizations — pushed the boundaries of what was possible. We continued to fulfill our core mission and advocated for LGBTQ+ rights in Georgia, and kept our status as the largest queer community organization in the South Caucasus region.

Our organization became a direct target of this repressive legislation last year. In September 2025, under amendments to the Law on Grants that are incompatible with the Constitution of Georgia, the Anti-Corruption Bureau initiated a monitoring process targeting civil society organizations and requested extensive information regarding their activities. While this illegal monitoring is still ongoing, we have learned that the law is becoming even more stringent. Violations of its newest provisions now carry criminal, rather than administrative, liability.

Despite these severe obstacles, I am proud to say that we have continued to provide vital medical services to our beneficiaries — completely free of charge and anonymously — and have even expanded certain services. For example, in 2025, 513 new beneficiaries joined our PrEP program, which aims to prevent the spread of HIV. In total, 2,158 beneficiaries received consultations, testing, and PrEP medication from our infectious disease specialists over the past year.

Beyond health services, Equality Movement remained steadfastly committed to advocating for LGBTQ+ rights and fostering a community-supportive environment, all while continuing our own organizational and institutional development.

Maintaining the continuity of our activities would have been impossible without the backing of Equality Movement's strategic partners. I want to particularly highlight their readiness and flexibility, which were often crucial in helping us navigate this new reality. Furthermore, this year's achievements are a testament to the Equality Movement team, who took daily risks to continue their work and advance our cause. Above all, our resilience relies on the trust of our community members. Your support is the ultimate proof of who we work for and why the existence and functioning of Equality Movement is so critical. Thank you once again.

Mikheil Meparishvili

Executive Director

Unified Organizational Statistics for 2025

Operational Focus	4
Human Resources	36
Regional Outreach Worker	5
Project	13
Number of beneficiaries who received a basic package of essential tools for preventing the spread of HIV and sexually transmitted infections	12 665
Number of beneficiaries who received voluntary counseling and testing services for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, including viral hepatitis (B and C) and syphilis	8 247
Number of beneficiaries enrolled in the HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) program	484
Psychological and Psychiatric Consultation and Psychotherapy	132
Social Worker Service Beneficiaries	367
Service of a Lawyer	230
Strategic Litigation Case	1
Number of beneficiaries attending informational and educational meetings	483

2025 Strategic Goals and Their Overview

Providing Health, Psychosocial, and Legal Services to Members of the LGBTQ+ Community



Medical Component

This operational focus addresses current needs in HIV/STI prevention through community-based approaches. Homophobia, transphobia, and stigma or discrimination related to HIV status often limit access to essential services, increasing the need for targeted interventions. The program is based on international WHO guidelines and integrates prevention, testing, counseling, social support, and communication components. The goal of the program is to prevent HIV infection and AIDS among the MSM population in seven cities of Georgia — Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Zugdidi, Telavi, Gori, and Rustavi — through active community engagement. This includes providing information, counseling, and access to preventive measures.

The intervention is implemented both through community centers and via field and online outreach. It is a large-scale, multi-component program that includes:

- Provision of a basic preventive package (risk assessment, counseling, and distribution of preventive means such as condoms and lubricants);
- Voluntary counseling and rapid testing for HIV and STIs;
- Provision of self-testing kits (HIV self-tests);
- Involvement of social workers, medical specialists, and psychological counselors/psychotherapists;
- Social support and case management;
- Development and distribution of informational materials and organization of preventive events;
- Monitoring and adherence support for people living with HIV.

In 2025, a total of **2,158** beneficiaries received consultations, laboratory tests, and prescriptions from infectious disease specialists. Additionally, **18,170** units of informational and branded materials were produced, including t-shirts, pill capsules, bags, notebooks, PrEP booklets, banners, condom envelopes, and flags.

PrEP Program

During the reporting year, **513** new beneficiaries enrolled in the PrEP program. The number of PrEP distribution days at the organization's community center increased. Starting from May 1, beneficiaries have been able to receive consultations with an infectious disease specialist and access medication at the community center twice a week. The program also made a significant contribution to the development of mental health services. Beneficiaries were provided with continuous support from both a psychologist and a psychiatrist through a partner organization.



A syphilis awareness campaign was launched by Equality Movement in cooperation with the British organization The Love Tank. The campaign materials were developed as a Georgian adaptation of The Love Tank's well-known British syphilis awareness campaign.



Psychosocial and Legal Direction

Within this component, Equality Movement aimed to develop psychosocial services tailored to the needs of community members and to provide organizational and legal support to them. As part of these efforts, the legal team provided legal consultations to approximately 230 beneficiaries. Over the year, the team worked on 96 new cases and, together with cases carried over from previous years, provided legal assistance in 136 cases. These included filing police reports, drafting complaints, and submitting lawsuits.

Main categories of cases included:

- Administrative/Civil cases – 66 cases
- Violence and threats – 30 cases
- Domestic violence – 4 cases
- Violation of labor rights – 3 cases
- Others – 33 cases

The organization's social workers provided services to around 400 beneficiaries, of whom around 100 were referred to psychologists and psychiatrists for further support. It is noteworthy that the demand for services has continued to grow each month. Based on the volume of beneficiaries and consultations, it is evident that the psychosocial, health, and legal situation of LGBTQ+ community members is deteriorating. Many continue to experience oppression, discrimination, and violence, as well as challenges related to education and employment.

The program providing health, psychosocial, and legal services to LGBTQ+ community members was supported by seven donors:

- 1 **Empowering and Mobilizing the LGBTQ+ Community** – funded by the Swedish Association for Sexual Education (RFSU)
- 2 **Human Rights & Resilience** – funded by the German Foundation for International Cooperation (GIZ)
- 3 **Mental Health is Key: Building a solid foundation for the civic engagement of young LGBTQI individuals from the regions** – funded by EU4Youth through the German Foundation for International Cooperation (GIZ)

4. Against the current – Remaining steadfast at the Georgian’s LGBT+ community’s side – funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Georgia

5. Green Future, Strengthening Rights and Stability: Promoting Inclusive and Green Transitions in the Eastern Partnership Region through Effective and Accountable Governance – funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

6. Strengthening National Systems for HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis Prevention, Treatment, Care, and Support in Georgia – funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

7. Queer TM - Trauma & Migration – Regional cooperation of queer community organisations for better social, psychological, and legal services – funded by the Swedish Institute



Mobilization, Empowerment, and Integration of LGBTQ+ Community Members

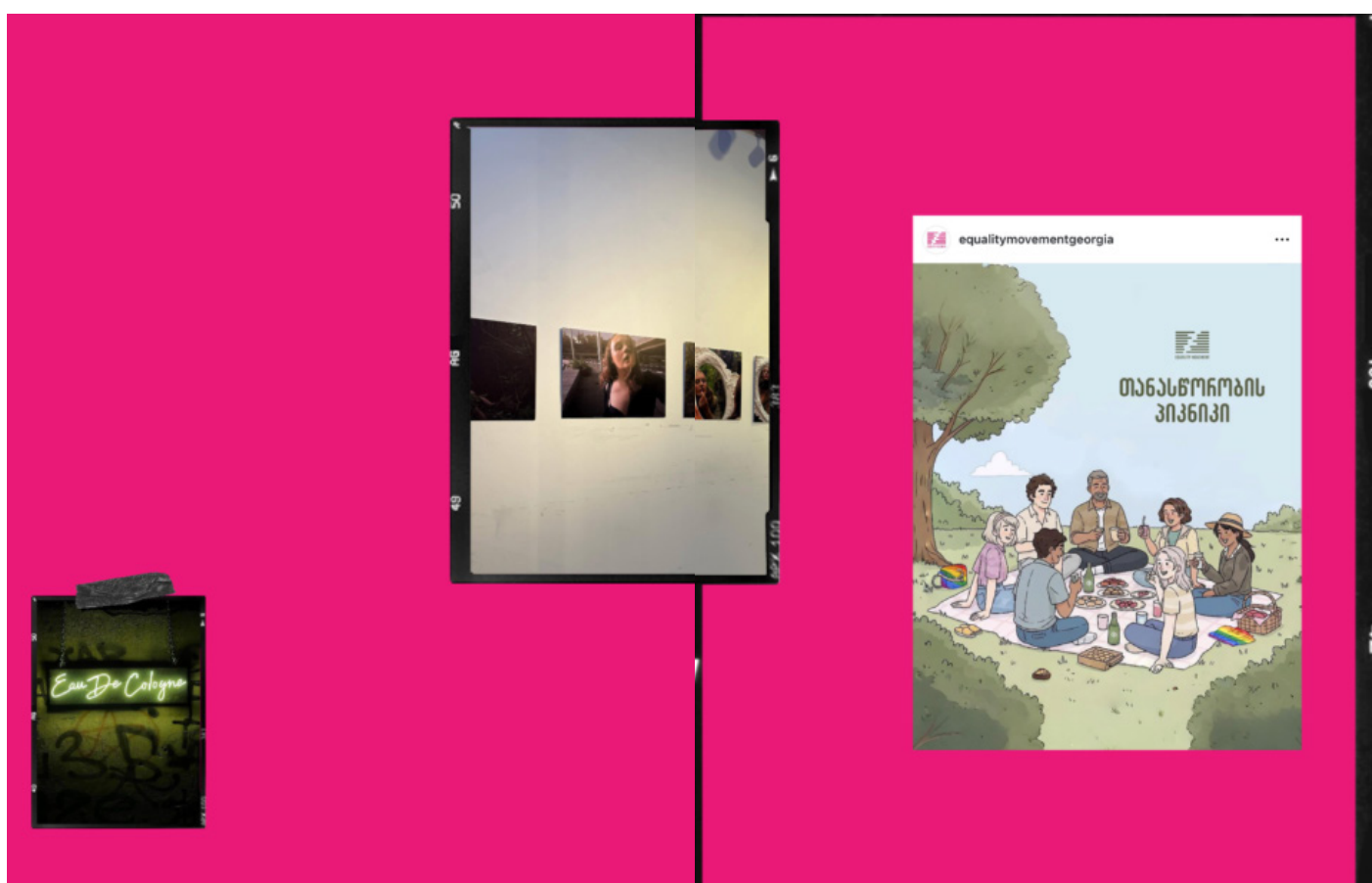
Equality Movement organized an “Equality School” focused primarily on health-related issues such as promoting healthy lifestyles and raising awareness of sexually transmitted infections. Approximately 40 participants from various regions of Georgia took part in the school. In addition, the organization hosted an “Equality Academy”, which engaged about 50 community members. This year’s theme centered on queer activism and personal stories, with 10 sessions led by invited speakers.

During 2025, Equality Movement conducted moreover five trainings in partnership with the Dutch organisation AFEW International, reaching around 140 participants. The trainings aimed to raise awareness and empower LGBTQ+ community members, allies, and key professional groups on medical, psychosocial, legal, and other current issues.

Equality Movement also organized three outdoor “Equality Picnic” retreats. The goal of these events was to mobilize the community and promote integration by encouraging healthy and inclusive activities in a recreational setting. Participants took part in rafting, ziplining, and other team-based challenges. Altogether, approximately 300 people attended the three events.

In collaboration with the Eau de Cologne Collective, a series of meetings were organized in March, April, and December. On December 31, a New Year’s event was held at the Equality Movement Community Center. In total, 900 beneficiaries attended the four events.

Six “Patient Schools” were conducted during the year, featuring the doctors Maia Butsashvili, Nino Rukhadze, Zura Alkhanishvili, Nino Markhvashvili, Ketii Mshvidobadze, and Givi Ghvinjilia, who led discussions on various medical topics. A total of 120 beneficiaries participated in these sessions.



Photos and illustration from events organized by Equality Movement

On March 31, 2025, a community meeting dedicated to Trans Visibility Day was held at the Equality Movement Community Center. The event included a photo exhibition by photographer Dadu Kalandadze, titled “Mirror, Mirror.” Approximately 30 trans participants and 50 supporters attended the event.

In December, Equality Movement organized an academic conference titled “Queer Voices from Georgia and Beyond.” The conference brought together activists from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to discuss the legal, social, and affective dimensions of queer migration. The discussions highlighted key issues shared across countries in the region, and the conference also featured artistic projects that provided additional space for thematic reflection.

Throughout 2025, the Equality Movement actively worked to establish a network of partners across the Baltic and South Caucasus regions. This initiative aims to foster knowledge exchange among civil society organizations to help them better address queer migration and the trauma associated with it.

- 1 Rights and Resilience: Empowering Georgia's LGBTIQ+ Community for Inclusive Change – funded by the European Commission
- 2 ‘Queer Context’ - Fresh voices from Georgia and beyond – funded by the Danish New Democracy Fund
- 3 Against the current – Remaining steadfast at the Georgian’s LGBT+ community’s side – funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Georgia
- 4 Queer TM - Trauma & Migration – Regional cooperation of queer community organisations for better social, psychological, and legal services – funded by the Swedish Institute



Creating an Equal and Supportive Environment for the LGBTQ+ Community

Equality Movement launched the “Let’s Unite” campaign to mark May 17 — the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). The video campaign was shared across the organization’s social media platforms, namely Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. The campaign’s message — A United State, Families, and Society Free of Homophobia and Transphobia — reached more than 163,000 viewers. Throughout the year, Equality Movement produced three educational videos addressing frequently asked questions about PEP, PrEP, and vaccinations, as well as six short informational videos about PEP, developed in collaboration with social media content creators.



The quote — When will we be together again? — is taken from a video produced by Equality Movement as part of its campaign dedicated to May 17, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

On December 1, 2025, at the initiative of Equality Movement, a conference dedicated to the International Day Against HIV/AIDS was held under the theme “A New Paradigm for Health: Equality, Innovation, Inclusivity.” The event brought together representatives of state institutions, academia, and non-governmental and community organizations working on HIV/AIDS prevention and response.

Against the backdrop of severely weakened human rights protection mechanisms, the introduction of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, and the radicalization of political homo and transphobia, Equality Movement faced significant constraints in actively promoting the protection and integration of LGBTQ+ people in society. During the reporting period, the emerging challenges were linked to both the systematic disruption of the civil landscape and the deliberate restriction and political instrumentalization of LGBTQ+ rights. These developments have effectively dismantled the space for strategic advocacy aimed at strengthening the protection of the rights LGBTQ+ people at the local level.

Despite numerous challenges, the organization remained active throughout 2025, continuing its work in assessing the needs of LGBTQ+ people, monitoring rights violations, preparing international reports, analyzing legal developments, and engaging key stakeholders. During the reporting period, Equality Movement placed particular emphasis on keeping supporters informed and enhancing coordination among them to help ensure the safety and well-being of LGBTQ+ community members.

AIDS Conference, 2025



Throughout 2025, Equality Movement representatives participated in a number of workshops and conferences focused on promoting the protection of LGBTQ+ rights. In addition, the organization made a significant contribution to the preparation of reports published by international organizations and networks assessing the human rights situation at the local, regional, and international levels. Notably, these included:

ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025

ILGA-Europe's Annual Review examines the human rights situation of LGBTQ+ people in Europe and Central Asia, highlighting both progress and ongoing challenges in protecting LGBTQ+ rights, and promoting stronger cooperation between governments and civil society. In preparing the 14th edition of the report — covering developments that took place in 2024 — Equality Movement contributed to the section on Georgia. This chapter documents the deterioration of LGBTQ+ rights protections in Georgian legislation and outlines pressing issues such as discrimination and hate crimes, restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression, the ban on legal gender recognition, and limited access to education, healthcare, and other essential services.

IGLYO LGBTQI Inclusive Education Map, Index & Report 2025

IGLYO's LGBTQI Inclusive Education Report provides a comprehensive overview of the state of LGBTQI+ inclusive education across the Council of Europe member states. The report serves as a key resource for assessing how effectively national education systems incorporate LGBTQI+ inclusion, and for supporting the implementation of international commitments and the improvement of environments. As part of the third edition of the report, which reviews developments from 2022 to 2025, Equality Movement contributed to the chapter on Georgia. Drawing on the progress and challenges outlined in the report, the LGBTQI Inclusive Education Index — a comparative table of education-related indicators among countries — was also updated. According to the index, Georgia's position has deteriorated significantly, receiving a score of 10 points, which is one of the lowest results on the map and approximately 40 points below the average among the assessed countries.

LGBTI Enlargement Review 2024

The report published by ILGA-Europe and ERA, the LGBTI Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey, examines legislative and policy gaps in the protection of LGBTI+ rights within the EU enlargement candidate countries. Equality Movement contributed to the section on Georgia, which outlines the alarming legislative changes introduced in 2024, identifies gaps in the implementation of existing policies and laws, and provides recommendations for the European Union to strengthen the protection of LGBTI+ rights.

OSCE/ODIHR Hate Crime Report 2024

On the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance (16 November), the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) annually publishes data on hate crimes committed in member states. The objective of collecting and publishing this information is to support efforts to combat hate crimes, inform targeted policy development, and provide tailored support to victims. In its 2024 release, OSCE/ODIHR reported 17 hate crime incidents registered in Georgia, five of which were documented and submitted by the Equality Movement.

Universal Period Review (UPR) on Georgia

Within the framework of the 4th cycle of the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Georgia, Equality Movement, in collaboration with various local, regional, and international organizations, submitted two shadow reports. One report was prepared by a coalition of local LGBTQ+ community organizations in partnership with ILGA World and assesses the human rights situation of LGBTQ+ persons as well as the implementation of SOGIESC-related recommendations between 2022 and 2025. The second report, developed jointly by Equality Movement, Tbilisi Pride, and ECOM, the Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity, also evaluates the human rights situation of LGBTQ+ persons, with a particular focus on the right to health and other cross-cutting issues.

In addition to submitting these shadow reports, the Strategic Advocacy Officer of the Equality Movement undertook a working visit to Geneva, where she participated in advocacy activities organized by ILGA World and the Human Rights House Foundation (HRRH), as well as in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) press session hosted by UPR Info.

Within the framework of the project “Against the current – Remaining steadfast at the Georgian’s LGBT+ community’s side,” supported by the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Georgia, the organization conducted a survey assessing community needs and access to services. The survey identified the wide range of challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people living in Georgia in the current context.

Relevant projects and donors in this area were:

- 1 Rights and Resilience: Empowering Georgia's LGBTIQ+ Community for Inclusive Change – funded by the European Commission
- 2 ‘Queer Context’ - Fresh voices from Georgia and beyond – funded by the Danish New Democracy Fund
- 3 Against the current – Remaining steadfast at the Georgian’s LGBT+ community’s side – funded by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Georgia



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