

ARMENIA- Participation in “Natural Disasters Youth Summit”(NDYS) project



We live in the country where natural disasters and cataclysms happen very often. That is why, the importance of participation in “Natural Disasters Youth Summit” project was stressed both by the students and their teachers. It is very important to acquire and use the means, which will help to protect us and try to prevent the natural disasters. The project was a good opportunity to raise the awareness on the natural disasters in the pupils’ circle.

“This project served as an informational and educational mean for all of us. During the months of the project implementation students got more information and knowledge about the natural disasters rather, than they would get in the one or two study years”, expressed her opinion Hasmik Margaryan, Regional Program Coordinator (RPC) of Vayots Dzor, who was responsible for project overview in the corresponding region.

Kanachut, Verin Dvin, Nor Kharberd Secondary schools from Ararat Region and Yeghegnadzor Secondary School #3 from Vayotc Dzor region, Armenia, became a part of NDYS initiative in the fall, 2005. Regional Program Coordinators (RPC) of Armenia School Connectivity Programs (ASCP), monitored and coordinated local activities of each working group, in line with the groups’ leading teachers.

The schools worked in a unified manner, according to the action plans they created. The action plan determined several stages for the project to be carried out in order to fulfill project goal and objectives:

- Preparatory phase (meetings, discussions, support from corresponding organizations and state bodies)
- Choosing specific disaster types for further investigation
- Material Gathering and Editing
- Creating school Safety map
- Creating Web Pages, Power Point Presentations, Booklets
- Presenting their work and results to corresponding school community



After preliminary meetings and discussions, students in all participant schools started to research in the Internet on the topic of natural disasters. They found much relevant information, mainly in English and Russian, Our students were rather innovative and they used various translating programs to the hard job and to transform the information into Armenian and vice-versa. All participant groups graphed their school site-maps to be used in case of disasters; they created Web pages and booklets, summarizing the types and peculiarities of disasters, shaking the world and their particular region. The students tried to give a structured toolkit on how to behave in each case of cataclysm and how to overcome them.

“As a result of this project, students became more informed and consequently, more prepared to Natural Disasters. In a country like Armenia, where these type of things often happen, this understanding is very important”, comments Fenya Yepremyan, Ararat RPC.

Students from Verin Dvin Secondary School, where students from national minorities study, in the preparatory phase of the program, visited the Emergency Management Administration in Ararat region. Regional Head of the department, conducted a training for the student working group, making them aware about main types of cataclysms which are common for Ararat region. Students were delivered handouts and printed materials on the topic, which were useful for further work. In the third phase of the program, the students initiated an intimidated urgent situation, when all the school staff had to leave the school, according to the school site-map they created. The site-map of the school is also included in the web site that the students of the school created according to the previously done job.

Kanachut and Nor Kharberd Secondary School students initiated meeting with local Red Cross representatives, who visited the schools to deliver information about disasters and first aid actions. The thorough investigations made by the students are incorporated into meaningful web sites, and their experience, challenges and successes are summarized in a



Power Point presentation to be presented to their school communities.

Another interesting approach was exercised by Yeghegnadzor Secondary School #3. After getting the project announcement, the working group of 8 students and 2 teachers, created a working plan, to guide them through project phase activities. The Yeghegnadzor branch of Red Cross assisted the students organizing a three-day workshop in the Internet Computer Center (ICC) of Yeghegnadzor Sec. School N3. During the workshop, the students got information about the natural disasters, such as earthquake, tsunami, hail, volcano, landslide etc. The student also got acquainted with the prevention

activities during the earthquake, storm and fire. At the end of the workshop, the Red Cross representative presented the participants with booklets and posters titled “Be ready to defend” and “Removement at school”. These booklets and posters were very useful in the material gathering process.

In the second phase the working group selected 5 natural disasters about which the students already had enough knowledge and which were typical for Armenia, especially for Vayots Dzor region; volcano, earthquake, storm, landslide, flood. The third phase of the project was the material gathering process. The students were given 2 weeks for this phase. They used different informational sources: textbooks, encyclopedias, Internet to accomplish their objectives. The Emergency Management Administration of Yeghegnadzor assisted the students. The students were invited to the administration where they got a lot of information and pictures about the natural disasters. Next phase was devoted to the creation of school safety map. Which was presented to the judgment of the school administration. With the suggestion of the working group, the safety maps were attached to the walls of appropriate floors. According to the action plan, the last stage was the creation of the website. The ICC monitor of Yeghegnadzor sec. School N1, Vayots Dzor RPC and the Vayots Dzor representative of Armenian Territorial Electronic Governmental System assisted the working group in website creation.

“I hope the website will be useful for those students who don’t know or have few information about natural disasters. And in the case of any disaster they will be able to protect themselves and why not to provide first aid”, mentioned Vayots Dzor RPC.

In the final phase of the project, the students will present to their co-students, teachers and community an unique picture of their work and achievements, as well as share their knowledge gained.