

OBJECTIVE 01

To increase accountability and visibility of CSOs toward the public including measures to improve enabling environment for civil society

HAND IN HAND WITH AGIA VARVARA/KAŞGAR TO A MORE BEAUTIFUL KYRENIA

G.A.L. INITIATIVE



THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Planning and production of a series of events including concerts, folk dancing and a tango event from July to October 2016.

ABOUT THE G.A.L. INITIATIVE

G.A.L. was initiated in 2011 by Oya Kutsal and formed by students who were studying at "Kyrenia Anafartalar High School/Girne Anafartalar Lisesi", in Kyrenia. G.A.L. is not only an abbreviation of the school name but also stands for "Young Activist Leaders" in Turkish. The primary aim was to organize fundraising events for selected civil society organisations but as they continued to grow, the G.A.L. have broadened their scope and developed actions on culture, art, environmental issues and historical artifacts. The initiative currently has many supporters, as both the graduates and students are still actively involved.

STORY OF THE ACTION

"Agia Varvara/Kaşgar was a neighbourhood with high levels of violence. Both visitors and locals were restless. Students were even afraid of walking in their neighborhood. We heard that the "general directorate of the police" called for an active citizenship initiative but had to end it due to low interest from CSOs. We wanted to act and change the situation in Agia Varvara/Kaşgar so we met with "the head of the police" and agreed to run this action in cooperation with them. The responsibility for the action execution was on the youth's shoulders."

Ogan Güntem

The "general directorate of police" wanted to cooperate with citizens to take a preventative approach to stopping acts of violence. They identified Mavi Kordon Street in Agia Varvara/Kaşgar as a pilot for this project. Active citizenship has been a useful tool in crime prevention, where the involved parties could address the negative impact of the crimes on the socio-economic development of their community. The G.A.L. Initiative, with support from Grow Civic, has put forward an action to create social events for the people living in the neighborhood to fulfill their social needs.

With the aim of improving the quality of life on Mavi Kordon Street in Agia Varvara/Kaşgar, Kyrenia, a series of events has been organized, including a concert, a folk-dancing show and a tango show. The action was also designed as an advocacy project to attract duty bearers' interest in investing in an area that had been left idle for so long.

"We aimed to imbue the youth, both G.A.L. representatives and locals, with the culture of social responsibility and cooperation. Almost thirty students from G.A.L. showed great responsibility and teamwork. Having the experience of planning, organizing and executing these events has led to a positive transformation in their lives."

Oya Kutsal

One of the most critical challenges was the neighborhood violence, which put their safety at risk.

"People living in the neighborhood were eager to step in, and "the police" was not intervening on time during these quarrels. Both the Kyrenia local community and the sponsors were supporting the implementation of the action, but it was difficult to continue through the violence. The local community had to place security at the entrance of the area."

Oya Kutsal

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The action aimed at developing and sustaining the bridge between the civil society actors and duty bearers, while addressing the issue at the grassroots level. Their main focus was on economic and social inequality and empowering a neglected group. Unfortunately, the action could not be implemented in full due to safety risk. However the action successfully reached its goal of attracting duty bearers' interest to invest in the area: economic development, and increased security were promoted in the region. Agia Varvara/Kaşgar is no longer a violent neighborhood and is attracting people as an alternative promenade on Kyrenia's seafront.



WHAT'S NEXT?

The initiative will continue to develop more projects but their involvement in Agia Varvara's/Kaşgar's transformation has finished.

TO FIND MORE ABOUT THE ACTION

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