



Center for Civic Education CIVITAS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

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Civitas Success Story: Russia

In the city of Samara, students at the Lyceum School of Economics discovered that there was a serious traffic problem on a particular corner near their school. They did an intensive investigation of accidents occurring at that intersection and determined that the best way to overcome the high volume of accidents would be to put a traffic light at the corner.

They spent a long time knocking on city hall doors trying to discover the right people to help them. When they found those officials, they then began the task of building interest for their proposal. After a long, hard struggle, they succeeded in convincing the appropriate authorities to install the traffic light at the dangerous intersection. However, they did not stop there. They then repeated their original investigation of accidents to see if their incidence did change. And it did! The rate of accidents decreased dramatically.

On the island of Sakhalin, students discovered an orphanage where young children were in a very economically deprived situation. The students thought they could help by finding food and clothing for the orphans. They discovered this was not enough. So, they decided to go to the largest oil company and put the orphans case before the company's decision makers. They made a convincing argument. In fact, the company gave them \$50,000.

The students did not give up. They then went to the largest gas company. They persuaded that company to contribute approximately \$8,300 per month to the orphanage. Then, the students worked with the orphans to set up a local government in the orphanage so that the children could decide how the money should be used and how its use should be monitored.

In the industrial city of Togliatti in the region of Samara, Project Citizen students decided to organize programs for poor people and senior citizens who lived in the neighborhood surrounding the school. Because this is a civics project, and they were taking a law course, they decided to begin with legal services. So, they persuaded local attorneys to help out, and together they set up a legal services program for the neighborhood.

After accomplishing that task, they decided to provide a program of cultural and social services for the neighborhood. Since they still had not finished their course and had some remaining time, they built an outdoor sport facility. However, by that time, the course was over, and they really had to get on with the rest of their studies.

In the town of Syzran, also in the Samara region, this time in School 29, students decided to help other young people in their school and in their neighborhood. They surveyed those students and

found out that their most important need was for a job. The students established an employment service. Within six months, they had found jobs for 42 students. This task took so long because they wanted to make sure to find good jobs that were full time and permanent. Most of those original 42 students are still employed.

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