

## Social Media at School

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Sandro Asatiani took part in “Social Media at School” (SMS) component, which was launched by GLSP in June, 2010 as a lecturer. The new component aims at building the capacities of the youth in using Social Media means for increased /improved civic participation and juvenile crime prevention. 100 students from GLSP participant schools in four cities of Tbilisi, Rustavi, Kutaisi and Batumi will be chosen to participate in the SMS based on the applications submitted. GLSP decided to conduct the trainings in two rounds: during the first round GLSP trained SMS participants from Tbilisi and Rustavi. The trainings were held at the University of Georgia in Tbilisi in the first half of July 2010. The total of 60 students were trained and 40 students more will be trained from the GLSP participant schools in Kutaisi and Batumi with the start of new school year in September 2010. Trainings centered round such topics as “Youth and Social Media as Agents of Change”, “How to Register a Blog; Principles of Working with Blogs”, “Forming Collaborative Media Projects”; “Grouping around Common Ideas”; “Creating Blogs Focused on Juvenile Crime Prevention” and etc. From the very start, students both from Tbilisi and Rustavi schools were very motivated and enthusiastic to learn about the social media tools.

There were a lot of questions and discussions about the role of youth in social change. Students were allowed to register their blogs right at the training. This gave them an opportunity to use the theoretical information gained the previous day into practice and ask as many questions as possible concerning the problems they came across during the hands-on session. Also, those who chose to work on joint projects had a chance to actually start to work together, exchange the ideas and discuss plans for future cooperation in the virtual world. GLSP team and SMS trainers as well as the students used the flip cameras to film the presentations of students’ ideas and uploaded to the SMS youtube channel. “Green Rustavi”, “Help Homeless Children”, “Drug Addiction”, “Trafficking”, “Juveniles and Employment”, “Static Kids” – are just a few of many blogs/ internet projects started by the training participants. Remarkably, since the end of the trainings, some of the students have been very active bloggers despite the vacation season. Students are willing to use their internet blogs for inducing civic activism in real world by organizing events in the scope of their blogs. The new component has its own logo and three websites ( <http://socialmediaatschool.wordpress.com> ; <http://www.youtube.com/user/SocialMS> ; <http://www.facebook.com/SocialMS> ), all of which will contribute to sharing information and updates as well as getting feedback and recommendations from the SMS trainers and GLSP team as well as the general public.

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