

YCA encourages autonomy, initiative taking and critical thinking of Armenian young people within the over-arching goal of creating a participative and democratic society in Armenia

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

Read in this issue:

- “Young Citizens of Armenia” /YCA/ project. News
- Animators about the November and December topics. “Ethics” & “Intercultural dialogue”
- Animators and club participants about YCA
- Youth events, grants, scholarships
- Examples of civic activism

YCA's NEWS

“Ethics” and “Intercultural dialogue”, these were the discussion topics for November and December at the clubs of “Young Citizens of Armenia” project. The opening of the monthly topics were done in different ways. We had walls full of interesting question-statements related to Ethics, for example, “What does it mean living a right life?”. Club participants got very interested in the question-statements and got the chance to present their own position. The club participants had to go through another “experience”. Entering the “Espaces” you could find QR codes all over the floor. The codes were hiding interesting question-statements and information regarding “Intercultural dialogue”. The club participants used their Smartphones in order to decode the QR codes and answer the questions discovering the unexpected. The month of November was also interesting with guests we hosted at our clubs. The Human Rights club had hosted Armen Ghukasyan from Ethics School in the frames of the “Business ethics” topic. While the English club had hosted Samvel Martirosyan, an expert in the field of information security where the topic of discussion was the Cyber-ethics. On 23-26th November the 2nd training of Animators was held in Yerevan. During the training the animators got acquainted with youth work and peculiarities of experiential training, as well as the theory of conflict transformation. The training was specific with the establishment of the 1st Animators’ Council formed from the 11 animators of Gyumri and Yerevan, and its first session. Hereinafter, the Council will



get the opportunity to participate in the decision-making of different issues regarding the project content jointly with the Project team. So, we wish the best of luck to the Animators’ Council in their activity looking forward to the coming monthly topics for the club. And before that. Yes, yes, yes ;) **Happy New Year and Merry Christmas** and let our young citizens be more conscious and demanding in protecting their rights, more responsible in participating in different processes happening in our society in 2014.



“One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say”. Bryant H. McGill

Animators About The Monthly Topic “Intercultural Dialogue” Our Clubs

YOUNG CITIZENS OF ARMENIA

December 2013- n 05

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

THE DIFFERENCE OF THE SIMILARITY

Similarity or difference? We would prefer similarity among the different ones and vice versa. We are similar, as we are all humans living on the same earth. We are different because each of us has free will and different minds, opinions and values, but we are different on our appearance. And should the difference become a reason for discrimination. Wouldn't the world be uninteresting without colors and diversity. Would we understand what the night was, if the daytime didn't exist or would we know what was the thing called cold, if the summer never existed. And what it would look like if one day the darkness could obliterate the daylight just because of the latter being different from it. Wasn't the difference the main reason for many human disasters, including the genocides, which took the lives of millions of people. This 'misunderstood difference' continues leaving its malice on the humanity. The human being is unable to choose the color of his/her skin, the nationality, sex, excellent physical data (disability, birth defects, etc.). In fact, those are minor factors to create a certain attitude or opinion towards them. Let's assess a person and accept him/her taking into account the features he/she has had the chance to choose and for which he/she is consciously responsible. And how is the perception of this difference nowadays? We are coming out of the “Espaces” Center where we just finished our usual meeting in the French Club. As always, the club was very interesting, full of controversial ideas. Today we discussed the differences and the similarities, and all those present being very different from each other were expressing different ideas. “I'm not a racist”, - everybody expressed this opinion. But is this really true? Maybe this is just our wish not to be a racist just because we acknowledge that it's a bad thing. Can a person love and treat everybody equally? Or is this on our consciousness level only? A consciousness that all of us should be equal. Is it possible in reality not to discriminate? The discussion during the club showcased that in reality all of us are a bit racist somewhere deep in our souls and it doesn't matter how ugly that word sounds to us. We just need to realize that it shouldn't grow into hatred. Otherwise, the results will be devastating. And when we say “I'm not racist”, it most probably means that “I am tolerant”. If speaking about our attitude to the others, we must understand that the tolerance is the basis of everything. Let's try to accept the difference of the others as a sign of individuality, but not try to discriminate because the similarity is boring. Fortunately, the world is so different, otherwise, the world would be so monotonous.

**Anna Gyulkhandanyan, Ani Mkrtychyan,
Lilit Chagharyan, Animators of French Club**

Tuesday

English Club, 18:00, Yerevan
Cartoon club, 15:00, Gyumri

Wednesday

French Club, 18:00, Yerevan

Thursday

Intercultural Club, 18:00, Yerevan
Art Club, 18:00, Yerevan
Human Rights Club, 15:00 Gyumri

Friday

Psychological Club, 18:00, Yerevan
Cinema Club, 15:00, Gyumri

Saturday

Human Rights Club, 15:00, Yerevan
Cinema Club, 17:00, Yerevan
French Club, 13:00, Gyumri
English Club, 14:30, Gyumri



CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE PAVEMENTS

Thousands of people have to make decisions every day, and those decisions are very often fatal both for themselves and for the others. And we are used to criticizing them, not even trying to think what we would do if being in their place. And generally, do we have the right to judge them at all. Below I present a story where the heroes of the story make decisions which are worth to be discussed.

There are thousands of streets in the world and millions of people are walking on these streets every day. Three people were walking on one of those streets. All of the them had smiles on their faces, but they were not happy, in fact. Two of them were women; one was middle-aged and the other one was older, the third person was a young man. The middle-aged woman was smiling, because she recalled the moment when she was told that she was pregnant. She was so happy that it seemed the world was hers. She was smiling because she didn't want to remember what a fatal decision she had made for herself and her child. The older woman was smiling because she was trying to find out the meaning of the life. She was leaving with now and here as tomorrow would never come for her. The young man was smiling because he had just informed his parents about a very important decision for him. But they had refused to even listen to him. Anyway, he was happy. He was in love. In fact, we could leave this story as it is and all the heroes would live long and happy, but this thing called "Happy End" is always something half finished, and our stories do have their end. The middle-aged woman, in fact, had done an abortion as she had learnt that the embryo was not developing properly. Indeed, she had done this based on her egoistic impulses as she wanted to avoid any difficulties in the future while growing up this kid. On the other hand, she had done this for the sake of that child as well. She was sure that this child would not become a full member of the society and people would not accept him/her in the way he/she was. And when one day she died, there would be no one to take care of the kid and stand for him/her. The older woman had learnt that she was going to die very soon. The doctors had diagnosed maximum one more year to live for her. However, living was something relative because the awful pains would start soon and the only thing she would wish then would be dying. Realizing all this she was not ready for this and was preferring the death. She would live some more days surrounded by her beloved persons and then she would resort to the use of euthanasia. And the only sin of the young man was him being a homosexual, a sin that was judged by millions of people, a sin that would make even your relatives leave you alone. The young man was

not strong enough to go against everybody. He just wasn't guilty that the nature had predetermined such a destiny for him. And now the cleverest and the justest of us let's judge them saying that we are the perfect creatures and will never take this way to build our personal happiness. But before doing that let's understand that the smile is not the guarantee of happiness, that a person ignored by the society cannot be happy. We, the perfect ones, should always remember that everyone is the judge of themselves. We ought to accept people in the way they are or at least not to complicate their life which is already so complicated.

Nane Norekyan, Animator of CineClub



"Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike"
Oscar Wilde



Photo by
Araxia Haroutunian

Davit Torosyan, Club participant in Gyumri

1. Which clubs do you attend? Why?

Once I attended the Cartoon club, and then I attended the Cinema club several times. I found the Cinema club more interesting. I believe the perception of the picture and consequently the understanding of certain situations becomes more realistic through those pictures. All the interactive and non-formal methods that are used during the club are very attractive for me.

2. Has the “Young citizens of Armenia” project impacted you and your perception of civil society in Armenia?

Attending several clubs of the “Young citizens of Armenia” project I have discovered many novelties. The used methods, the atmosphere is just amazing and conducive to learning. I myself have become very curious and like participating in different activities. Nowadays I feel the people want to raise certain questions and discuss the topics that are usually ignored. The society changes, people are becoming more and more curious. For instance, I have been a member of the Student Council and have been part of a number of youth initiatives which is very encouraging.

**Victoria Grigoryan,
Animator of Art Club in Yerevan**

1. Which club do you animate and how did you come to animate this club?

I'm the animator of Art club in Yerevan. At the beginning I couldn't get decided which club I'd prefer to animate.

I am a future Psychologist and I was thinking to go for the Psychological one as this could be a good practice for my future career. But on the other hand, I like painting very much. So the Artist inside of me won at the end and I started animating the Art club which is a great opportunity for expressing all my creative ideas.

2. Has the “Young citizens of Armenia” project impacted you and your perception of civil society in Armenia?

Our generation is ready to become a civil society. In this informative century our youngsters receive all they need to know about civic activism, but they can't realize it because of the structure they are living in. On the other hand, the structure of the new society needs to be created by us. We are the future and it's up to us to decide in what kind of society we want to live. So, the “Young Citizens of Armenia” project provides us with the framework to understand that:

- We are the future creators
- We have a potential
- If we want, we can do it

So, let's gather and become what we want to be.

3. If you could change one thing about Armenian society, what would it be?

I'd change the Education system. Why? Because the one we have is very rigid. The generation has changed, but the education system is still the same. As a result, we face a conflict. It's a conflict between the model of contemporary personality and the education system of 20th century. As a result, the motivation goes down. Internet has changed the model of thinking among young people of 21st century. So the society structure needs to be relevant to its generation. Here I bring an example of a possible solution: more frequent use of non-formal education methods in our educational processes.



Youth Events, Grants, Scholarships Examples Of Civic Activism

YOUNG CITIZENS OF ARMENIA

December 2013- n 05

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

“Training of Trainers” project by KASA Foundation. Deadline to [apply](#) is the 15 January, 2014

UN-HABITAT announced new youth mentor program. [Click here](#) to apply.

Call for grant applications by RA Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. Deadline to [apply](#) is 30th December, 2013.

Social impact media awards /simawards.org/. Deadline to [apply](#) is 7th January, 2014.

Competition for social entrepreneurs of 18-28 ages /thedoschool.org/. Deadline to [apply](#) is 7th January, 2014.

War and Peace in the 21st Century Course / iuc.hr/. Deadline to [apply](#) is 22nd March, 2014.

Fellowship in global journalism /munkschool.utoronto.ca/. Deadline to [apply](#) is 10th February, 2014.

United Nations Democracy Fund accepting applications. Deadline to [apply](#) is 31st December.

According to the new amendment to the RA law on Accumulative pensions, the gross salaries in Armenia will decrease by 5-9,5% (6,6-13% from net salary) starting from 2014. The latter concerns those born after 1st January, 1974 excluding the representatives of power forces, judges and people equaled to them. The money deducted from salaries will be accumulated in funds managed by private companies. The law directly concerns the youth who represent one of the socially vulnerable layers of Armenia. And here comes a question. Is it advisable to establish this fund in a period when the “brain outflow” from Armenia is so intense and the majority of people migrating are youth. In fact, the youth, who are our present and future and could greatly contribute to the development of Armenia, prefer leaving Armenia. In reality, the idea of the accumulative pension fund is not bad as such, but in case trustful mechanisms and standards of monitoring and supervision of the activities of these funds are established and applied. This is skeptically accepted by many, including a big group of youth who have gathered themselves around the initiative “Dem em” which is aiming to fight against the law on Accumulative pension. The initiative is struggling to remove the Article 5 from the law, namely “the obligatory participants of the obligatory accumulative component”. The law has already been ratified by the National Assembly, but the initiative continues its struggle though the law will enter into force in just several days, on 1st January, 2014.


ՀՀ Պարտադիր
Կուտակային
Կենսաթոշակային
Համակարգին

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles and interviews are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of “Young Citizens of Armenia” project.

Our supporters



“KASA” Swiss Humanitarian Foundation
Offices
24-5 Tumanyan street, Yerevan 0001, RA
+ 374 10 58 40 32
kasaam@kasa.am

7 Rosi street, 1012 Lausanne, Switzerland
+ 41 21 728 50 78
kasa@kasa.am

Gyumri centre

69 Shahumyan, Gyumri 3101, RA
+ 374 312 5 65 28
kasa.gumri@kasa.am

“Espaces” centre

29 Nalbandyan, 0001 Yerevan, RA
+ 374 10 54 18 44
espaces@kasa.am