

DEMOCRACY TODAY

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

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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

I am happy to present the Annual Report of “Democracy Today” NGO (DT), introducing the activities and initiatives that have been carried out by our organization in 2019.

DT implemented many outstanding initiatives during the year, nevertheless, in the report, you will find the most memorable and illustrative ones.

2019 has been very important for our organization, as during this year we started many new initiatives and launched new projects, that are of great importance for the promotion of human rights in Armenia and the region. This gave new motivation to our staff and became a strong basis for the

future development of our organization.

Despite the fact that peacebuilding and gender equality stay priority areas for our organization, we have developed a new direction of work in the areas of creative thinking and exchange projects. Thus, in 2019 we broadened our work and fixed five specific areas that became our shared approach during the year to invest in making change in Armenia and beyond.

In the center of all the ongoing activities and projects, there is one special initiative. The annual International Young Women’s Peace and Human Rights Award. Starting from 2011, 27 exceptional women got awards for

the major contribution in peacebuilding and human rights. Every year the award ceremony is followed by the International Conference. The title of the conference for 2019 was “Women at peace table - more justice for all”.

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.



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

- **156 young women and men** educated on human rights / fundamental freedoms through DT's projects.

- **up to 900** indirect beneficiaries affected by the project.

- knowledge on human rights / fundamental freedoms increased among project participants **by 60% in average**.

- understanding of gender equality concept increased among project beneficiaries from target communities **by 65% in average**.

- **about 50 %** of women from Nalbandian

village became aware of sexual and reproductive health and rights improved their health as a result of the project.

- **5 women** from Nalbandian province got practice on public speaking and have been empowered to implement their own trainings.

- **101 women** passed medical examination free of charge.

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

- **36 young people** got HR skills and became competitive on the local market, among which 11 participants got jobs during the project period.

- **110 leaders**, journalists, politicians, activists and peacebuilders from **24 countries** from all over the world took part in the 7th International Conference: "Women at peace table – more justice for all"

- up to **250 persons** took part in 8th International Young Women's Peace Award ceremony and honored Women who have been

awarded.

- **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".

- **3 awards have been granted** to women for "exceptional work in the field of peace and human rights"

- **2 special diplomas** have been handed to women "for human security and outstanding and dedicated work in building inclusive societies".

OUR WORK IN ARMENIA

During 2019 Democracy Today NGO worked in 32 communities and 7 provinces all over Armenia.

TAVUSH PROVINCE

Voskevan
Voskepar
Berd
Bagratashen
Chinari
Movses
Chinchin
Aygedzor
Paravaqar
Itsaqar
Aygepar
Berdavan

ARARAT PROVINCE

Sipanik
Getazat
Qaghcrashen
Mkhchyan

ARMAVIR PROVINCE

Myasnikyan
Mrgashat
Araks
Eghegnut
Nalbandian

LORI PROVINCE

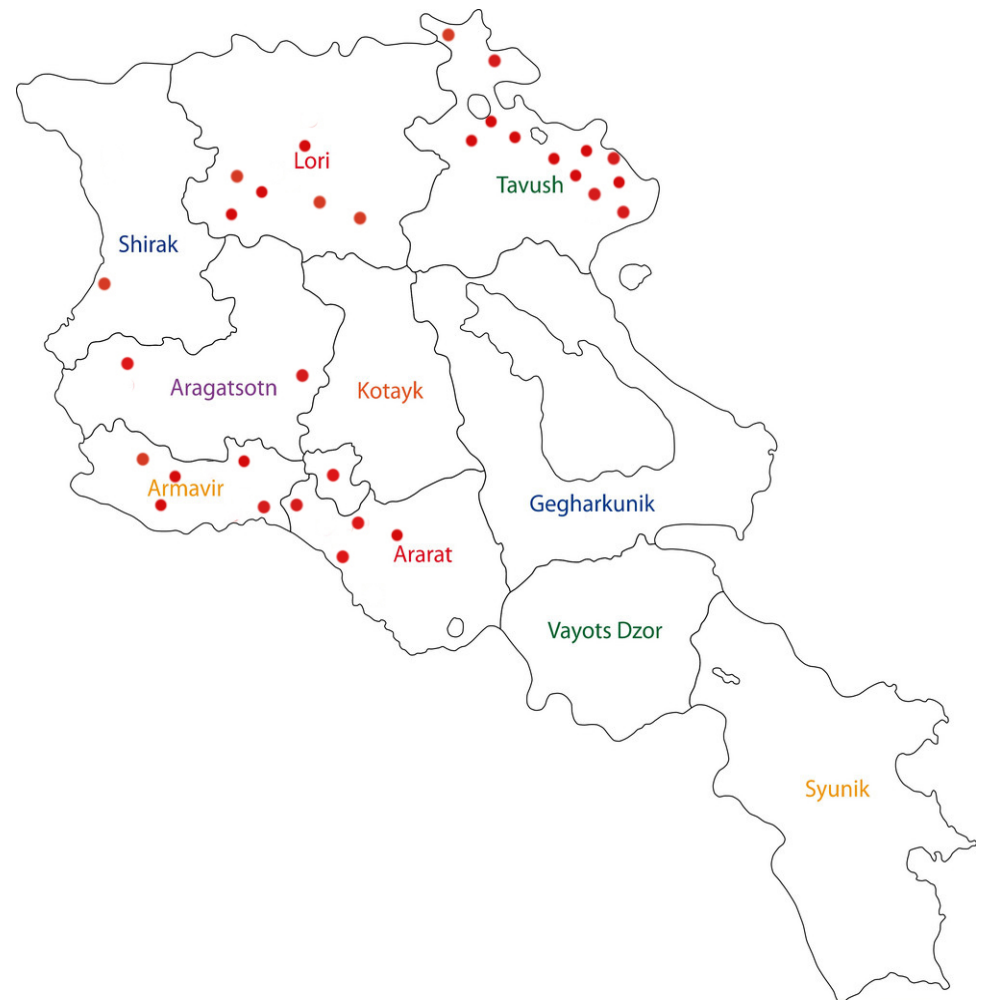
Vardablur
Gargar
Kurtan
Sarahart
Jrashen
Arevashogh

ARAGATSOTN PROVINCE

Apna
Tallin

SHIRAK PROVINCE

Isahakyan



OUR WORK THROUGHTOUT 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.



MAIN DIRECTIONS OF OUR WORK

PEACEBUILDING

During 2019 Democracy Today implemented few peacebuilding projects which aimed at mobilizing women leaders and other relevant actors from bordering communities of Armenia to take initiative for human rights protection and peace building. The projects aimed at empowering new generation of women peace activists from the most vulnerable border regions through complex in country and cross-border activities and provide knowledge and experience. To bring the requirements of UNSC Resolution 1325 to the state partners and develop long term policy on participation of women in peace process.



GENDER EQUALITY

Due to social stigma and numerous stereotypes existing in Armenia rural women face many obstacles and challenges when trying to get involved in political life, advance in career, work and education.

The gender equality projects of the organization aim at addressing the complex discriminations that women encounter, particularly in rural areas where patriarchal attitudes and gender

stereotypes are more than evident. The projects are being implemented in different villages all over Armenia.



CRITICAL THINKING

In the times of rush media battle and flow of fake news Democracy Today NGO initiated a critical thinking project. Through the project we invested in social change and democratic achievements in Armenia through enhancing knowledge of young people from rural communities in

Armenia, as well as, building skills and knowledge for creative and transformative thinking and analysis.

The project supports new democratic ideology and counterbalances fake and destructive politicized nationalistic agenda investing in the development of creative and critical thinking of young people.



MAIN DIRECTIONS OF OUR WORK

EXCHANGE PROJECTS

Democracy Today has been privileged to launch exchange project which aimed at developing new platform for confidence building and coexistence, as well as, invest in lasting cooperation between Georgia and Armenia.

The political scientists and journalists from Armenia and Georgia made exchange visits to each other's country, traveling through regions, meeting and discussing with different groups of societies and sharing their experience through various creative means: writing articles and papers, organizing discussions, posts in social media and contributing to established by them on-line open discussion blog.

The project aims at beginning a new joint on-line journal, which will serve as platform for continuous cooperation to share the ideas on various topics and invite more participants to the cooperation.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Democracy Today NGO has a special policy, which includes special capacity building activities for the staff members and beneficiaries of the organization. Activities

can include specialized management trainings and programs for staff members. During 2019 DT also implemented number of activities and initiatives which aimed at the capacity building of the beneficiaries. We tied to invest in raising economic level of rural communities through provision of necessary skills to young generation, who will be able to get well paid competitive jobs and gain social-economic stability.

We educated and empowered youth from rural communities and make them competitive at the new labor market by providing them necessary skills for successful job application and further employment. Project opened new opportunities for students

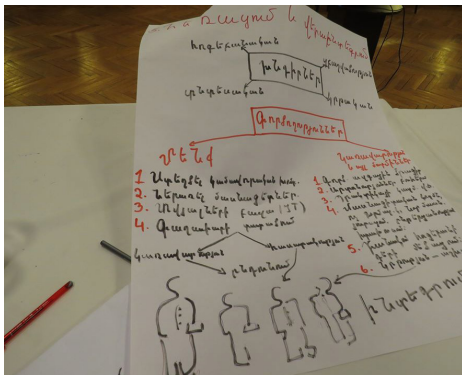
and created alternatives for them not to leave country for low skill jobs to survive, but get gainful future oriented jobs for their professional development and country.



THE SPECIAL INITIATIVE

THE ANNUAL PEACE AND LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

Alongside with the ongoing activities and initiatives already for about ten years Democracy Today NGO organizes annual Autumn schools. The main aim of the school is to bring together beneficiaries and participates from different projects of DT and organize special sessions during which they can debate, organize discussions, work jointly to find solutions to the



emerging issues, as well as, learn from each other.

In October 2019, the regular school has been organized. Within the frameworks of the initiative human rights activist, publicist, journalist and lawyers meet with the participants.

The first panel has been dedicated to the cooperation of NGOs and the Government in the Republic of Armenia, the expected results as well as the recent years civil movements in the Republic of Armenia.

During the second day of the school UN Security Council Resolution 2250 has been presented to the public. Within the framework of the Resolution, the young people discussed Youth, Peace and

Security issues, as well as, highlighted the priorities of youth. The discussion was followed by a group work activity.



The young people were divided into groups to discuss Resolution 2250 and presented their proposals. On the third day of the school, the mechanisms for developing the proposals that were suggested by youth under the Resolution 2250 (Youth Peace and Security) were

discussed. A working group with the participation of youth has been set up to coordinate recommendations of young people for the future national action plan.

The school was completed by the film screening of “Stories from War and Peaceful Days” by Vardan Hovhannisyan.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

THE INTERNATIONAL YOUNG WOMEN'S PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD (IYWPA)

IYWPA - an inspirational initiative founded by the regional movement "Women of South Caucasus for Peace. Peace starts from your home" - established in October 2011.

Through the years 27 outstanding women from different parts of the world became laureates of the IYWA and engaged in different activities organized both by "Democracy Today" NGO.

The goal of the movement is to make the role of women in peace processes visible and recognized, as well as, bring voices of women to peace negotiations.



Each year The International Young Women's Peace and Human Rights Award is being accompanied by theatre and musical performances.

AWARD WINNERS OF 2019

In 2019 the award has been granted to **Shirin El Jurdi (Lebanon)** "for exceptional dedication and work to conflict prevention and protection of human rights",



Muna Luqman (Yemen)
"for outstanding work in raising women's visibility in peace building"



and **Malika Abubakarova (Chechnya, Russian Federation)** for "huge contribution in protection of women's and children's rights, as well as, investing in justice".



The special certificates have been granted to **Eka Horstka** "for dedicated work in building inclusive and resilient communities" and **Mission Armenia** "for providing human security to refugee and vulnerable communities".

CREATING A NETWORK

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

On 23 – 24 March 2013, “Caucasus Peace Conference: two Decades of Women’s Rights in the Caucasus” was held in Yerevan, Armenia. It was organized by “Democracy Today” NGO. It was the first regional conference aimed to develop new platform of collaboration between women’s groups from entire Caucasus.es and provide knowledge and experience. To bring the requirements of UNSC 1325 Resolution to the state partners and develop long term policy on participation of women in peace process.

Starting from 2016, the Conference has become international. Organizations

working in the different part of the world are invited.



Any participating organization should have had a longstanding experience of in promoting peace, security and human rights in their respective regions/ countries. The two-day meeting provides creative environment for the participants with a free choice of the methods of presentation they are interested in, such as panel discussions, master class demonstrations of methodologies and group discussions.

The title of the International Conference in 2019 was: “Women at peace table - more justice for all”.

Apart from taking part in the Conference the members of the event also visited National Assembly of The Republic of Armenia, as well as, had discussion with MP Maria Karapetyan.



Alongside with the intensive panel discussions, group works, thematic presentations the participants of the 8th International

Conference visited folk art house in the countryside to know more about the Armenian traditions and have chance to connect with each other in the non-formal atmosphere.



Due to the conference a network of human rights and peacebuilding organisations has been created.

Currently this network encounters 132 organisations/ individuals.

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.



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.



JACKIE ABRAMIAN

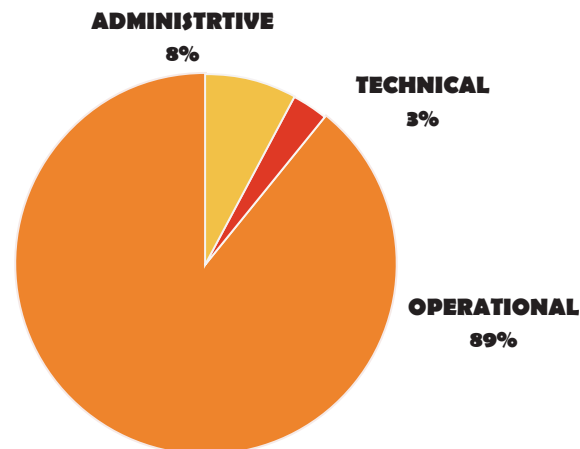
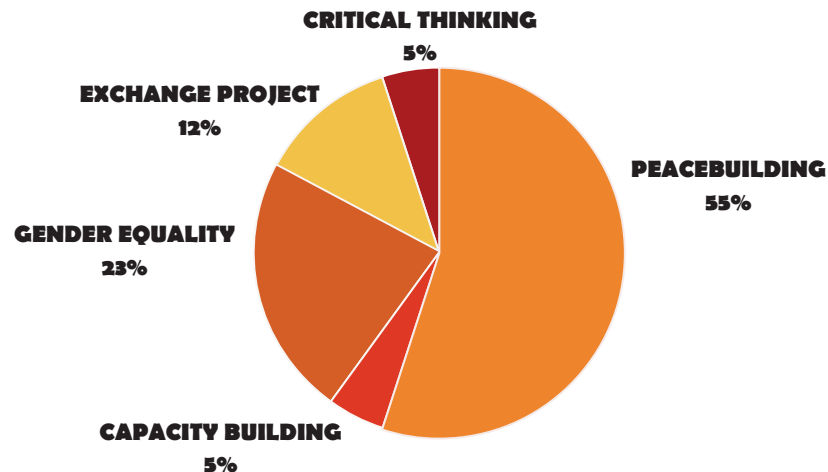
Multi-lingual PR, Social Media Marketing executive for global technology companies, consulting with social enterprises in the UK, Africa, Syria and Armenia, raising visibility of social impact on marginalized and refugee populations. Philanthropist dedicated to defending human rights and women empowerment.

PROJECT DATA

PROJECT DATA

During 2019 Democracy Today has been working in five main directions, which are Peacebuilding, Gender Equality, Critical Thinking, Exchange projects and Capacity building.

Below is presented the share of each of these categories from whole bunch of activities.



ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

To make its projects more results oriented Democracy Today pays special attention on the correct allocation of funds and decent distribution of the resources.

During 2019 the organisation encountered 8% of administrative, as well as, 3% of technical expenses. The rest 89% of the financial resources have been spent on the operational costs of the projects.

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