

"CAUCADOC and Golden Apricot on the Wheels"

"Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre" NGO organized a festival of documentary films "CAUCADOC and Golden Apricot on the Wheels" funded by "People in Need" NGO. 8 documentary films were screened, which were the products of the Armenian and European directors. The festival lasted 3 days and in total almost 180 people was present. The opening of the festival took place on 8 November 2013, at Hall of N7 School, Gyumri. The speech floor was given to the representative of "People in Need" NGO Varduhi Dadunts who welcomed the guests, introduced the background of the festival and the entire festival project in South Caucasus. She stressed the importance of such a festival and especially of the discussions that followed after the screenings. Special experts were invited to give professional explanation to the raised questions. In the list of the invited experts were;

- Gurgen Baghdasaryan – project coordinator at “Elderly Day Care Center”, “Armenian Caritas” BNGO
- Kristina Magrvelashvili - Public Relations and Information department of the Parliament of Georgia, Kutaisi.
- Iva Bartosova - “One World” in Prague, Czech Republic
- Varduhi Dadunts – “People in Need” Yerevan, Armenia
- Armen Nakhshqaryan – Head of Educational Department of Gyumri Municipality, Candidate of Historical Sciences
- Mkrtich Babayan – Specialis on migration and on politics, project manager “Armenian Caritas” BNGO
- Armen Vardanyan- artist, film director

The topic area of the festival was very wide and touched the actual and painful reality in Armenia. Migration, birth selection, historical issues with two bordering neighbors are real threats to Armenia. The presence of the film directors was very encouraging for the audience. The discussions after each screening were very important and gave extra coloring to the films and the topics reflected in the films. There were representatives from young, middle and elderly generation, which made the discussions very hot and fruitful. People started thinking about the issues they were directly or indirectly dealing with everyday; they started looking for possible ways of solving the issues. The educational background of the discussions was very important; there was always so much to learn from experts of the fields, who were ready to share their practical and theoretical knowledge with the audience. “Golden Apricot” films were assets of the festival and the audience deeply estimated the chance to watch those contest films and had face to face discussions with the film directors.

Esmarida Poghosyan



Crossroads of Cultures

September 20-28, 2013, Georgia

In the frames of “Crossroads of Cultures” youth exchange different cultures were crossed, which was reflected in the creations of artists. The main point of the project was to exchange with each other not only knowledge of art but also the cultures. Every team was representing its own country and was the reflection of it. The Armenian team was good not only in team work but also in organizational activities during the whole exhibition. The hosting was organized on high level and there were all the right conditions to create. There was a great view of Black sea from the hotel’s window which was also a source of inspiration. Our creations were shown in Kobuleti and Batumi and in the end in the Tbilisi art academy exhibition hall.

Taron Manukyan



STEP OUT OF YOUR MIND, ANIMATE YOUR LIFE

23 November-1 December, 2013, Romania

Greetings everyone!

First of all-Bucharest is not the Budapest!

I guess you’ve heard this expression a lot, even though I have to

repeat it, as I have felt the meaning of it on my own skin! Here’s how my very first international training course has started in the Bucharest city of Romania. The thing is, that when buying the tickets I’ve asked them almost thousands of times to be attentive, and find me the cheapest ones to Bucharest. However, in the end I got a ticket to Budapest, I was sure that they bought the right one. So here it says: “Bucharest is not the Budapest!” I guess they were missing some geography lessons. When I told this story in Romania they said that I’m not the first and not the last one. So I guess there’s a serious problem with the Bucharest-Budapest crossroad, there’s even a special web-site: <http://budapestnotbucharest.net/>.



I felt that I was changing before the actual training itself-with the new country, people and habits. I felt that I was thinking out of my national mentality: seeing things from another perspective, new thoughts and ideas were coming to my mind. It was unusual in the beginning, then slowly I got that this was necessary. Right after I got to Bucharest I started to walk by the city and tried to find all the places of interest I found in internet or my friends advised me to see. I met Christian there, who was the owner of the hostel and just a very friendly person. He dealt with Armenians before. My friend advised me to stay there. I got a big help from him: maps, advices or simply nice company.

Buşteni, Gura Diham, 7 days. The training was quite similar to the trainings in Armenia, but the people were different, so there was a giant opportunity to self-develop. We already had ideas of further cooperation right after the training. I am very thankful. I have to thanks the people who helped me to get to Romania, to YIC NGO, to Valya Martirosyan particularly and the two Armenian girls-Anzhella and Syuzan, who came with me. I have to admit, that it was extremely pleasurable to travel with them. I am going to apply for upcoming trainings for sure, because it is a great opportunity to gain new skills, and I would like to share my knowledge, skills and attitude with the others. Thanks Romania, for filling one of my life pages with bright colours!

Arsen Vardanyan



Conflict vs. Negotiation

14-21 September, 2013, Pambak, Armenia

Gyumri “Youth Initiative Centre” NGO in the frameworks of the project “Conflict vs Negotiation” of “Youth in Action” program hosted 28 participants from Armenia, Czech Republic, Turkey, Georgia, Germany, Moldova and Ukraine on September 14-21, 2013 in Pambak, Lori region.



7-day international training course on conflict management and negotiation skills aimed at sharing the culture of peace among young people.

The “Conflict vs. Negotiation” international training course on conflict management and negotiation skills was funded within the framework of the European Commission’s “Youth in Action” Programme. The training course aimed at sharing the culture of peace among young people through providing the opportunity to exchange peace-building and cross-border practices.

The objectives of the TC were:

- Develop negotiation skills and competences for dealing with conflict;
- Break stereotypes through creating channels of communication between different countries and cultures;
- Promote cooperation and partnerships among youth organizations from East and West.

The training brought together 24 participants from 7 different countries (Programme and EPW countries).

Artur Najaryan



Volunteering+Action=Change

“Volunteering + Action=Change” was a pan-Armenian volunteering campaign implemented with the support of Counterpart Armenia and USAID. The goal of the project was to raise the value of volunteer work among the Armenian population and recognize its impact on both personal and community levels.

The 7-month project was full of public activities which provided the opportunity to meet the aims of the project to some extent. All of the activities were public and we tried to involve all regions of Armenia, including Yerevan. The project was designed in such a way that we managed to involve various social groups, helping raise the spirit and culture of volunteering among youth, kids, adults, and the elderly, as well as the education and business sectors, primarily in the rural areas of Armenia. The following activities were conducted during the campaign:

- Pressconference
- Presentation of volunteering opportunities
- “Homemade Food” day
- Flashmob “I am a volunteer”
- Painting day
- Cleaning and Planting day
- Photo contest/exhibition
- Closing event



On November 2nd, the final event of the project took place in Yerevan. The event included a conference focusing on the following issues:

- Obstacles of volunteer work in Armenia
- Value and culture of volunteering
- Development of the law of volunteering
- How to use volunteer experience to increase employment opportunities
- Recognition of volunteer work (within the framework of European Youth Foundation projects)

The conference was followed by a summary of the results of the photo contest and distributing awards to the winning photographers.

The event concluded with a concert featuring young singers from Gyumri– Armine Qocharyan and Nare Gevorgyan.

Nelli Minasyan



EVS sending

With the help of my sending organization in Armenia, which is Youth Initiative Center, I got the chance to be a part of the EVS (European Voluntary Service) project and do the voluntary service in Istanbul, Turkey. Since September, 2013 I have been volunteering for TOG (Community Volunteers Foundation) and the Hrant Dink Foundation in frames of this programme. This is a unique chance to work on the projects concerning Human Rights, Dialogue between countries and civil societies, etc. While helping with the implementation of different projects I am getting more experienced, and maybe, this will be the basis to realise my own projects in the future. I had my article published in AGOS. I also got the chance to work with other organizations, with Armenian ones, to do a radio in programme in “Nor radio” about Armenians lives in Istanbul. Thanks to the program, I learn much about Armenian Community of Istanbul, work with “Nor Zartonk”, make new contacts, friends. Being a part of these organizations, I attend many events, conferences and discussions.

With the help of diverse projects of TOG and the Hrant Dink Foundation, I could travel to other cities for a short time and see how life is there, how NGOs are working, I could communicate with people of different backgrounds, nationalities, points of view, learn something new about their culture, history, traditions, etc. While being an “Armenian book” in TOG’s “Living library” project, I could discuss the barriers that exist in Turkey-Armenia relations with my “readers”. This helped me to understand the approach of youth about this issue. Thanks to this EVS program, I have lessons of Turkish, which will let me improve the knowledge of it and learn something new. To conclude, being a part of the EVS program, working in TOG and the Hrant Dink foundation, living in Istanbul helps me to develop myself, to become experienced enough to catch the pace of life.

Varduhi Balyan



EVS Hosting

The Autumn of 2013 was very productive for YIC. In the months of October and November, YIC welcomed our new EVS volunteers Alex and Judith from Germany and Krystina from Poland.

The volunteers get introduced to the most important things connected to the organization, their work, tasks, local reality, traditions and Gyumri and Armenia in general.

Alex, Judith and Krystina started their activities such as German Cultural Club, Friday Café, Discussion clubs, as well as doing activities at Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute and at German school.

The volunteers will be part of the YIC team until September 2014. Don't miss the opportunity to meet them, to join the interesting and unique activities provided by them.

Nelli Minasyan



You(th)r life

October 2-10, 2013, Portugal

The 21st century is a century of information and its technologies. Many people, including me are adherent to social networks and Internet resources and as a lot of students, employees, employers and political figures possess electronic mail addresses, as do I, which I check on a daily basis.

It was a nice day when I decided to check my e-mail inbox, entered login and password and my attention was caught by a message sent by Human Resources Manager of YIC NGO-Valya Martirosyan.

I was very happy and excited about getting an e-mail on selection of a Training Course in Portugal on rural development and cultural protection.

Within few minutes I confirmed my participation and got to know that my trip to the land of Fado music and olives would be together with Office Manager of YIC-Liana Hakobyan and my happiness doubled.

The time was running and we were getting prepared for our adventurous trip to the country being bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west. After entering the French Embassy five times and being issued with the anticipated visas, we packed our luggages and got ready to be in the clouds very soon...

The training course was hosted by H2O NGO organisation which is functioning in a small village called Arroquelas and our sending organisation was Youth Initiative Centre which has a valuable experience and expertise in youth work.

The training was designed for youth workers and youth leaders for empowering them to use different kinds of tools in order to preserve the local community's values and engage young people from rural areas to take part in exchanges, develop their skills and competences.

More than 29 participants coming from different countries of the European Union and Eastern Europe and Caucasus region with different cultural and educational backgrounds, gathered in Portugal for taking part in the training course, exploring new cultures, raising awareness of preserving local cultural heritage as well as involving youth from rural areas in an active youth life and youth work..

During the training course we learnt how to design projects, such as European Voluntary Service, Youth Exchanges based on preserving culture and local heritage. The trainers gave us tools and methods how to work with young people, how to use European tools and values for making positive impact on society, how to find partners and how to design and manage projects. A very constructive part of the training was the upcoming exhibition, conference with locals, especially with young people from Arroquelas, which aimed to disseminate the European values and possibilities within the youth by encouraging them to be more initiative and motivated to make changes and to have a better life and community.

Besides the above mentioned aspects, during the training we had a chance to present our countries emphasizing cultures and traditions, as well as take part in NGO Fair which will lead to create a nice atmosphere between participants.

The training Course was very productive with all sessions, preparation for the exhibition "Arroquelas through the eyes of 13 countries", presentation of our countries, and cultures, a visit to a small city called Rio Mayor and its library and also a National Agency of Portugal of Youth in Action Programme where a new European programme of the European Commission- Erasmus + was presented with its main idea, priorities, subactions, target groups and deadlines by stressing the importance in the development of non-formal education within and beyond Europe.

A very important part of the TC which should be highlighted was the creation of working groups composed of culturally diverse participants for designing and developing ideas for future cooperation in engagement of youth from rural areas and preservation of cultural treasures and heritages.

We are very grateful to the sending and hosting organisations and trainers for making our one week really unforgettable, full of knowledge, information and experience that we gained during the training course.

Rebecca Hovhannisyan



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