



CURE'S NEWSLETTER

"CURRICULUM REFORM FOR PROMOTING CIVIC EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN ISRAEL AND IN GEORGIA"

CURE's Coordinator's Introduction to CURE's First Edition Newsletter,

Dr. Rhonda Sofer, Gordon Academic College of Education, and Haifa, Israel

Curriculum Reform for Promoting Democracy and Civic Education in higher education in Israel and in Georgia (CURE) is an ERASMUS+ Key Action 2 Capacity Building for Higher Education Project that was selected for the 2016 programs. It is a three year project which unites professionals from 17 different institutions located in six different countries who share a common vision that relates to the role of higher education and more specifically teacher-training programs in promoting values that are so essential for our societies today. This is a joint project which is aimed to directly benefit Israeli and Georgian universities and colleges. Gordon Academic College of Education from Haifa Israel is the coordinating institution and I am privileged to be the coordinator of this project. I am an anthropologist and head GACE's Office of International relations and had the amazing experience of coordinating the successful program of DOIT (<http://tempus-doit.sapir.ac.il/>) that promoted Diversity and Children's Rights in teacher-training programs (also in Georgia and in Israel). It is our aim that CURE's important programs that consist of developing new courses; Faculty training workshops; Student leadership training for student activities, establishing Civic education clubs/centers at CURE's Israeli and Georgian universities, and establishing civic clubs in schools where students practice teach will, like DOIT, have a sustainable impact on our institutions and other institutions in our societies.



Our partners include from Israel: Sakhnin Academic College of Education, Givat Washington Academic College of Education, David Yellin College, and Sapir Academic College. From Georgia: Iliia State University, Ivan Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Samtskhe-Javakheti State University, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Kutaisi University, Civic Development Institute. EU partners: Pädagogische Hochschule of Upper Austria in Linz, University of Salzburg (AU), Canterbury Christ Church (UK); Tallin University (Es), Jagiellonski University (Po) and Jaan Tonisson Institute (Es).

This newspaper is aimed to share the experiences of the faculty and students who participate in CURE's multi-dimensional and dynamic programs as well as the results of our work with other academic institutions and key stakeholders of higher education in our countries. For more details of our program we invite you to visit our website at: <https://cure.erasmus-plus.org.il/> and visit our webpage on facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1864512057094561/>). In addition you are welcome to write to me about our program or comments about this newspaper at: rhonda@gordon.ac.il

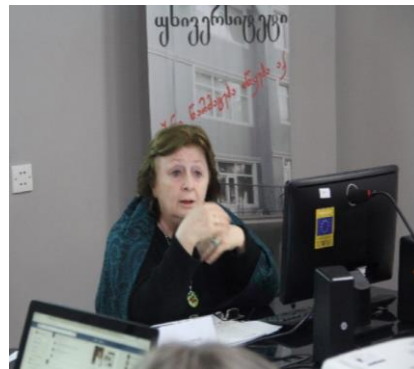
Respectfully, Rhonda Sofer, Coordinator of CURE and Director of the International Office at Gordon Academic College of Education.

Why participate in CURE? Interviews with key stakeholders, faculty and students from Georgia.

Prof. Ketevan Chkuaseli, Head of Department of Education Sciences at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Ivan Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University was willing to share her feelings about CURE with Prof. Izabella Petriashvili who asked her the following questions:

What does CURE project mean to you?

Today the issue of civic education is an important topic in the whole world, especially in Georgia, as we have left the Soviet mentality and need to re-evaluate citizenship and democratic principles. Therefore, this project gives us the opportunity to get acquainted with the newest trends in this sphere.



Why are you personally and as the Department Head participating in this project?

We are preparing teachers, and teachers are the very people who should start raising civic awareness of students. That's why it is very important to have the innovative courses that promote civic education and democratic principles in our society.

What are your expectations about the project outcomes?

As we have many educational programs and we need to share the international vision and expertise to deliver correct messages to new generations. Within this project, I got acquainted with many representatives of European and Israeli universities with whom I will continue academic and professional collaboration with even after the project is completed. New courses will be created which will meet the international standards. This semester we are already piloting the course: **Civic Education and Democracy in Georgia: challenges and pathways**. Also, Special Mobility Strand gives us the opportunity to raise the qualification of our faculty and train the trainers in civic education.



Students are also an important part of CURE's dynamic multi-dimensional program and one of the aims of CURE's projects is to raise civic awareness and teach them how to be active citizens. Professor Tina Geliashvili from Samtskhe-Javakheti State University asked several of her "CURE" students from SJSU, how they feel about participating in this program.

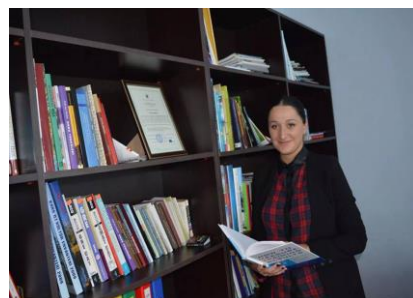
What does CURE mean for you, as students?

Mari Narimanidze: Nowadays, we, the youth is facing quite a great number of challenges. The low level of civic awareness in our country is caused firstly, due to the soviet regime that destroyed people's self - consciousness. Secondly, low level of civic education made people indifferent to many issues. The CURE ERASMUS+ project gives us a great opportunity to be aware of the principles of democracy and the role of civic education in becoming active citizens of our country, and fight for its better future. It also helps us to become friends, to share our ideas and to be aware of experiences of different universities in this field.

Tamar Akhalkatsi: According to the project a lot of activities are planned and some of them have already been implemented. The aim of these activities is to gain knowledge in democracy and civic

education. We learned what to do and what should be done in order to achieve our civic goals. The activities and the experience we get from these activities help us to become active citizens, to solve problems, to improve our social conditions. Besides we share our experience with other university and school students. The program gives us an opportunity to involve as many young people as possible in our activities. CURE taught us, that civic society is very powerful, it can manage civic challenges and solve the problems, improve the social life of people, take care of elderly people and children, make people believe in a better future.

Manana Kokhodze: Democracy and civic education are very important and vital in Georgia and not only in Georgia. We are sure that only education can save our country from the problems we encounter. The youth is the main strength to implement it, obtain education and change the life of the country and build a democratic country with active citizens.



Dr. Maka Murvanidze, Assistant Professor at SJSU was interviewed by Prof. Tina Geliashvili and shared these feelings with her.

First of all, I would like to thank everybody who is involved in this great project and does everything to feel comfortable and have a wonderful atmosphere in each country on Special Mobility Strand meetings. Great thanks to project coordinator, Dr. Rhonda Sofer, who is a person with special skills and who manages all these meetings, consortiums and workshops on a high level.



What about the meaning of CURE, it's really a big question for me. First, I am proud, that my university is one of the partners of those 17 institutions, which are involved in this project. My university has an opportunity to pilot and implement those new strategies, methods and courses which are already implemented in European countries. As far as my country, it doesn't have a long experience with how to live, teach and study in democracy. Therefore, this project gives us a chance to make the curricular reform in our universities; building on civic education and principles of Democracy.

How do you believe that CURE's Objectives for promoting Curriculum Reform can be achieved?

I strongly believe in this project as one of the multi-facet programs for curricular reform in Georgia. The biggest thing for me is the sharing of knowledge and good practices among CURE's experts especially our partners from the European Union. We have been developing innovative courses, student's activities and establishing Centers for Social and Civic Involvement. All of these facets will contribute to increasing students and faculty knowledge and practical tools that promote active citizenship and civic education.

What is your opinion about dissemination and sustainability of CURE in your region?

This could be a challenge for us to mobilize not only university staff and students but also teachers of elementary schools, who will teach the generation of the 21st century. However, I am sure, that the Centers or Social and Civic Involvement at our university will provide activities and training to promote these important values. We are going to have faculty, students and teachers training workshops to design and implement civic activities. We are also going to share our knowledge and tools that are gained through CURE's programs with in-service teachers so they can use these

materials and new pedagogical methods in their classes. We also will publish reports about each visit of Special Mobility Strand, have interviews with local TV and disseminate gained knowledge and experience as on University web-page also on Facebook.

Could you share your reflections with already gained information on previous Special Mobility Strands?

I have already been in JU Krakow (Poland) and PHOO Linz (Austria). Both workshops were about Democracy and Civic Education presented in different ways. We were introduced to such topics as: understanding of public spheres and its importance for teacher-trainers in old and new democracies and also Community Based Learning as a tool of civic education. From our training, we were provided with a variety of methods and special tools to teach our colleagues how to design and implement social and civic activities.

Could you briefly give me your own approach toward the project CURE?

CURE's courses and innovative way of teaching that we have been learning from our EU partners, provides me with new tools in pedagogy. Moreover, now I have new perspectives about social and civic responsibility and teaching these topics. I have never thought before about using some methods in order to develop the real citizen in the future. "Knowledge is not a package to put on the back, it is a skill which is developable" and I am going to disseminate, develop, implement and pilot everything what I gain form CURE project as well as possible.



Professor Nana Makaradze, Head of the Faculty of Education at Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University interviewed Prof. Nino Mikeladze, a faculty member in the department of Education at BSU.

What does your university expect from the grant project CURE?

Like other partner institutions, participation in this project has the highest values for BSU. We will be gaining from the development of innovative training courses, the special mobility strand which includes *training of trainers*, student leadership seminars and activities, in-service teacher trainings, and the establishment of a Center for Social and Civic Involvement.

How is BSU going to apply the experience gained from the project?

One of the biggest benefits is that BSU is given a great opportunity to share the international practices and improve the quality of teaching of civic education and democratic principles. CURE's program also enables us to the awareness and enhance active citizenship among our students, faculty and the in-service teachers who participate in our professional continuing educational workshops and programs.

How is CURE different from other grant projects? What is novel about the program?

CURE's programs promotes important values which are important for our society and it involves students in the program. Various student activities foster the knowledge and provide also an international experience of civic education. CURE programs promote civic education, democracy and it's sustainability in their higher educational institutions and countries. Another very important and unique part of CURE's project is the Special Mobility Strand which enables certain key members of our faculty to receive intensive training in the specialties of our EU partners.

What is your personal benefit from the project? How are you going to implement it in practice?

I have everyday contact with students from different faculties and my involvement in the project has given me an opportunity to share my experiences gained from CURE with my students as well as other professional contacts that I have at Batumi Public Schools. The project with its dynamic character, well-organized activities, clear goals and good management enables us to determine problems and challenges existing in our country, to evaluate their effectiveness in comparison to other countries best practices and to organize activities that contribute to our civic society.

CURE Social Involvement and Active Citizenship in Regev Excellence Program at Sakhnin College for Teacher Education

Dr. Lina Bolous, Lectuer, Sakhnin College for Teacher Education

Social involvement is an integral part of active citizenship and it is a crucial educational goal especially in a multicultural country like Israel. CURE's program for social and civic involvement and promoting Democracy strengthens our Regev Excellence program at Sakhnin College for Teacher Education through embedding social involvement and active citizenship in its teachers' education program while taking into consideration the graduate's profile. One of Sakhnin College goals, in accordance with CURE's sharing good practices for promoting civic education, is getting to know the Israeli society with its different social layers in general and the Arab society in particular. As a result, the excellent students will be able to build alliances and to become social agents and activists. This fits the Regev program's rationale which aims at giving the Excellent students a chance to learn about the multicultural society and to get involved in the community service which will help them gain social and educational insights that will hopefully improve their circumstances.



This perception of the significance of combining social involvement together with excellence is reflected in the CURE project which the college is a member of. Sakhnin College believes that student's social involvement in the different social organizations in their community and their cultural activities in addition to improving values that are related to their subject matter and good citizenship will increase their leadership and entrepreneurship awareness while making them both special and outstanding.

Each student in the program has to commit to 2 yearly credit hours for three years in the different social frames. The program works closely with: hospitals, health organizations, community centers, day care, welfare centers, schools and many NGO's. This variety exposes the student to the different layers of social activism and they gain a lot of experience. CURE's international, national and institutional leadership workshops provides an opportunity for Sakhnin's students to share their good practices and the knowledge gained with the other students.

Some Personal Reflections on our Kick-Off Meeting: Tbilisi, Georgia November 2016

Dr. Yahya Hijazi, David Yellin Academic College of Education, Jerusalem, Israel



CURE

Curricular Reform For Democratic Principles and Civic Education in Teacher-Training Programs in Israel and in Georgia

Project number 573322-EPP-1-2016-IL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

CURE's Kickoff Consortium Meeting
December 12-15, 2016 in Tbilisi, Georgia

ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY
Kakulava Chokobashvili Ave 3/5
Plenary Sessions will be held at G106
Building G

Working groups will be held
Aud: F303 to meet with int. Room, F104 to meet with int. Room, E301

The participation in the CURE project and its exposure to different countries and institutions and how they integrate social and democratic values as an integral part of academic work, has been an important and inspiring experience. During my meetings with colleagues from Georgia, I recognized the challenges faced by a nation that seeks to build a democratic pluralistic country after living under a centralized communist regime. It has also been enriching to learn from the success stories and the failures of the European partners in dealing with issues related to minorities, ethnic identities and migrants whether in integrating them in work or in the educational system. Israelis too can learn a lot from other countries since Israel has yet to find and crystalize the golden solution for its ruling system.

Reflection on the Workshop Promoting Civic Education through Community Based Learning die pädagogische Hochschule-Oberoesterreich -Linz (10 - 17/12/2017)

CURE'S project was awarded the special mobility strand (SMS) which is an additional program for "training the trainers" at our European partners who specialize in different approaches towards teaching democracy and civic education. Below are short articles that relate to the SMS TOT training workshops in Linz and Krakow.

Our workshop in Linz was very exhilarating and insightful. We met wonderful people from Austria and Georgia, and discussed issues such as civic engagement, democratic participation, service learning, community-based learning, and inclusive education. The program's declared mission was to improve the level of civic education and



principles of democracy in Israeli and Georgian teacher-training programs.

During our stay in Linz, we met with its mayor, who talked about the importance of education and of human rights in particular. The lectures given to us focused on methods of inclusive education and multi- inter- and trans-culturalism in education in the face of immigration.

We met with educators – teachers, principals – and with elementary school students and teaching interns (students of education) – who explained and demonstrated to us how they participate in inclusive education programs in their respective institutions.

On the cultural side, we enjoyed seeing Christmas ceremonies at our hosting university and at a concert hall. We saw the beauty of Linz in its churches, Christmas markets, streets and people. We went to the School of Disobedience: an art museum dedicated to the works of cartoonist Gerhard Haderer and its criticism of politics, religion and society.

And finally, on a personal note, as a Jew, it was important for me to visit Mauthausen concentration camp and witness its horrors. It was however, even more important for me to talk to the special people at PHOOE who hosted us; to talk to teachers and students; to talk to our co-participants from Georgia; to talk to the mayor of Linz – and hear from all of them about the importance of education, civic engagement, pluralism and acceptance of other people.

Here is a summary video of our experience: <https://vimeo.com/248596234>

Personal description from the trainer's perception:

Dr. Claudia Fahrenwald (Professor of Education and School Development at the University of Education Upper Austria)

The CURE – Special Mobility Strand about “Promoting Civic Education through Community Based Learning” was held at the University of Education Upper Austria, December 10th – December 17th, 2017. It was well attended by 14 participants from Higher Education Teacher Training Institutions from Georgia and Israel. Community Based Learning (CBL) is a teaching strategy that bridges academic theory and real-world practice, it promotes students’ academic learning and civic development while simultaneously addressing real world problems, community needs and interests. CBL is characterized by its



emphasis on reciprocity and collaboration with community stakeholders and refers to a wide variety of instructional methods and programs that educators use to connect what is being taught in schools and universities to their surrounding communities. CBL is also motivated by the belief that all communities have intrinsic educational assets and resources that educators can use to enhance learning experiences for students.

Synonyms include community-based education, place-based learning, and place-based education, among other terms.

We started our first session with a short introduction into the theoretical framework of CBL, which refers to American Pragmatism and Democracy Theory on the one side and to European Citizenship Education on the other side. In a next step we continued with some research about CBL programs in the field of teacher education and school development. Two case studies about CBL in schools dealing with civic engagement projects in Hamburg (Germany) and Upper Austria (Austria) were presented. Especially the “metaphors of change” expressed by the interviewees in the case studies led to an exciting discussion about intercultural differences in understanding and interpretation of metaphors. Then we learned in the second part of the presentation as a “best practice” example about a theatre project with refugee children, which was planned and realized by students at the University of Augsburg (Germany). The participants of the course told me that they found this concrete example very helpful for a better understanding of how to integrate and lead CBL projects in teacher education programs. We ended our session for this day with a common conclusion about a new educational mission of schools in our changing world that includes civic education promoted by new learning concepts and didactic tools like CBL. We agreed on the fact that new possibilities of emerging networks within CBL projects between universities, schools and community partners are associated with a variety of learning challenges at the individual and organizational level. That does not only mean an organizational shift in educational practice, but also a design task that can bring about broader social and democratic reform.

Changing Schools in a Changing World need new theoretical concepts as well as didactic tools in Teacher Education



The following day we visited a Volunteer’s Organization at Linz which promotes CBL in teacher education programs and helps with the matching of students and community organizations in the field of civic engagement projects. The participants of the SMS group were fascinated by this opportunity to understand now better the relation between the theoretical concepts and the empirical studies they had heard about the day before, and the concrete every-day-practice in teacher education. We had again an exciting discussion with the practitioners of the Volunteer’s Organization and we talked, shared and learned about possibilities, experiences and challenges in CBL projects in Europe, Georgia and Israel. There was a great interest of the participants to work with CBL in their own national contexts and to build up new networks of collaboration on this topic in the future. For me as a researcher in the field of Civic Engagement Education and Community Based Learning it was an extremely enriching teaching experience and I am happy to know, that CBL seems to be a fascinating and empowering learning strategy in teacher education for an international audience from outside of Europe. Question: What does CURE project mean to you?

Givat Washington Academic College’s faculty discusses the benefits, as teacher-trainers, of their Special Mobility Strand ToT experience at Jagiellonski University in Krakow.

Dr. Sharon Azaria and Dr. Miki Ophir.

There are numerous advantages in conducting study days similar to those which we attended in Krakow. The lectures were very practical and the methods taught can easily be applied in our classes.

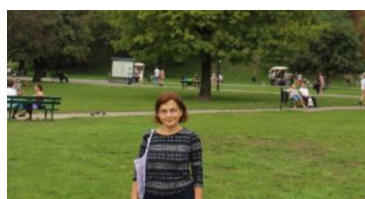
Interactive drama skills which we learned, have not only been applied, but have been discussed with our students regarding application in their own student teaching classes as well as modelling. In addition, the games which we learned were a reminder to always think outside of the box and use various games in our classes as a means of teaching. As a result, we made changes in our syllabi and added many new methods and games to our lectures (Triventy, Ourboox, Moviemaker, etc.). This

served as a model for the students and, in turn, after discussions, the students are expected to use a variety of games in their classes. Another advantage is the fact that it is always refreshing to hear different ideas by the participants from the various countries. It encourages us to reevaluate our work and our students work in the field. The goal of the program is to raise awareness among the students regarding social roles as a means of change. In addition, it provides them with conditions to actually create and experience social and environmental changes.

More reflections of the SMS experience from Linz

Ass. Prof. Nino Chikovani, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (September 2017)

I would like to start this letter with expressing my gratitude to the project coordinators and organizers for giving me an opportunity to take part in all the events that took place during our stay in Austria. I have much to say, but will try to be brief. The sessions and workshops conducted were crucially significant for our professional growth. There were sessions carried out on



contemporary teaching methodology such as community-based learning which covered the topics like civic education, project-based learning, multicultural and multilingual education, inclusive education, etc. Though I always tried to follow the pace of the challenges and demands of the modern teacher, the information shared with us was presented from a different angle that I hadn't experienced so far. Consequently, it made me rethink of the

approaches I use in the classroom and encouraged me to focus more on my students' future study outcomes. One of the most significant sessions was about inclusive education and a vivid emphasis on how much the country does to raise civic awareness of the importance of this issue starting everything with perfectly elaborated curricula, where a major emphasis is made on helping the children with special educational needs to adapt to the normal lifestyle.

We became acquainted with the Austrian education system and had the opportunity to make a comparative analysis between our local analogues and others distinguishing strengths and weaknesses of each system. In terms of the project, we visited one of the special schools which held hundreds of emigrant children of diverse nationalities studying within the same classrooms. It was really impressive for me to realize that the school was working that hard to generate and develop civic awareness in the students showing and teaching democratic values of the European society. We had interviews with the pupils and saw how eager they were to succeed in their new habitat despite the fact that they were considered to be refugees from many different countries around the world.

We had an opportunity to see additional social links who were involved in the successful implementation of the project. There was a NGO, which helped the university students to do the public service and simultaneously get extra university credits from it. Another institution that we visited was Linz City Hall. Following the conversation with the mayor we were able to have an idea how much the government is involved in the process.

One of the most impressive days in our agenda was visiting Mauthausen concentration camp. The impression gained from there is impossible to express by word of mouth since we had to face the reality of those times' evil and injustice. The most emotional of all was the number of peoples' names sacrificed to that regime amongst whom there were a lot of Georgians as well. It is impossible not to mention the guide's professionalism and dedication to his job in depicting the scenes of the fierce facts from the past. It was an unforgettable tour to our recent history.

I would also like to make an emphasis on the professional team that made me feel more confident and secure with the information I was acquiring from them. In the framework of the project-based learning, we had an opportunity to meet the university students who had carried out research and prepared short films that were one of the best examples of using the theoretical knowledge in practice. Overall, I would conclude that the information gained from the project was a valuable asset

to our professional practice that can be discussed and implemented in our local context on the basis of discussions and assumptions.

Special Mobility Strand - Linz 10-17.12.17

Dr. Yocheved Yorkovsky, Gordon Academic College of Education, Haifa

I would like to express my wonderful experience in Linz. The program of the meetings was very interesting, enriching and broadening horizons. The atmosphere was very pleasant, and everything was organized perfectly. Roswitha, Catherine, Claudia, and all the staff were very nice and helpful. It was very nice to meet Georgians colleges from the Cure project, and getting to know new ones.



One of the topics that we were exposed to, was community-based learning (CBL). In Israel we have a project, called Mehola, which each student must volunteer in the community. From one of the lectures I understood the importance of personal and general reflection, after volunteering. I have offered our college staff involved in the project to apply the reflection process, and it will be implemented. Another issue that we were dealing with was the assimilation of immigrants into society. One of the things I have internalized is the importance of preserving and respecting their heritage, along with helping them with their studies and especially in learning the new language. As a result, we will apply these principles in our approach to the Ethiopian community in our college.

The visit in Mauthausen, was extremely difficult and very important. My husband's father-Pinkus Jurkowski was sent to Mathausen labor camp in Austria, where he was forced to work slave labor along with the other inmates. He decided to escape from the camp - he made a dummy out of rags and put it in his bed to fool the guards. He managed to escape but took a bullet in his leg while running away.



In conclusion, the workshop experience was empowering, stimulating thinking, and provided tools for implementing the themes in Gordon College.

Student Activities in Georgia: A Report from Dr. Tamar Mosiashvili, Civic Development Institute

The expert staff members from the Georgian NGO Civic Development Institute are guiding the CURE students in developing activities in the community. Already several community programs are running and described below.

1. Charity Action “Give a child a book – Show a child the world”

There are a very few works of fiction and other leisure readings in rural school libraries in Javakheti. The aim of the action is to provide books for libraries in remote regions, which have no community libraries. Lots of schools do not have libraries at all. Children have a will to read, but they do not have access to library resources.

Kotelia and Gorelovka are villages in Javakheti, where lots of gifted and motivated pupils study. A rich library will stimulate and encourage their academic performance and bright future.

Students of Ilia State University, involved in the international project "Curriculum Reform for Promoting Democratic Principles and Civic Education in Israel and In Georgia" (CURE) have joined the action. They collected books and delivered to Civic Development Institute office. These books are intended for readers of different ages.



2. How Students’ Perceive Civic Activism in Georgia

Ilia State University students conducted a survey of “students’ knowledge and attitudes relating to civic activism” and CURE’s students gathered data from each of the Georgian CURE universities. The findings and recommendations were developed and presented in Universities.

In Georgia civic activism is low among youngsters and mainly it covers political actions and participating in decision-making process of other acute situations. This differs from other more developed countries where students are often actively involved in social and civic issues.

The **Civic Development Institute and CURE partner students** conducted meetings in Tbilisi State University and Ilia State University where they discussed their findings. University professors, students and youth leaders also participated.

