

## ADVERTISEMEN ON THE RADIO, WHICH CHANGED MY DESTINY



Last year when I found out that I did not enter the University at the department of law, I thought that my life ended and I never find myself in this incapable world, where everything depends on money and there is no place for girls like me. I was very upset and thought to return to Dilidjan, where my main occupation was talks and discussions about injustice and hopeless of fate. I have been depressed from excitement and emotion and lost my hope.

By good fortune I heard through the radio an advertisement that Young Women's Leadership Institute announced that submissions are accepted in Yerevan, Massis, Ashtarak, Armavir. I didn't believe that it was possible to get education free of charge; for all that I decided to visit the Center for the Development of Civil Society.

During my first visit to the Center I was inspired because I saw many kind and sympathetic people who are working on voluntary basis and carry out their difficult and responsible work. It was interesting for me to know about this Center's activities and to meet with people who do this noble mission.

I'll study English language and will be able to use a computer; it was my dream for ages. But it is not enough. I'll study such subjects, which will help me to find my position in this life. Can I become a leader? Have I got such abilities?

I was twice inspired when I heard one story. The brother of alumni of the previous year, who has finished University the Department of law, was surprised that his sister for nine months has got specific knowledge than he at the University.

We were deeply impressed by the presentation of project, which was organized for potential listeners. We got acquainted with our program and list of subjects, which we must take during nine months, such as: Computer, English language, Ethics and Aesthetics, Basic knowledge of business and management, Introduction to Gender, Civic Education, Leadership, Handicraft, Healthy Lifestyle. We found out that this program was formed with the purpose to give opportunity to young girls from vulnerable families to get education and appropriate skills free of charge in order to get job. Most of alumnees of the previous years have found work thanks to skills they got at the Center.

It was interesting that step-by-step we were including in public work, finding self-confidence in ourselves, and made our contributions in common cause, finding practical skills, which necessary for building our general home.

At the same time with our education we were formed in one team and had the same interests in common: our traditions of celebration Birthday party of the listeners of the institute. Beautifully we celebrated Christmas, New Year, the Day of Beauty and Motherhood. Organization of this holidays aloud us to show up our hidden talent. We presented our own pieces of handicraft at the exhibition of handicraft organized by IRD, which had a great success. Among the cultural events I should be a mentioned excursion to Sevan, Garni, Geghard, Matenadaran, Parajanov, Saryan, Khachatryan museums, which left unforgettable impressions at me. We had very interesting discussion after watching "Ararat" film of Atom Egoyan. Thus our leaders did all their best to give us knowledge and confidence that will be able to make rapid strides along the road of progress, that without filling isolated we can use our potential in the right way and to be active participators in development of Democratic Society.

Especially we liked additional special program called "Meeting with guest Speakers". Our guests were representatives from different international and local social organizations, Embassy, also Businessmen, politicians, painters and professors. They told about themselves, their activities, how they achieved perfection, and made career in a chosen field. In addition our international guests talked about traditions, customs of their countries and about their love to Armenia.

During these courses we got acquainted with new phenomenon NGO, Public Society, Women's movement. Having graphic example work of volunteers in CDCS, we also expressed our willingness to make our input in development of Civil Society in Armenia. We took part in the action "Clear Yerevan" organized by Tufenkyan Foundation and some of us accepted this idea to work as volunteers in different NGO's.

For us as a women was very important to have a conception of Feminism, Gender, women's movement, and women's rights. We have been shocked when we watched a film "Trafficking in Women", because we have never heard about it before. We are very grateful to organizers that we had this chance to watch this film, discussion and provided materials.

Now, when we want to compare us at the beginning and at the end of the course we can see apparent difference. We became freer and more self-confidant and broke free of stereotypes. Our mentality has changed. We know our rights and we can express ourselves with originality and enthusiasm. Now we can say that we became full and equal member of Society and have our own opinion.

On behalf my fellow students I want to express our gratitude to CDCS, leaders of Institute, Lecturers, Guest Speakers, all organizations, which had contributions for implementation this program. I think we never forget these classes, which

changed our life and it helped us to start a new life. I can't imagine what would have happened to me, if I haven't heard this fatal advertisement.

Martirosyan Hasmik, from Dilijan

