

EDITORIAL
BY MONIQUE BONDOLFI-MASRAFF,
PRESIDENT OF KASA

YOUNG
CITIZENS

June 2013- n°3

NEWSLETTER THE NEWSLETTER THE NEWSLETTER



What is your goal?

Most of the time when we speak about Armenian development programs people ask KASA: what do you teach? Languages, computers skills, project management, that sort of thing? Of course all those skills are important to increase the chances of finding work.

But for KASA the most important goal is not to transmit knowledge or methodology, but the capacity to understand the world and its rapid change.

A generation ago Armenia was still communist, with very different references.

In a few years, although in a very bad economical and social situation, Armenia began to face westernization, including a turn to consumerism and a get-rich-quick mentality.

Some people increased their wealthiness. But most of them got the feeling that they were losing everything: security, health, money, and, worst of all, the meaning of their lives.

This situation seemingly presents a contradiction.

KASA'S BIG CHALLENGE is to take the best from both systems: a sense of community and social welfare from communism, and the incentive to be individually responsible for ones own life from liberalism. In other words: that everybody should combine personal development with a sense of the common good.

LET'S DECREASE THE PERSONAL PRONOUNS

I absolutely need to be a person, not a function. For example, as a woman, to be appreciated because of my own qualities, and not because I am useful to make Children, Cook and Conserve traditional values. German people speak about the 3 Ks: Kinder, Küche, Kirche...

But since I was born, my development depends on a **YOU**: my parents' love, my friends' complicity, and so on, what Levinas aptly asserts as: "the importance of the face of the other." And as I grow up, I need to live in society, in a neutral **IT**, where I discover rules, laws, etc.; sometimes just, sometimes unfair. Maybe I reject or even hate them.

Yet, I have to understand that there isn't an opposition between me and it, but a straight relation. As soon as I definitely accept being an actor and not a mere consumer: i.e. a **consumer-actor**. I will never be able to "actualize" myself and my freedom.

With the others **WE can** contribute, step by step- *gamatz gamatz*- to build a more democratic society. I am responsible for the society as much as the society is responsible for me.

So how do I get involved? How do I promote the values of equity, transparency, solidarity?

Nothing to do in Armenia? No, there's a lot to do, and its very exciting if we do it together!

THE MONTHLY THEME: ART AND POWER

NEXT MONTH'S THEME: RELIGION,
SPIRITUALITY AND SECULARISM

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NEWSLETTER THE NEWSLETTER THE NEWSLETTER

NEWS



Central Gyumri

On the 30th of May, volunteers in Gyumri cleared the public noticeboards and streetlamps in central Gyumri, proving that citizens themselves can improve their urban environment.

13

participants,
2 districts
cleaned



Armenian composer in Art Club

On 13 of June Art club hosted Ara Gevorkyan, famous Armenian composer, and discussed; "The role of youth in the development of contemporary Armenian music."

Presentation of
Gevorkyan's new
music video "Love
Each Other"

Participants
selected their own
issue to document
through
PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography and social change

7 young people took part in the workshop called "Photography and social change". They explored the question how photography can be used as a tool for social change.

TUESDAY

English Club: 3pm-4.30pm, KASA Gumri

English Club: 6pm-7.30pm, KASA EspaceS

WEDNESDAY

French Club: 6pm-7.30pm, KASA EspaceS

THURSDAY

French Club: 2pm-3.30pm, KASA Gumri

Art Club: 6.30pm-8pm, KASA EspaceS

Intercultural Club: 6pm-7pm, Kasa EspaceS

FRIDAY

Cine Club: 3pm-4.30pm, KASA Gumri

Psy Club: 6pm-8pm, KASA EspaceS

SATURDAY

Debates Club: 3pm-5pm, KASA Gumri

Human Rights Club: 3pm-4.30pm, KASA EspaceS

Cine Club: 5pm-7pm, KASA EspaceS

A WORD FROM OUR ANIMATORS SHURA MARTIROSYAN

What club do you animate and how did you come to animate this particular club?

I animate the debate club in Gyumri. I participated in a training course about "Conflict management" in KASA, and the trainers talked to me and my friends. They asked us if we would like to lead a club. As we had a lot of experience participating in different debates in our city and country, we decided to create a Debate club. The important thing about our club is to be without any complexes, to express freely, and to develop analytic reflexion.

How has the young citizens project impacted you and your perception of civil society in Armenia?

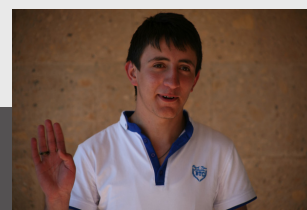
The most important things are sharing experience and communicating with other people, with the people

who don't know anything about the debate. To have the chance to work with young people from different backgrounds (social, age, etc).

Civil society in Armenia is still developing, and I think the participation of young people is very important, their involvement and their drive to have something without purely self-interested motives. Any young person can be involved in the activities of civil society and make active citizenship real. For this they need only the will.

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

I will change the stereotypes in the mentality of people by my own example.



LIA MKHITARYAN TALKS ABOUT
THE MONTHLY THEME...



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NEWS THE NEWSLETTER THE NEWSLETTER

Art has always inspired social change

GIVE US SOME INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

Tall, 25 year old curly haired artist with a linguistic background and a mom-to-be. I am the founder of EIVA, an arts foundation promoting the social, therapeutic and educational uses of art.

YOU ARE A LINGUIST BY PROFESSION, WHEN DID YOUR INTEREST IN ART BEGIN?

I've always been interested in Arts, my father is an artist, so I grew up in that environment. From the time I was 8-9 years old, I used to paint a lot, staying in my father's studio for hours, trying to copy the style he is working in. To tell the truth, I don't even remember having ever painted with water colors, I started with oil colors - just like my father. Then school and music classes and other teenage academic responsibilities took over my life and step by step I started painting less and less and eventually ended up in V. Brusov State Linguistic University at the age of 15.

I have always liked studying languages, though I didn't really know exactly why I chose to go to that university but since I was there I started really studying languages deeply. I got my MA degree at the age of 21 and then adult life began with full time employment. However,

during my studies I was volunteering for all the art festivals taking place in town which kept me close to arts.

During my employment years I went back to painting again. I took courses in graphics and started really going deep into it. I held exhibitions, started illustrating stories and books and eventually ended up founding an organization doing arts.

DO YOU THINK THAT ART CAN INSPIRE A SOCIAL CHANGE?

Art has always inspired social change. It's visual, it's sensitive, it touches the emotions it talks to people in the language of colors, texture and emotions.

WHAT KIND OF PROJECTS EIVA ARTS FOUNDATION IMPLEMENT?

Eiva Arts Foundation was established in 2012 with the mission of practicing art as a tool of voicing social issues and contributing to the creation of alternative and innovative informational and educational resource. So, all our projects are directed towards fulfilling the mission of the organization. Currently Eiva is running 2 projects: "Art in Media" and "The Visual book of Fundamental Human Rights".

You can find out more information at www.eiva.am or search for them on facebook, twitter and youtube!

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