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ICYF-ERC's Diplomatic Act as a Mediator in Cultural Diplomacy of Shusha- Azerbaijan to Global Society

Brilliant Windy Khairunnisa
Khazar University, Azerbaijan

Corresponding Author: **Brilliant Windy Khairunnisa**

Abstract

Since 2021, ICYF-ERC commenced a project called "Show Me Azerbaijan" annually in which they invited several bloggers, YouTubers, and social media activists from various countries in the world to visit and enjoy the social and cultural beauty of Azerbaijan, especially Shusha for one week therefore that it could then be documented and disseminated to the entire world community delivered in several foreign languages. In this case, this study aims to describe how the ICYF-ERC organisation acts as a mediator in Shusha-Azerbaijan cultural diplomacy in the global

community through the "Show Me Azerbaijan" event which has been held annually since 2021. This study utilises a descriptive qualitative research method with secondary data in the form of literature studies and observations on social media. The results of the study show that ICYF-ERC as a cultural diplomacy mediator makes social media activists from various countries with thousands to millions of followers as a bridge to reach the global community and introduce them about social and culture of Shusha-Azerbaijan.

Keywords: ICYF-ERC, Diplomatic Act, Cultural Diplomacy, Shusha, Azerbaijan

Introduction

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has traditionally been described as a territorial dispute conflict as well as an ethnic war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is de facto governed by the self-declared Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and is recognized internationally by portions of Azerbaijan. Even though the present conflict commenced in 1988 and turned into a full-fledged war in the early 1990s, it has roots in the 20th century. Despite an armistice deal being reached in 1994, sporadic tensions and border conflicts have persisted in the region (Saleha & Nugrahani, 2023) ^[3]. In regards to this, Shusha, which is situated on the Armenian border, was not in Azerbaijan's authority prior to being retaken during the second Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. On the other hand, it is teeming with people and Azerbaijan's historical history, including ex-poets, heritage structures, and other cultural and creative treasures that might become a unique draw for the world. However, few people in the world society are aware of Shusha-existence Azerbaijan's or its historical values.

ICYF-ERC, an Islamic organisation with a physical presence in Baku, Azerbaijan, has organized the "Show Me Azerbaijan" international event since 2021. The primary goal of this event is to inform and demonstrate to the international community that Shusha, one of Azerbaijan's cultural centres, has been incorporated into the country and that President Ilham Aliyev has designated 2022 to be the "Year of Shusha." In this respect, ICYF-ERC invited a number of bloggers and other social media activists through the event to discover the cultural legacy of Azerbaijan in a variety of locations, including Shusha, therefore they could film it and share it with their thousands or perhaps millions of online followers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explain how the ICYF-ERC organization serves as a mediator in Shusha-Azerbaijan cultural diplomacy in the international community through the "Show Me Azerbaijan" project which has been conducted annually since 2021. It is also being a novelty of this study since it has never been covered in previous research.

Research Method

The descriptive qualitative research method is utilised in this study to describe widely the research results without any quantitative data. The data was provided with secondary data sources through literature reviews, previous studies or papers as well as an observation on social media which are then reviewed and assisted by the diplomacy concept utilised in this research therefore clear research conclusions could well be produced. On the other hand, the triangulation approach was utilised to examine the accuracy of the study data.

Result and Discussion

Cultural Diplomacy Act on Shusha-Azerbaijan

The presents and appreciation from all guests of the "Show Me Azerbaijan" initiative were examined as the success of the ICYF-cultural ERC's diplomacy act. This organisation recognises that social media plays an active role and has tremendous potential in sharing information and presenting new items to the global community with a very broad reach. As a result, this organisation made those influencers with hundreds to millions of social media followers on multiple platforms as a bridge to carry out cultural diplomacy towards Shusha-Azerbaijan, which is also a kind of celebration for Azerbaijan's re-occupation of the Shusha area. Concerning the videos that have been created and disseminated via social media, they have been seen thousands of times by the international community and were gaining positive feedbacks. On the other side, videos may be prepared using numerous languages of instruction by influencers from other nations, making it simpler to reach an extensive audience from various places. Thus, the "Show Me Azerbaijan" event initiated by ICYF-ERC had a positive impact on Azerbaijan particularly in the introduction of social and cultural in Azerbaijani regions including Shusha, which is wealth in history.



Source: Show Me Azerbaijan's Official Instagram

Fig 1: Official poster of "Show Me Azerbaijan"

According to the influencers that joined the event, the writer analysed that Shusha will serve as a city emblem for the Azerbaijani tourist industry and it will be the gem of Azerbaijani culture which will develop new tourism routes with its historical sites and distinctive architecture. Due to the fact that Shusha offers a pleasant atmosphere and restorative mineral waters, successful artists, singer experts, and painters all grew up in this town as well. All of this enables the society to develop and deliver attractive tourism service routes in Shusha to the visitors (Gojayeva, 2022) ^[1]. According to declarations made by Ilham Aliyev and other officials, as well as the Azerbaijani army's combat tactics, which involved pushing into Shusha from the south, Shusha was the key strategic target for the Azerbaijani army during the war of 2020 which carpet museum as one of Azerbaijani culture is located (Mozaffari & Barry, 2022) ^[2]. Furthermore, Shusha has many songs with its uniqueness and claimed as a major cultural centre due to this fact. From the perspective of reciprocal enrichment of traditions that

have been linked by commerce and cultural pathways from ancient times, Shusha inhabitants' quick adoption of the world's musical history in the realms of both exhibiting and creating art should be taken into consideration (Shamili & Akhundova, 2022) ^[4]. In addition, those facts were also crucial to the success of the ICYF-ERC-organized event.

Conclusion

In light of this evidence, it is crystal clear that Shusha is a land with wealth in history, culture, and art which could be a tourist attraction for the global society. However, not many of them already know and are familiar with this region until they require a bridge that could share those facts. In this case, the writer analysed ICYF-ERC's success in its mission as a mediator to share the facts of Shusha to global society through the bloggers, influencers, and all social media actors thru the "Show Me Azerbaijan" event. Due to the fact that those international influencers made videos about Shusha-Azerbaijan, share them with their audiences and their videos catch thousands of viewers around the world which could be a signal of successful introduction. However, the authors contend that such initiatives might depart on until more and more people throughout the world are aware of Shusha-Azerbaijan, a country rich in history, art, and culture, and even remember it. As for more study, the authors advise a much more thorough investigation into the rise in foreign tourists visiting Shusha-Azerbaijan since it is feasible that this trend might boost the nation's economic output.

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