



STEPANAVAN YOUTH CENTER

Not for profit, non-governmental organization

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Leadership & Volunteering

Directions: Youth leadership, Volunteerism, Active Citizenship

Objectives:

- Promote positive impact on youth work at local level and integration of youth in to society at large
- Increase capacity and effectiveness of young people to address local issues encouraging their spirit of initiative and active participation in the development of the local community
- Promote more engaged, empowered and knowledgeable young people actively collaborate with local organizations in solving local issues
- Provide a platform for exchanging experience, skills and information, and developing leadership and life skills
- Provide opportunities to meet outstanding young leaders from different sectors of the society and peers from other countries
- Encourage and facilitate initiation and implementation of small community projects

Project examples:

GLOW - Girls Leadership and Empowerment Project, 2009

Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) is a yearlong leadership program for young Armenian women, ages 12-17. The Girls Leadership and Empowerment project brought together up to 40 adolescent girls from rural communities of Armenia providing them self-development and leadership enhancement opportunities in a fun and friendly atmosphere and follow up activities which promotes the usage of gained competences for the development of their communities. The program began with a 6-day residential summer school, giving the participants the opportunity to work in a team based setting to explore topics such as personal development, gender, career planning, health, HIV/AIDS, peer education, and leadership. After the summer school participants hold peer education sessions in their communities, contribute to the GLOW newsletters, and help organize regional seminars during the year for other young women.

The objectives of the GLOW camp address four main aspects:

- **Leadership:** to introduce and develop communication and leadership skills of participants; to develop and implement interactive activities fostering girls' leadership potential and self-esteem;
- **Education:** to learn and discuss various issues, including domestic violence, women's trafficking, health lifestyle choices, HIV/AIDS, etc.; introduce engaging learning methods to encourage creative thinking and expression
- **Empowerment:** to learn from and interact with strong female role models; to help participants make plans for their future and plan concrete steps on how to achieve them
- **Sustainability:** to create a network of peers to ensure long-term impact; to provide further



possibilities for the camp participants for self-expression/development and active citizenship; to organize GLOW camps annually making strong connections between them (e.g. include previous participants as counselors, etc.).

This is a continuous project and the GLOW 2009 summer school took place 15-20 July, 2009 in the town of Stepanavan. The follow up activities will continue till May 2010. They included peer education sessions, regional reunions, seminars, trimester newsletters and small community actions.

Active Youth as a Guarantee of Civil Society Strengthening in Regions of Armenia (2005)

The project “Development of Civil Society through Active Participation of Youth NGOs” was implemented in partnership with All-Armenian Youth Union “New Generation” (Vanadzor, Armenia). The project underlined the importance of youth involvement, activeness and increase of the role of youth in the process of civil society and democracy development in Armenia. The target group of the project was regional youth nonprofit organizations of Armenia. The project was directed to the elucidation of the activities of regional youth organizations, as well as providing and spreading information which can be useful and interesting to these organizations and youth living in regions of Armenia (about programs, financial sources, events, training, seminars, other), and developing public relations capacity of the organizations.



Environmental Action

Directions: environmental education, environmental campaigns

Objectives:

- Promote environmental education among young people and children related to water resources
- Raise awareness about the local and regional issues related to water resources in the community
- Promote positive impact of youth work at local level and youth active participation in the preservation, management and monitoring of local water resources
- Increase capacity and effectiveness of young people to address local environmental/water issues
- Promote more engaged, empowered and knowledgeable young people actively collaborate with local organizations in solving environmental/water issues

Methods: water monitoring tests, training, media campaign, seminars, publications, peer education, international events (sending and hosting), other

Project examples:

European Youth Exchanges “Water and Youth”

SYC organized 3 European youth exchanges “Water and Youth” in 2005, 2006 and 2010. The events brought together over 100 young people from 11 European countries to share and exchange knowledge on a varied number of topics related to the world's most important natural resource - water.

Objectives:

- to develop environmental awareness and environmental education among European youth;
- to provide opportunity for youngsters of developed and developing countries to share experience, exchange of information on environment, water and sustainable development issues;
- to promote positive impact on youth work at local level and youth active participation in the preservation, management and monitoring of local water resource;
- to increase capacity and effectiveness of young people to address local environmental and water issues.

During the project participants were learning about water resource situation in various parts of Europe, sharing experience, developing knowledge and skills on environment, water and sustainable development issues. They visited the Hydrological station and Environmental impact monitoring center in Vanadzor and made water monitoring tests in the lake Sevan. Also every evening the participants presented their countries through their cultural heritage - dances, music, national cuisine.

“Youth Protects Nature” Contact Making Seminar, Stepanavan, Armenia (2007)

The project was implemented in collaboration with “Kenguru Skola”(Latvia). The seminar unified youth organizations dealing or interested to deal with various environmental issues in local communities from European Union member states and Eastern Europe/Caucasus with the aim to provide a platform to develop ideas for new joint projects, enhance quality of projects and assist in future cooperation on environmental issues between groups from various parts of Europe. Young people, youth leaders from fifteen European countries participated in the event.



Social Development and Peace Building

Objectives:

- Promote the increase of youth capacity for social development of the country
- Organize projects to address different community issues
- Increase training and information accessibility
- Create a youth resource and counseling center

Project examples:

“For a Future to Come”, International Youth Work on Conflict Management (2007-2009)

The aim of the long-term project (2007-2009) is to train youth workers from various European countries in conflict management and conflict resolution and to establish a Trans-European youth network to use the Youth Programme in European youth work. The project is a partnership with Academy for Peace and Development (Georgia) and Minorities of Europe (UK), as well as Association of Young Azerbaijani Friends of Europe (Azerbaijan), Academic Centre of European Information and Education (Poland), Mostar Friedensprojekt (Germany) and Stepanavan Youth Center. A training of trainers, two multiplying training courses for other European organisations, two Contact-Making-Seminars focusing on cooperation between European Union and Eastern European and Caucasian countries about conflict management and three youth exchanges will be organized during those two years. These project elements will be accompanied by the set up of an internet platform, which will function as a youth portal for European youth organisations by informing about youth events and as a place for partner finding and exchanging of ideas. Furthermore, two training manuals and a final report will be published and a video clip informing about the project, particularly about the conflict management training will be produced.

This project fits to the needs and working priorities of our organisations, because all are involved in conflict resolution and integration of minorities and foreigners into their local communities. All of us work on an intercultural understanding and on the reduction of xenophobia as well as on the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Project web-site:

<http://www.apd.ge/Projects.html>

<http://alldifferent-allegal.info/node/537>

“Peace through photography”, May-October 2008

Our project aims to bring out various conflicts that exist in Caucasus, Western and Eastern Europe through photography highlighting peace-building and conflict resolution. The project PEACE THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY was a short-term project related to the large scale pan-European youth initiative FOR A FUTURE TO COME: International Youth Work on Conflict Management (2007-2009) (<http://www.moe-online.com/future>). The main partner organizations of the project are Stepanavan Youth Center (SYC) - Armenia, DiDEE - the Netherlands, Youth for Society - Latvia and Association "ATINATI" - Georgia. The Stepanavan Youth Center holds the leadership and coordination of the whole project. The project PEACE THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY had several components. One week youth exchange project (11-17 July, 2008) with participation of all partner organizations for 25 young people on creating the base of



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the project - organizing workshops on how to be positive on speaking/showing conflicts stressing on peace rather than endorsing conflicts, gathering all photos taken in different countries, taking new photos, making a selection for the exhibitions and publications. In order to promote participation of young people from other countries of the world, a web photo contest will be launched where everyone can post conflict and peace related photos. Selected ones will be included in the final chosen photos and three best pictures according to web voting will receive gifts. The partner organizations organized exhibitions in their countries and communities with the selected photos. Publications, such as calendar and posters were printed in Armenian, Latvian, Georgian, Dutch, and English languages and disseminated in participating countries, as well as throughout Europe through international projects organized by participating youth groups. Photos reflect conflict situations and peace building. The project was aimed at promoting the peace among young people through empowering them with necessary skills as a tool using photography and picture in overcoming various forms of conflict. Diverse youth groups came together highlighting conflicts in their societies. It was focused on rising European citizenship awareness of such groups, on development role of young people in peace-building.

Web site: http://www.salto-youth.net/NPC_good_practise_projects/87.html?&search=&country_id=39&field=&pagerCurrentOffset=3



Information Access

Objectives:

- Promote information accessibility in regions of Armenia, particularly for young people
- Increase possibilities for information technology use and development for young people
- Collect and spread information that will promote enhancement of active citizenship and participation, development of self-actualization and self-development among young Armenians living in regions of Armenia

Methods: networking, publications, training, meetings, library services, counseling

Project examples:

Promote information accessibility among young Armenian and youth organizations (through e-list, newsletters, etc.)

The role of young people is crucial in the development of civil society, through their participation, activeness and involvement. Efforts to encourage youth service/participation are one of the best ways to ensure youth are viewed by the community and by themselves as resources and solutions rather than problems and victims. Stepanavan Youth Center recognizes the importance of information accessibility for increasing the opportunities of youth involvement, youth participation and development at large. On a regular basis Stepanavan Youth Center spreads information through SYC-info e-group on opportunities in Armenia and abroad for Armenian youth, such as conferences, events, training, grants, scholarships, job opportunities, fellowships and internships.



Cultural Exchanges

Objectives:

- Provide possibilities for young Armenians to share their own culture with their peers and to explore different cultures
- Provide a better capacity of participation in social interaction, and the recognition of the common heritage of humanity and the advantages of cultural diversity for solving local issues
- Develop and promote friendship, mutual understanding, tolerance, respect, harmony and dialog among youngsters from different countries

Methods: summer camps, international events, exchange programs, publications, other

Project examples:

“Myths and Legends of Europe”, youth program, 15-23 October, 2008

The youth exchange MYTHS AND LEGENDS took place in Stepanavan, Armenia. During the eight days 27 youngsters from Western Europe (Germany and Sweden) and Eastern Europe/Caucasus (Armenia and Russia) experienced the diversity of European cultures through theatre, national myths, histories and legends. Each country had the opportunity to share their cultural identity with others through country presentations, powerpoint presentations, sharing national food and drinks, cooking national dishes. Participants learnt dances and songs, myths and legends, some phrases and simple words of all participating 4 countries. They also attended a workshops with local kids from schools, learnt some things about the Armenian culture and also speak about their own culture with people in the community. The final performances of national myths and legends took places in one of the biggest stages of Vanadzor in Abelyan Dramatic Theatre and in a local school in Stepanavan where children from all schools of the city were invited.

“Cultures Together”, international youth project in Armenia, 19-29 July, 2008

The youth exchange “Cultures Together” was organized 19th-29th July, 2008 in Stepanavan by the cooperation of Italian applying partner Allegro Con Moto and Armenian hosting partner SYC. The 36 participants from Italy, Denmark, Germany, Armenia, Georgia and Belarus exchanged their cultures through national cuisine, dances, music, arts and crafts. The project aimed to promote better understanding of the diversity of cultures among European young people, to provide possibility to youngsters interact with their peers in other parts of the Europe, experience cultural diversity, learn about cultural values of other countries, share cultural heritage through dances, music, arts and crafts, national cuisine, to develop and promote friendship, mutual understanding, tolerance, respect, harmony and dialogue among European youngsters. An informal exhibition-concert was organized in Stepanavan on 25th July presented to the local public the songs, dances, arts and crafts of all the countries.

“European Dinner in the Odesseas homeland”, international youth event in the islands Kefalonia, Greece (15-24 May, 2008)

The cultural event aims to promote better understanding of cultural diversity, dialogue among young people from different countries, ideas of peace, solidarity and tolerance between them by cooking of food of different countries together in international groups that will allow the study of



intercultural learning in practice. Participants from Latvia, Georgia, Armenia and Greece will gain experience in living and working in a multi-cultural and intercultural group of young people and will learn about the multi-cultural realities and situations in other countries of Europe. The program will include activities on discussing stereotypes, prejudice and promoting equality of all nationalities. European culture, traditions and customs are the base of the youth project. The exchange is based on the principles and practices of non-formal and in-formal education in order to enable participants to exchange their experiences and approaches and reflect upon them.

“Stomp - Bridge to Europe”, youth exchange in Zarasai, Lithuania, (23-30 September, 2007)

The project was hosted by the Social Center of the Blessed J. Matulaitis in Zarasai, Lithuania. Music connected young people with different backgrounds, nationalities and personal characteristics. Stomp was a new genre of music for almost everyone and it enabled the participants to discover new elements, new rhythms, and more than that, to practice it by starting from a din and a loud rattle and finally finishing by rhythmic, harmonious and passionate beats. Practice made it perfect! The participants from Armenia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Denmark and Slovenia impressed the public during the final concert in Zarasai with their enthusiasm, energy, and of course, music!

