



British Embassy
Yerevan

“Political Thinking: Test it in February Presidential Elections”

Trainings for the Young activists



Between September 2007 and November 2007, the School President programme was realized for the students of higher grades of the Secondary School #131 in Yerevan (sixteen trainings were organized for a group of fifty students). During the trainings, special attention was paid to the presidency as a state institution, the ability to study and compare the programmes of the candidates, as well as to debating skills. The trainings were conducted by teachers from the school #131 Mariam Voskanyan and Ruzanna Grigoryan, as well as by Georgy Vanyan, Bela Dallakyan, Naira Sultanyan and Stepan Grigoryan.

Within the framework of the project the students had an opportunity to visit the Constitutional Court of Armenia, where they heard lectures about the functioning of the court by the Court Chief of Staff Arushan Hakobyan and leading lawyer of the Court Armen Nersisyan. The students also visited the library and attended a session of the Constitutional Court. The students were accompanied by Bela Dallakyan.

Between October 2007 and December 2007, the second part of the project, the School for Human Rights and European Integration, was organized. The School for Human Rights and European Integration took place on the premises of the Chair on Human Rights of Yerevan State Linguistic University after V.Brusov (Head of the Chair Valeri Poghosyan). Within the framework of the School thirty-two lectures and trainings were conducted: for a group of fifteen associate professors of political science, international relations, sociology and philosophy; and for a group of thirty-four representatives of youth NGOs and students of Yerevan State University, Yerevan State Linguistic University, European University, Russian-Armenian University, Academy of Agriculture and Gladzor University (the list of participants is attached). The participants were chosen on competitive basis, interviews were conducted with the applicants. An announcement was placed in *Aravot* daily and on the website of Yerevan State Linguistic University – www.brusov.am; prospective participants had to fill an application form and pass an interview (the announcement published in *Aravot* daily is attached).

Before the beginning of the trainings, the students received participants' kits, which included the Constitution of Armenia, the International Declaration on Human Rights, the International Charter on Protection of Human Rights and Basic Liberties, the Armenian National Constitution of 1863, the American Declaration of Independence, the French 1789 Declaration about the Rights of Man and Citizen, the 1990 Declaration of Independence of Armenia, brochures on European integration, the EU-Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Treaty, etc.

During the trainings special attention was paid to such issues as multi-party democracy, party ideologies and programmes, parliamentary systems, electoral procedures, as well as the process of European integration and European institutions.

The participants of the School for Human Rights and European Integration heard a lecture by the Chargé d'Affaires of Lithuania Kestutis Stankevicius about the presidency in Lithuania, the Baltic States' experience of regional cooperation and the principles of good neighbourhood. Avet Demuryan of Team Research Group delivered a lecture about the PR actions in the United States. Mr. Demuryan, who participated as an observer in the elections in USA, told the participants about his experience.

Other trainings were conducted by Jemma Hasratyan (Association of Female Alumni), Karine Danielyan (representative of the UN Environmental Programme), Naira Sultanyan and Stepan Grigoryan.

At the end of the course, the School participants filled questionnaires about their experiences from the trainings and the perspectives of similar programmes. The participants could grade the trainings on 5-grade basis. The average grade was 4.8.

Within the framework of the project Deputy Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Chancellery of President of Poland Urszula Doroszewska was invited to Armenia. Mrs. Doroszewska delivered a lecture about the presidency in Poland, as well as about the role of youth NGOs in the society and Poland's experience of European integration.

Within the framework of the School, on 28 November 2007 an international conference was organized. The conference theme was Poland's Experience of European Integration and Lessons for the South Caucasus. Reports were made by Urszula Doroszewska and Armen Ashotyan (member of the National Assembly of Armenia, member of the Board of the Republican Party). The conference was opened by British Ambassador to Armenia Anthony Cantor and the participants were welcomed by Ambassador of Poland in Armenia Tomasz Knothe.

Urszula Doroszewska gave a detailed report about the advantages and disadvantages of EU membership for Poland. She mentioned such advantages as open borders, development of agriculture, opportunities to study and work abroad. It was emphasized that during three years after Poland's EU accession that country received 20.5 billion Euros as financial assistance for structural reforms.

The conference was attended by over fifty participants – representatives of the Embassy of Ukraine, representatives of Armenian civil society institutions, lecturers and students of Yerevan State University, Yerevan State Linguistic University, European University, Russian-Armenian University, Gladzor University, journalists, etc.

Information about the conference was disseminated by *Aravot* daily, Kentron, Armenia and ArmNews television companies and such websites as www.panarmenian.net, www.aeplac.am, www.arminfo.info, www.hayinfo.am, www.day.az and so forth (all links and photos are attached). In addition, Mrs. Doroszewska participated in one-hour long programme Point of View of TV-5 Channel (anchorperson Nelly Harutyunyan).

During the period of realization of the School Parliament and School for Human Rights and European Integration programmes we were actively assisted by employees of the British Embassy in Armenia: Naira Sultanyan (responsible for the political issues and projects), Bela Dallakyan (project assistant) and Armine Grigoryan (responsible for the press relations).

The outputs were:

Sixty students and young lecturers learned about the institute of presidency, how to judge the presidential candidates and compare their programmes. They were familiarized with the presidency in Poland, as well as with functioning of such international structures as UN and EU. Fifty students of the School Parliament were familiarized with the functioning of the Constitutional Court of Armenia. For a first time, they could enter the chamber and attend a hearing.

The outcomes were:

The experience of our project demonstrated that our activities within the School Parliament and School for Human Rights and European Integration yielded positive results. For instance, some of the students later participated in the parliamentary elections as local and international observers or candidate proxies. Two participants of the School Parliament began to participate in TV programmes concerning youth, in particular, secondary school students. Some of the participants later won trivia organized by the authorities of Yerevan. Besides, the most active participants of our trainings now participate in other training programmes, after passing the preliminary stages.

For more information please contact:

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