



Your grants' stories!

2011-2012

FLEX Alumni Grants

(narrated by the project leaders)

What's your story?

- **Dear FLEX alumni I want to share the great experience I had while implementing my FLEX Small Grant Project. We decided to conduct series of career orientation trainings for 9th to 12th graders in schools of Armenia.**
- **The trainings included information about how career choices should be usually conducted, what personal factors and abilities should be considered. The second component of the Project was involvement of university students from different faculties who where appointed as guest speakers and talked about the professions they had chosen. Thus the overall outcome of the Project was very successful, we were able to reach our aim. But this is only the beginning we strive to enlarge the project in the future and involve more students, schools and towns.**

Lucine Arakelyan'04 (Armenia)

"Smart Future" Career Orientation Project (Yerevan, Armenia)

- **Dear friends, do not hesitate, be confident and be more active, apply to the FLEX Small Grants and try your skills. It is a great opportunity for all of you to gain knowledge and experience, to meet new people, make friends and of course help others and/or contribute to development of your country.**
- **Besides all the experience and knowledge you get while working on various Projects, it is always a great feeling that you can really help someone, especially work with young people is always rewarding.**

Lucine Arakelyan'04



Integrations FLEX project in collaboration with Red Cross. 2011-2012 (St. Petersburg, Russia)



- More than 100 orphans participated in break dancing, urban poetry and street knowledge workshops and simplified contests. Together with the people who know what it is all about to come up in the city they learned that changing one's attitude towards simple things and being creative is the very first step towards escaping the sometimes grey reality.
- During my experience with Integrations project we got to see many orphans.. many of them had better cell phones and lap tops than I do.. still very often there is something that sticks out when you visit those places.. some feeling of poverty despite repaired walls and new digital equipment.. my guess this comes from attitude..from the very deep believe that it's quite impossible to change the reality to make things go differently in everyday life..one sees this in the way people talk to each other, in the way people walk..with our project we didn't bring much stuff which can be easily calculated or documented.. but if a kid looked at the world with a lil different emotion or just stood somehow differently after the workshop, we knew we did our thing right..

Leo Shishov'03

Safe Roads For Future Generation(Tbilisi, Georgia)

- My name is Guram Sulakvelidze. I am FLEX alumni 2005. I live in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia which is being developed, but there are still issues which should be addressed, especially when the case is about road safety. Pedestrians do not cross the Zebras (cross roads) and if they do the drivers do not stop the car. As you know in Western countries road safety culture is on a high command, particularly pedestrians' esteems are met. I always thought about taking part in solving this problem. As soon as I heard about FLEX Alumni Grant program I applied for it immediately because I wanted not to miss the opportunity of making changes in the community where I live.

Safe Roads For Future Generation (Tbilisi, Georgia)



- Under the frames of the project "Safe Roads for Future Generation" one of the activities implemented by NGO "Children of Georgia" and me was discussions about road safety issues in Secondary Schools which aimed to inform children about road safety culture. Activities were divided into two parts: discussion and drawing. The children appeared even more motivated than we had anticipated. We set timeframe for these activities but because of immense interest from children we never fit in time which was positive result, I think. Therefore, I am continuing to implement this project to make changes together with new generation of Georgia. I want to thank FLEX program for giving me chance to take part in rising civil awareness of Tbilisi community!"

Guram Sulakvelidze'05

"When We Are United, We Will Help Them Live" (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)

- Excitement! Excitement and only excitement! Anytime I participate in any alumni event, I feel so powered, so motivated and so ready to make a change! FLEX alumni grant is a great opportunity not only to make the society we live in better but also develop us personally. Last year I won grant which contains 3 events (soccer match among 6 international universities, diverse picnic and charity concert) all pursuing 2 goals - strengthen ties between young people in Kyrgyzstan and help children in local cancer center. In my country, the medical care in cancer centers which would guarantee successful treatment unfortunately, doesn't exist and for me and many other members of Unity Fund (FLEX's project 2010) staying apart not helping them is equal to committing a crime. We really want to make changes in our community and we are given so many opportunities to do so! I think, all FLEX alumni and other alumni of State Department Programs should know that the most important part our alumni life starts AFTER we return back to our home countries! Dear alumni, let's get the most out all opportunities we have!

Nadezhda Pak'10

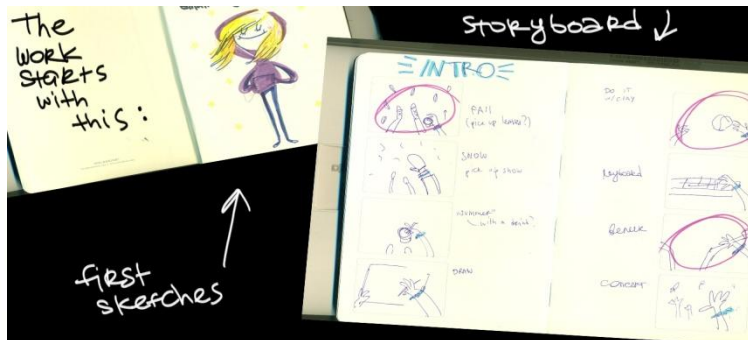
"When We Are United, We Will Help Them Live" (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)



- I'm very motivated to continue applying for alumni grants or help other FLEX alumni to write grants proposals and develop ideas because development of my society stands to be one of the most important priorities for me.
- Project It is like a stream of new blood! FLEX alumni, get started, get FLEXed! Apply for grants and you will never regret!!!

Nadezhda Pak'10

"A Charmed Year" (Moscow, Russia)



- My name's Sonya Gorya, and this is my second time receiving the grant. This year I'm working on a film called "A Charmed Year" and it's an amazing experience! I've worked in animation for a while by now, and this project lets me do what I do best and love doing as well as (hopefully) tell a universally understandable story that should inspire kids to take part in the FLEX program. I've felt the urge to make a film like this, and I'm glad that I was given a chance to do so! I enjoy being the project leader, finding volunteers who are eager to help, organizing the process of creating a film.. So, hope you will enjoy the film when it's done! Thank you!

Sonya Gorya'04

“Girls Leadership and Empowerment Summer School” (Stepanavan, Armenia)

- Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) is a leadership program for young Armenian women, ages 13-16. The program begins with residential summer school, giving up to 70 participants the opportunity to work in a team based setting to explore topics such as personal development, gender, career planning, health, HIV/AIDS, peer education, and leadership. After the summer school participants hold peer education sessions in their communities, contribute to the GLOW newspapers, and help organize regional seminars during the year for other young women.
- Number of GLOW summer school participants 2008-2011: 200 girls aged 12-16 from 57 communities all over Armenia
- Number of GLOW regional seminar participants 2008-2011: 632 teenagers from all over Armenia
- Number of GLOW peer education activities/community projects organized by GLOW alumnae 2008-2011: 124 activities/actions (the number might be higher, as some girls may not have informed us about their activities)
- Number of peers participating in peer education/community projects organized by GLOW alumnae 2008-2011: rough estimate is 1600 teenagers from all over Armenia
- Number of GLOW newspapers published and disseminated 2008-2011: 7 numbers, 6000 examples
- Number of GLOW Alumnae who got FLEX scholarship: 7 girls

Check GLOW blog www.syc-glow.blogspot.com/

“Girls Leadership and Empowerment Summer School” (Stepanavan, Armenia)

- The GLOW project continues its quest for the fifth year already! It is a way for 12-17 year old girls from all regions of Armenia to learn about healthy lifestyle, career planning, self-development, peer education, leadership, gender, domestic violence, trafficking and HIV/AIDS. The project has a distinguished approach which differ it from any other project. It gives ownership of the project to the participant girls and comprises of different elements following one another and being like stones put one on another to build a strong base for a whole life! I feel extreme joy following the personal and professional achievements of each of GLOW girls.

Sona Grigoryan, 28 years old, Yerevan, Armenia



"Civil Education Summer School" (Borjomi, Georgia)

"FLEX alumni grants program is a good opportunity for those who has a brilliant idea and needs some financial support for it's realization. Although my idea wasn't that brilliant I still decided that I had a chance. I like one proverb which is really true one. "Ideas are like children, none of them are as good as your own". FLEX alumni grant helped me to bring my idea into reality. there are 3 main principles which make FLEX alumni grants program so interesting and attractive for me:

- I - it helps you to bring your ideas into reality and to develop your leadership and management skills.*
- II - It makes it's beneficiaries happy*
- III - every good deed is beneficial indeed. (for society, for town, for city, and for the country)*

My first grant was very memorable for me and that is why I decided to apply for another grant this year. Join me, Let's change world into a better place together!!!

Natia Sharikadze'08

"Civil Education Summer School" (Borjomi, Georgia)



- My project was a civil education summer school which I organized with my Friend Shorena Megrelishvili FLEX'08. The summer school was dedicated for high school students from villages in Borjomi Region. The summer school let the participants gain valuable knowledge about civil education, voluntierism, diversity and environment, and on the other hand brought valuable experience to us (it's organizers). I want to thank American Councils once again for this amazing opportunity!
- I believe we can change world to a better place!

Natia Sharikadze

“Radio-Journalism”(Baku, Azerbaijan)



- Our goal was to involve young university girls in social life and help them to act freely, making decisions freely and so on. There were two students participating in the project who wanted to apply for UGRAD program and study abroad. Before participating in this project they were not sure if they could ever go and study and live abroad. And their parents did not let them do any of this. They even had to try a lot to persuade their parents to let them participate in the project. As a result of this two of our participants applied for UGRAD and now their parents let them do what they want to do for their future. I can say even more than that. In just a few words I want to say that our project changed some young university girls' lives.

“Path to discover the world with orphans” (Konibodom, Tajikistan)

- One of the major goals of the project was to give hope and motivation to orphans for studying hard. As the counselors already had experience with conducting these kind of seminars they did their best in order to make these days unforgettable for kids. At the beginning participants were not participating very actively but after some days they became very open and started to be very active. As teachers and counselors observed the projected made the participants motivated in studying very hard.

Kholmati Kholik'09



“Early Steps for a Healthy Child” (Tajikistan)



- I think the project had a good contribution to the social development of Sogd region in Tajikistan. Since the topic of early pregnancy, medical-gynecological checks were forbidden for not married girls, and they didn't have a chance to speak about these kind of problems openly, there was essential need for them to hear about these situations from the professionals. At the end of the trainings many girls said that now they know how to protect themselves, but next time, when they'll feel not healthy they have the phone number of doctors whom they can go for check ups.

Omina Sanginaova'07