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“OPEN YOUTH WORK: EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE IN GYUMRI” PROJECT

Impact Study Analytical Report

(draft)

Gyumri "Youth Initiative Centre" NGO

Caucasus Research Resource Center – Armenia Foundation

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Introduction

“Open Youth Work: Empowering Young People in Gyumri” project was designed by the Gyumri "Youth Initiative Centre" NGO and Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia Foundation for the youth in the second largest city in Armenia – Gyumri. The project aimed at empowering young people in Gyumri through variety of services provided by the newly established Youth Centre.

“Open Youth Work: Empowering Young People in Gyumri” has been co-funded by the European Union (EU) and has been implemented within Small Grant Scheme of “Support to Civil Society Organizations Capacity Building” program funded by EU. The project was launched in October 2017 for one-year period with the intention to establish and insure continuous operation of the “Youth House” – first in Armenia Open Youth Centre (herein and after the Youth Centre).

In case the centre’s operation model and impact study justify the need of centre’s operation beyond the 12-month grant period, the legal owner of the centre - Gyumri "Youth Initiative Centre" NGO commits to attract financial resources for further operation of the centre.

The Youth Centre hosted its first beneficiaries on the 30th of April, 2018. This analysis covers the work of the centre in the four-month period from April 30 to August 10, 2018.

In this impact study the following sections will be covered: the background and the context of the project, the assessment methodology, the impact analysis by providing major facts and findings from the general visits, registered and long-term beneficiaries of the Centre and in the end there will be some concluding remarks and sets base for policy recommendations.

Background

The city of Gyumri was chosen for the location of the project, due to 1) child poverty rate (the highest of the region) (UNICEF 2009, 2016), 2) available data on youth situations and proposals for development (“Gyumri youth situation analysis”, 2015), 3) existing human resources, who would be able to carry out the work with little methodological support and 4) preliminary framework for local youth policy which underlines the importance of inclusion and participation (draft Gyumri Youth Policy Strategy, 2016).

Direct beneficiaries of the project are the following two groups:



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- 600 young people in the 13-18 age group, representing 6% of overall population in this age cohort in Gyumri (2011 census, NSS Armenia),
- 200 professionals working in the field of youth and/or directly with young people, including youth NGOs, high-school teachers and administrators, social workers and psychologists, researchers, volunteers, medical and law enforcement workers, etc.

There are also some guiding criteria related to gender, age and social status in terms of targeting direct beneficiaries:

- at least 50% of the direct beneficiaries of the project are girls and women,
- at least 75% of the direct beneficiaries of the project are young people below 18y.o.,
- at least 50% of the direct beneficiaries of the project are young people facing financial, social, physical, mental, psychological, educational and/or geographic challenges.

Indirect beneficiaries of the project are:

- the overall community of Gyumri: the families and peers of the young people attending the centre, the neighbourhood where the youth centre is located, the educational institutions which the young people attend, etc.,
- the recipients of the services provided by the 200 professionals involved in the capacity-building activities.

For this analysis only data deriving from the first group of direct beneficiaries will be presented. The activities of the second group of direct beneficiaries are not the purpose of this study. Yet the capacity building activities and their impact have been assessed in a separate report by the YIC project team.

Assessment Methodology

A unified data collection system was developed to collect the necessary data for the impact assessment of the project. Different sets of forms/questionnaires were prepared which aimed to gather information about the beneficiaries who visit the Centre on a daily basis. For this analysis the datasets generated from the Youth Centre's attendance form, registration form and long-term attendance/beneficiary form have been applied.



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- To track the number of direct beneficiaries every young person entering the Centre with the purpose of using its services was asked by the receptionist to fill in the attendance form where some basic information (name, surname, father's name, complete date of birth, contact information and indication of the first visit) was requested from the young person. More information (gender, number of visits, consent form status, registration form status) was added by the receptionist in the extended excel form.
- After the 4th/5th visit of a young person, one of the youth workers of the Centre conducted a small interview with him/her to fill in his/her registration form. The latter was similar to a demographic form where the young person's school type, computer/language literacy level, the number of household members, the number of the employed household members, housing type, emergency contacts and other relevant information was asked (in a form of an interview) and filled in by the youth worker.
- Long-term attendance/beneficiary form was filled in by a youth worker again in a form of an interview with the young beneficiaries. Those beneficiaries (1) should have passed the registration interview; (2) should have attended the Centre at least 10 times; (3) their first attendance should have happened before July 1, 2018; (4) they still continue attending the Centre. Long-term attendance form aims at evaluating the quality and usefulness of the services provided by the Centre and also evaluating the work of the Centre's team.

Impact Analysis: Major Facts and Figures

In this section the key findings and major facts of the Youth Centre's operation will be presented with different graphs and charts over the four months of its operation. The first part - (a) - examines the data from general visits and registered beneficiaries' demographic profile, meanwhile the second part – (b) - analyses the findings from the long-term beneficiaries' interviews.

General visits and registered beneficiaries' demographic profile

In the period of April 30 to August 10 the Centre recorded 206 attendance -137 male and 69 female attendees (Figure 1). This is the total number of main beneficiaries who visited the Centre in the mentioned period, where the number of boys is twice more compared to the number of girls.

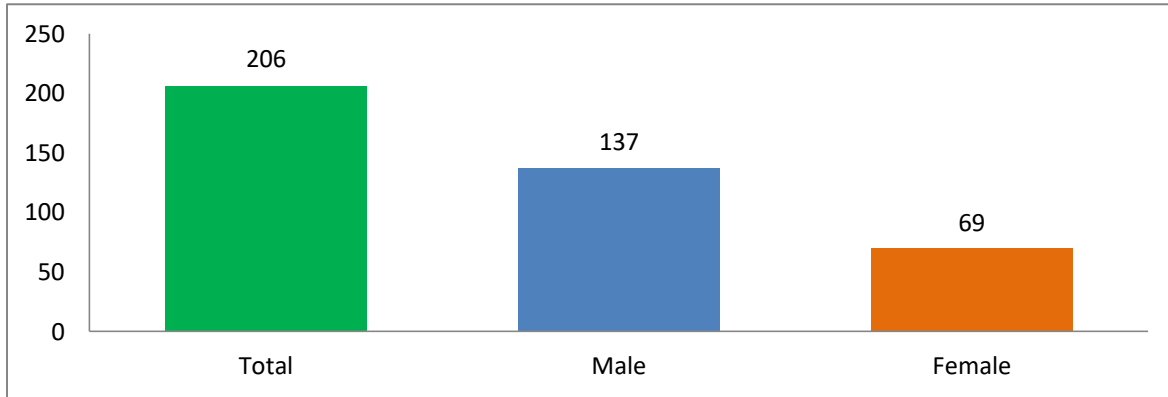


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Figure 1: Total number of main beneficiaries who visited the centre

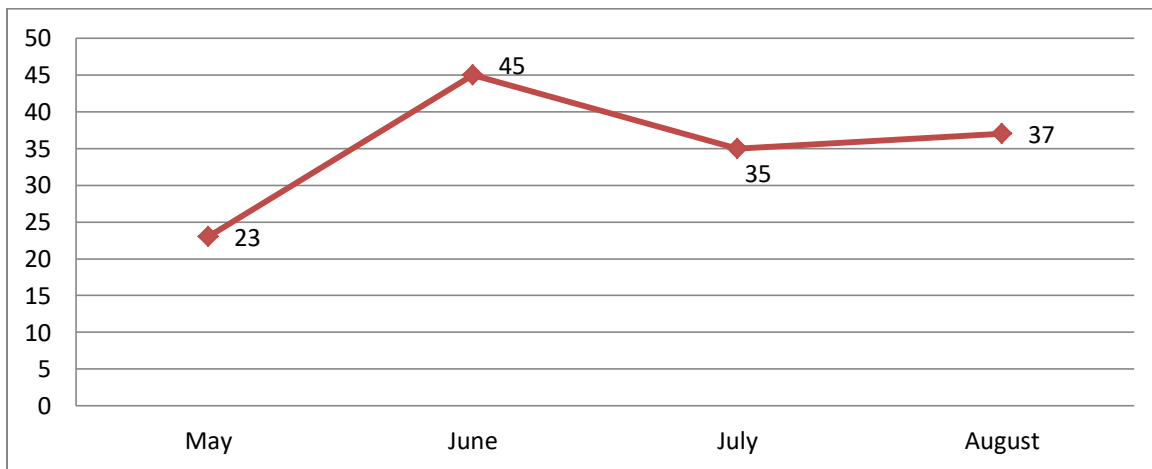
Main beneficiaries: young people aged 13-18



In Figure 2 we can see that the daily average number of visits per month at the Centre has gradually increased from May (23 visits) to June (45 visits). Then we see that in July the daily average number of visits has decreased to 35 visits and then remained almost constant in August with 37 visits. The high attendance level in June is conditioned by the holiday on The International Day for Protection of Children on June 1. For instance, the number of visits on June 1 reached to its peak with 66 visits. The following days the Centre recorded a high number of visits as well.

Figure 2: Daily average number of visits per month at the centre

May-August, 2018



Although the main beneficiaries of the Centre are young people in the 13-18 age group, however, the centre hosted 11- and 12-year-old beneficiaries as well. In Figure 3 below we see that the total number of 11- and 12-year-old youngsters is 53 – out of which 39 are male and 14

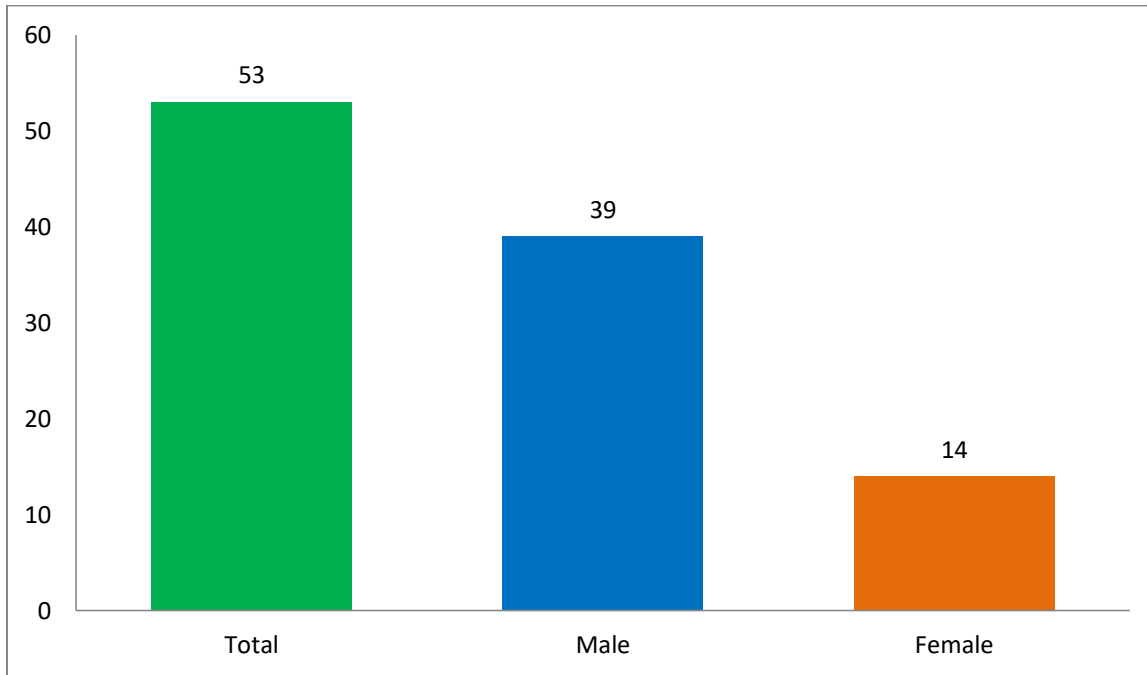


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are female. The gender gap is visible here as well, where boys were more active in attending the Centre than the girls.

Figure 3: Total number of 11- and 12-year-old beneficiaries who visited the centre



As mentioned in the assessment methodology section of this report, the young person who visits the Centre for 4-5 times he/she should get registered. The youth workers register the beneficiary by filling in the registration form which covers questions such as: the young person’s school type, computer/language literacy level, the number of household members, the number of the employed household members, housing type, emergency contacts and other information. In the reporting period there were 84 registered beneficiaries – 51 male and 33 female (Figure 4) who were mostly born in 2003, 2004 and 2005 (Figure 5). Here we can see that the proportional gap of the boys and the girls attending the Centre has decreased.



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Figure 4: Total number of registered beneficiaries

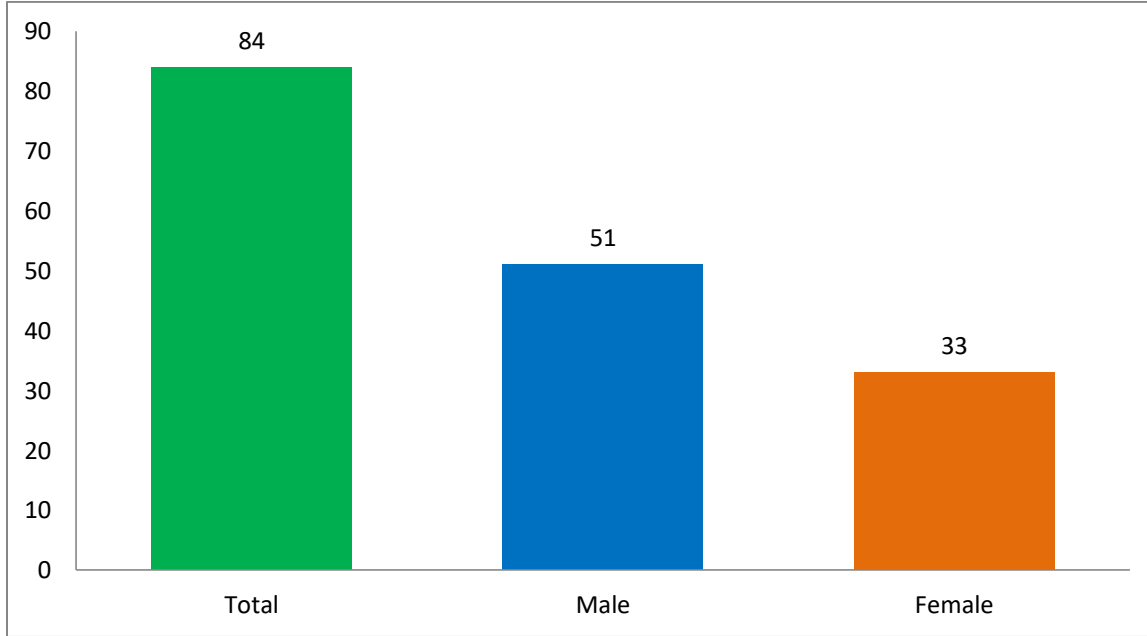
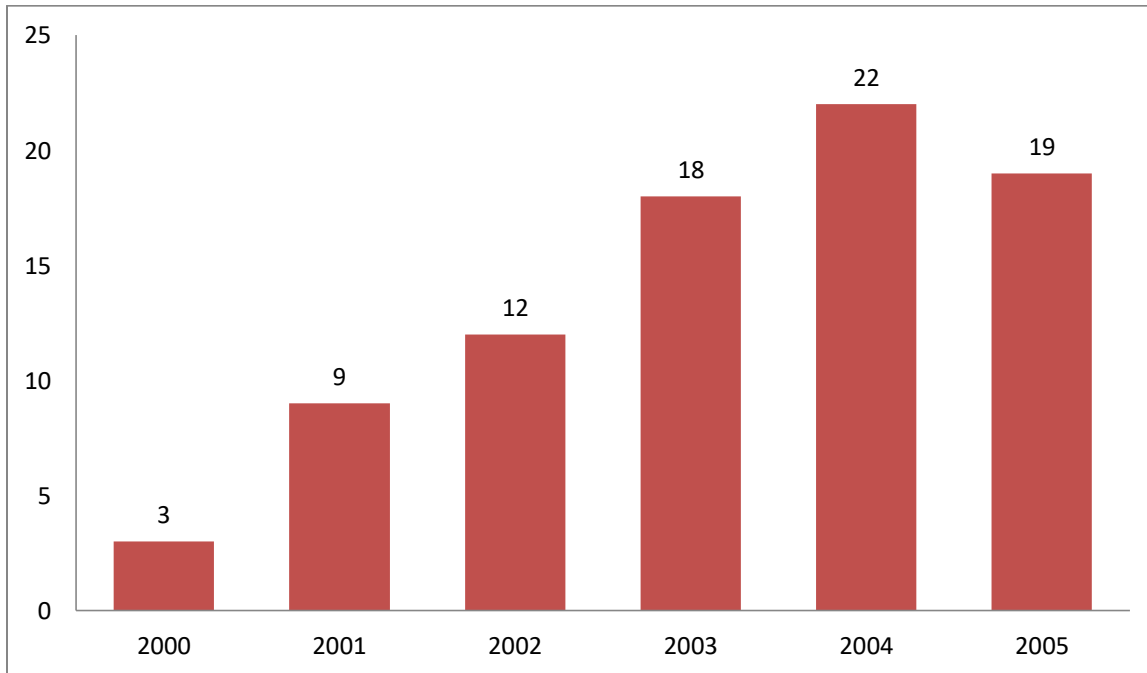


Figure 5: The number of registered beneficiaries by birthdate





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The number of registered beneficiaries who live in container houses in Gyumri city is 21 (Figure 6). It shows that one-quarter of the registered beneficiaries represents vulnerable groups. Moreover, 33 registered beneficiaries represent households where only one person is employed (Figure 7) which means that there is high level of economic vulnerability in those households as well.

Figure 6: The number of registered beneficiaries by housing type

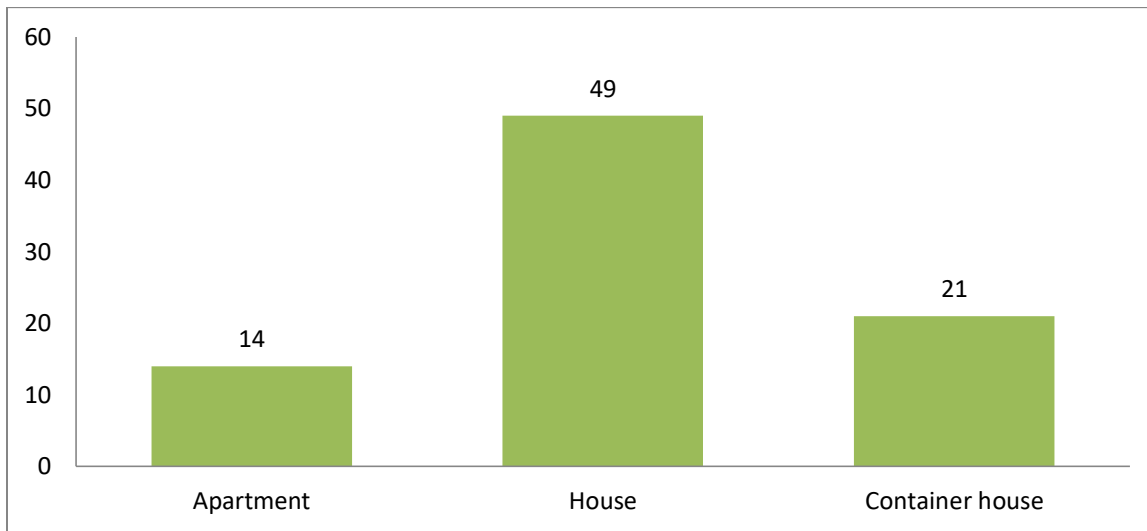
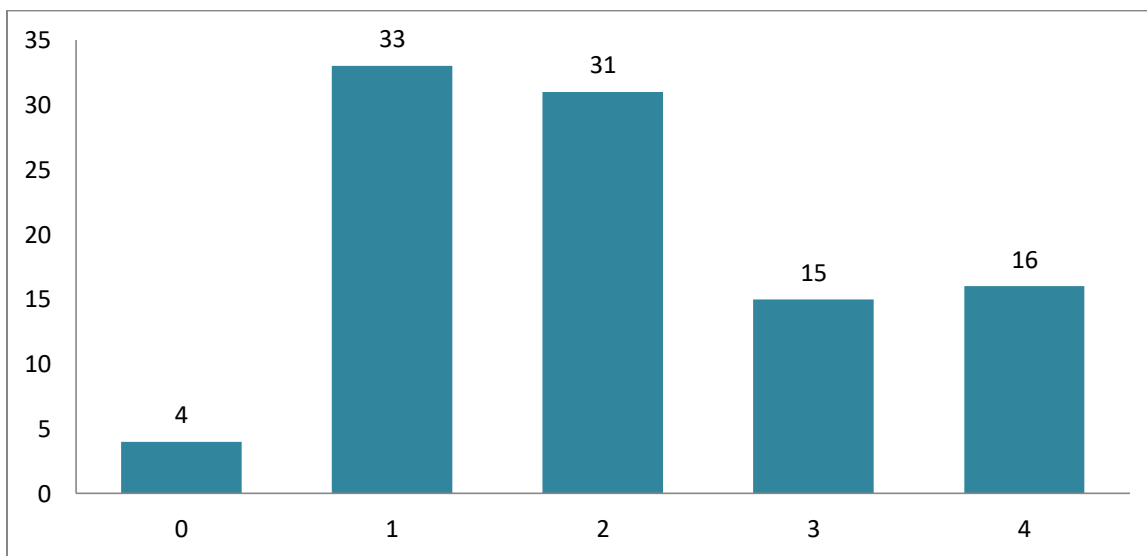


Figure 7: The number of employed people per each household





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The figures below depict the educational background of the main beneficiaries who visited the Centre in the reporting period. In Figure 8 we see that 49 out of 84 main beneficiaries represent primary school and only 13 beneficiaries receive vocational or higher education. The computer literacy level shows that more than one-fourth of the main beneficiaries are in the beginner’s level (Figure 9). Meanwhile the English knowledge of the beneficiaries has low records: 57 of them at the beginner’s level or not having any English knowledge at all (Figure 10).

Figure 8: The number of registered beneficiaries by school type

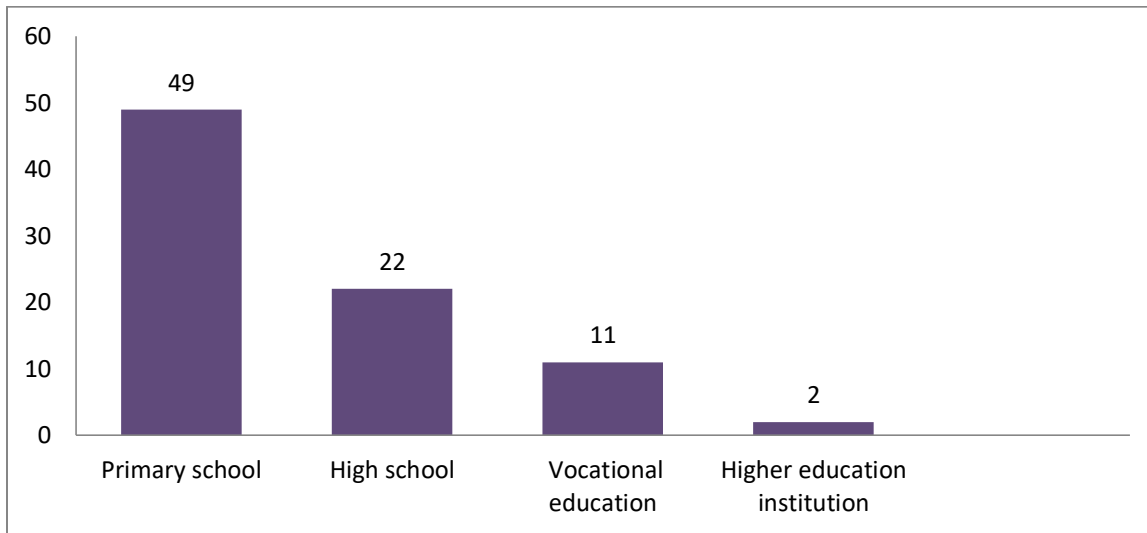
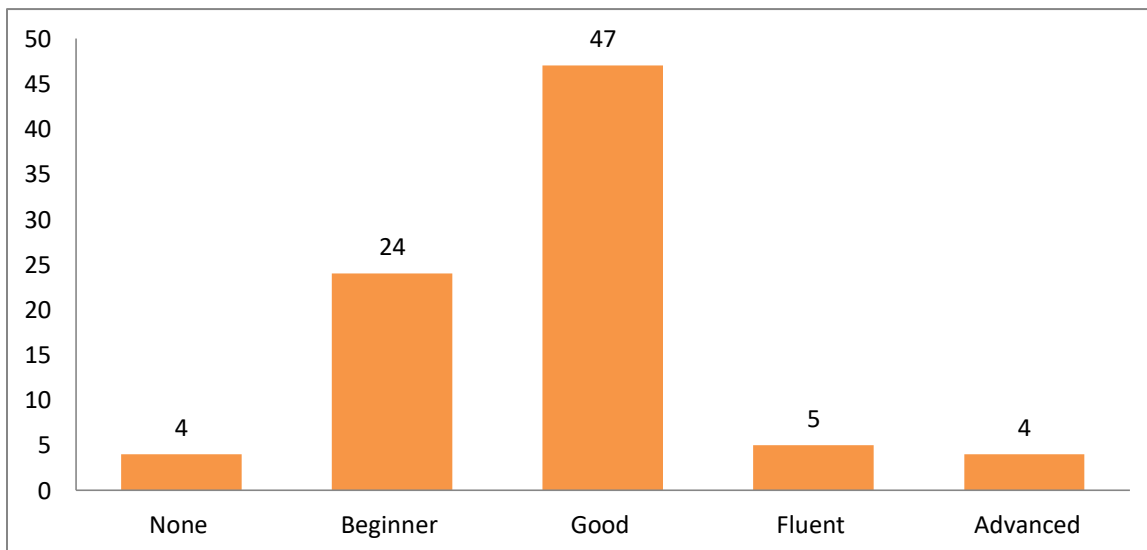


Figure 9: Computer literacy level

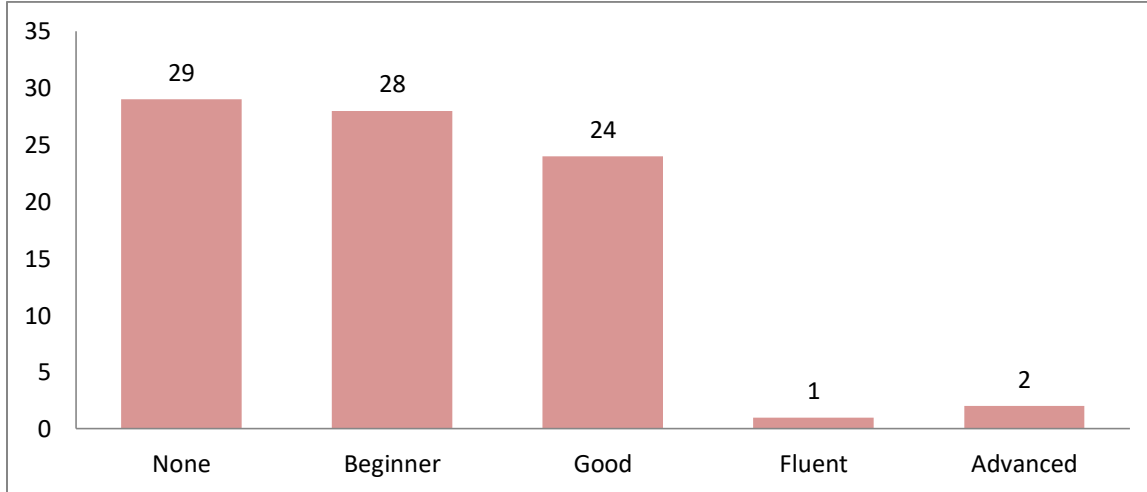




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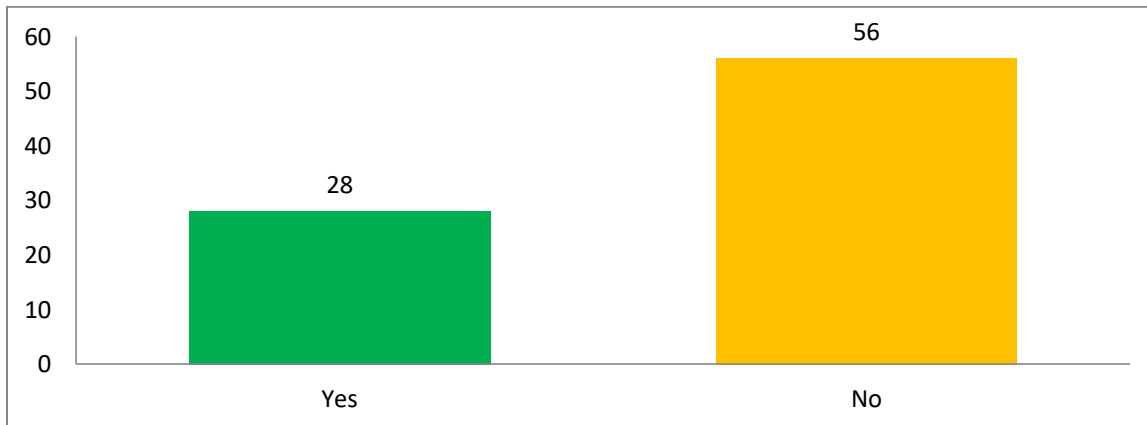


Figure 10: English knowledge



In the registration form young beneficiaries of the Youth Centre are also asked about their extracurricular activities. To the question if they have ever taken part in any event organized by a youth centre or a cultural centre out of the school curriculum 56 beneficiaries out of 84 replied “No” (Figure 11). This means that their activities are limited only on school premises. However, to the question if they have visited a youth centre or a cultural centre before, the majority of them replied “Yes” (Figure 12) meaning that at least once they visited a youth centre or a cultural centre. The latter, for instance, could be a concert hall or a theatre.

Figure 11: Have you ever taken part in any event organized by a youth centre or a cultural centre out of the school curriculum?

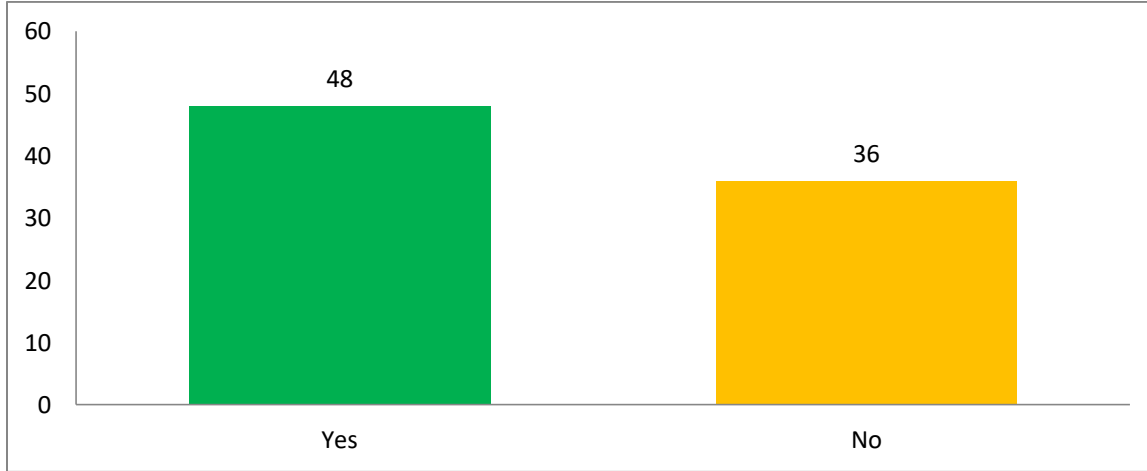




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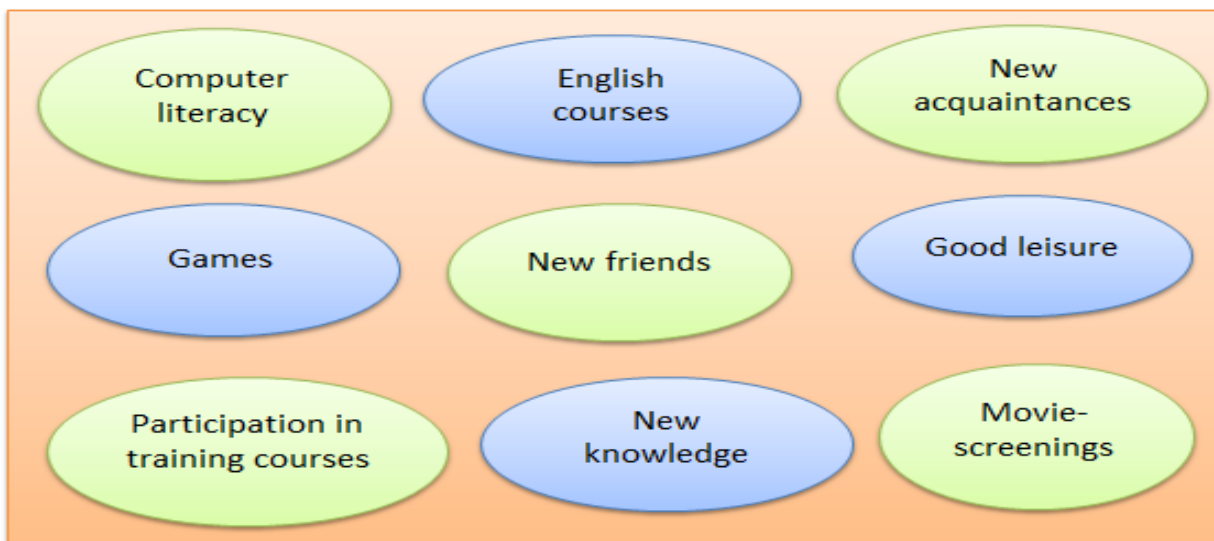


Figure 12: Have you visited a youth centre or a cultural centre before?



The young beneficiaries of the project were also asked about their expectations from the Youth Centre. Figure 13 sums up the most frequent responses according to which young people in Gyumri expect to gain new competences by raising their computer literacy level and the level of English knowledge. They aim to gain new knowledge also by participating in various training courses and movie-screenings organized at the Centre. The youngsters are also enthusiastic to make new friends and acquaintances and spend quality leisure time with them.

Figure 13: What are your expectations from the Youth House?





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Long-term attendance key findings

In this part we will analyse the key findings of the long-term attendance interviews conducted with the beneficiaries who (1) have passed the registration interview; (2) who have attended the centre at least 10 times; (3) whose first attendance happened before July 1, 2018; (4) who still continue attending the centre. Forty four out of 84 registered beneficiaries took part in the long-term attendance interviews - 25 male and 19 female (Figure 13). It is important to note that the number of boys and girl have become very close in terms of long-term attendance of the main beneficiaries.

**Figure 13: Long-term attendance:
Number of beneficiaries by gender
The number of respondents: 44**

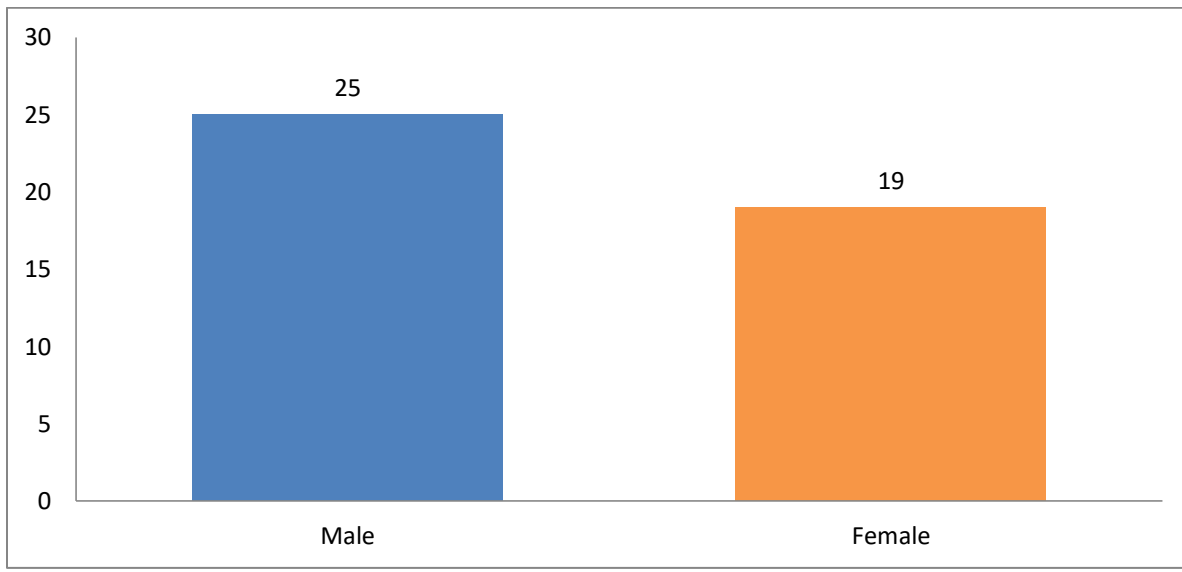


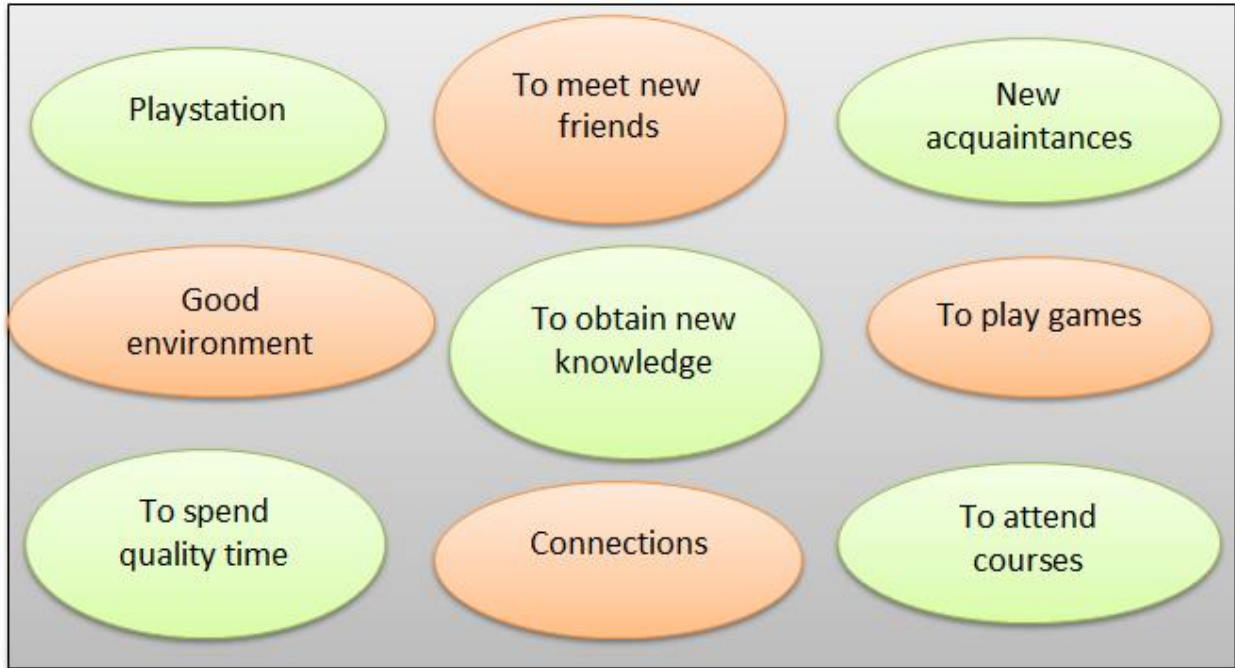
Figure 14 sums the responses of the long-term beneficiaries to the question what is their motivation to attend the Centre. Here we see that the responses are identical with the ones what they expected from the Centre to get, such as: to attend courses and gain new knowledge, to play games and Playstation, to meet new friends and acquaintances.



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Figure 14: Long-term attendance:
What is your main motivation to attend the centre?
The number of respondents: 44



The favourite services by gender received at the Centre is depicted in Figure 15. Proportionally almost the same number male and female beneficiaries prefer table games, computers, Playstation, outdoor games and the kitchen of the Centre. The preferences to get engaged in the Centre conclude the musical activities, the library and thee stationary. The most interesting and useful clubs of the Centre both for male and female beneficiaries are the movie-screening, English and music clubs (Figure 16).



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Figure 15: Long-term attendance:
Which services do you like getting most? (by gender)
The number of respondents: 44

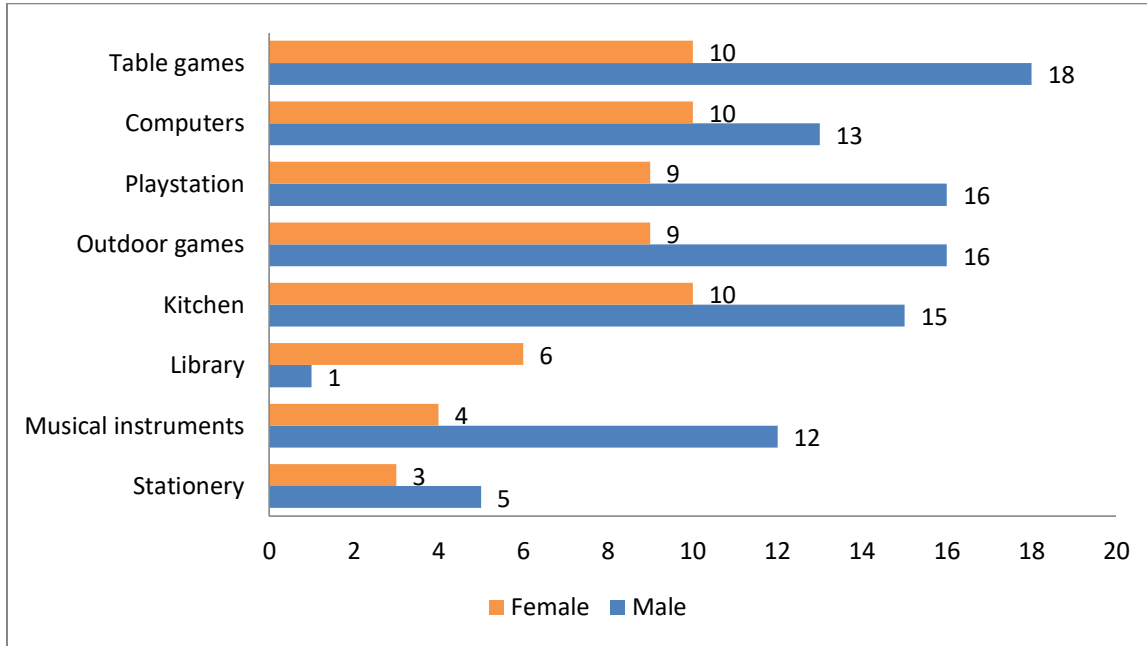
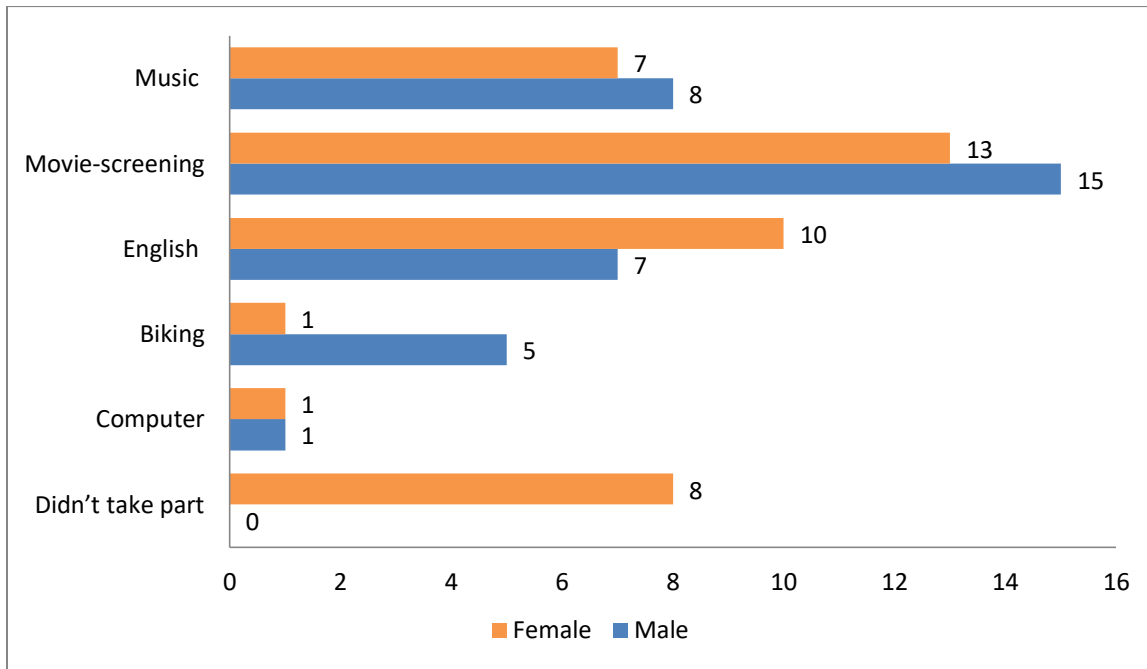


Figure 16: Long-term attendance:
Which clubs were the most interesting and useful? (by gender)
The number of respondents: 44



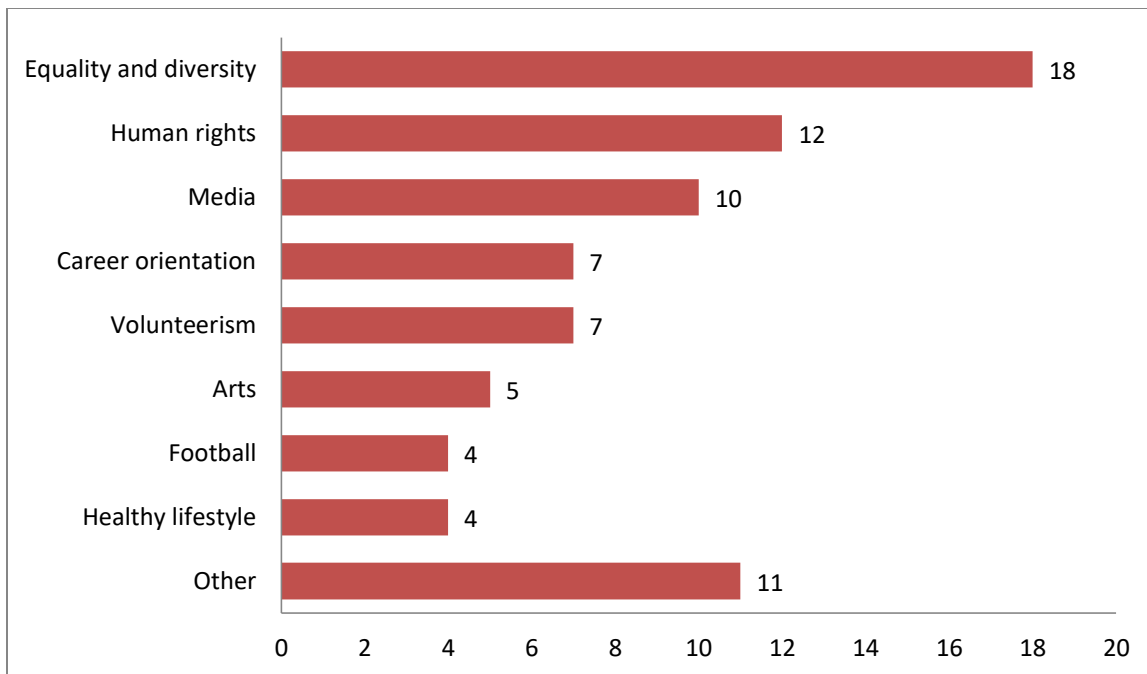


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The Centre also hosted many workshops/thematic weeks. In figure 17 we see that the equality and diversity, human rights and media thematic weeks were the most interesting for the long-term beneficiaries of the Centre. Other workshops marked by them as interesting are the topics on career orientation, volunteerism, arts, football and healthy lifestyle.

Figure 17: Long-term attendance:
Which workshops/thematic weeks organized by the centre were the most interesting?
The number of respondents: 44



Other services that the long-term beneficiaries would like the Centre to offer them are summed up in Figure 18. The youngsters who attended the Centre for at least 10 times would also like to have playground, football field, volleyball net, book discussions and intellectual club, also sports equipment and dance club (Figure 18). To the question what kind of new opportunities long-term beneficiaries would like to be offered out of the centre for their development, they stated that they need more reading and new technological centre, playground and sports activities, music and dance clubs and more foreign languages courses (Figure 19).



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Figure 18: Long-term attendance:
Apart from the services provided by the centre what else would you like the centre to offer?
The number of respondents: 44

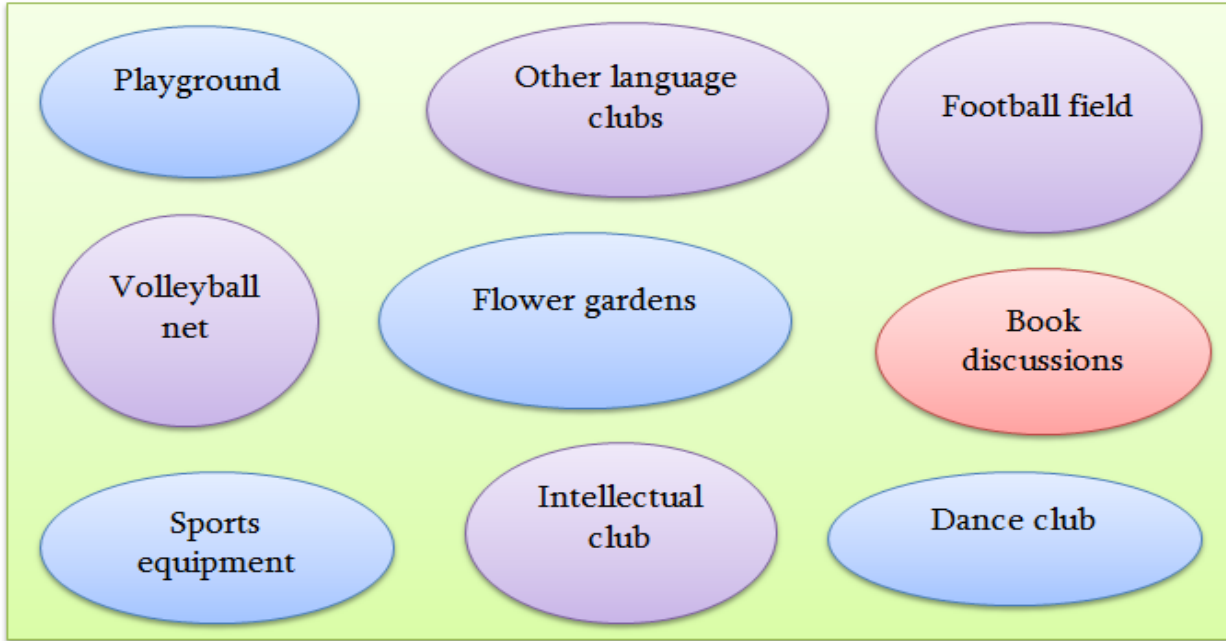
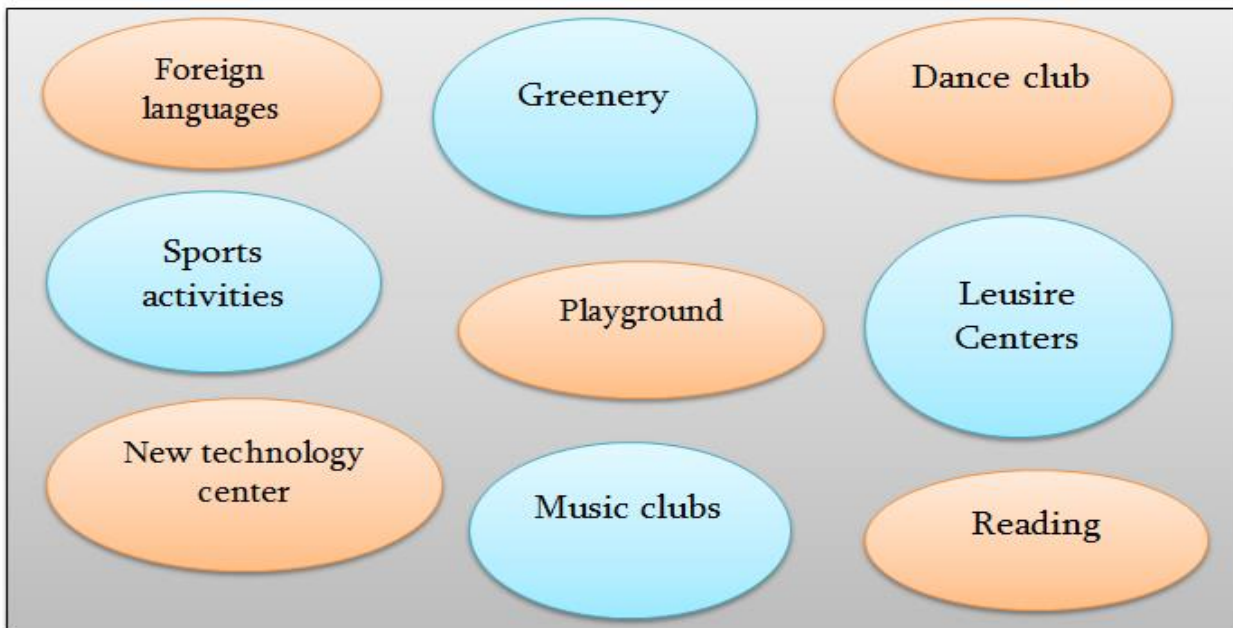


Figure 19: Long-term attendance:
What kind of new opportunities would you like to be offered out of the centre for your development?
The number of respondents: 44





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The last two questions significant for this analysis are presented in Figure 20 and Figure 21. Thirty seven out of 44 long-term beneficiaries would definitely recommend their friends to attend the Centre (Figure 20). Moreover, 43 out of 44 long-term beneficiaries rated the work of the Centre's team as "Very good" (Figure 21).

Figure 20: Long-term attendance:
Would you recommend your friends to attend the centre?
The number of respondents: 44

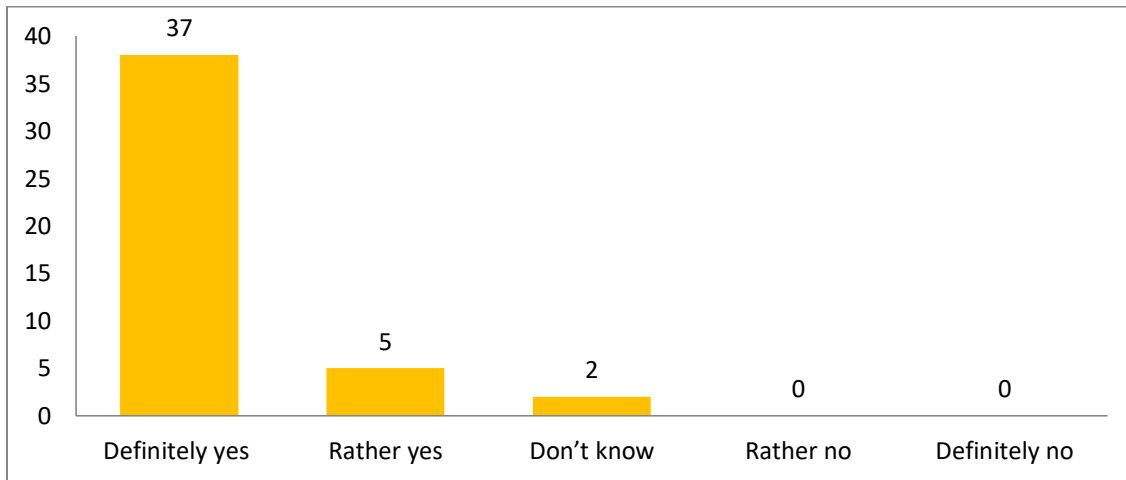
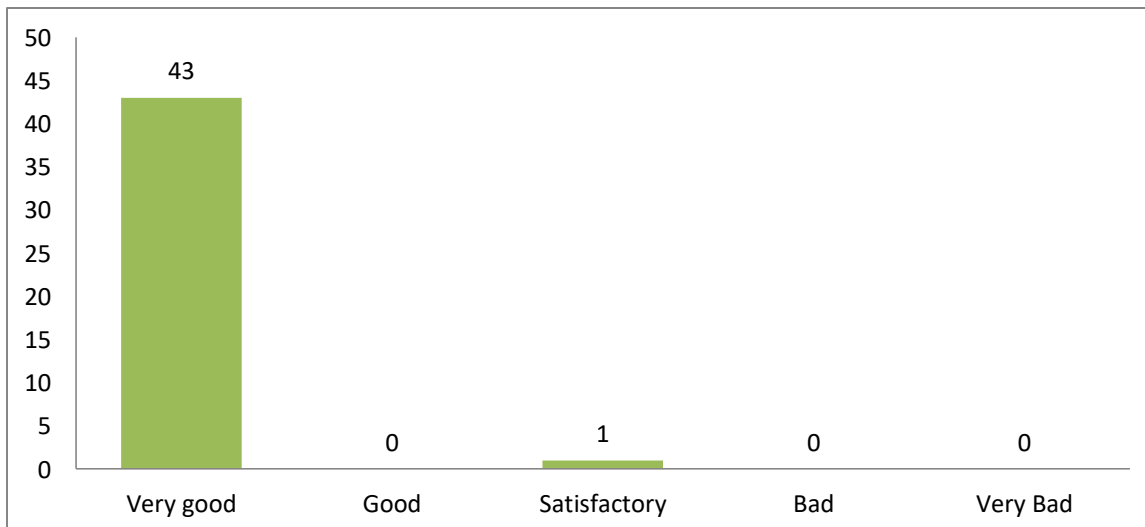


Figure 21: Long-term attendance:
How would you rate the work of the centre's team?
The number of respondents: 44





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Conclusion

To conclude some of the key aspects of the Youth Centre's operation period in Gyumri we should take into consideration the fact that the Centre operated 4 months instead of 10 as it was initially planned. Hence, instead of reaching the initial goal of 600 13-18-year-old young people, the Centre recorded 259 beneficiaries in 4 months which is still a high attendance level. The recommendations to be provided based on this study are the result of the work within this 4-month period. There were some objective reasons - such as the delayed contracting with the donor and a different from initially planned season for the start of the project, which in its turn resulted in the delays and issues connected to the reconstruction and the renovation of the Centre, and consequently – its operation date.

Considering the factor of gender equality, we saw in this analysis that initially the gender gap was quite high. However, over the time the gap has been decreasing and in the final stage of assessing the long-term beneficiaries' feedback we recorded that the number of boys and girls have become very close if not identical. As shown in the charts of the previous sections of this impact study, beneficiaries who benefitted from the Centre's activities represent vulnerable groups mostly from primary school. The Centre provided them space and a variety of services to make a favourable environment for them to communicate with their peers, to spend quality leisure time with them and most importantly to increase their computer literacy level, to learn English and to get engaged in community work. The high satisfaction level of the main beneficiaries of the Centre is their evaluation of the Centre's team work as "Very good" (Figure 21: 43 out of 44) and the fact that most of them would definitely recommend their friends to visit the Centre (Figure 20: 37 out of 44).

Herein some key conclusions from this study that we have recorded based on the data provided above and our observations:

- positive dynamics and trends in terms of the young beneficiaries' self-development,
- positive trends in terms of balancing the gender gap among the young beneficiaries attending the Centre,
- very satisfying and positive feedback on the work of the Centre's team from the long-term beneficiaries' side.

This analysis shows that the project met or is on the way to fulfilling the initial criteria set in the beginning:



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- at least 50% of the direct beneficiaries of the project are girls and women,
- at least 75% of the direct beneficiaries of the project are young people below 18y.o.,
- at least 50% of the direct beneficiaries of the project are young people facing financial, social, physical, mental, psychological, educational and/or geographic challenges.

It is important to also note, that we named this analysis as impact study analytical report, however, to perform a real impact study we would need more time to operate the Centre and more data to analyse the results and to measure the impact of the project. This analysis is more of a mid-term assessment of the Centre's activities. Hence, to continue the successful implementation of the project we would need the support of various state and international actors. Only after the long-term operation of the model we can draw conclusions whether the model is truly successful and whether we should replicate this model in other cities of Armenia or elsewhere.