

DEMOCRACY TODAY

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

REPORT

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ABOUT THE REPORT

The Annual Report provides an overview of the work carried out by Democracy Today NGO (DT) in the period of January to December 2019.

The Report covers the work of DT, as well as, illustrates success of our beneficiaries and participants. The data and financial figures are also included in the report narrative.

Democracy Today NGO supports increasing calls for greater accountability from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to donors, governments, partners and communities.

Our organization highlights the importance of transparency and accountability.

The main principles of our

organization include clear definition in regards to the main goals of Democracy Today NGO, highlighted with the progress achieved during the report period.

For us is critically important to engaging key stakeholders in meaningful dialogue to enable continuous improvement for our beneficiaries.



MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

With the great pride I am presenting the extraordinary work that “Democracy Today” (DT) team has successfully implement in 2020.

We had been confronted with many challenges: the Covid- 19 pandemic that introduced new behavioral models and rules that was hard to obey, but soon as all the others we developed new models of work and moved all our activities to the on-line mode limiting person communications. Even our traditional staff meetings and work discussions, our staff members enjoyed so much we had to move online.

The 44-war which broke out against Artsakh resulted in heavy human and material losses. Many families had to flee Artsakh and find refuge in the Republic of Armenia. As for

all other people in Armenia, our work shift turned 24/7. We designed and implemented many emergency assistance programs, providing emergency packages, clothing and psychological trainings. Alongside with that, Democracy Today worked to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, to condemn all kinds of violation of the principles we believe in. We initiated many activities, launched new projects and discovered new areas for our work.

You May find many exciting and interesting projects in the report.

Values of our organization and basic principles which are protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality and ant-discrimination have

always been in the center of our activities. Our work and success gives us motivation and helps to become stronger to resist any obstacles.

Human rights and gender equality as always are priority areas for our organization, in all our projects. Through the year, we have developed new directions of work carrying out professional studies and initiating empowering publications.

Democracy Today NGO works hard to bring to light new creative approaches of collaborations, build and improve sustainable practices in all areas of our work.

We did our best to invest in making positive, democratic change in Armenia and beyond.



**Ms. Gulnara Shahinian
Founder and President
Democracy Today NGO**

ABOUT DEMOCRACY TODAY

Founded as an initiative of civic activists in 1994 Democracy Today has been registered as an NGO in 2002. DT is a union of public leaders, scholars, activists, whose aim is to support and strengthen democratic achievements and human rights in Armenia.

Democracy today's mission is to:

- Support democratic processes in Armenia
- Enhance women's role and invest in building gender-sensitive and inclusive society
- Protect of rule of law and human rights

Recent political events in Armenia have had an important impact on the nature of our work and go in line with our vision of

Armenia as a democratic country governed by the rule of law and with a balanced participation of women and men in the country's political, social, economic and cultural life on equal and non-discriminatory basis.

During 2019 DT has been working in five main directions, which are the following ones:

- peacebuilding and conflict transformation
- women's rights and gender equality
- critical and creative thinking
- exchange projects and
- capacity building

We hope that the investment of Democracy Today (DT) and other civil society organizations will

contribute to a country where everybody's rights and dignity are protected, and women play an important role in making society just, secure, and prosperous - a democratic country with strong rule of law and balanced participation of

women and men in society.

Democracy Today's membership is open. Our members are activists, public leaders, young women and men that build their work and values on principles of social inclusion and non-discrimination.



HIGHLIGHTS

FROM THE YEAR

- **187 young women and man** educated on human rights, gender equality, critical thinking through various DT's projects.

- **up to 1000** indirect beneficiaries affected by the project.

- increase of knowledge and leadership among the projects' participants **by 70% in average.**

- understanding of gender equality concept increased among project beneficiaries from target communities **by 75% in average.**

- **about 55 %** of women from Nalbandian village became aware of sexual and reproductive health and rights improved their health as a result of the project.

- **105 women** passed medical examination free of charge and improve their reproductive health.

- approximately **60% of women** who were examined during previous project had no complains because they started to pay attention to their health.

- **50 young people** got HR skills and became competitive on the local market, among which 16 participants got jobs during the project period.

- **a network of 132 human rights organizations** and individuals established as a result of annual "International Young Women's Peace and Human Rights Award" and "International Conference".

- **556 humanitarian packages** were distributed among the

families which were displaced due to the 44-day war in Artsakh.

- **shelter provided to 32 people** that had to flee Artsakh due to the 44-day war.

- **a tent** provided to the soldiers on the border.

- **5 books have been published** which include a series of articles, research studies, assessment reports.

OUR WORK IN ARMENIA

During 2020 Democracy Today worked in 59 communities and 9 provinces all over Armenia, including the capital city Yerevan.

ARMAVIR

Yeghegnut
Araks
Tandzut
Haykavan
Nalbandyan
Pshatavan
Metsamor
Arevik
Aygevan

ARARAT

Getazat
Artashat

ARAGATSOTN

Bazmaghbyur
Karbi

SHIRAK

Mantash
Aregnadem

Lernagyugh

Arpi
Gyumri

LORI

Gargar
Urut
Alaverdi
Shirakamut
Akhtala
Aqori
Metsavan

KOTAYK

Charentsavan
Abovyan

GEGHARKUNIK

Sevan
Gavar
Vahan
Gandzak

Noratus

Tsovasar
Tsovagyugh
Vaghashen

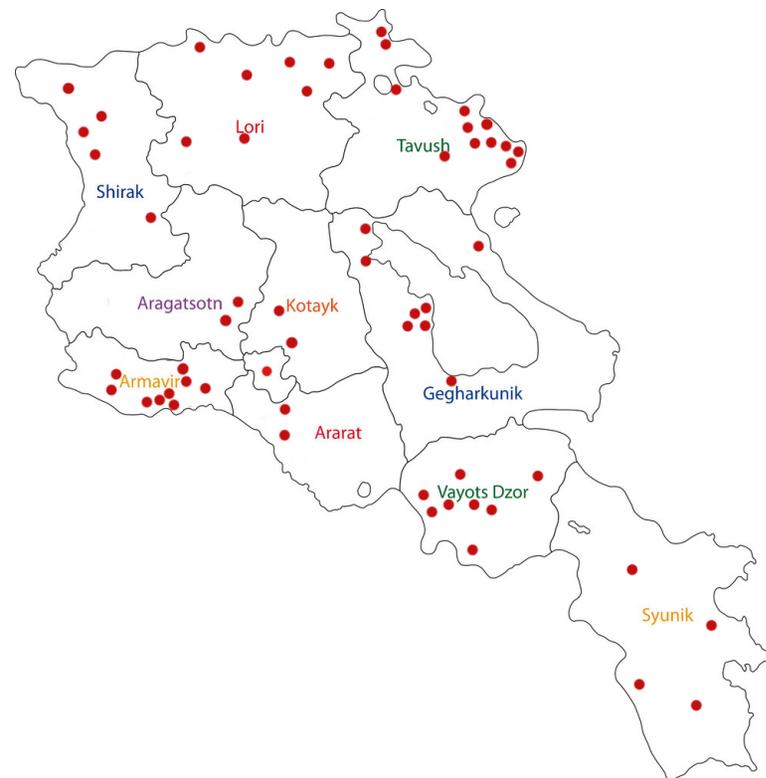
VAYOTS DZOR

Yeghegnadzor
Maralikh
Shatin
Vayk
Jermuk
Areni
Khndzorut
Rind

SYUNIK

Tandzaver
Qajaran
Shishkert
Sisian

YEREVAN



OUR WORK THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Apart from the local and regional work Democracy Today NGO also works internationally.

We involved participants from South Caucasus including Armenia, Georgia Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Region of North Caucasus including Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia. Middle East through Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, South America through Colombia, North American through United States of America, Europe through Belgium and Cyprus.

And these are only the countries from which laureates of International Young Women's Peace Award are coming.



OUR MAIN PROJECTS

MIMINO (SUPPORTED BY THE FIND FOR LOCAL COOPERATION/MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND)

The project brought together young journalists and political scientists from Georgia and Armenia to see, learn and make circles of friendship through their exchange visits, empowering meetings in both countries and published stories. The title of the project “Mimino” comes from the famous film “Mimino” of the great Georgian filmmaker Georgi Danelia who with the great talent of master presented the beauty and deep sense of unity, shared culture, as well as, wisdom

between Armenians and Georgians.



YOUTH SCHOOL OF CREATIVE THINKING (SUPPORTED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NETHERLANDS)

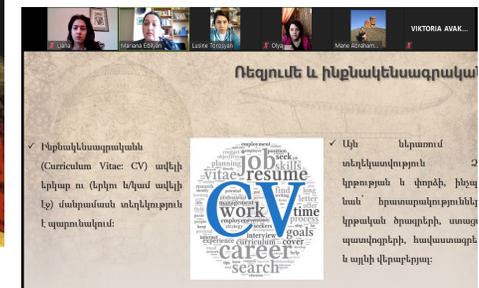
The overall goal of the project was to empower young and muddled aged members of the rural communities with the comprehensive knowledge of

fundamental human rights, legal instruments and political situation making them able to define fake news. Initially, the project was designed for youth however, later extended to middle-aged parents, which was the suggestion brought up by the young participants. 12 communities throughout Armenia took part in the project, bringing together 40 community leaders.



NEW SKILLS FOR NEW YOUTH

The project aimed to provide rural youth with the skills to get competitive jobs on the labor market. It included the provision of specific knowledge on forms of job application, writing CV, speaking during the interview, dress code, public speaking skills, search for jobs on the internet, taking appointment for the job and other simple but essential rules to get success.



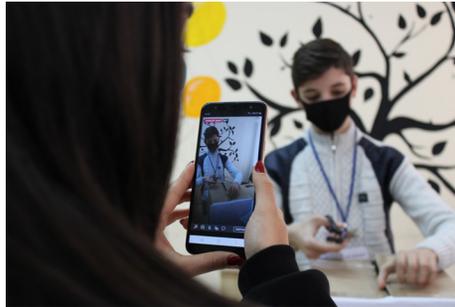
OUR MAIN PROJECTS

U-18 (SUPPORTED BY THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN EXCHANGE (DRA))

The aim of the project was to introduce the concept of U18 (Under 18 years) elections in Armenia.

U-18 is a sustainable method in civic education and youth policy, as well as, the establishment of five regional U18 coordination center in the regions and embedding of sustainable regional youth participation culture and creating of a networking platform for partner organizations of several regions.

The project was implemented in 5 provinces of Armenia.



STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF RURAL WOMEN (SUPPORTED BY KTK FOUNDATION)

The project invested in strengthening leadership and equality through encouraging women mentors so they could provide education to young leaders from their community and educate the community at large, making it gender-sensitive and more egalitarian. It also invested in strengthening

the individual capacities of rural women specifically women of Nalbandian village so they were able to manage and successfully run community-based civil society organization.



YOUNG WOMEN FOR PEACE AND GENDER EQUALITY (SUPPORTED BY KTK FOUNDATION)

The project aimed to contribute to young women's

empowerment in Armenia to take action for the protection of human rights during conflict-related situations.

The project activities were targeting participants from different bordering communities of Tavush province.



OUR HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVES

HUMANITARIAN PACKAGES

Due to the outbreak of the 44-day war in Artsakh, many over 90.000 people have been displaced from Artsakh. The vast majority of them found refuge in the Republic of Armenia.

The goal of Democracy Today's humanitarian initiatives was to provide the basic essential kits to displaced families.



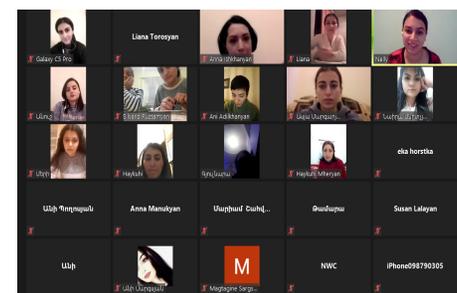
Over 550 humanitarian packages have been prepared. The kit included hygiene and first aid products and supplies. Most parts of the packages were provided to women and children who are directly affected by the conflict.



Humanitarian aid has been provided to the most vulnerable and socially unsecured groups.

SESSIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Apart from the provision of direct humanitarian aid, Democracy Today organized psychological sessions for a group of up to 50 women. Participants had a chance to either choose psychological support for themselves or get ToT training to be able to support members of their communities. Events were held 2-3 times each week. This became critically important for the rehabilitation of women and members of their communities. It gave the participants a chance to help other women and children affected by the war.



Sessions were held by the international experts and had extremely positive outcomes for the participants many of whom were able not only to provide assistance for the people in their communities but also in the neighboring ones.

IYWPA BOARD MEMBERS

THE BOARD MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL YOUNG WOMEN'S PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD ARE EMPOWERING EXAMPLES OF STRONG WOMEN WHO PROMOTED HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD.



GULNARA SHAHINIAN

The UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, member of the CoE Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, founder of Democracy Today.



HEIDI MEINZOLT

European coordinator of Women's International League

for Peace (WILPF), coordinator of Gender Working Group of the Civic Solidarity Platform, Women's rights and Conflict Transformation specialist, UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW professional.



CAROLANN NAJARIAN

Medical doctor, philanthropist, humanitarian, worked in Armenia and Artsakh delivering aid and providing care, sponsors human right lecture annually, recipient of Vachagan Barepashd award 2019 for consistent support shown to Artsakh and services rendered to the republic.



JACKIE ABRAMIAN

PR, Social Media Marketing executive for global technology companies, consulting with social enterprises in the UK, Africa, Syria and Armenia, raising visibility of social impact on marginalized and refugee populations. Philanthropist dedicated to defending human rights and women empowerment.

ANDREA MARTIN

Two time Tony and Emmy Award winning actress, singer, author and comedian, philanthrope, human rights defender and exceptional women who dedicated huge part of her work to benevolent acts, taking care about the most vulnerable groups.



AUDREY KALAJIAN

Human rights advocate, supporter of the Boston-based activist collective, Zoravik. She worked on projects to facilitate and promote dialogue among women. Coordinated humanitarian aid, led fact-finding missions, documenting human rights violations.



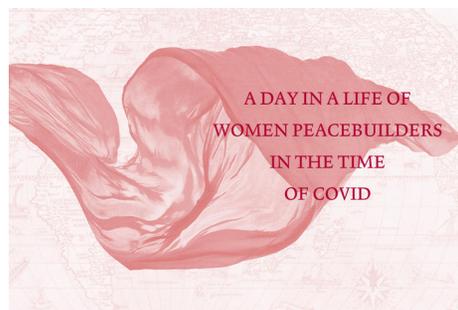
OUR PUBLICATIONS

MIMINO PROJECT



The main idea of the “Mimino” project was the development of new platform for confidence-building and coexistence of Georgian and Armenian young people. The project raised awareness among the young, active and knowledgeable members of Armenian and Georgian societies on the social, economic and political situations in both countries and helped to find common grounds for distinctive and productive cooperation.

A DAY IN A LIFE OF WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS IN THE TIME OF COVID



We are happy to present you with a unique publication which is a collection of stories and articles from women peacebuilders from different parts of the world.

This publication is also an expression of the new creative spirit of women from all over the world and this is our joint input in gender equality and new post-COVID democracy.

WOMEN RESIST WAR



Lika (Anzhelika) Zakaryan is a journalist at CivilNet from Stepanakert. Throughout the war, she was covering the situation in Artsakh. She is a political scientist by profession, more focused on the resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding. Lika gained readers when she started publishing her war diary, which was written in simple human language and was loved by the people.

MANUAL ON PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR EMPLOYMENT



In the frameworks of the “New skills for new youth” project, a publication has been initiated which includes the step-by-step recommendation on how to build a successful career path for young people. The manual includes recommendations on CV, resume, and motivation letter writing, as well as, practical tips on how to succeed during a job interview.

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