



Summer School for Young Peacebuilders

Call for peacebuilding organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine

*"Bridge of Friendship Kartlosi", NGO based in Gori, Georgia will present a new project for the EaP CSF RE-GRANTING 2016. Therefore, we are searching for partner organizations (from **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine**) to take part in the Summer School in Georgia.*

Why are young people so important for peace-building?

Young people are not only the most likely to be adversely affected by the success or failure of peace-building efforts, but they also have the capacity to make powerful

and productive contributions to peace. They are tomorrow's decision-makers, so their outlook, attitude and skills as peacebuilders are all crucial to a long term approach to peace.

Problems should be solved by those who are most affected by them if the solutions are to be just, consensual and durable. Armed conflict profoundly affects young people, so there are both ethical reasons for taking their participation in peacebuilding seriously as well as sound practical reasons for deep and broad youth involvement. Any long

term perspective on conflict resolution has to both consider how young people are affected by conflict and how young people can be involved in the process of building peace and resolving conflicts.

Long running conflicts harden attitudes, leaving people unwilling to make the change in perspective required to move beyond cycles of violence and counter-violence. Peacebuilding can therefore benefit from a generational change in attitudes, when a new generation decides not to make the same mistakes their predecessors made, or to suffer the consequences of conflicts that were not of their making.

Project Description

Recently violent conflicts and wars have shaken the world. However, in all conflict areas there are people who speak out against the use of violence and who are committed to a more peaceful world. Young people are not just the future, they are the present. Today almost half of the world's population under the age of 24. By offering young people a possibility to take part in shaping their own futures, young people can be at the front line of peacebuilding. Thereby, the role of young people receives increasing attention. They need encouragement and support.

Youth can play an important role as escalators or 'brakes' in conflict situations. Their opinions and

approach have an important impact to raise or to calm down emotions and perception of conflict issues. Early enough peaceful intervention by youth is an effective tool of conflict resolution. It requires however skills and knowledge about conflict dynamics, practical techniques of dealing with it and intervening.

The proposed project aims to prepare a group of skilled young mediators from EaP countries that would play in regions endangered by the risk of conflict a double role. They would either intervene as mediators in conflict situations (family, local) and simultaneously they will promote mediation as an effective tool of conflict resolution, so local communities understand better alternatives for conflict escalation.

Finally, the project aims to meet at least three strategic goals: 1) to increase local capacity of individuals and institutions prepared to work for peaceful conflict resolution 2) to support youth activism in local issues 3) to promote in these critical regions.

APPLICATION

Please describe the project relevant experience and expertise of your organization, full name and address of organization, email and phone number of the contact person.

Please send your applications to jolita.staselyte@gmail.com



Peacebuilding in Georgia

Kartlosi's approach

Many grassroots NGOs are leading the effort to involve young people in peacebuilding and give them the tools and the capacity to take action in their communities.

One example of this is Kartlosi, founded in 2006 by Georgian and Ossetian youths from the village of Pkhvenisi, 5km from Tskhinvali, the de facto capital of the breakaway region of South Ossetia (the name Kartlosi comes from the combination of 'Kartl', which means Georgian, and 'Osi', which means Ossetian). It's mission is to support the sustainable development of local communities in the Shida Kartli Region of Georgia (which borders the breakaway region), contribute to the peace process and the settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia (or Tskhinvali Region, as the area is called in Georgia), and carry out dialogues between communities that have been divided by the conflict. A major part of this mission involves raising the local civic participation of young people in the region, especially in conflict affected areas.

Young people from the conflict-affected region are working with Kartlosi to identify and document

problems faced by communities who live in villages on the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) between Georgian-controlled territory and breakaway region. Since the 2008 war, for example, the people in these villages have faced daily insecurity and the risk of being kidnapped and detained on the South Ossetian/Tskhinvali side of the fence where the location of the ABL is unclear. They also have to deal with a lack of water for irrigating their crops because the source of their water lies on the Ossetian side of the ABL, and severe depopulation of the region as young people move away from the conflict zone. The volunteers assist with researching areas of concern and lobbying local government.

While young people are often drivers of change and at the heart of peacebuilding work, they can also be the beneficiaries of peacebuilding projects. Youth in conflict affected areas often lack the opportunities they need most if future conflict is to be avoided and divided communities are to be reconciled. This is why it is important for peacebuilding NGOs to provide training to youth in conflict affected areas,

providing them with the skills they and their communities need. This is part of a long term peacebuilding strategy that goes beyond the immediate requirements of conflict management. For example, Kartlosi has been involved in multiple projects that aim to empower local youth and increase their civic engagement, from teaching school children debating skills and foreign language training for local students, to media training and international exchanges. Self-governance is the key term here: training the next generation of civil society activists and community leaders who will bring about lasting change in conflict affected areas.

Bridge of Friendship Kartlosi

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