

## OBJECTIVE 02

To promote Human Rights and  
Democracy, involving citizens in policy  
dialogue, design and monitoring

# EXPRESS IN EQUALITY FOR EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Aycan Garip



Photo Credit: Dr. Aycan Garip



## THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Strengthening the efforts for self-empowerment of disadvantaged youths in Nicosia

Organisation of the "Storytelling Through Art Workshop" on 29 September and 5 October 2019 in Nicosia.

Production of a short documentary presenting the lives of participants, entitled "Step-by-step".

Online screening of the documentary with a panel entitled "Create your own story: equality, expression, empowerment" on 31 August 2020.

## ABOUT DR. AYCAN GARİP

Dr. Aycan Garip is a freelance project coordinator and writing consultant. She is also an audio-visual artist and performer who also produces, writes and directs music videos and short visual essays. Passionate about providing a platform for overlooked and suppressed communities and raising awareness of their struggles, Garip aims to continue her efforts in exploring creative means of communication to increase awareness and visibility of underrepresented and overlooked communities.

## STORY OF THE ACTION

The action aimed at introducing basic methods of co-creation to disadvantaged youth dancers and guiding them to structure their own stories through their chosen artistic practises.

It strengthened the efforts for self-empowerment for disadvantaged youth. It gave visibility to young talents to alter prejudices among the Turkish Cypriot community and created a platform for disadvantaged youth to have their voices heard and acknowledged by local bodies. Furthermore, the action provided space, time, and know-how for young immigrants to discover their talents. Also, it contributed to the visibility of young female performers. Finally, it worked towards the inclusion of the Roma community in artistic and social activities within the Walled City of Nicosia.



Photo Credit: Dr. Ayca Garip

The first activity was two-day "Storytelling through Art Workshop" conducted by Ioana Turcan, a Romanian visual artist, filmmaker, Gizem Nalbant, a dancer and choreographer, Ekin Çalışır, a producer and a documentary film director. The first day was dedicated to discussions and sharing of stories led by Gizem Nalbant. Dancers conveyed to one another the role and significance of dance in their own lives, the difficulties faced because of their desires to dance and their personal stories of how they found freedom in dancing. For a week, dancers worked individually and collectively, along with Ioana and Gizem, to devise a choreography expressing their lives the stories and challenges they previously shared in the old city of Nicosia. Ioana and Gizem's guidance on 'creative processes' resonated not only with choreography but life itself. On the second day, this choreography was performed and filmed.

*"The highlight of the action was a storytelling workshop, listening to each participant's take on their relationship to dance and how it made them feel, how it was liberating for some and meditative for others. Seeing the participants dance and choreograph, watching their process of choosing their song collectively and doing this all in a supportive, empathetic, respectful manner reassured the project team that this project was the right choice. It further confirmed that the talent and potential of the youth in the old city of Nicosia should not be overlooked any longer."*

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The outcome of the discussions was used for the short documentary's narrative which focused on two Roma dancers and their attempts to encourage the participation of youth in their creative practice.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the documentary screening was held online followed by a panel named "Create your own story: equality, expression, empowerment" on 31 August 2020. The final activity has raised awareness of stakeholders, duty bearers and persons with access to local bodies on the struggle and lack of opportunities, resources, and attention of the creative youth in Nicosia Walled City.

## RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The action managed to strengthen self-empowerment of disadvantaged youth by providing them tools and contacts and making their voices heard. It provided visibility to young talents by creating short documentary and bringing their stories to the attention of duty bearers and stakeholders. A platform for dialogue was created with local bodies to address the obstacles faced by youth in terms of creative practice and self-expression. The action contributed towards the visibility of young female performers by encouraging them to exist and perform within a public and male-dominated sphere without the fear of being judged.

*"The most gratifying and heart-breaking feedback was that the participants commented on how no Cypriot had expressed interest in their stories, lives, art, and abilities and that the Action had given them hope that not all Cypriots were apathetic to their struggle and hardship."*

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## WHAT'S NEXT?

The action has already contacted PeacePlayers Cyprus for potential future collaboration. It will also liaise with other youth-oriented organisations and CSOs willing to work with youth in Nicosia old city. Meetings will be arranged with duty bearers and local bodies with the assistance of the panel participants. Participants of the storytelling workshop will be encouraged and assisted in taking action.

TO FIND  
MORE ABOUT  
THE ACTION



"Step-by-step" Documentary  
Adım Adım - Lefkoşa on Vimeo



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