

PROMOTING YOUTH ACTIVISM IN MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITIES



-EMPOWERING THE NEXT
GENERATION-

Foreword

This booklet is a product of the project “Promoting Youth Activism in Multiethnic Communities” implemented by the Center for Intercultural Dialogue CID.

This booklet aims to highlight the importance of youth activism and outline effective strategies for empowering young individuals to become catalysts for social transformation within multiethnic communities. The first section of this publication will explore the significance of youth activism within multiethnic societies, emphasizing its potential to foster intercultural dialogue and address systemic issues that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. By providing a comprehensive overview of the benefits and challenges associated with youth activism, we hope to inspire individuals, organizations, and policymakers to invest in initiatives that promote youth engagement. The second section will delve into practical approaches and successful case studies that have successfully promoted youth activism in multiethnic communities. These examples will demonstrate how young individuals have utilized various platforms, such as community organizing, social media advocacy, art, and education, to advocate for social justice, cultural understanding, and equality.

Foreword

Moreover, this booklet will outline resources, and support mechanisms that can nurture young activists, amplify their voices, and ensure their long-term impact in their own communities.

By fostering a culture of active citizenship and intercultural understanding, we can create a more equitable and cohesive world that harnesses the collective power of diverse voices, cultures, and ideas.

We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who helped with the project and the creation of this publication, as well as to all of the supporters of the advocacy campaigns, Digital Youth Activists, and other important stakeholders whose contributions helped make each of these campaigns possible.

Author: Tamara Petkovska

This project was supported by the National Endowment for Democracy NED.

INTRO

Multi-ethnic societies are quickly becoming the norm rather than the exception in today's globally interconnected world. People from many cultural backgrounds come together in these diverse communities, creating a rich tapestry of traditions, languages, and perspectives. The need to promote inclusivity, understanding, and active engagement among the youth is one of the specific issues they face.

Youth activism is crucial in determining how multiethnic societies will develop in the future. It gives young people the confidence to express their worries, confront structural injustices, and work for change. We can build a more peaceful and equitable society that honors and respects every individual, regardless of their ethnic or cultural origin, by utilizing their energy, enthusiasm, and creative thinking. To meet this urgent demand, the initiative "Promoting Youth Activism in Multiethnic Communities" is essential.

This booklet intends to highlight the value of youth activism and lay out practical methods for equipping young people to engage as catalysts for social change in diverse settings. Promoting Youth Activism in Multiethnic Communities is a project funded by National Endowment for Democracy NED and implemented by Center for Intercultural Dialogue. This project is designed to address the rising need for active civic engagement of young people in the community. Based on the lessons learned from past projects, this project created a space for young people to advance their skills in Human Rights, Intercultural dialogue, civic engagement, and advocacy by using different digital tools and creating local advocacy campaigns and initiatives based on the needs of the young people



AIM OF THE PROJECT

- Develop competencies of 25 young people to gain practical knowledge on democratic participation which the participants can further multiply in their communities;
- Foster social cohesion through cooperation between the various ethnicities of Kumanovo and the region;
- Build a space to teach human rights, intercultural dialog, advocacy, and building community trust;

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT

- 01 Youth participation: Participation by young people is crucial because it gives young people the ability to actively participate in decisions that have an impact on their life. We ensure that their perspectives, experiences, and ideas are taken into consideration by including young people in community activities, organizations, and governance, resulting in more inclusive and successful outcomes. Young individuals who are involved develop a feeling of civic responsibility, ownership, and obligation that enables them to make meaningful contributions to society.
- 02 Youth Activism: Youth activism is essential for driving social change and tackling urgent problems. In several movements, young activists have taken the lead, fighting for issues like social fairness, environmental sustainability, and human rights. Young people gain knowledge of the effectiveness of group action, advocacy tactics, and mobilization strategies through activism. They gain critical thinking abilities, abilities to lead, and a sense of agency, enabling them to question conventional wisdom, motivate others, and influence the future.
- 03 Youth Advocacy: Youth advocacy refers to the act of young individuals (often teenagers and young adults) actively promoting or supporting a cause, idea, or policy to bring about positive change in society. This form of advocacy enables young people to raise their voices, express their opinions, and take action on issues that matter to them and their communities. Youth advocacy is an essential aspect of civic engagement, encouraging young people to participate in the democratic process and contribute to shaping the future.

04

Digital tools have completely changed the way that young people interact with the outside world, communicate with one another, and acquire information. Young people must learn how to utilize digital tools successfully so they may raise awareness of social concerns, magnify their voices, and connect with others who share their interests. Digital platforms offer opportunities for advocacy, campaign planning, and information sharing on a worldwide scale, enabling young people to make a real difference outside of their immediate areas.

05

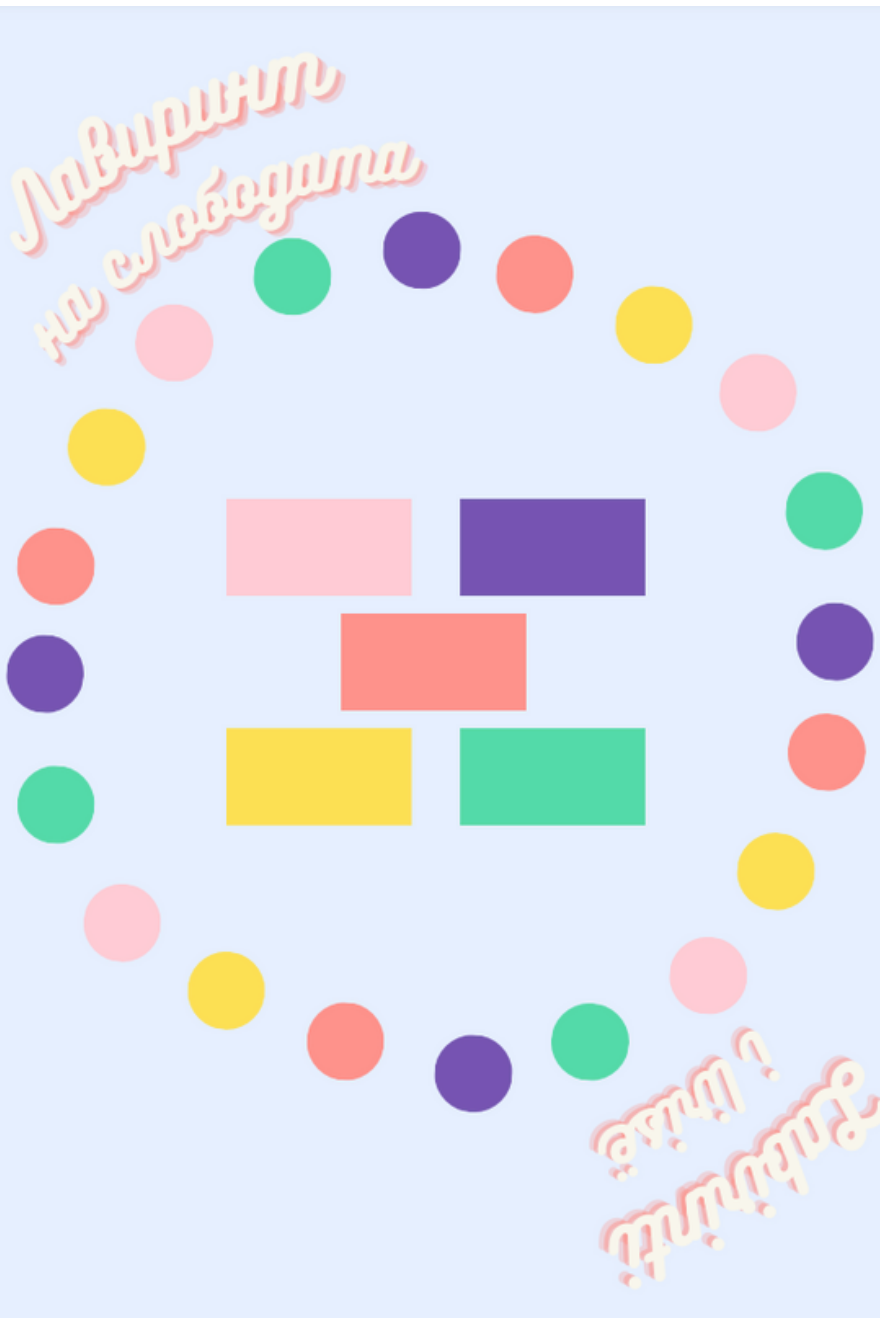
Volunteering: Young people have the chance to volunteer and use their time, talents, and energy to help others and address social issues. Young individuals gain empathy, compassion, and a sense of social duty through volunteering. They increase their interpersonal skills, acquire real-world experience, and improve their comprehension of many groups and cultures. Additionally, volunteering helps in the development of networks, interpersonal connections, and a lifelong sense of altruism and community involvement among young people.

06

Leadership: Young people's leadership development is essential for raising the next generation of change-makers. Young people with leadership abilities are better able to take charge, motivate others, and mobilize a group effort. Young people are more prepared to face problems, manage complexities, and effect significant change when leadership skills like communication, decision-making, teamwork, and resilience are fostered. Young people who possess leadership qualities can influence others and serve as role models in their communities, advancing good morals and social change.

LOCAL
YOUTH
ADVOCACY
CAMPAIGNS
AND
INITIATIVES

1ST LOCAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN/INITIATIVE: HUMAN RIGHTS BOARD GAMES



This groundbreaking initiative brought together a passionate group of young individuals who recognized the importance of advocating for human rights within their community. Determined to engage their peers in a meaningful and interactive way, these young change-makers decided to develop a unique Human Rights Game, serving as a catalyst for awareness, education, and empowerment. In this booklet, we explore the story of their remarkable initiative, documenting the process, challenges, and impactful outcomes achieved by these young activists. We explore how they utilized their creativity, digital skills, and knowledge of human rights to create a dynamic and engaging game that captivated the attention of their peers and sparked critical conversations. The planned activity for this initiative was producing a human rights board game. The idea was to use

gamification to expand the message of human rights education and understanding. Recognizing the power of interactive gameplay, stimulating challenges, and real-life scenarios, the young participants channel the potential of gaming to cultivate empathy, critical thinking, and active involvement.

This creative strategy aims to break down obstacles, encourage reflection, and enable other young people to become human rights activists in their own lives and communities.

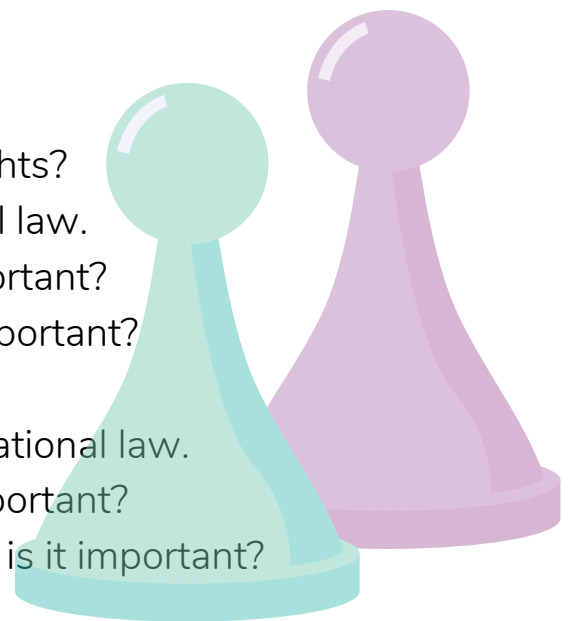
The development of the Human Rights Game is a noteworthy accomplishment that shows how providing young people with the appropriate knowledge and tools can help them to come up with creative solutions that are well-received by their peers. This success highlights the value of funding youth development initiatives that give participants the information and resources they need to turn their concepts into real-world effects.

The title of the game is “Labyrinth of Freedom”, and the aim of the game is to reach the goal first by answering human rights questions correctly and collecting points along the way. The game has a game board with fields, each field represents a different human right, dice, and figures.

The game board is divided into squares, each square representing a different human right. The boxes are colored based on the human rights category they belong to (eg civil, political, economic, social, and cultural). Players take turns rolling a die and moving their figures onto the spaces on the board. When a player comes to the field, they draw a card that contains a question related to that human right. If they answer the question correctly, they collect a point of that color. If they answer incorrectly, they don't get a point. The first player to collect all five points and reach the finish line wins the game.

A few examples of what the questions:

- What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
- Name three civil rights protected by international law.
- What is the right to education and why is it important?
- What is the right to free speech and why is it important?
- What is right to work and why is it important?
- Name three economic rights protected by international law.
- What is the right to health care and why is it important?
- What is the right to freedom of religion and why is it important?



This game is a fun and simple way to introduce players to human rights concepts and help them learn about the different categories of human rights.

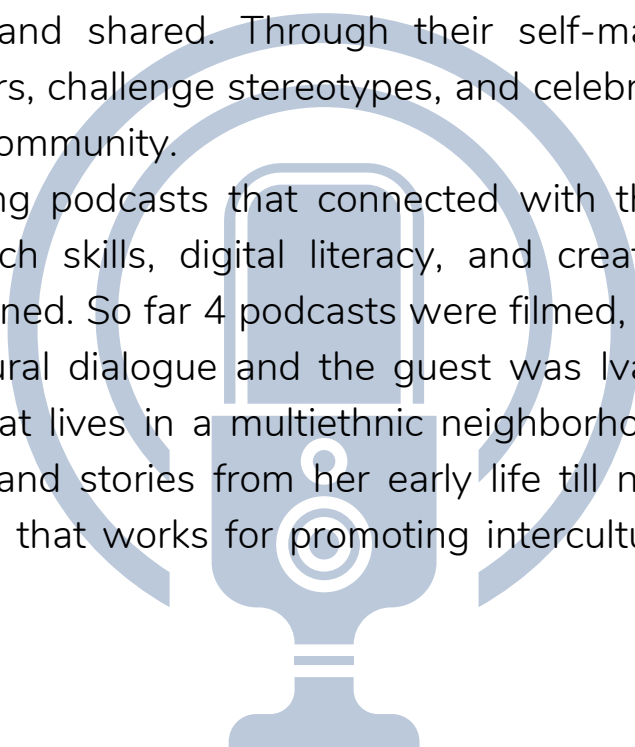
2ND LOCAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN/INITIATIVE: МУЛТИКУЛТИ ПОDCAST



A group of young people joined together to launch this inspirational effort with the goal of fostering cooperation, respect, and understanding among many cultures in their neighborhood. These enthusiastic participants made the decision to start their own podcasting journey using the knowledge and resources they gained through the project, with the goal of amplifying voices, sharing stories, and fostering intercultural understanding. The participants made the decision to start their own MultiКулти podcasts because

they understood how easily accessible and adaptable video storytelling is. This allowed a variety of voices to be heard and shared. Through their self-made productions, they want to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and celebrate the richness of cultural diversity within their community.

The project's participants produced engaging podcasts that connected with their target audience by combining their research skills, digital literacy, and creative storytelling strategies with the tools they learned. So far 4 podcasts were filmed, the first one was tackling the topic of intercultural dialogue and the guest was Ivana Stojchevska, a project coordinator in CID that lives in a multiethnic neighborhood. She shared different interesting anecdotes and stories from her early life till now working as a project coordinator in an NGO that works for promoting intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism.



3RD LOCAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN/INITIATIVE: ALTERNATIVE CINEMA IN KUMANOVO



The idea for this advocacy campaign originates from the initiative of last year when young people conducted research on the need for a cinema in our city and also organized an open cinema event, which was successful and attended by a large number of young people. This year the young people wanted to advocate for space where they can watch movies together, space for cinema, that will come as a refreshment for the youth, where they can come out of their comfort zone but also make them feel comfortable while socializing. The youth is desperate for a change, the monotone city life makes them feel even more isolated. Instead of socializing and watching movies with their friends, they watch them alone in their own rooms.

The youngsters also tried to travel to Skopje just for a movie because not only did they waste a lot of time traveling but they also have extra costs for it. As we know, when you are young you don't have your own money and you depend on your parent's financial support. Not only is that a problem for the youngsters, but that's also a big issue for the parents.

This year a group of young people prepared a petition on which they gathered 2000 signatures from young people. With the fulfilled petition the young people showed their good advocacy skills in the meeting with the representatives from the Council of Municipality of Kumanovo. The discussion was officially added to the agenda for the forthcoming Local Council meeting, holding promising prospects for a positive outcome. This advocacy initiative is a powerful demonstration of the power of advocacy and the crucial part that young people can play in bringing change to their communities.

However, their impact did not end with the petition. Recognizing the significance of engaging decision-makers, the participants seized the opportunity to present their case before the Council of Municipality. Through a well-prepared and compelling presentation, they successfully brought the discussion regarding the necessity of a cinema space in Kumanovo to the attention of the Local Council. This notable achievement shows the power of youth advocacy in driving concrete progress and engaging with local authorities to address the needs of the community.



4TH LOCAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN/INITIATIVE: BRIDGING DIVERSITY



A group of passionate young individuals came together with a beautiful initiative to foster socialization and understanding among youngsters from diverse ethnic backgrounds. In the heart of the vibrant event "Piknik u Pelince in an open space, they embarked on an unforgettable journey of games, art, and shared laughter. Their initiative aimed to break down the barriers that often separate us, inviting everyone to embrace and celebrate the rich spectrum of cultures that make up their community. By providing a platform for interaction, the

young organizers wanted to create lasting connections and promote empathy, respect, and inclusivity. Young artists were encouraged to use their imagination to express themselves as they painted on the canvas. Participants took up brushes and spilled their feelings onto the canvas under the premise that art is a universal language. The essence of diversity and the harmony that results from celebrating differences are captured in an interconnected painting.

Within this inspiring setting, the youngsters took the opportunity to present the three local advocacy campaigns/initiatives, raising awareness about vital issues within their community. These passionate voices amplified their messages, touching the hearts of their peers, and catching a sense of shared responsibility.

In this spirited celebration of togetherness, the young organizers demonstrated that by embracing our differences and reaching out with open hearts, we can build bridges that connect us all. They reminded us that through the power of games, art, and laughter, we can create a world where every voice is heard, every story is valued, and every individual feels a sense of belonging.

Key Impacts

Throughout the project, we saw a number of noteworthy results and beneficial benefits. They were able to have significant results by putting the digital tools and skills they had learned to use, as well as by developing their efforts. Some of the most significant effects they encountered were:

- **Increased Awareness and Knowledge:** Through the project, participants deepened their understanding of the chosen themes and gained valuable knowledge on subjects such as human rights, intercultural dialogue, advocacy, and diversity. The digital tools and resources provided them with opportunities to explore diverse perspectives, access relevant information, and engage in critical discussions, thereby broadening their horizons and fostering informed decision-making.
- **Empowerment and Confidence:** The participants experienced a boost in self-confidence and a sense of empowerment through their active involvement in the project. By developing and implementing initiatives, they honed their digital skills, communication abilities, and leadership qualities. This newfound confidence enabled them to take ownership of their ideas, express their opinions, and drive positive change within their communities.

Key Impacts

- **Community Engagement and Dialogue:** The initiatives developed by the participants facilitated community engagement and fostered meaningful dialogue. Through workshops, events, podcasts, and other activities, they created spaces for open discussions, sharing of experiences, and bridging cultural divides. These interactions encouraged empathy, understanding, and mutual respect among participants and community members, leading to a more cohesive and inclusive environment.
 - **Social Impact and Awareness:** The initiatives implemented by the participants had a tangible impact on their communities. By raising awareness and advocating for important causes, such as human rights, diversity, and interculturality, they contributed to positive societal change. Their digital tools and skills allowed them to reach a wider audience, amplify their message, and inspire others to join their efforts, resulting in broader awareness and increased engagement within the community.
-

Key Impacts

- Long-Term Influence: The impacts of the project extended beyond its immediate duration. The project empowered the participants to continue their advocacy and engagement in various spheres of life by equipping them with digital tools and skills. The acquired knowledge, digital literacy, and networks formed during the project served as a foundation for their ongoing involvement in promoting positive change within their educational institutions, local communities, or professional endeavors.

These impacts highlight the transformative power of digital tools and skills in youth-led initiatives. The participants not only experienced personal growth and empowerment but also made tangible contributions to their communities, fostering awareness, dialogue, and positive social change. The long-term influence of the project demonstrates the enduring effects of equipping young individuals with the necessary tools and skills to become active agents of change in the digital era.

ABOUT CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE (CID)

Center for Intercultural Dialogue (CID) is a civil society organization working to promote intercultural acceptance and active citizenship through capacity-building processes, education, and youth work.

The organization's activity focuses on many aspects which are of interest to young people: from the provision of services and information to research and support for policy-making and networking.

CID is working to create diverse responsible and cooperative communities where citizens are actively contributing to social development and integration. Our mission is to ensure sustainable community development by creating opportunities for quality engagement of civil society, advancing learning opportunities, and active involvement of young people and other citizens.

More about CID can be found at: www.cid.mk