

Interethnic and Intercultural Summer Academy «Sources of Tolerance» Evaluation Report



Informal education Center «Diversity»

1. Interethnic and Intercultural Summer Academy «Sources of Tolerance» (SA).

Summer Academy is holding in Moldova since 2011. Total duration of the project cycle is approximately 5 months. The Summer Academy itself lasts 11 days, and is preceded by contacting with ethnic communities, Embassies and SA partners for starting invitation of participants, preparing and announcing call with creative task for participants. The other important component is intensive work with team of project: weekly preparatory workshops during the month and 3-days preparatory training of trainers, organized for the project's team right before the course and 3-days evaluation training of trainers two months after.

2. Project overview and description of the group

Interethnic and Intercultural Summer Academy «Sources of Tolerance» has an aim to create the atmosphere of positive interest to cultural differences focusing on human values in each culture and a space for intercultural dialogue. The young representatives of different ethnic\religious groups were gathered together for 11 days and provided with a safe space for sharing their culture with the others. The program of SA is built in such way that our participants could reflect on topics of identity, diversity, tolerance and intercultural dialogue during the first days and continue with the learning of cultures different ethnic groups, in the way one day dedicated to one culture.

Participants of the project were 85 teenagers who represent Moldavians, Russians, Bulgarians, Jews, Roma, Polish, Bulgarian, Gagauz communities', plus group of refugees from Central Asia and Middle East. The middle age of participants are 11-17 years old, the geography of participants are around all the Moldova: Chisinau, Baltsey, Soroca, Edintsey, Tiraspol, Bendery, Chadyr-Lunga, Tyrnovo, Grigorovka, Rybnitsa.

According to the results of research, made in frames of the project, part of participants have mixed ethnic identity, associating themselves with two or more ethnic groups in the same time (i.e. Moldovan-gagauz; Russian-ukrainian, etc.)

3. Evaluation goals

- The primary goal of this evaluation was to measure change in participant attitude about diversity and understanding of "tolerance" concept that resulted from participation in the Summer Academy.
- A secondary goal was to collect information about how successfully the course proceeded from participant's point of view and to identify their feelings, challenges during the project, and reflections about course's aims.
- One more goal was to analyze the most successful practices and program parts and to compare participant's expectations in the beginning of the project with their feed-backs in the last day.

4. Evaluation methods

In order to evaluate changes in attitudes and behavior on the part of participants, their knowledge of course content, reviews of program, and their self-reports of actions they took were measured by a survey given at the beginning (first day of SA) and the end of the course (final day of SA) and the differences in pre- and post- responses over this time period were compared. Both for pre- and post- responses were created special questionnaires.

Examples of items in pre- questionnaire:

- From this course I expect...
- Tolerance for me means

Examples of items in post- questionnaire:

- If I was an educator I would...
- This Summer Academy is necessary for...

5. Survey results

There is a difference on how participants see the Summer Academy aims in the end and in the beginning of the project:

According to the results of pre- response (in the beginning of the course)	According to the results of post- response (in the end of the course)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest and the organization of leisure, interesting pastime; • Meeting new people, communication; • Gaining new knowledge, as well as some participants (less part) indicated the components of development and self-development; • Interaction with representatives of different ethnic groups, familiarization with their culture and traditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of tolerance, understanding of equality, counteraction to stereotypes, unification of representatives of different ethnic groups; • Studying the culture, customs and traditions of various ethnic groups; • Rest with benefits, intercultural communication • Self-development.

Also can be observed a difference on how participants percept and understand the meaning of «tolerance» in the end and in the beginning of the project:

According to the results of pre- response (in the beginning of the course)	According to the results of post- response (in the end of the course)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most participants defined tolerance as respect, respect for people in general; • Patience and restraint; • Personal qualities - education, friendliness; • Much less often participants understood tolerance as equality between people, respectful attitude to representatives of other ethnic groups, to differences between people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most often, participants defined tolerance as respect for representatives of other ethnic groups, and respect for differences, understanding differences between people; • Also, more often participants defined tolerance through equality and equal treatment of people, regardless of their belonging to different groups and external characteristics, some emphasized the lack of stereotyping towards others; • Personal traits – friendliness, education, patience.

It was important to compare the participants' expectations before the Summer Academy starts with the most successful and remembered moments during the course:

Expectations	Most remembered and successful moments
<p>The main expectations from the project for the participants were related to rest and interaction with peers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy pastime, rest, positive emotions, new acquaintances, search for friends. <p>Also (but somewhat less frequently), participants also noted cognitive expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• In general – “to learn something new”; •• Learn about the traditions and cultures of other peoples, get acquainted with them. 	<p>At the end of the project, among the most memorable moments were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Days of cultures and their elements, workshops, some of them you could see below as Festival of colors; different folk dances; writing and recording of song about freedom connected with story of exodus from Egypt; visit of Museum “Parents’ house”, which displays artifacts of traditional Moldovan peasant life, cooking of traditional food like Moldovan, Syrian, Gagauz; creating of posters based on the Polish school of posters at 1950 -1980; “building” Ukrainian different cities based on renovation which come at the time of Ukrainian independence; designing own social initiatives, etc.); • Time, spent with their group of peers, activities organized by educators in the group; • The atmosphere in the Summer Academy in general; • Workshops (music, photography, psychology, etc.).

At the end of the course, the participants would like to share with other positive emotions and positive impressions, this was noted by the largest number of respondents, and also:

- Feelings of kindness, joy, love and respect
- Knowledge gained about the traditions and culture of other peoples
- Personal inner feelings

Most often, participants felt during the course a feeling of joy (35 people), happiness (11 people) and fun (8 people). Also participants shared that they felt euphoria (5), freedom (5), calmness (5), acceptance (4), pleasure (3), appeasement (3), enthusiasm (3), comfort (2) and satisfaction (2). Much less often participants expressed negative feelings during the course such as anxiety (2 people), melancholy (2), loneliness (2), and boredom (2).

According to participants’ feedback, such a course is needed for:

«In order that very different people can find a common language and learn as much as possible about other cultures so that they do not create false stereotypes about different ethnic groups.»

Danyil, 15 years

«Is necessary and important for people who are at a blind alley.»

Kirill, 15 years

«To unite people, to develop new interests, in order to destroy certain stereotypes about ethnic groups.»

Tanya, 14 years

«To improve the relations between adolescents of different ethnic groups and races.»

Dima, 13 years

6. Conclusions

The summative evaluation (pre- and post- comparisons) and the qualitative analysis of data, collected during the survey, has shown that during the course there is a change in how participants understand the aims of the course, emphasizing the importance of intercultural dialogue and breaking the stereotypes and prejudices; percept and understand tolerance and diversity.

Also were identified the most remembered moments and feelings of participants during the course (most of them sharing the positive feelings of joy and happiness). In general, the participants' feedback shows that the project's goals were realized successfully.

The program reflects diversity of Moldovan society, emphasizing the contribution of ethnic minorities and refugee to its culture and growth during the centuries and nowadays, as well as highlighted the interaction between cultures in past and present days.

7. Recommendations

To widespread this program to the other categories of groups (young leaders from ethnic minorities, young teachers, young journalists), who could influence on intercultural dialogue amongst the groups.

To cooperate closely with Ministry of Education and Bureau of Interethnic relations for sharing with some of educational materials developed in the frame of Summer Academy for national curriculum and textbooks on the topic of intercultural dialogue and diversity taking into consideration Moldova's context.

To empower component of interaction with communities after the end of Summer Academy on the level of cooperation between alumni and their communities, between alumni from different communities and between alumni, communities and Informal Education Center "Diversity".