

Report of Gagauzian Youth Leadership Program (GYLP)

Spring School: Critical Thinking

March 18 -23, 2019

From March 18 to March 19, at the Festival training camp, young leaders of Gagauzia studied the topic of critical thinking. This two-day training became the basis for further education of the GYLP leaders, since critical thinking and the ability to work in a team are the skills that will be necessary for them when studying project writing, in particular, and personal development.

On the first day of arrival, the GYLP team, young and inexperienced, started with an introductory part prepared by Sergey Yakimenko, a local expert on Critical Thinking. The introductory part was more focused on acquaintance and rapprochement of participants among themselves. But how to connect together 15 different guys from different parts of Gagauzia? The answer is simple - you need to be able to build a team out of them that will be sustainable throughout all subsequent schools. Exercises "My Book" and "Jenga" were able to solve this problem. The involved guys tried to find different approaches to solving the tasks that were given by the trainers. Only team spirit and group work helped the GYLP team to achieve the desired results.

On the second day, young leaders were able to apply critical thinking on practical tasks. A foreign expert Ondrej Schutz prepared the BALOON exercise, where it was necessary to analyze the incoming information and question it, draw valid conclusions, create its own assessment of what was happening.

Skills of arguing and persuasive justification - the key competence of critical thinking. Convincing should be made not by a beautiful presentation or form, only by comprehensively proven and disclosed arguments.

As a result of the two days passed, they learned about:

- Teamwork
- Critical thinking
- Effective argumentation

- Search of unusual solutions to usual situations

We noticed that this two-day training became the basis for further education of the GYLP participants, since critical thinking and the ability to work in a team are the skills that they will need in studying project writing and personal development.

What do our experts think about the past two days?

The participants of the project “Activization of Youth and Responsible Citizenship” are talented guys with great potential for further work. The program, built by us, was interactive and voluminous, and the information presented by us was perceived through the prism of experience. I think that the first meeting is quite useful for the participants and will serve as a basis for continuing to work with them at the next session”, reported Sergey Yakimenko.

“During my life I coached various categories of people, starting with company managers, ending with university students and school institutions. I happened to see more experienced people in this field, but drawing a parallel, the GYLP participants are like the youth from Bratislava. I cannot say that they are not professional, just do not have enough experience. This will be my task as a coach - to transfer the experience that they will need for further problem solving”, expressed Ondrej Schutz.

And what do the GYLP participants think about it?

“The first two days were very productive for me. The task before the facilitators was not easy - to rally us and make one common team of us. And they did it. I got experience and interesting ideas related to critical thinking ", explained Sergey Borlak

“The introductory first days helped me to meet and make friends with others. For me personally, critical thinking is an important component in life, because it makes you think outside the box and not stereotyped”, said Natalia Kroitor

“The cognitive training was presented by Serey Yakimenko and Ondrej Schutz. The trainers introduced me the system of open and closed questions, showed how to think critically and developed effective communication skills”, described Yevgenyi Iovchu

