

Report on focus-group carried out among Azerbaijani youth regarding the “Transitional Period” TV program of Internews

General data and conditions of focus-group holding

The given research has been aimed at revealing opinions and estimations of the Azerbaijani youth regarding the program of Internews Azerbaijan’s “Transitional period” along with spheres of interests and preferences of this youth. The goals were reached by means of realization of 2 focus groups in age groups of 13-14 and 16-18 years. Prior to holding the focus groups several releases of “Transitional period” program were displayed to the participants. Afterwards the participants got acquainted with the research questionnaire and took part in the program discussion. Each focus group included 8 participants. Participants have also familiarized with the terms of discussion where the key point was that participants can freely fill in the questionnaire, discuss proposed topics and express their opinion regarding the program, and no other participant can interrupt the other’s speech, even having a different opinion.

All the answers of the participants were shorthanded.

Age group 13-14 years

The program is of peaceful and informative character

When the participants viewed some releases of “Transitional period” program being acquainted with the questionnaire they started the program discussion. Speaking of the aims of the program participants noted that in their opinion the key goal of the program is *“to tell about the youth of the neighboring countries”*, *“to explain all the youth that to be friends is so easy”* (in other words to make friends with peers from neighboring countries), *“to let know that friendship is real”*, and also *“it teaches us what is peace”*. All of the participants agreed with the opinions of Quseynli Rauf and Qurbanova Elmira that the program is of “peaceful” and “educational” character.

Answering to “what distinguishes this program from the others”, the participants generally indicated that this program is solely for and about the youth, it is also “funny” and “dynamic”. Along with that speaking about their wishes and suggestions the participants noted that it would be better if there were more music and playing topics. (This is normal taking into consideration the participants’ age).

Teenagers like to “hug in the streets”

Speaking of the most liked stories the participants noted that video pieces about “youth movement”, “Caucasian lads”, and “hugs in the streets”. Although the last video piece was also marked by some participants as “less liked”.

Stories about music and sports were also among the favorites.

What would they like to see more?

Discussing the stories that the participants would like to include into the program and improve them, they basically mentioned teenagers’ school life, their school successes, entertainment and leisure. Developing this topic and answering the question where would the participants go themselves if they had an opportunity to take shootings and prepare a story, the participants mentioned “school”, “countryside”, “places of rest and entertainment” of the youth.

Producing the program by the teenagers is great!

Almost all of the focus group participants mentioned this thought. Many of them noted that it was for the first time they saw such an interesting program about the youth. And probably the secret of this success lies in the fact that teenagers produced and shot these stories by their own. With this in mind the participants came to a wise conclusion that the teenagers should watch the program in the first turn.

What the participants didn’t like much and things they would like to change

The participants didn’t like the style and manner of Azerbaijani anchor of the program. Moreover, they offered to prolong the stories because of being too short. There were also wishes to sound more music in the program.

Basically, the participants liked the program

The majority of participants liked the program very much, some of them, a little bit less. While characterizing the program the participants used such words as “super”, “interesting”, “perfect”, “good”, “normal” (what in youth’s language also means good).

Participants guessed authors’ intention and think that the authors have reached their goals

The participants consider the program authors to aim on telling the teenagers about their peers from neighboring countries – Armenia and Georgia. With this in mind they wanted to attract their interest to each other and accordingly make them closer. The focus group came to a joint conclusion that they have reached the goals set. Most of the participants declared that “the program positively changed their attitude towards Armenia and Georgia”. The interest to their peers from neighboring countries increased. Participants unanimously expressed that they would advise other people to watch the program, not only on weekends but also at weekdays.

16-18 age group

The program liberalizes youth, helps them to broaden their outlook.

In general, the evaluation and opinions of this age group is similar to the ones expressed by the previous group. This group agreed that the program is very interesting and informative. Speaking on the aims and learning aspects of the program, along with the opinion that the program is focused on showing the life of the adolescents of neighboring countries the participants also noted that the program “liberalizes youth, helps them to broaden their outlook” (Azer Mamedov). «Besides, due to the conflict with Armenia, this program helps us to prevent negativism towards them” (Esmira Orudjeva).

Describing the factors distinguishing this program from the others, the participants noted the program being very youth-concerned, showing the young people of three neighboring countries and this positively distinguishes it from other youth programs.

The senior group also liked “hugs in the streets”

This youth category also liked the video pieces about the “hugs in the streets” (there is nothing to do with that) rappers (although the participants claimed on the way the rap was told, it seems like

they could do it better), Michael Jackson fan (probably there were a lot of Michael Jackson fans among the participants) and weight-lifter girl. The participants appraised video pieces concerning music and sports.

We would like to see more video pieces about sports and extreme

The participants noted these video pieces while talking about their preferences, including videos about young photographers. Speaking on where they would prefer to make shootings, young people mentioned sports competitions. They also mentioned video pieces about the night life of the youth and their interesting ways of spending time.

The participants were displeased with the anchors again

As well as the previous group, participants of this group disliked program anchors. They mentioned superfluous pathos. However they liked the fact that the program has been prepared by their coevals.

The secret “revealed” again

The participants again “guessed” the main goal of the program, which is to represent youth and neighbor countries. They also mentioned that the program has succeeded. It was generally agreed among the participants that the program strengthened their interest to Armenia and Georgia and had positive influence over their opinion of these countries. Due to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, video pieces from Armenia turned to a sensitive point for the participants. They noted this program as one-of-a-kind among the ones they have seen, about the life of the youth in Armenia, which helps them to better understand thought and expectations of their coevals from Armenia.

Main conclusions on the focus-group results

1. “Kechid Dovru” (Transitional period) program is generally appraised by the youth. They find the program interesting and informative.
2. Regarding the aim of the program, the participants mentioned that the program succeeded in representing youth of neighbor Trans-Caucasian

countries. The program has also strengthened their interest to the youth of neighboring countries.

3. Major part of the participants noted that the program has positively influenced over their opinion on the neighboring countries.
4. It is necessary to pay attention to the style and manners of the anchors.