



Round-Table Discussion: The role of culture initiatives in the development processes in Armenia and Ukraine



Within the Framework of "Equal Opportunities for National Minorities and Disadvantaged Groups in Realizing Cultural Rights: Richness through Diversity" program, on April 26th 2013, the Civic Development and Partnership Foundation and "NGO Center" Civil Society Development NGO organized a round-table discussion on the topic of "The role of culture initiatives in the development processes in Armenia and Ukraine".

The objective of the event was to discuss the cultural initiatives and programs implemented by numerous organizations in Armenia and Ukraine, as well as, to present the state policies of those respective countries towards the empowerment of national minorities, the preservation of cultural heritage and the community cultural development initiatives that are being employed. More importantly, the debate highlighted the potential possibility of cooperation between the organizations operating in both countries.

The round-table discussion was carried out with the participation of the representatives of the Ukrainian "GURT Resource Center", the head of the department of internal affairs of the Kiev region, the representatives of Ukrainian communities and organizations, representatives of the RA's administration and government bodies, local and international organizations, as well as representatives of the various communities encompassed within the initiative.

During the event, the organizers presented the "Equal Opportunities for National Minorities and Disadvantaged Groups in Realizing Cultural Rights: Richness through Diversity" program's mission, objectives, implemented policies and the future plans set forth for execution.



Afterwards, Republic of Armenia's state representatives presented the implemented government policies for the purpose of preserving the cultural heritage of national minorities. It was noted that, apart from the government grants provided to the organizations of the national minorities, the government is also aiding the national minorities in the publication of newspapers and books in their own language, broadcast of TV and radio programs, as well as, helping them organize cultural events by providing a space for a National Minority Cultural Center in Yerevan.

The representatives of the NGOs working in the field of protecting the rights of national minorities presented their perspectives regarding their mission, the aid they have received and the challenges and problems that are still existent. During the discussion, participants voiced out the necessity for



organizational capacity building and the paramount importance of a more engaged involvement in the lives of the local communities across all regions.



Onwards, the representatives of the communities expressed their gratitude for the support they have received through the implementation of the program, especially through the capacity building initiative program. Moreover, the representatives voiced out their concerns regarding the depreciating infrastructure of cultural establishments across various regions, and the lack of support and attention from Yerevan based organizations towards the remote and distant communities across the country.

Finally, the representatives of the Ukrainian communities shared their impressions of the Armenian communities they had visited, highlighting the importance of direct contact in exchanging experiences, ideas and establishing further cooperation, while at the same time expressing their joy of getting acquainted with the country (Armenia) and its people.

The event was concluded with warm atmosphere, with the expectation of further cooperation and future meetings with one another.