

UNICEF's study on international experience of gambling prevention among adolescents, conducted in partnership with the Patriarchate of Georgia, outlines specific recommendations for Georgia



Prevention of Gambling Amongst Adolescents Should be Placed on a National Public Health Agenda, says UNICEF

TBILISI, August 4, 2020. Problem gambling among adolescents and youth is a growing public health concern globally, as well as in Georgia, UNICEF study says. Worldwide, the prevalence of gambling is 2 to 4 times higher among adolescents than among adults, with up to 8% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 being pathological gamblers. Problem gambling during adolescence can lead to adverse outcomes, such as strained relationships, delinquency and criminal behaviors, depression and even suicide. Such negative outcomes have short- and long-term implications for the individuals, their families, peers, as well as for society at large.

The aim of the UNICEF study, International Experience of Gambling Prevention Among Adolescents, conducted within the framework of the UNICEF and Patriarchate of Georgia Partnership, was to understand how other countries, including developed countries, are responding to growing problems of adolescents gambling, as well as share best practices in the concerned area.

The findings of the study were presented today by UNICEF to major stakeholders and partners from the Patriarchate of Georgia, the Ministry of Education, Science, Sport and Culture, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the National Center for Disease Control, the Youth Agency of Georgia, psychologists and mental health specialists.

“Early exposure to gambling may lead to a higher risk of developing problem gambling.” – Ghassan Khalil

“Adolescents are more susceptible to gambling fallacies”, says Dr. Ghassan Khalil, UNICEF Representative in Georgia. “Early exposure to gambling may lead to a higher risk of developing problem gambling. It is crucial to take decisive steps by strengthening evidence-based policies and prevention strategies, as well as by launching specific services tailored for young people to reduce current and future harm and social costs associated with gambling”, Khalil added.

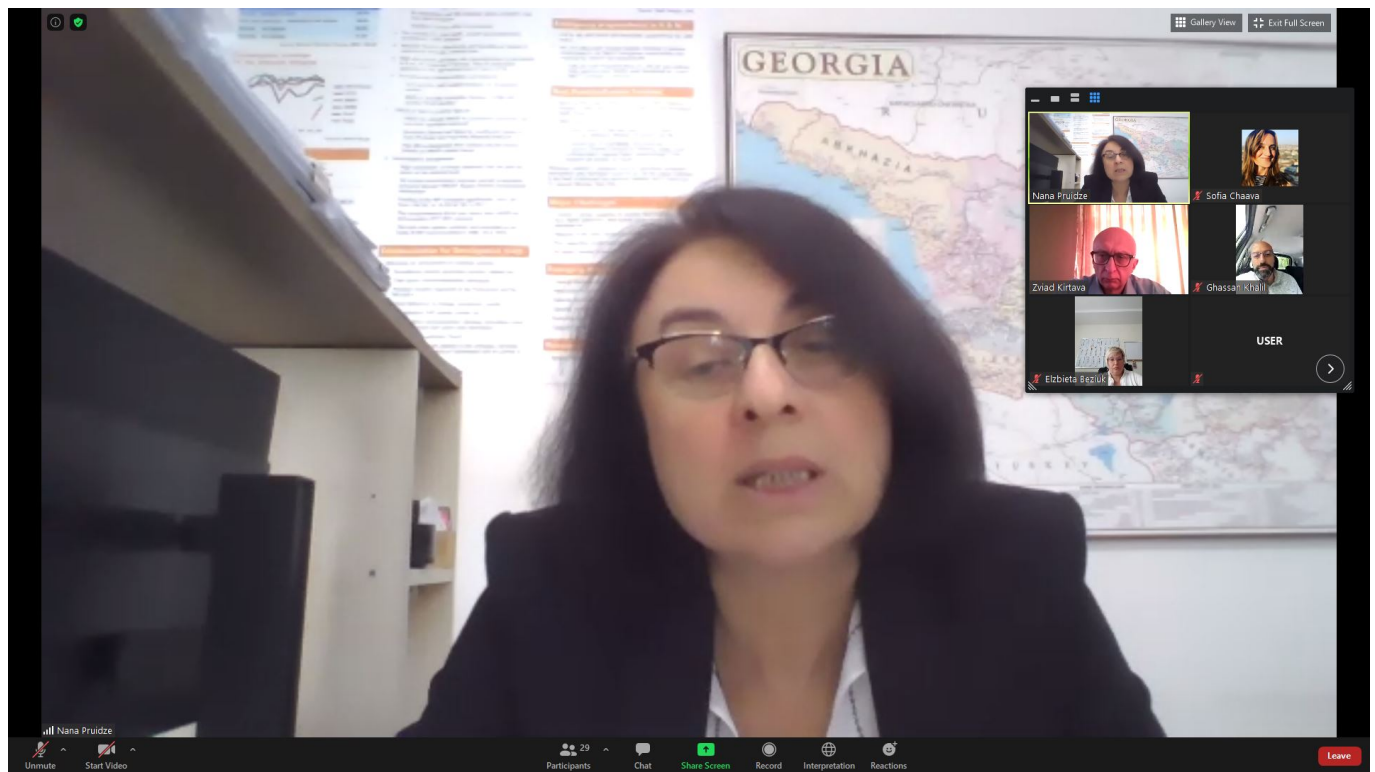
The study finds that a significant reduction of demand on gambling could be achieved by awareness raising, education activities, and public health policy introduction and implementation. Adolescents with less knowledge about gambling and problem gambling are more likely to gamble and achieve a problem gambling level than those who have greater knowledge about the harm of gambling.

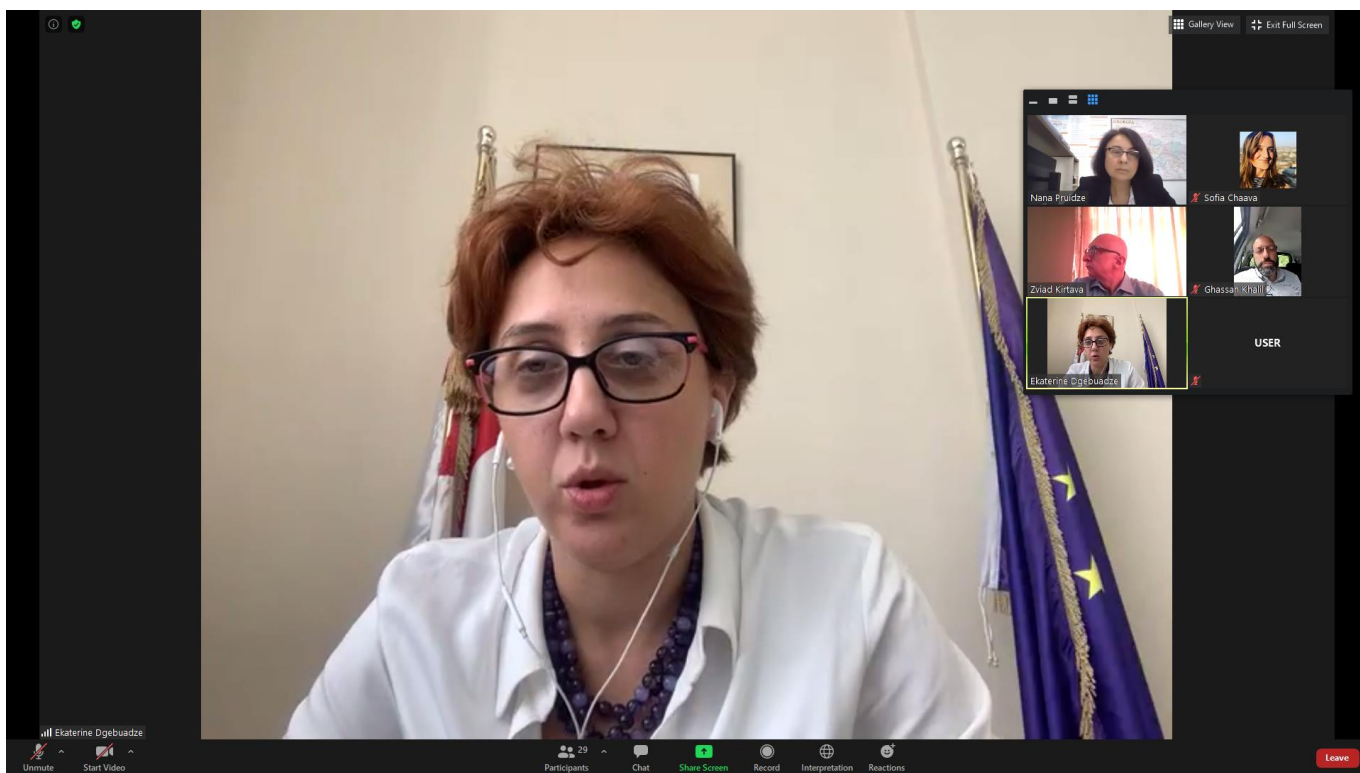
It is anticipated that based on the findings and recommendations of the study, the coordination group on adolescents’ gambling prevention, formed within the partnership between UNICEF and the Patriarchate of Georgia, will elaborate the best model of gambling prevention amongst adolescents tailored to the Georgian context.

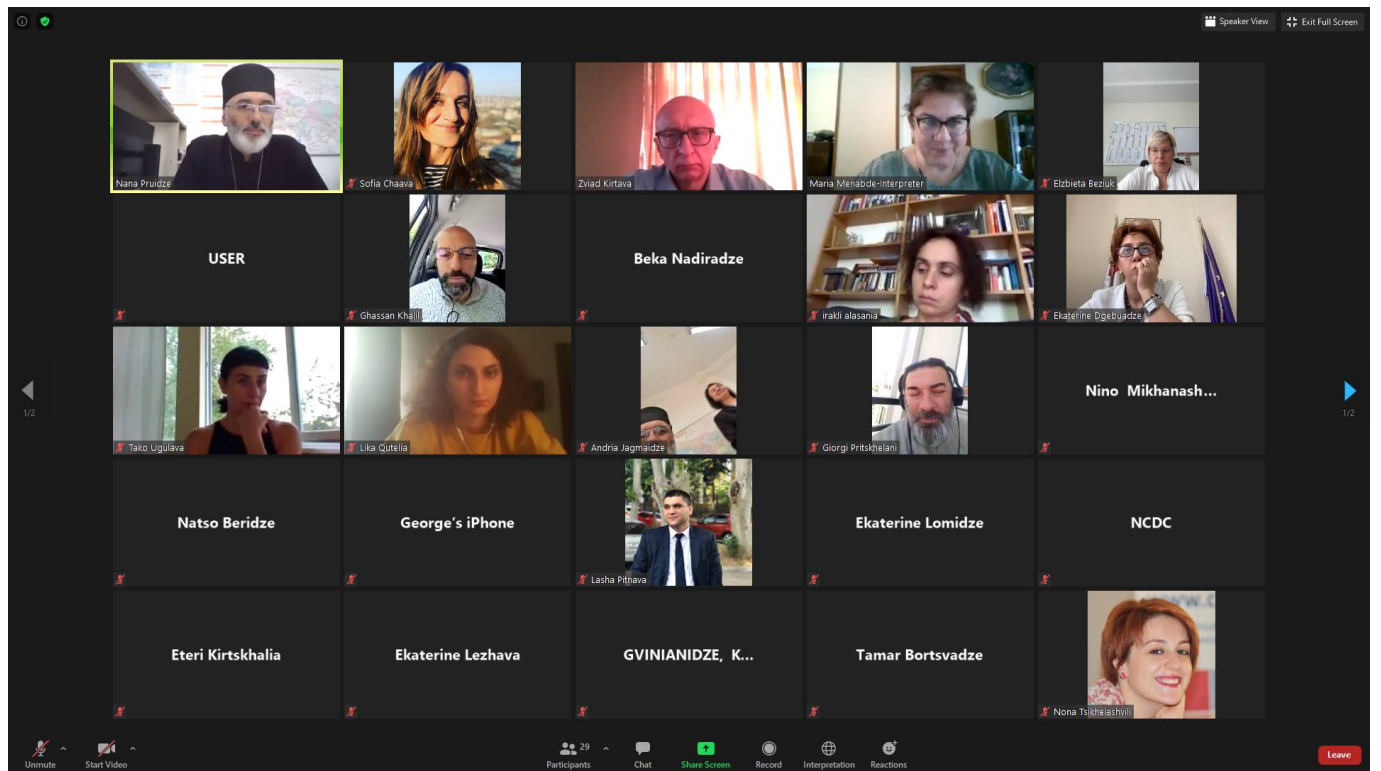
In June 2020, the adolescents’ hotline 111 was established to address the psychosocial needs of adolescents/youth and their parents/caregivers, in response to an increase of pathological gambling or gaming during COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide psychological first aid and psychotherapy if needed. To reach the hotline, adolescents, children and their families need to dial 111. The number is

operational during working days from 10am till 7pm. All calls from Georgia are free of charge.

In 2020, a number of resilience building and online capacity building workshops were launched for adolescents to effectively cope with problems they have developed during COVID-19, including media literacy – with a focus on online gambling, to increase their awareness on how the gaming industry tries to involve adolescents through advertisements.







[Source](#)