

Annex VIII:

Description of Mardamej projects

Student Lab Initiative (comprised of 10 participants from Mardamej), formed in frames of Mardamej, implemented the UNication project, which focused on creating a student-youth blog that aimed to create a unified platform for students. Its purpose was to provide a space for students to establish and strengthen inter-student and inter-university ties, share their student experiences, thoughts, and ideas, and express their opinions about other students' articles. UNication provided students with the freedom to express themselves and post articles on educational topics. The platform is also supposed to host podcasts that focused on issues of interest to students, including problems they faced, Armenian education system, and gaps and shortcomings in educational institutions. The podcasts featured discussions among students from various universities. The need for a platform like UNication arose from the fact that there was no existing platform that addressed the aforementioned problems and helped students integrate into university life more easily. UNication sought to bridge this gap by creating a unified platform that catered to the needs of students. The tools produced in frames of the project have been the **Student Blog, and the podcasts**. Thanks to the collaboration with Boon TV, the project's implementation had a significant impact. Instead of the originally planned 5 podcasts, the team was able to produce 18. The podcasts will be made available on the website immediately following their broadcast. At the time of writing, these are aired every Tuesday on Boon TV. Podcasts provide a comprehensive list of topics covered and produced by UNication. The topics are the following: (1) The importance of volunteering, (2) Formal and informal education, (3) Community youth in regions and Yerevan, (4) International programs for Armenian youth, (5) Tips for exam preparation, (6) Understanding student motivation, (7) The characteristics of an enterprising student, (8) Balancing work and education, (9) An exploration of students' rights, (10) Differences between distance learning and face-to-face education, (11) Student entertainment options, (12) How universities serve as a key to success, (13) Improving student-lecturer relations, (14) A discussion of in-demand and under-demand professions in Armenia, (15) Considerations when choosing a vocation, (16) The age at which students typically begin university, (17) The role of the student in Armenia, (18) Information about UNication and other initiatives.

The second project - **Capacity building of the youth workforce**, was implemented by a team of 3 from Mardamej. The team noted in their proposal and pitching, that in today's academic landscape, students face a challenge in presenting themselves to potential employers and positioning themselves competitively in the job market. This is largely due to the fact that the university-labor market relationship has not yet matured to a point where students can readily fill the necessary positions during or after graduation. Among the reasons for this is the lack of access to modern tools and resources that would help them succeed, such as the ability to use social networks effectively, certain soft skills, and other key competencies. To address this issue, the team has developed a plan to provide training courses led by professional trainers, which focused on equipping students with the skills necessary to present themselves effectively to employers. This will include instruction on crafting a comprehensive curriculum vitae (CV), writing an impactful motivation letter, preparing for interviews, and mastering essential soft skills. Additionally, the training will cover the purposeful use of information technologies,

specifically social network platforms such as LinkedIn, to maximize the probability of finding a job. The project was implemented at the Goris State University. The Personal Development Club, initiated by the project, hosted 8 meetings with 30 students aimed at contributing to the development of the abilities of students studying at Goris State University to find a job. The project team received positive feedback from 90% of the participants. There are already participants who have been hired thanks to the skills gained and CV made during the project. Anahit Amaryan, one of the participants, says: I would like to share with great joy that I have already received a job offer and am currently working at the A. D. Sakharov Armenian Human Rights Centre. By the way, I presented there the CV written during the course, which was highly approved by my supervisors, and the discussions held during the meetings helped a lot.

The third initiative, **Brian Center Youth Initiative**, comprised of 8 Mardamej participants, implements eponymous project, which is currently ongoing. The main problem, which the project is aimed at solving, refers to the insufficient level of conditions for writing research papers in the field of humanities and social sciences in universities and, as a result, the almost complete absence of this skill among students. The initiative aims to address the problem by developing students' research skills and abilities. Throughout the projects, students receive basic training on research methods and conduct research with the guidance of a mentor-lecturer. As a result, students will become involved in wider research-student activities and the student-mentor connection will be strengthened. The project seeks to institutionalize these activities, ensuring that they continue beyond the few months of this project. Additionally, the project aims to promote student self-government and democracy by establishing a self-governing student community that advocates for student rights and creates a student-centered university environment. The project will be completed and the results of the project will be evaluated in the next reporting period.

The fourth project – **iMap Initiative** comprised 6 participants of Mardamej and aimed enabling students and visitors to navigate in the YSU area to find faculties, classrooms and other university infrastructures through electronic maps to be developed in frames of the project. Unfortunately, after the initial phase of the project, the team formed in frames of Mardamej discontinued, and they realized the project was not feasible to be implemented with the funds available. The funds, therefore, were returned to EPF.