

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Caritas- “For people, with people”</b>  | 3  |
| <b>Social protection and care</b>  | 4  |
| <b>Children and youth</b>  | 4  |
| 1. “Aregak” Day Care Center For Children With Multiple Disabilities In Gyumri          | 6  |
| 2. Summer Camp for Children with Disabilities and their Families                       | 9  |
| 3. “Little Prince” Social Centres for Children from Vulnerable Families                | 10 |
| 4. German Friendship with multi-children families                                      | 17 |
| 5. Food for Kindergartens in Sepasar and Ghazanchi villages                            | 18 |
| 6. Improvement of Educational Conditions of Schoolchildren                             | 19 |
| 7. Secure behavior and socio-psychological rehabilitation through Art Therapy          | 21 |
| <b>Elderly Citizens</b>  | 22 |
| 1. Home Care   | 24 |
| 2. Day Care Centers for the Elderly  | 29 |
| 3. Dry Food Provision to the Elderly in Gyumri   | 32 |
| 4. Warm Winter   | 33 |
| <b>Community in development and public health</b>                                      | 35 |
| <b>Rural communities in development</b>  | 36 |
| 1. Social and Economic Self Determination in Rural Areas                               | 36 |
| 2. Parish Social Ministries in Northern Armenia  | 39 |
| 3. Support for training of Parish Social Ministries                                    | 38 |
| 4. “Aramazd” social-educational development project                                    | 42 |
| 5. Water and Sanitation  | 44 |
| <b>Schools in development</b>  | 46 |
| 1. Equal opportunities for socially vulnerable and disabled children and their parents | 46 |
| 2. Micro Project of School Renovation  | 47 |
| <b>Women in development</b>  | 48 |
| Handicraft Workshop for Women  | 48 |

# CONTENT

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Public health</b>   | 50 |
| 1. Primary Health Care Center  | 50 |
| 2. Healthy Mentality Healthy Family within Primary Health Care project in Gyumri | 52 |
| 3. Improvement of the Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Support                  | 53 |
| <b>Migration and integration</b>   | 54 |
| 1. Migration and Development   | 56 |
| 2. Sustainable Reintegration after Volunteer Return                              | 59 |
| 3. Human Trafficking - Common Challenge for the New Century                      | 60 |
| 4. Migration and Trafficking Resource Center                                     | 61 |
| <b>Emergency response</b>  | 62 |
| 1. Assistance to Syrian Armenian Families  | 62 |
| 2. Humanitarian Aid /Pasta and Cloth Distribution                                | 63 |
| <b>Armenian caritas youth corps</b>  | 64 |
| Equal Opportunities for Outstanding Volunteers                                   | 67 |
| <b>Financial report</b>  | 70 |

## **Caritas - “For people, with people”**



*Dear friends,*

*The everyday work being done by all the Caritas organizations around the world is a miracle.*

*Happiness comes when we recognize the miracles around us and the miracle of Caritas is around us; we just need to recognize it.*

*2012 was a year of miracles for Armenian Caritas while working for people and with people.*

*The new center for children and youth with disabilities, which is currently being constructed, will bring a new breeze into the lives of kids and young people with its uniqueness and friendliness. Children will have the chance to experience “Caritas” and be the rays of love to their communities. We were graced to be able to use more professional methodologies while serving people, in order to help solve their health issues and protect their families. The number of young people wanting to commit to the service and protection of vulnerable populations through Caritas’ mission has increased, and we now have more followers; that is to say, more of God’s servants ready to save and improve human lives.*

*With this annual report we have the pleasure of sharing with you the beautiful moments that we experienced while working for people and with people in Armenia. We know that all people who read this message share the same passion for humanity as we do.*

*Thank you for being with us both spiritually and in action.*

**Anahit Mkhoyan**  
*Executive Director, Armenian Caritas*

## Social protection and care



# Children and youth

Armenian Caritas is one of the main social service providers in the Shirak, Lori, and Gegharkunik regions of Armenia. According to the strategic plan of the organization, the goal of the Social Protection and Care Department is: to enhance family development and sustainability as a social unit of society.

The main objectives of the department are:

- to raise social awareness about disadvantaged children, youth, and their families;
- to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged children, youth, and their families;
- to foster the socialization of vulnerable children, youth, and their families;
- to develop the capacity of alternative care institutions for children and their families.

In 2012, Armenian Caritas implemented eight projects directed toward Social Protection and Care. Those projects included the operation of five Day Care Centers (four Little Prince centers; one center for children with disabilities) in the cities of Gyumri, Vanadzor, Tashir, and Gavar. Additional projects concerned the improvement of educational and living conditions for schoolchildren in Vanadzor, schoolchildren in three rural schools in Lori region, and preschool children in two village kindergartens in Shirak region.

The Social Protection and Care Department of Armenian Caritas plans to expand its activities through launching more alternative day care centers and enlarging the geographical coverage to include more communities with a high poverty rate. To reaffirm the importance of the role of family in raising and educating children, the department will continue to support state policy reforms promoting inclusive education and the restructuring of overnight childcare institutions.

The department further envisages increasing its efforts in advocating for and protecting the rights of children with disabilities, with a specific focus on raising public awareness, changing attitudes, and endorsing inclusive education in Armenia. The department also studies current state policy toward children and people with disabilities in an effort to gauge its relevance to the actual situation and offer a set of recommendations to the government for legislative changes.





**1** **“Aregak”  
Day Care Center  
For Children  
With Multiple Disabilities  
In Gyumri**

*My dream is to become a doctor and to heal children. I want to have a big hospital where a lot of people with health problems will be cured. I want all the people to be healthy. First I will cure the Aregak children; they are my friends and I love all of them.*

*Arsen Alaverdyan, 15*

According to the RA National Statistics Service, people with disabilities in Armenia comprise 6% of the population. In Gyumri, this figure is even larger at 7.5%, of which

almost 7% are children. Generally, families who have a child with disabilities are deprived of adequate social conditions. Family members often avoid holding a steady job since the lack of alternative care centers for people with disabilities leaves these family members no other choice but to stay home and look after their child on their own.

Armenian Caritas Aregak Day Care Center for Children with Multiple Disabilities is a one-of-a-kind institution in Gyumri. The project began in 2008 with only 20 children, although that number has increased over the past few years. During 2012, 35 children with multiple disabilities between the ages of 5 and 17 regularly attended the center.

Over the course of the year, the center continued providing developmental and social services to the children and their families, including: physio-therapy, art, music and speech therapy, special education, social and psychological consultations, hygienic care, provision of food and medication, etc.

In October 2012, a new project began in collaboration with the Norwegian



**Հայկական  
Կարիտաս  
Armenian Caritas**

**Տեղեկատվական  
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կենտրոն  
համակցված  
հաշմանդամություն  
ունեցող անձանց համար**

**Թեժ գիծ՝  
0-8000-1011  
Hot line**

**Information  
and Support  
Center for Persons  
with Multiple Disabilities**



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY  
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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Government to supplement the activities of the Aregak Center- Information and Support Center for Persons with Multiple Disabilities. This project supports people with disabilities and their families by providing information, consultations, and trainings to help ensure their social inclusion. It works toward creating positive attitudes and accelerating the processes of social inclusion. Within the framework of the project, a network of NGOs and state institutions was established to collaboratively solve common issues in the field, and a partnership was established with the Human Rights Protection Office in Shirak region. Several meetings with Aregak staff members and parents were organized to discuss and make recommendations regarding the state disability laws and how to deal with them.

In late 2013 the construction of a new disability care center will be finished. The new center will include therapeutic, informational, and vocational training centers and public parks for children and youth with multiple disabilities. The center will have modern rehabilitation facilities with the capacity to serve up to 100 children and youth.



|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Project annual budget: | 61.933 EUR                              |
| Project location:      | Gyumri, Shirak Marz                     |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Austria (Diocese of Vorarlberg) |
| Project manager:       | Armen Martirosyan                       |



## LET'S LIVE TOGETHER

*It has been almost 4 years that Margarita Sargsyan has been attending Aregak Day Care Center, and she waits with great anticipation for her next visit. She has become best friends with Haykuhi and Yura, with whom she loves to play, paint, and watch cartoons at the center. But she hardly goes out to play with other children in the yard. Margarita lives with her parents in a rented house which her parents can barely afford to heat during the winter. And that's the reason why Margarita often falls sick. Her parents do not have permanent jobs, and the state allowance for Margarita is too small to cover all the basic needs that a child with disabilities would require.*

*The past year was a very significant one for Margarita, as two major events occurred in her life- she participated in TEDxKids conference and started school. TEDxKids is an annual televised event that lets children from different areas of Armenia share their genuine ideas*

*The past year was a very significant one for Margarita, as two major events occurred in her life.*

*with a live audience. During the event Margarita got onstage in her wheelchair and spoke about the lack of opportunities for children with disabilities in Armenia, and the importance of human tolerance and compassion. Her voice during the speech was calm and touching. Margarita addressed everyone: LET'S LIVE TOGETHER. All the people in the hall were touched and after her speech many children and people approached her and became friends with her.*

*Another exciting event for Margarita was starting school. She currently attends Aregak twice a week; the other days she goes to school since children with special needs are now placed in regular schools in Armenia. So far Margarita has made a lot of progress; she has earned excellent marks of which she is very proud. She has also learned many new things, and she shares what she has learned at school with her friends in Aregak.*

*Margarita loves vibrant colors and coloring fairytale books. Her favorite fairytale is Cinderella, and she hopes that one day her life will be beautifully transformed just the way it happened to Cinderella.*



*Developed by Armenian Caritas, the “Parenting is a Big Gift” booklet provides recommendations for parents of children with disabilities.*

## 2 Summer Camp for Children with Disabilities and their Families

*“Each year I wait impatiently for the summer camp, especially the last day when we go to Lake Sevan for swimming. I would like the camp to never end and we all could live there as one big family.”*

*Davit Karapetyan, 9*

children and young people with disabilities, volunteers, and parents of the children. The camp participants were from Aregak Day Care Center for Children with Multiple Disabilities and the “Faith and Light” community.

The camp had a full agenda each day, with



For 6 years Armenian Caritas has been implementing a summer camp project for children and youth with disabilities. The 2012 summer camp started during the last week of July and lasted for seven days. The camp was located at the “Tsitsernak” camp site in Vanadzor, and the participants spent the final day of camp resting on the shores of Lake Sevan. The camp had 78 participants:

different developmental games organized for the children and the opportunity for activities in the surrounding nature.

During the summer camp, children and volunteers from Little Prince Day Care Center in Vanadzor visited the camp participants. They prepared a nice event with recreational games, sweets, and presents.

|                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 3.500 EUR                   |
| Project location:      | Gyumri, Shirak Marz         |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Austria (Innsbruck) |
| Project manager:       | Armen Martirosyan           |

## “Little Prince” Social Centres for Children from Vulnerable Families

The work at Little Prince Social Centers revolves around the ideology of the uniqueness and inner beauty of each child. The centers provide the space for children to create their own planet where they can find the inspiration and desire to design their world and realize the ideas they imagine. The encouragement of individualism and self-expression is especially important considering the Soviet period during which everything was assessed from a communal point of view, everyone had to fit into a “frame template,” and whatever was different or distinct was regarded as “abnormal” or disgraceful. In contrast, these centers create an atmosphere that promotes individual expression and appreciates the colors and diversity radiating from each child.

The first Little Prince center was established by Armenian Caritas in 2009 in Gyumri. Currently, three additional centers operate in the cities of Vanadzor, Tashir, and Gavar.



## “Little Prince” in Gyumri and Tashir

*“Little Prince gave us wings to fly,,”*

*Naira Simonyan, 14*

The Gyumri and Tashir Little Prince centers are operated by Armenian Caritas within the “Family-oriented Support for Children and Adolescents in Critical Circumstances” project. The total number of children attending both centers is 112: 78 children from 57 families in Gyumri, and 34 children from 33 families in Tashir.

- The following services are provided within the centers:

- Social and psychological services;
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles;
- Educational and life-skills training for



- children and youth;
- Support in organization of educational and leisure activities, both indoor and outdoor;
- Events and excursions;
- Provision of material assistance.



The following group trainings are organized within and outside of the centers:

- Computer literacy;
- Applied arts;
- Sewing/handicrafts;
- Cooking;
- Journalism;
- Furniture making;
- Office skills.

After completing Caritas-sponsored vocational training courses in 2012, 48 parents and family members received the supplies and equipment (i.e.: sewing machines) to begin using their newly developed skills to earn money for their

families. As a result of this project, eight beneficiaries from Gyumri- four parents and four young adults- were able to participate in social work courses and receive completion certificates. In addition, two young people from Tashir were transferred to Yerevan to further their vocational courses.

Within the Little Prince program, Armenian Caritas created a network of organizations working in the field of childcare and protection in Gyumri. Members of this network and representatives of the organizations shared experiences, discussed and offered solutions to current issues, and initiated joint events for children in Gyumri.

Project annual budget: 180.000 EUR

Project location: Gyumri, ShirakMarz and Tashir, Lori Marz

Project partners: Caritas Germany and German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development(BMZ)

Project manager: Hasmik Sargsyan



## FUTURE ARTIST

When 16 year-old L., directed by the Department of Child Protection for Shirak region, visited the Little Prince Center for the first time, everything was strange to her. The people at the center were different from anyone else she had ever met.

First of all, she was surprised by people's treatment. It was unusual to see so many adults and peers who were smiling and greeting her as they passed by, just like her family members.

Until that moment, she was sure that only her mother, grandmother, and sister could be concerned about her. The widespread indifference toward the family's difficulties was a common phenomenon in society. When she was begging for alms from passers-by to buy bread for her disabled mother and sister, she expected offensive and abusive treatment, but she never expected smiling faces and compassion.

**But the most important achievement is that she has found a dream.**

At first it was difficult for the young lady and for the professionals working at the center. Outwardly, L. was not well-groomed; she had noticeable communication difficulties that manifested in aggressive behavior or

isolation. Social workers and psychologists were trying to change her worldview that had formed over the past 16 years under poor social conditions, help her develop new personal hygiene habits, and strengthen her skills in communication, making friends, artistic self-expression, and many others. During the initial period there was hesitance from her peers and parents, and behavioral and psychological difficulties from L. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the girl didn't attend school.

All of these difficulties have been overcome due to the kind-hearted attitude of the staff at Little Prince, who provided social support for the family and helped take L. off the streets as a beggar.

Today L. goes to school and continues to attend the Little Prince Center. She has become more communicative and self-confident, has overcome her isolation tendencies, and has begun to pay attention to her appearance.

But the most important achievement is that she has found a dream. She dreams of becoming a great artist, and wants to tell the world her life story through fine art.



## “Little Prince” in Gavar

*“The Centre has become a very dear place to me: it is equal to a family.”*

*Lusine, 14*

“Striving to Eliminate Poverty for Children in Gavar” is a project aimed toward alleviating poverty among disadvantaged children and their families in Gavar through enhancing the social protection system.

During 2012, this project worked with 43 children between the ages of 10 and 16 and their family members through providing complex socio-psychological assistance to overcome the challenges caused by poverty and its consequent side effects.

To build a base for possible professional orientation and to make their leisure more productive, life-skills development trainings were offered to children in the following areas: craftwork, culinary art, computer skills, wood crafts, drawing, and journalism.

Additionally, professional development trainings were offered to parents and other family members in order to help them generate income and contribute to a more stable home situation. Those who successfully graduated from the trainings were presented with the corresponding tools and equipment that would allow them to provide the services on their own. During 2012, the following trainings were offered: car repair, hairdressing, cosmetology, sewing, and pastry-making.

The children also attended the sports complex to practice individual and group sports, and participated in seminars on



healthy lifestyles and personal hygiene. The fresh food prepared daily was provided to 20 children each day to prevent malnutrition due to economic poverty.

In addition, the children participated in in-center and public social activities, city marches, initiatives, competitions and contests, and visited historic sites in Gavar and outside the city.

The parents were offered legal counseling services with an advocacy component to raise their awareness about personal rights and to encourage them to exercise those rights.



Project annual budget:

25,000 EUR

Project location:

Gavar, Gegharkunik Marz

Project partners:

Caritas Austria

Project manager:

Gurgen Balasanyan



## LOVE AND ATTENTION

*They say that love and attention can cause miracles. And this is what exactly happened to G. He lives with his father, brother, and stepmother. He always compares his stepmother and his mother, who passed away when he was quite young. The child refused food and refused to study because of the problems he had with his stepmother. As a result, she used physical violence as a means of tackling the issue.*

*The problems in the family were clearly revealed at the center and it became evident that the child needed love and attention.*

*The problems in the family were clearly revealed at the center and it became evident that the child needed love and attention. Due to the socio-psychological work with the child and the family, positive changes have been noticed: the stepmother has become more tolerant and attentive toward the child, and G. now happily attends the center, easily communicates with the other children, and eats the served food. G. is a very active and lively child.*

## “Little Prince” in Vanadzor

The Little Prince Center in Vanadzor operates within the framework of the project “Empowering Youth and Families in Vanadzor.” In total, the center worked with 96 child beneficiaries during 2012, generally ranging from 71-80 beneficiaries per month. Additionally, the center worked with 88 parents and family members.

On average, 26 children received a freshly cooked lunch at the center on a daily basis, and the average number of daily visitors to the center was 37.



Overall, 82 children participated in the general development training programs organized in partnership with Crossing Roads NGO, and 90% (74 beneficiaries) successfully completed these trainings. The training cycles attended by the children were as follows:

- Journalism & related disciplines;
- Culinary art and table design;
- Applied art;
- Handicrafts & macramé;
- Puppet-making;
- Computer operating.

34 family members and older project beneficiaries (25 family members; 9 older beneficiaries) between the ages of 16 and 18 also attended professional development trainings. Of these participants, 94% successfully completed the trainings, and these graduates received the necessary equipment and tools to enable them to

generate income using their new skills.

The trainings offered to the family members and older project beneficiaries were:

- Hairdressing;
- Cosmetology;
- Manicure/Nail design;
- Car repair;
- Sewing;
- Business correspondence.

37% of the older graduates have been able to generate an income of some kind by using skills acquired during the trainings. One of the graduates has even established a small workshop for himself.

The project team, working together with the volunteers, leadership group, and partner institutions, initiated a total of 23 events. Approximately 60% of our project beneficiaries actively participated in these events, which were held both within and outside of the Little Prince Center.



|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 83,864 EUR   |
| Project location:      | Vanadzor, Lori Marz                                |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Germany, Cordaid and "Crossing Roads" SNGO |
| Project manager:       | Gurgen Balasanyan                                  |



## OVERCAME FEAR

*A. was born in 2000 in Vanadzor. She lives with her mother and brother. Her father passed away 4 years ago, after which the family experienced considerable psychological trauma. The mother has lost her job and is seriously ill.*

*A. enrolled in Little Prince in April 2012 and faced serious psychological challenges including fear and communication difficulties. Individual psychological work was scheduled for her, and she overcame her fear after only 3 meetings.*

*A. soon became involved with the mentoring initiative, Puppet Theater, design, and English and dance clubs. Within two months, A. overcame her communication difficulties and is no longer afraid to express her thoughts.*

***A. overcame her communication difficulties and is no longer afraid to express her thoughts.***

*During each meeting her mother states, "I cannot recognize my child; she used to be silent, never left home, did not interact with anyone, and after her father's death could not even express her thoughts. Now she speaks so smoothly that I cannot imagine it is the same shy and silent child. She sleeps well at night, has completely overcome fear, and has many friends."*

## “DO THE KIND” VOLUNTEERING CAMPAIGN

The volunteering campaign, “Do the Kind,” was implemented in Vanadzor for the 5th year, jointly executed by Armenian Caritas and Crossing Roads NGO. The project launched on October 15th and lasted until November 25th, with an awards ceremony on December 5th, the International Day of Volunteering.

In total, 25 schools, 2 universities, 1 college, 2 cultural centers, 2 NGOs, 2 media companies, and 8 individuals participated in the campaign by organizing and implementing 213 volunteer activities. Activities included city marches, environmental campaigns, visits to and assistance for disadvantaged citizens, discussions, donations, etc. At

the awards ceremony, which was attended by approximately 400 people, a selection committee announced the winners, who were chosen based on their volunteering initiatives and actions.

The most significant impact from this campaign was raising the social responsibility of local stakeholders in tackling issues within the community.



## 4 German Friendship with multi-children families

*“Armenian Caritas and German friends fortify my ability to fight the bitterness of life...”*

*Simonyan. A, 35*

Solidarity and compassion between nations has been the inspiration for launching many initiatives. One such initiative is the “German Friendship” project, which was launched in 2003 with the support of teachers, students, and parents from the Gymnasium after

KardinalFrings in Bonn, Germany. This group organizes various events to help raise funds to assist Armenian peers with improving the educational process and the social conditions of families.

In 2012, 55 vulnerable families, each with at least three children and living in temporary housing in Gyumri, were included in this project. These families received food provisions that included products necessary for child nutrition.

The project team faced considerable difficulty in choosing the families, since Gyumri is the city with the highest rate of poverty in Armenia and has a large number of vulnerable families.

|                        |                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 3000 EUR                          |
| Project location:      | Gyumri, Shirak Marz               |
| Project partners:      | Kardinal Frings Gymnasium in Bonn |
| Project manager:       | Hasmik Sargsyan                   |

## 5 Food for Kindergartens in Sepasar and Ghazanchi villages

*“While Caritas takes care of my family I am able to work and take care of the whole family.”*

*Papikyan, S., 32*

Many community-owned kindergartens in villages throughout Armenia are gradually closing since limited community funds are often not enough to cover the expenses of a fully-functional kindergarten.

Striving to fill the gaps in children’s educational development, the Armenian Catholic Church has purchased and renovated the community-owned kindergartens in the villages of Ghazanchi and Sepasar, restarted the kindergartens, and is further planning to establish educational and spiritual centers there.

Armenian Caritas joined this initiative through the “Assistance to Kindergartens” project, which provided furniture, toys, and food to the children.

The communities of Sepasar and Ghazanchi also made a considerable contribution to this project, as the communities were responsible for funding the salaries for professional staff and covering utility expenses.

As a result of this productive cooperation, 51 children between the ages of 3 and 6 years old living in Sepasar and Ghazanchi villages got the opportunity to attend kindergarten.

This project not only contributes to the educational, cultural, and social development of children, but also creates alternative social protection and assistance for these children and their families.



Project annual budget:

6000 EUR

Project location:

Sepasar and Ghazanchi villages, Shirak Marz

Project partners:

Caritas Austria /Innsbruck

Project manager:

Hasmik Sargsyan

## 6 Improvement of Educational Conditions of Schoolchildren

*“Whenever I get a chance to learn something new, I feel more confident,”*

*Haykaz, 16*

Unemployment is quite often considered to be the main reason for increased levels of poverty. But unemployment is not necessarily the result of a lack of employment. Therefore, choosing a relevant and timely profession can be very important for the future of young people.

The “Improvement of Educational Conditions for Schoolchildren” project was launched to assist youth and children with obtaining professional knowledge and practical skills that correspond to the employment market in Armenia.

In order to achieve this, specialists worked with pupils from two special schools in Vanadzor



to develop their willingness and readiness to work, their ability to interact in a working environment, and their understanding of the importance of civic engagement. This work consisted primarily of seminars, discussions, film screenings, and special psychological tests.

Through this project, a total of 160 schoolchildren from Geghasar village, Khnkoyan village, and Vanadzor were provided with:

- Stationery;
- Sports equipment;
- Food;
- Blankets and towels;
- Hygienic items.

Project implementation was greatly boosted thanks to cooperation with local government institutions, television companies, the State Unemployment Agency, and Crossing Roads NGO. Specifically, during 2012 the Vanadzor boarding school administration provided classrooms for group meetings with 25 children in the project. The Lori School Foundation established by the Vanadzor municipality provided the children with stationary, allocating a total of 300 EUR. Crossing Roads NGO took responsibility for implementing seminars on the following topics: active citizenship, healthy lifestyles, leadership, and communication.

Project annual budget: 29,000 EUR

Project location: Geghasar, Khnkoyan, Vanadzor

Project partners: Action of the 3 Kings, Caritas Austria/Feldkirch

Project manager: Gagik Tarasyan

***“I am going to cover the expenses of the school graduation ceremony with the money I earned...”***

*Haykush Khachatryan was born in the village of Dzoraget in Lori region. It is already her third year at Vanadzor’s Number 1 Boarding School of Children’s Care and Defense. Haykush is 17 years old. There are 5 children*



*in the family, and Haykush is the third child. The family’s socially vulnerable condition hasn’t affected their close-knit relationship; all are warm and kind with each other. This family dynamic was noticed by the workers of the N 1 Boarding School.*

*Prior to participating in this project, Haykush had wanted to become a nurse and this project was a great opportunity for her to decide whether she wanted to pursue nursing or try something different. Early in the project, Haykush was interested in hair-dressing and expressed her wish to be*

*included in that vocational training group. Within a month Haykush had completely forgotten about becoming a nurse and she started to specialize in hair-dressing. By the end of the courses Haykush had already become quite skilled. She typically leaves Vanadzor to go to her village once or twice a month, and it was during one of these visits that she cut and styled her mother’s hair and the neighbors noticed her skills. It was a close neighbor who first entrusted her hair to Haykush. She cut the neighbor’s hair carefully and the neighbor was excited to show off her new and beautiful hairstyle to other people. And this was how the number of Haykush’s clients increased. It was both Haykush’s skills and the professional equipment provided through the project that helped make this happen. “I have never asked for money from the villagers for my services, but they have insisted on paying, explaining that they would pay any other hairdresser for the same services. They are pleased with my work, so they pay me. I have already earned 8.000 drams. I am saving this money to pay for the expenses of my graduation ceremony. I must buy clothes, shoes, etc. to be beautiful on that day,” Haykush indicated with excitement.*

*Her greatest dream is to own her own beauty salon- in Vanadzor, not in the village. “People in the village are few; I won’t have many clients. But there are more people in the city and I will be able to make the salon successful. And I won’t forget my fellow villagers; I will cut their hair on a volunteer basis,” Haykush added. We are pretty sure that her dream will come true.*



## 7 Secure behavior and socio-psychological rehabilitation through Art Therapy

*“The most significant impact of the project so far is its assistance to parents in breaking the wall of unawareness.”*

*Petrosyan, A. 28*

This project works with 25 children from difficult circumstances and their family members. Different methods- including fairytale therapy, art therapy, forum theatre in the newly constructed open-air amphitheater,

and activities to strengthen memory and perception- are used with children who face challenges with speech, hyperactivity, phobias, attention disorder, self-control, etc. As a result of these activities, the following changes have often been noticed in the children:

- Overcoming fears, phobias, and aggression;
- Improved dimensional orientation;
- Ability to display appropriate emotions;
- Improved visual attention.

Project annual budget: 12,800 EUR

Project location: Vanadzor, Lori Marz

Project partners: Caritas Spain and “Crossing Roads” SNGO

Project partners: Gurgen Balasanyan



## Elderly Citizens



Based on our experience and expertise in the implementation of social projects, Armenian Caritas also implements projects that tackle issues faced by the elderly. The main goal of these projects is to improve living conditions for elderly citizens through the provision of consistent, compassionate, and personalized care in three geographical areas of Armenia- Shirak, Lori, and Gegharkunik regions. The elderly care projects allow beneficiaries to integrate more fully into society and receive equal treatment.

The issue of inadequate care for the elderly is primarily a result of the overall economic situation in Armenia and is therefore difficult to resolve. The people most in need of assistance are those who live alone, are unable to care for themselves, and are unable to find a place in the few convalescent homes that are available. Many seniors prefer living within the larger community rather than a convalescent home, but still require some support for their personal care.

The Home Care program, Day Care centers, Warm Winter program, and Supplementary Dry Food Provision project aim to improve the health and living conditions of 620 elderly Armenian citizens. The projects provide beneficiaries with primary health care, general care activities and consultancy, assistance in maintaining personal hygiene, household assistance, dietary food provision, household heating assistance, medication provision, and special nursing/social care to those with severe mobility limitations.

# 1 Home Care

*“Although I am blind, my soul seems to be enlightened with the kind people of Armenian Caritas. Now I am in safe hands, I am sure that there is someone who will give a helping hand during hard times.”*

*Rima, 74*



A study by the United Nations shows that Armenia is an ageing country, the reasons for which are a declining birth rate and increased emigration due to difficult socio-economic conditions. According to data from the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues, more than 14.000 elderly live alone in Armenia, and this number is still growing.

Due to a lack of appropriate state policies, elderly citizens living alone are deprived of social care and protection and forced to get along with only their pension. The disabled elderly face even more challenging conditions since they have limited mobility and often are out of society's attention.

The Home Care project aims to develop a model of care that can be used within the health care and social care systems of Armenia.

The main beneficiaries of the project are 300 elderly citizens from the cities of Gyumri, Gavar, and Vanadzor who live alone and in impoverished living conditions.

Beneficiaries are selected according to the

following criteria:

- Low pension/disability pension;
- Disability group;
- Social status;
- Housing conditions;
- Absence of relatives' care.

Beneficiaries are provided with social and medical care, nutritious food, and cleaning services for their home and clothing.

Generally, each nurse cares for 55-56 beneficiaries (except in Gavar- 30) and visits each one at least twice a month. The nurses provide beneficiaries with healthcare and, in case of necessity, first aid. In addition to providing medical care, the nurses also speak with the beneficiaries, providing them with psychological support.

Volunteer caretakers provide social care and support for the elderly beneficiaries. Each caretaker visits 15 beneficiaries weekly. Three caretakers- of the 25 current

volunteers- stay busy with washing, drying, and ironing clothes. The elderly beneficiaries emphasize the importance of having fresh linen and clothing.

Beneficiaries who do not face limited mobility often prefer to take care of household chores by themselves, choosing instead to receive only healthcare and material support. Moreover, the majority of these beneficiaries express their readiness to help other, less

mobile elderly citizens, participate in social activities, and transfer their skills to youth.

Contributing to improved living conditions for 300 elderly citizens, this program also creates a stimulating environment for the elderly, which helps them lead a full life. Moreover, the program helps strengthen community solidarity and the idea of community participation as a means to solve individual and social problems.



Project annual budget: 212,000 EUR

Project location: Gyumri, Shirak Marz; Vanadzor, Lori Marz; Gavar, Gegharkunik Marz

Project partners: Caritas Germany, Caritas Spain, Caritas Austria (Innsbruck), Renovabis, US Bishops Conference

Project manager: Flora Sargsyan



## ***They are together***

*During Soviet times the city of Gyumri was famous for textile manufacturing. In order to recruit more workers for the newly built textile factory in the 1930s, orphanage children between 12 and 13 years old were brought to the factory and trained to work. Many of those children are now elderly citizens living alone. Many of them never married and remained alone, sometimes supporting one other.*

*Parzanush and Lida are two of those orphans who became close friends, almost like sisters. The women seldom complain of their present situation, yet they both live in old houses that have not been renovated for many years. Their houses lack necessary accommodations such as bathrooms or toilets; the kitchens are communal and lack such basic conveniences that the women sometimes do not even use the kitchen since it is so cold and uncomfortable. The women wait with excitement for each visit from the Home Care employees, as they have no any other relatives and few friends. Since their childhood they have rarely made any other friends. We try hard to bring them out*

*and socialize them, but they often refuse to participate in any event and instead keep themselves isolated. We are very sorry for their solitary behavior, but it has become a custom for them. But at least they are together and find friendship with one other.*





## ***IN THE NAME OF NZHDEH***

*In 2012 a major historical drama depicting Garegin Nzhdeh- one of Armenia's greatest leaders and a national hero- was filmed in Armenia. Some scenes in the film were recorded near Gyumri at the Marmashen monastery.*

*Upon learning about the Home Care project by Armenian Caritas, the director of the film invited our elderly beneficiaries to be filmed in some of the movie scenes. Initially, our beneficiaries were reluctant to*

*accept the offer, stating that they were too old to be actors. But their decision changed after learning who the film was about. They agreed: "In the name of Nzhdeh, we agree to be filmed." Despite the extreme heat and the fact that they needed to remain outside for a long period of time, they made unforgettable memories during the filming.*

*The premiere of this film was anticipated by both the project staff and the beneficiaries more than any film before.*



## **FASHION KNOWS NO AGE**

*Cooperation between different projects and departments within Armenian Caritas always results in successful outcomes, and one such example was the joint initiative between the National Home Care and the Handicraft Workshop for Women projects. This initiative resulted in a new collection of clothes for the elderly, as part of the “Designed with Love” line created by participants from the Handicraft Workshop for Women project.*

*The elderly collection consisted of ten pieces of clothing that were publicly displayed*

*during a fashion show using the elderly clients of the National Home Care project as models. During their runway walks, each one was accompanied by young people from Gyumri’s Little Prince Social Center. Despite their unsteady and cautious walks, each model was warmly greeted by the audience and received a very positive response for the show.*

*At the end of the fashion show, these beginner models each received the clothing they had modeled..*



## 2 Day Care Centers for the Elderly

### in Gyumri

*“At night when the door is shut and I am alone, the only thing that helps me go on is the feeling that there are people waiting for me at Caritas tomorrow,,”*

*Elena, 68*

Research conducted by Armenian Caritas has revealed, based on results from a needs assessment, that solitary and disabled elderly citizens are in need of communication, psychological support, and socialization

more than any material provision. They also have the need to be useful to society.

The Day Care Center for the Elderly aims to support the social integration of 60 disabled elderly citizens living in Gyumri through the provision of services, including legal and social support.

The center provides beneficiaries with an opportunity to interact with others, communicate, and lead an active social life. The center provides beneficiaries with food, primary healthcare, leisure/table games, a sewing machine, periodicals, books, and the opportunity to participate in different events.

Project annual budget: 66,917 EUR

Project location: Gyumri, Shirak Marz

Project partners: Italian Bishops Conference; Caritas Ausria (Feldkirch), Caritas Poland

Project manager: Flora Sargsyan



## In Tashir

*“Let God protect Caritas as Caritas protects us...”*

*Vektor Hazoyan, 75*

The Day Care Center in Tashir has been operating since 2007. It strives to promote the fundamental rights of each individual, particularly with regard to the right to adequate living conditions and the right to freely participate in the cultural life of a society.

The project continued its standard activities during 2012, in total providing services to 64 elderly citizens from Tashir. The project activities contributed to decreased feelings of isolation among the elderly and supported their inclusion in society through

the organization of different events for their participation. The Center also provided hygiene and health care, legal assistance, and help with mediating solutions to their social problems. There were also events organized at the center with the participation of children from Little Prince Social Center of Tashir and elderly citizens from the Day Care Center. These organized events included game competitions, carpet-making, literary recitation, holiday celebrations, and others.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the project was the contribution and involvement of volunteers. The four volunteers involved in this project proved invaluable and did a tremendous job taking care of and assisting the elderly, as well as completing their work with great devotion and compassion.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 45,000 EUR                               |
| Project location:      | Tashir, Lori Marz                        |
| Project partners:      | Medicor Foundation and L'Oeuvre D'Orient |
| Project manager:       | Armen Martirosyan                        |



## GOD'S GIFT

*"It is just one year that I have been attending the Day Care Center for the Elderly but I do not feel myself as handicapped. Before attending I was hardly socializing with people, much less thinking about singing or dancing, and I walk with stick which is quite difficult for me.*

*When I started attending here, I was initially a little bit skeptical but on the very first day, when I noticed the attitude of the staff towards everyone, I really thought I should have come sooner.*

*And the next day there was an event at the center, and I was so excited that I even sang and danced with the help of others.*

*This center is a gift from God for people like us, we feel at home here. And in particular I would like to mention the assistance provided by "Warm Winter" for heating expenses, the humanitarian aid sent by Caritas Austria, the medications, delicious food, and the caring attitude of the staff members at the center."*

*Varduhi Baroyan, 68*



### 3 Dry Food Provision to the Elderly in Gyumri

“Dry Food for the Elderly” was the first attempt of cooperation between Armenian Caritas and a business enterprise. JT International has significant experience in the implementation of corporate social responsibility projects. This joint food provision program focuses on alleviating some of the challenges faced by underprivileged elderly citizens.

The aim of the project is to provide dry food to the elderly and improve their minimum standard of living. Within the scope of this project, 200 elderly people receive packages composed of 3800 dram worth of food (i.e.: flour, vegetable oil, butter, tea, coffee, rice, pasta). The project also encourages elderly citizens to spend more time taking proper care of their health concerns.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 8,940,000 dram   |
| Project location:      | Gyumri, Shirak Marz  |
| Project partners:      | Representative office of “JT International Luxembourg S. A” in Armenia |
| Project manager:       | Diana Boyajyan   |



## 4 Warm Winter

Implementation of the “Warm Winter” project began in 2003. The primary goal of the project is to promote the well-being of the elderly population while increasing the responsibility of local authorities and society to care for the elderly during winter in three regions of Armenia (Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik).

In 2012, this project was much more successful than in previous years due to significant collaboration with the local governing bodies in the cities of Gyumri, Vanadzor, Tashir, and Gavar. In addition to

the monetary amount provided by Armenian Caritas for the “Warm Winter” project, an additional thousand drams per beneficiary was allocated from the city budget.

As a result, it was possible to cover the heating expenses of 690 elderly citizens living alone in Gyumri, Vanadzor, Tashir, and Gavar, rather than the anticipated 570. Each beneficiary received 63,000 AMD for their winter gas or electricity bills, or, for beneficiaries without gas or electric heating, alternative fuel for heating was purchased (i.e.: wood).

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 89,382 EUR   |
| Project location:      | Gyumri, ShirakMarz; Vanadzor and Tashir, Lori Marz; Gavar, GegharkunikMarz   |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Germany, Caritas Feldkirch (Caritas Austria), Caritas Innsbruck (Caritas Austria), Cordaid, Local municipalities of Gyumri, Vanadzor, Tashir and Gavar |
| Project manager:       | Flora Sargsyan   |



# Community Development and Public Health

The Community Development and Public Health departments strive to help solve communities' social, economic, and health problems; strengthen community potential and capacity; and promote socio-economic and cultural processes through the provision of services.

## ACTIVITIES:

- Promote mechanisms for economic and social support through teaching entrepreneurship and handicraft skills to vulnerable groups, while contributing to the creation of employment opportunities.
- Develop infrastructure through improving the drinking water supply system, roads, schools, etc.;
- Expand community partnerships between local organizations, groups, councils, and centers;
- Encourage community participation in the decision-making processes of local government;
- Provide primary outpatient care to vulnerable groups in target communities;
- Encourage the development of healthy families and raising a healthy generation, while promoting family values;
- Contribute to the development of rehabilitation therapy;
- Support preventative care in the sphere of drug use and HIV/AIDS.

## VISION:

A civil society in which the primary needs of each citizen are protected within the spheres of healthcare, education, legal rights, and social and cultural progress.



# Rural Communities in Development

## 1 Social and Economic Self-determination in Rural Areas

*“Through this project I realized that everyone should contribute to the development of the community.”*

*Koryun Petrosyan*

The economic and social development of rural Armenia is essential if the country is to become a true democracy with a fully engaged, civically active, employed population. Problems begin at a social level and unfold into a broad web of dysfunction at an economic level, aided by a political system that is, at best, indifferent to its rural constituencies.

Social and economic progress, as well as the majority of GDP growth, is limited to Yerevan, home to 40% of the population. The ever-widening gap between rural areas and the capital is becoming increasingly problematic.

To contribute to the social and economic development of rural Armenia, Armenian Caritas launched the “Social and Economic Self-determination in Rural Areas” project in 2009 in the regions of Gegharkunik, Lori, and

Shirak. The project was implemented with the close cooperation of local organizations, including Gegharkunik Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Gyumri Development Center in Shirak region, and Crossing Roads NGO in Lori region.

The overall goal of the project was to create profound positive change through providing opportunities for economic and social development in 15 Armenian villages, in order for the villages to become self-reliant and involved in community improvement through a values-driven and participatory approach.

The main objectives of the project were:

- To increase the capacity of local partner NGOs, including working together for increased effectiveness;
- To create and strengthen positive models of behavior, leading to a change in attitudes toward community responsibility;
- To contribute to the improvement of social and economic conditions in target sites, strengthening the capacity of local community action groups through providing them with practical experience in community mobilization and collaboration with local government.
- To increase awareness of and reinforce democratic principles through the



On February 12, 2012 the National Conference was held at a cultural and business center, “The House of Moscow in Yerevan.” The aim of the conference was to present the results of the project, analyze the success of community action groups, discuss future steps, and create opportunities for the cooperation of community development organizations in Armenia.

implementation of small community projects and the start of new small businesses.

The conference provided groups with the opportunity to share their experiences, learn from one other, and create possibilities for their future cooperation.

In 2012 our local partners continued to provide regular consultations for community action groups and local businessmen with regards to project development and implementation, new business establishment and profit, and community capacity development.

In 2012 the “Community Development” manual developed by Armenian Caritas was published. The manual provides practical tools for working with rural communities and bringing positive change through utilizing participatory methodology.

In January 2012, Armenian Caritas announced the third phase of the community development small grants competition.

Between 2009 and 2012, 50 highly competitive proposals were submitted to the selection committee for review, and 30 were selected to receive funding for implementation in eleven communities. In total, Armenian Caritas provided only 24.6 million AMD for the implementation of these local projects; the remaining amount- 44.4 million AMD- was contributed by the communities.



|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 81.232 EUR   |
| Project location:      | Shirak Region: Hayrenyats, Kaps, Basen, Hovuni, Karnut villages<br>Lori Region: Chochkan, Hagvi, Debet, Qarinj, Sverdlov villages;<br>Gegharkunik Region: Gandzak, Zovaber, Tsovazard, Akunq, Chkalovka villages |
| Project partners:      | European Commission, Caritas Belgium, Crossing Roads Social NGO, Gegharkunik Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Gyumri Development Center NGO   |
| Project manager:       | Gayane Norikyan  |



### **“GURGEN FROM BASEN”**

*Everyone at Armenian Caritas knows Gurgen Petrosyan. He is very goal-oriented, hard-working, and devoted to his native village. Gurgen Petrosyan was born in and currently resides in Basen village. From the first day of the project, Gurgen was singled out for his active participation and new ideas.*

*In the summer of 2009 Gurgen participated in an intensive business study course as part of the “Socio-economic Self-determination in Rural Communities” project. His business project proposal won the commission’s approval. The aim of the project was to develop the sheep breeding economy and improve the quality of sheep by changing the breed. Gurgen received 2.010.000 AMD to implement his project. The sum was given as a no-interest loan.*

*Annually, there are between 1.000 to 1.500 sheep sold in Gyumri, which constitutes 7% of Shirak region’s demand. This project intended to annually produce 50-60 sheep, which constitutes 5% of the market in Gyumri. Three new workplaces were created as a result of this project, and the project set a new precedent in the community, where sheep breeding is a traditional practice.*

*The total cost of the project was 11.600.000 AMD; 9.590.000 AMD was the businessman’s own investment.*

*Gurgen returned the sum of the loan during the first 15 months of the project, and gave 7% to the local community action group to implement another social project.*

## 2 Parish Social Ministries in Northern Armenia

*“The Katnaghbyur villager, who did not trust anyone or anything, has come to understand today that miracles are sometimes possible, and is now filled with trust and a sense of gratitude towards Armenian Caritas and our priest.”*

*Susanna Poghosyan, Head of “Praying Community”*

*Subgroup of Katnaghbyur PSM*

In an effort to help communities address their development needs, Catholic Relief Service (CRS)/South Caucasus developed a regional Parish Social Ministry (PSM) project. The project adapted conventional PSM approaches to fit the specific needs of Armenian Caritas, Caritas Georgia, and the Roman Catholic Community of Baku.

Having previously developed PSM groups in six villages in Shirak region in 2006, the PSM concept was expanded in 2012 to include five villages in Lori region: Katnarat, Katnaghbyur, Petrovka, Saratovka, and Blagodarnoye. Five Parish Social Ministries have now been created in the target villages and operate according to the principles of democratic governance, relationship strengthening between the communities and the Church, and facilitating widespread community participation.

Locally adapted training modules provided the PSM groups with valuable knowledge and skills for community development work. The small grants component of the trainings enabled participants and the local communities to use

PSM principles to achieve practical and tangible results.

PSM group members in the target villages were offered an exceptional opportunity for growth and development through this project. With the guidance and close support of Armenian Caritas, group members received ample consultation and training opportunities in a variety of areas, including project management, project implementation, administration, and finances.

As a result, 47 community activists in these five villages in Lori region are now familiar with participatory research methodologies and are able to use these methodologies to identify community problems and strengths. 15 community activists in the five villages are able to effectively develop and write project proposals. In addition, this project fostered a sense of ownership toward the community and increased local responsibility for community development.

During 2012, the Grant Selection Committee received 22 grant proposals from the PSM groups and awarded grant funding to 9 projects. Three projects were implemented in Katnarat, two projects in Saratovka, one project in Katnaghbyur, two projects in Blagodarnoye, and one project in Saragyugh. The development and realization of these community projects significantly increased the professional skills of the PSM members.



Project annual budget: 7616.55 EUR

Project location: Saratovka, Petrovka, Blagodarnoye, Katnarat, Katnaghbyur (Lori region)

Project partners: Caritas Innsbruck (Caritas Austria)

Project manager: Gayane Norikyan

### 3 Support for the Training of Parish Social Ministries

In 2006, Armenian Caritas had great success in developing Parish Social Ministry groups in six villages of Shirak Region. One of the main purposes of the project was to mobilize the communities, enabling citizens to become more active in the decisions that affect their lives, their families, and their communities.

To complement the PSM project, in 2012 Armenian Caritas designed the “Support for the Training of Parish Social Ministries” project. In addition to continuing to facilitate community development, this project also included tools for economic development and entrepreneurship training.



In 2012, five additional parishes were selected to participate in the project, and community action groups were successfully formed with members ready to learn and participate in developing their communities. Armenian Caritas uses participatory methodology for community mobilization, which is specifically adapted to the traditions, culture, and habits of the Armenian population. Moreover, the methodology is localized for each community to provide maximum efficiency.

The small business culture is underdeveloped in rural areas, and most rural communities in Lori region are very poor. The small amount of items that the villagers are able to produce is sold at very low prices, largely due to a lack of business education and awareness. The villagers are not able to analyze the risks and develop simple business plans to increase their income.

Banks and loan agencies consider the agriculture business very risky, especially

in the northern part of Armenia where Caritas works. Typically, the banks and loan agencies either refuse to fund business ideas from these villages or charge a high interest rate for agriculture, which is not effective for starting a business. Only small loans with an interest rate of 24-26% are available in rural communities, which do not encourage local business growth.

This project provided five communities in Lori region with the opportunity to learn how to develop and benefit from small business. Beneficiaries received a series of business development trainings, practiced writing a business plan, and were awarded a small amount of credit to start some business initiatives.

Six business plans were assessed by the project committee, and the five most viable plans were selected for “revolving funding”. The selected businesses signed agreements with Armenian Caritas regarding the use of funds, according to a payment schedule that required payback of 100% of the initial funds. Since the direct beneficiaries of the economic component of the program are generally individuals and families, it is important to emphasize the need for self-sufficiency. Thus, the gradual re-payment of the initial money to the revolving grant fund is a critical component of the project. The businesses began repaying the grant funds after 2-12 months depending on the specific



needs of the businesses, and the full 100% will be repaid before the end of the program in August 2012.

According to the contract, entrepreneurs must not only return the full amount of funding but also give 5% of the initial funding to their community PSM groups to implement social projects. This 5% funding is aimed at not only improving socio-economic conditions in the target communities, but also creating and developing new models of behavior to increase community members' responsibility toward the community.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 3.100 USD  |
| Project location:      | Saratovka, Petrovka, Blagodarnoye, Katnarat, Katnaghbyur (Lori Region)                                       |
| Project partners:      | United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Subcommittee on Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe |
| Project manager:       | Gayane Norikyan  |

## 4 “Aramazd 3” Social-educational Development Project

“This project contributes both to improving the community’s social-economic condition and to creating interest in Armenian traditions among youth. It also helps to spread our national culture all over the world”.

Sargis Ayunts,

Head of the local governance of Getik village, Gegharkunik region



In 2012, “Aramazd 3” Social-educational Development project activities, directed toward community development, were implemented in 21 communities in Shirak and Gegharkunik regions of Armenia. Partnership was established with six local NGOs, and five grant programs are currently being implemented in the communities of Amasia, Vardenis, and Chambarak:

- Astghavard NGO, Vardenis- “Talking Carpets”
- Cross of Armenian Unity NGO, Chambarak- “Creation of Employment Opportunity for Women in Getik Community”
- Community Social Development Center NGO, Amasia- “Pomegranate’s Grains”
- Community Development Center NGO, Vardenis- “Zartonk-2”
- Path of Hope-Glade of Hope NGO, Amasia- “Traditional Handicraft in Rural Communities”

The goal of these grant programs is three-fold: to improve the social-educational

environment; to create possibilities for improving professional skills among needy and vulnerable groups; and to develop traditional arts and crafts in the rural areas of Amasia, Vardenis, and Chambarak.

The total budget of the five programs is 25.804.526 AMD, of which 19.270.526 AMD is grant funding and 6.534.296 AMD is the community contribution, constituting 25.3% of the total program costs.

Within the program, there are 111 direct beneficiaries and 16,559 indirect beneficiaries.

In 2012, the three program partners- Amasia CSDC NGO, VardenisCDC NGO, and Hamazarg NGO of Chambarak- developed three-year strategic plans with the support of experts. The NGOs were also provided with opportunities to take part in different training programs.

Unemployed members of the target communities were also supported through this program.



Project annual budget: 150.993 EUR

Project location: Shirak region, Amasia sub-region: Amasia, Meghrashat, Byurakn, Voghji, Aregnadem, Gtashen, Djradzor  
 Gegharkunik region, Chambarak sub-region: Chambarak, Getik, Martuni, Dzoravanq, Dpraback  
 Gegharkunik region, Vardenis sub-region: Vardenis, Sotq, Vanevan, Torfavan, Akunq, Lusakunq, Khachaghbyur, Shatdjreq  
 Armavir region: Etchmiadzin

Project partners: Caritas Spain, Secoure Catholique/Caritas France, Caritas International Belgium  
 Amasia Civil Society Development Center NGO, Vardenis Community Development Center NGO, Astghavard NGO of the Parents of Handicapped Children, Hamazarg NGO, Cross of Armenian Unity NGO, Path of Hope-Glade of Hope NGO

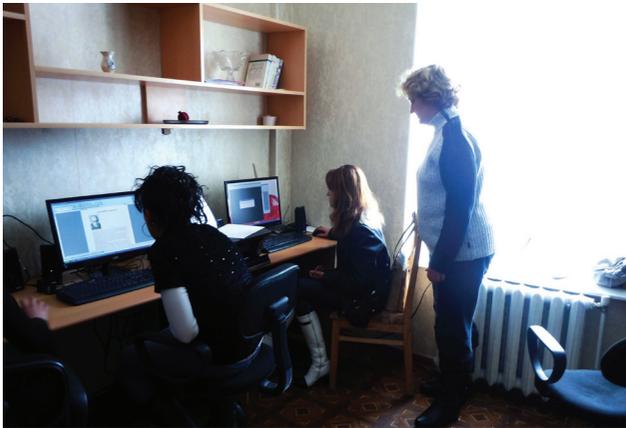
Project manager: Zara Aghanyan

## THE SUCCESS OF “NRAN HATIKNER”

*Anna Khlghatyan lives in Amasia. As a specialist of Russian Language and Literature, she was working at the school in the bordering village, Garnarich, which is 25km away. During the long, severe winters the roads connecting these two settlements were largely impassable and Anna had to live alone, far from her family. As a result she*

*had to stop her work and hope to find a job in Amasia.*

*The grant program “NranHatikner” (Pomegranate’s Grains)” was started by Amasia CSDC NGO within the program “Aramazd-3”. When Anna applied to this program she was an unemployed citizen, but through the program she has been trained as a “computer operator, secretary, and director’s assistant”. Currently, she works at Amasia CSDC NGO as a trainer for unemployed citizens and as the director’s assistant. Participating actively in the public life of the community, she is famous for her professionalism and organizational skills. The director of the local school noticed Anna’s abilities and invited her to work at the school in Amasia. Now, along with her work at the NGO, she also teaches at the local school.*



## 5 Water and Sanitation

Rehabilitation of the drinking water supply system in the village of Tsoghamarg

The village of Tsoghamarg receives water from the Ghazanchi main waterline through two separate pipelines that enter the village from different directions. The pipelines were constructed in 1963. In general, the pipes were in very bad condition and in some sections there was a 70% leakage of drinking water. In addition, sections of the pipeline passed through the cultivatable land of 83 inhabitants of the village, and the continual leakage did not permit them to grow anything in their gardens.

Moreover, the leakage caused a decrease in the water pressure in the system, so other households did not have water despite there always being an adequate supply in



the pipeline. This problem existed for 10 years, and neither the inhabitants nor the local governing bodies could resolve it. By initiating this renovation project, Armenian Caritas improved the social conditions of 83 households in Tsoghamarg village through installing 1300 meters of synthetic pipeline, while also ensuring a community contribution to the project.

As a result of the project, 83 families in the village are now able to use their land and generate some profit. A majority of the village's male population now prefer to stay with their families rather than seeking temporary work in Russia and other countries. The profit gained from cultivating the land has helped the villagers improve their domestic, farming, and social conditions.

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 5.000 EUR                 |
| Project location:      | Tsoghamarg, Shirak region |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Italy             |
| Project manager:       | Artashes Margaryan        |

## Construction of Drinking Water Pipeline in the Village of Chkalovka, Gegharkunik Region

The poor conditions of the water pipelines in Chkalovka village had prevented a regular water supply from reaching the village for many years. In an effort to improve social conditions for 37 families living in the village, and to ensure a regular water supply, 1250m of water pipelines were installed.

The community made a financial contribution to the project equal to 25% of the total project budget.

As a result of the program, 37 families in the village now have 24-hour drinking



water available in their homes. Because of the community's active participation and contribution to the project, the project was implemented successfully and completed within the planned timeframe.

|                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 5.000 EUR                     |
| Project location:      | Chkalovka, Gegharkunik region |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Italy                 |
| Project manager:       | Artashes Margaryan            |



# Schools in Development

## 1 Equal Opportunities for Socially Vulnerable and Disabled Children and their Parents

*“You helped me become self-confident and feel stronger, and not be afraid of difficulties”.*

This project strives to promote equal opportunities in education and employment, and a dignified life for socially vulnerable children, children with disabilities, and their families.

To achieve these aims, basic vocational trainings were organized at School #7 In

Gyumri, School #1 in Chambarak, and School #65 in Yerevan, through which 200 pupils with disabilities and pupils from disadvantaged families developed professional skills. To help sensitize society toward children with disabilities and the challenges they face, the project initiated peer-to-peer education activities that involved 510 children. In addition, this project allowed for the production of films highlighting the importance of inclusive education, which were screened at 18 schools in Shirak region, Gegharkunik region, and Yerevan.

Project annual budget:

41.220 EUR

Project location:

Yerevan  
 Shirak region: Gyumri, Pokrashen, Toros, Mets Sepasar, Tavshut, Krasar, Lernut, Getk  
 Gegharkunik region: Gavar, Drachtick, Shorja, Aghberk, Dpraback, Norashen, Ganzak, Tsackashen, Chambarack, Shatjrek

Project partners:

Secours Catholique

Project manager:

Gayane Norikyan

## IMPORTANT TASK

Mary Pogossyan has two children attending School #129 in Yerevan. Mary was one of the most active participants of the inclusive education trainings organized by NASPCM and Armenian Caritas. Soon after the trainings, Mary became very interested in inclusive education and has started conducting trainings herself at School #129. The school administration greatly values her

experience and skills; whenever they need to hold trainings on inclusive education for school staff, parents, and schoolchildren they always invite her to lead the trainings. Mary enjoys her work and delivers the trainings with great responsibility and pleasure. She knows that she is doing important work and is happy with it.

## 2 Micro Project of School Renovation

The extreme winter temperatures inside the Byurakn village school had worsened the structural state of the building and made teaching and learning nearly impossible during the winter. In an effort to restore educational processes and ensure adequate conditions for learning in the village school during the harsh winter months, Armenian Caritas initiated the replacement of old broken windows with new hermetic windows.

The project was implemented over a two-month period, from August 1st through September 30th, 2012. Implementation was carried out in two phases. During the first phase, an open call was announced to select a window manufacturer and a contract was signed with the company. This preparation phase lasted for three weeks, during which time the old windows were removed from



the school building. The new windows and windowsills were installed during the second phase of the project.

Since October 2012, 100 schoolchildren in Byurakn village have had the opportunity to continue their education in safer and warmer classrooms.

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 5.000 EUR              |
| Project location:      | Byurakn, Shirak region |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Spain          |
| Project manager:       | Artashes Margaryan     |



# Women in Development

## Handicraft Workshop for Women

*“Nowhere else in Gyumri have I met such an honest and considerate attitude,,”*

*Karine Papoyan*

The RA National Statistical Service conducted a nationwide survey about domestic violence against women in Armenia in 2008-2009. According to the results, the majority of women who suffer from domestic violence “do not have sufficient economic resources for economic security, self-reliance, and empowerment through entrepreneurship, employment and ownership”.

This evidence was one of the reasons why all of the activities of Armenian Caritas within the field of domestic violence prevention are directed toward initiatives that support the self-confidence and economic independence of potential victims. The “Handicraft

Workshop for Women” project was created to address this very issue.

In January 2011, Armenian Caritas started the second three-year phase of the Handicraft Workshop project, providing women with the opportunity to gain economic independence and thereby decrease the probability of violence against women.

In 2012 the center provided services to two groups of women; one group consisted of five women and the other of eight women.

Each woman participated in the sewing skills workshop, which required 15 hours a week for 12 months to ensure a deep knowledge and skill set for their future profession. The center also provided general information about business planning to help ensure the graduates’ employability, and to help participants organize and manage their own small businesses in the future. The



center also provided the women with sewing machines and equipment.

In addition to the focus on employability, the project also focuses on women's psychological health. In 2012, all participants were provided with individual and group psychological consultancies.

In 2012 many events were organized, including fashion shows in July and December that displayed clothing made by participants of the Women's Handicraft project. Elderly women from the Day Care Center for the Elderly participated in the shows, as well as

children from the Little Prince social center. The fashion show participants modeled the clothes, which were sewn especially for them, with love. The Handicraft center also actively participated in exhibition sales in Gyumri, which gave an opportunity for the women to make new acquaintances, discover employment opportunities, and show their clothing products in the local market.

These types of regularly organized events helped raise the women's self-confidence and allowed them to evaluate their abilities and skills.

|                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 17.610 EUR                 |
| Project location:      | Gyumri, Shirak region      |
| Project partners:      | Renovabis, Caritas Belgium |
| Project manager:       | Gayane Norikyan            |



### HONEST AND CONSIDERATE ATTITUDE

*Karine Papoyan is a fashion designer by education, but she considers the knowledge she gained as a student only theoretical and confesses that she couldn't imagine what kind of future she would have, especially considering the conditions of our town.*

*She appeared in the Handicraft center by chance and was very pleased with the training she received, as she developed a large supply of knowledge and practical experience.*

*Karine says, "It is very interesting that nowhere in Gyumri had I met such an honest and considerate attitude".*

## Public Health

### 1 Primary Healthcare Center

The National Health Policy of the Republic of Armenia for 2004-2015 stresses the importance of primary healthcare (PHC) development and emphasizes the institution of Family Medicine as a main PHC provider.

Currently in Armenia, primary healthcare shows a mixed picture. Most urban polyclinics continue to operate based on the former Soviet tradition, in which there are no family physicians. Instead, each doctor specializes in the healthcare needs of a specific age group and specific health problems, including separate medical specialties for women.



On the other hand, Family Medicine, which is designed to provide comprehensive healthcare for people of all ages, has been introduced in Armenia and is supposed to be the main basis for preventive healthcare.



The “Primary Healthcare Center” project of Armenian Caritas represents the “cradle” of Family Medicine in Armenia. The initial project of the Primary Healthcare Center (PHCC) in Gyumri was launched in January 2002.

The program strives to offer, in a compassionate and competent manner, primary ambulatory care for needy patients in Gyumri and those from the surrounding areas, while also providing training opportunities for two Armenian Family Physicians and two nurses.

PHCC is easily accessible, making itself the first point of contact for many individuals with health issues. Over 5000 visits are made to the center annually.

The center provides a wide range of basic health services:

#### Laboratory Instrumental Examination

- Ultrasound examination
- Vascular Doppler examination
- Laboratory-biochemical examination

#### Specialist Consultations:

- Gynecologist
- Endocrinologist
- Psychologist
- Physiotherapist

In addition, medicine is provided if available.

In 2012 the center underwent a major renovation using locally raised funds. The fundraising campaign was entitled “From Prosperity to Charity” and targeted local businesses. As a result of the campaign, 15 companies donated a total of 1.600.000 AMD toward the project.

|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 75.000 EUR         |
| Project location:      | Shirak region      |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Spain      |
| Project manager:       | Artashes Margaryan |

## WELL-TIMED ASSISTANCE

*The patient, Ashot, was 53 years old and came to us with diabetes, from which he had been suffering since January 2012. At that time he lived in Anapa.*

*Doctors prescribed different hypoglycemic drugs and diets, but the assigned treatment did not help and his health condition worsened daily. He lost 25kg of weight during two months. Permanent weakness and pain began to appear. The prescriptions given by doctors did not have any result. In May 2012, the patient applied to Armenian Caritas. After examinations and analyses, the doctors discovered that he had a tumor in the left kidney and recommended surgery. Ashot was sent to the Erebuni medical center, where the diagnosis was confirmed. The patient underwent an urgent operation, and afterwards his health condition improved. Currently the patient has no complaints;*



*he feels well and leads an active life. Now he has reached his former weight and his carbohydrate metabolism is normal.*

## 2 “Healthy Mentality, Healthy Family” within Primary Healthcare Project in Gyumri

The “Healthy Mentality, Healthy Family” project is very unique in that it focuses on the value of family and the importance of creating healthy families and raising a healthy generation.

The ultimate goals of the project are: to emphasize the significance of Holy Marriage; encourage equal partnership between the wife and husband in taking care of the family; clarify responsibilities within large, multi-generational, traditional Armenian families (i.e.: in which the newlywed couple lives with the parents of the husband); and raise a psychologically healthy generation.



It is worth mentioning that with the funding of Caritas Spain, implementation of this project began in July 2009. In October 2010 the project received funding from the German organization Renovabis, at which time possibilities for the project expanded.

Each group meets together once a week for approximately 2 hours, and the general training consists of 8 meetings. The number

of participants in a group fluctuates between 7 and 9 women. The total number of beneficiaries in 2012 was 74.

Within this project, additional “Mother-Child” psychological trainings were conducted for 33 children with their mothers.

|                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 12.500 EUR         |
| Project location:      | Shirak region      |
| Project partners:      | Renovabis          |
| Project manager:       | Artashes Margaryan |

### 3 Improved Access to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Support

Many socio-economic problems within Shirak region- including financial insecurity, a high unemployment rate, an increasing number of people leaving to find work in countries with a high HIV index, and insufficient awareness about infection transmission and prevention- create conditions that contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The aim of this project is to promote safe sexual behavior among residents of 60 communities in Shirak region through the implementation of preventive measures, informative activities, and cooperation with the spiritual leaders of the communities.



Over the course of the project, 40 community coordinators will receive training to implement project activities within their communities and 200 residents of the target communities will have the opportunity to receive a free, anonymous blood examination annually.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 73.750 EUR   |
| Project location:      | Shirak region: Meghrashat, Hovtoun, Amasia, Bandivan, Djradzor, Aregnadem, Gtashen, Byurakn, Voghly, Hoghmik, Ghazanchy, Bavra, Arpeni, Zouygaghbyur, Coghamarg, Tavshut, Torosgyugh, Sizavet, PoqrSepasar, MecSepasar, Ashocq, Krasar |
| Project partners:      | Austrian Development Agency, Caritas Austria   |
| Project manager:       | Gayane Norikyan  |

# Migration and Integration





The goal of the Migration and Integration Department is to plan, implement, and coordinate initiatives to solve key issues related to migration.

The objectives of the projects being implemented are:

- To support the process of preventing illegal migration and trafficking in Armenia by disseminating information about the dangers and consequences of illegal migration.
- To become a bridge of return to the motherland for vulnerable migrants by protecting their rights, offering realistic solutions for their needs, and facilitating opportunities for development.

Activities:

- Organizing consultations, seminars, and informational campaigns about the consequences of illegal immigration and legal means of immigration among youth and potential immigrants.
- Providing legal and social counseling and material support to returnees from the EU for their reintegration in Armenia.
- Providing no-interest loans and grants to returnees for their economic stability.
- Allocating no-interest loans and grants to communities with a high rate of immigration.
- Providing vocational training opportunities for young unemployed people.

Vision

Advocate for vulnerable migrants through the development and implementation of sustainable mechanisms for the protection of their rights.



## 1 Migration and Development

*“Armenian Caritas is the only organization in Armenia that I am happy with”.*

*Anonymous Beneficiary*

The Migration and Development (MD) project promotes links between migration and development in Armenia by contributing to the establishment of sustainable reintegration measures for returnees to Armenia, and by creating an effective, client-centered information system for potential Armenian immigrants.

Activities implemented within the MD project are as follows:

- Provision of legal, material, and employment support for returnees from EU countries;
- Provision of information, business consultation, and community development programs for residents of regions with a high rate of immigration, with the purpose of mitigating immigration flows.

Overall, the Migration and Development program had 2185 beneficiaries from different regions of Armenia in 2012.

Specifically:

- 25 returned families have resettled in their home country and received material support (i.e., grants to help cover their basic living expenses);
- Seminar meetings were organized for 247 participants in various educational institutions and communities to raise awareness about the risks of illegal immigration;
- 45 unemployed young people attended vocational trainings on hairdressing, table design, floral arrangement, and computer skills. Data collected from three months after the end of the trainings revealed that 12 individuals found work providing hairdressing and design services to their acquaintances, and hope to enlarge their businesses in the near future.
- 11 families received no-interest loans

to set up a business. Of these, four successful business owners qualified to receive a second loan with the purpose of expanding their businesses.

The documentary film “Return” was produced and broadcast on local television channels, reaching audiences in the regions

with the highest rates of immigration. The purpose of the film was to raise awareness about migration, including: the consequences of illegal immigration, ways to prevent immigration, activities that have been implemented within the field, and the relevant efforts and contribution of Armenian Caritas.



|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Project annual budget: | 25.000 EUR  |
| Project location:      | Yerevan   |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Vorarlberg (Caritas Austria), Government of Liechtenstein |
| Project manager:       | Tigranuhi Tarakhchyan   |



## **WHEN THE HOME COUNTRY CALLS**

*No matter how hard the social conditions are; although it can be difficult, sometimes even impossible to survive, still the motherland calls you back. Homesickness is an inexplicable feeling that can come upon you in beautiful places and appear as an unwelcome guest in the most unexpected moment.*

*The Khachatryans left Armenia in 2005. They were welcomed in Greece; it is easy to integrate when you know the language. Their two sons were going to school and their daughter was younger then.*

*There was no need to worry about earning a living as they managed to find work quite easily. Things were going smoothly and it seemed as though nothing would bar their stay in Greece. But as their sons grew up, it became more and more difficult for them to adapt to the foreign traditions and customs of Greece. And one day the eldest son claimed that he would soon be 18 and he had a duty to his home country- to join the Armenian army. His parents were surprised and they initially objected to his claim. They had left everything behind and had overcome many challenges to reach and remain in a foreign land, and they knew that the return would*

*be even more difficult. They were in a state of uncertainty and despair as they had no means to return to Armenia and no idea how to survive there.*

*But the son's decision was firm. One day he claimed that he had found a "lifeline" for the family- it was Caritas, an organization that helps emigrants settle in their homeland. The family couldn't believe their son's story, but their meeting with Caritas staff brought them back to reality- Armenian reality.*

*It was Caritas that helped them in Armenia. Their house was renovated, furniture and household appliances were bought, no-interest loans were provided to the family so that they could set up a shoe-making business, and the sons are now serving in the army. They say that although there are a lot of difficulties, they are in their homeland and are not alone. Armenian Caritas has stood by them and assisted them during the hard times, like their closest relative and friend. The material and moral support received from Armenian Caritas has given them hope and filled the family with optimism and confidence.*

## 2 Sustainable Reintegration after Voluntary Return

*“Living abroad is hard and cruel. It’s better to live in the motherland. Caritas helped us overcome many difficulties and granted us warmth and care”.*

*Anahit Karapetyan, Talin*

The target group of this project is voluntary returnees of Armenian origin from Belgium. The project creates opportunities for sustainable reintegration through offering material and non-material assistance such as housing, vocational courses, assistance in finding a school, assistance in finding

employment, medical help, information, and communication with local authorities. The assistance offered by this project is unlimited and is based on an assessment of the specific needs of each individual returnee, who must sign a reciprocal agreement upon receiving assistance.

In 2012, 43 families (73 people) returned to Armenia and benefitted from this project. 12 families received financial support to establish or expand their small businesses in the sectors of agriculture, production, and service provision. In addition, 10 returnees received medical aid and 21 families received social assistance.



|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 100.000 EUR  |
| Project location:      | Yerevan  |
| Project partners:      | Caritas International Belgium, FEDASIL, European Union |
| Project manager:       | Movses Hakobyan  |

### 3 Human Trafficking- Common Challenge for the New Century

*“It was really interesting to become familiar with the reality in Armenia and the work done by AC during their 9 years of experience”.*

*Anonymous  
(Excerpt from an evaluation)*

The Human Trafficking project strives to encourage and strengthen cooperation among the countries of Eastern and Southern Europe in order to accelerate existing efforts to combat human trafficking.

At the international level, the project develops the capacity of Caritas staff throughout Europe through the exchange of experience between project partners, and the opportunity for staff to gain practical experience.

At the national level, the project strengthens Armenia’s response to trafficking through improving the visibility of national and international anti-trafficking measures.

In 2012, a program was developed by Armenian Caritas to allow for the exchange of experience between representatives from partner organizations in Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and France.

As part of the program, representatives attended a seminar entitled “Prevention of Human Trafficking in Armenia” and a conference called “Prevention of Human Trafficking- 9 Years at School”. During the conference, participants, representatives from the government and national and international NGOs, and school authorities gave concrete suggestions about how to improve the existing anti-trafficking mechanisms in the country. A letter with recommendations was also presented to the Government Anti-trafficking Commission in Armenia.

The activities, initiatives, and experiences within this program received comprehensive coverage in the “Euro-Mediterranean Anti-trafficking Project” monthly e-newsletter.

Also during 2012, project staff and volunteers had the opportunity to build their capacity through participating in two unique activities- the “Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking” experience exchange program organized by Caritas Ukraine, and the international summer camp, “All Together Against Trafficking+Be the Change!” organized by Caritas Albania.

|                        |                                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 11.481 EUR                          |
| Project location:      | Yerevan                             |
| Project partners:      | Caritas France (Secours Catholique) |
| Project manager:       | Movses Hakobyan                     |



## 4 Migration and Trafficking Resource Center

*“This kind of project was necessary; it was launched at the right time and was a logical continuation of previous anti-trafficking initiatives”.*

*Armen Hovhannisyán, Gegharkunik region,  
Vardenik Community*

The Migration and Trafficking Resource Center (MTRC) was created to promote and disseminate information about legal methods of migration, and to provide counseling support to victims of trafficking. A core component of the project is the development and facilitation of trainings about migration and trafficking for different groups. For this purpose, the MTRC has developed corresponding training materials.

In 2012, 196 people learned about the dangers of illegal migration and trafficking through various training projects. In order to make the necessary information more readily available, the center developed an official website for the project: [www.mtrcarm.com](http://www.mtrcarm.com), as well as a hotline service that operates free of charge: 8212. Through these services, individuals can receive answers to any questions they have regarding migration.

In addition, MTRC trainers were invited by World Vision NGO to conduct trainings on illegal migration and trafficking for young people between the ages of 14 and 25, due to the significant experience of MTRC in developing and facilitating trainings.

Also in 2012, Armenian Caritas was invited to be part of the RA government’s working group on human trafficking issues. In November, the Armenian Caritas representative participated in drafting a National Action Plan (NAP) on anti-trafficking. As a result, the NAP was developed for 2013-2015.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Project annual budget: | 44.735 EUR                               |
| Project location:      | Yerevan, Shirak, and Gegharkunik regions |
| Project partners:      | Caritas France (Secours Catholique)      |
| Project manager:       | Movses Hakobyan                          |

# Emergency Response



## 1 Assistance to Syrian-Armenian Families

The start of the civil war in Syria in 2011 caused approximately 7000 Syrian Armenians to leave the country and come to Armenia. The Republic of Armenia was not prepared to respond adequately to such a high amount of immigration. As a result, Syrian families- who suffered tremendously while leaving their home country and arrived under extremely challenging social and psychological conditions- often did not receive appropriate assistance for settling in Armenia. These immigrants are faced

with various challenges, including a lack of shelters, the absence of educational institutions in Arabic, unemployment, and many others.

To tackle these issues Armenian Caritas developed a new project to provide assistance to Syrian Armenian families during the integration process through addressing their primary socio-economic, legal, and psychological needs. The project has provided 15 Syrian Armenian families with temporary accommodation at the Yerevan Center of the Armenian Catholic Church, where they have also received free meals, clothing, medications, legal counseling, and psychological assistance.

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Project annual budget: | 88.981 EUR            |
| Project location:      | Yerevan               |
| Project partners:      | Caritas Germany       |
| Project manager:       | Tigranuhi Tarakhchyan |

## THE OPENED DOOR

*One of the Syrian Armenians sheltered at the Yerevan Center is Salbi, who left Syria with her nine year old son. As Salbi says, the decision to leave Syria was quite a difficult one since she didn't have any relatives in Armenia. So she was very happy when "this*

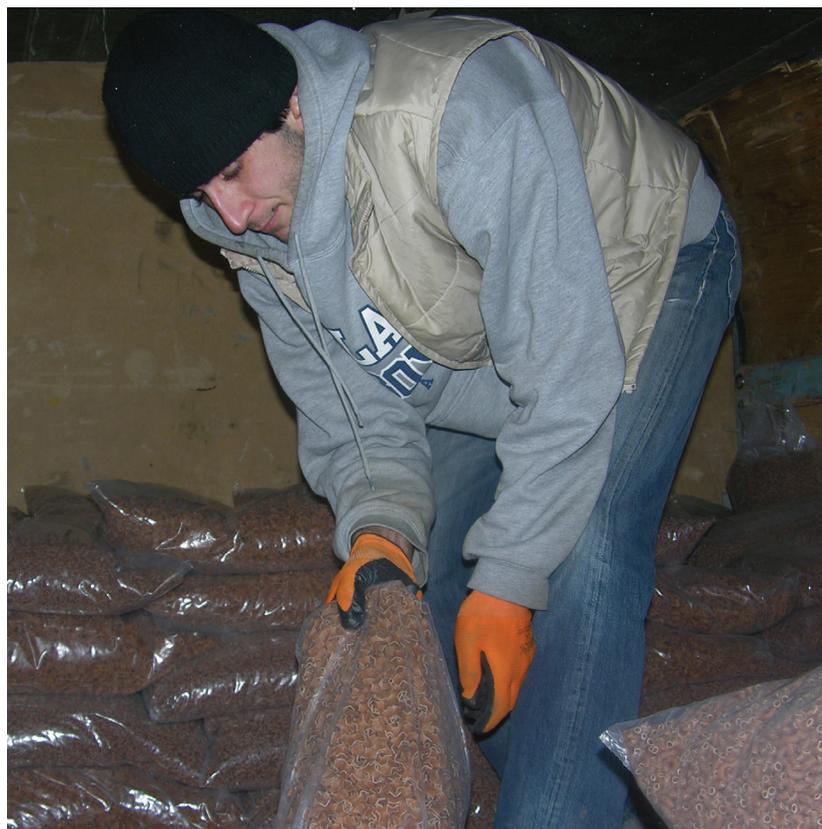
*door was opened" to new opportunities and support. Now Salbi has a job and her son attends a special school. In answering the question, "How is the attitude of the local population toward you?" Salbi answered, "They are very kind and sociable".*

## 2 Humanitarian Aid/Pasta and Clothing Distribution

In addition to implementing development projects, Armenian Caritas also provides humanitarian aid, taking into account the rising rate of poverty in Armenia.

In June 2012, Caritas Austria Feldkirch Diocese sent 19.364 kg of humanitarian aid to Armenian Caritas to be distributed among needy beneficiaries in four regions of Armenia- Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik, and Yerevan. The humanitarian aid package consisted mainly of noodles- 18.000 kg worth- made from a specific type of wheat.

In total, close to 2800 families, 6 organizations/institutions, and over 20 communities received noodles, ranging between 5 and 10 kg per individual package.



|                   |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Project location: | Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik, Yerevan |
| Project partners: | Caritas Austria /Feldkirch/        |
| Project manager:  | Gurgen Balasanyan                  |

## Armenian Caritas Youth Corps





Armenian Caritas (AC) volunteers are a core carrier of the organization's mission and ideology. Since the very establishment of the organization, volunteers have been involved in the different fields of operation.

Understanding the potential of a group of united and mobilized volunteers, AC set up the Armenian Caritas Youth Corps (ACYC) in 2009. ACYC brings together current and potential volunteers of Armenian Caritas according to common interests and concerns. Currently, about 80 volunteers are involved in various AC projects. These volunteers work with the elderly, disabled children, and disadvantaged youth, and assist with the administrative work at AC offices and centers. Our volunteers are very civic-minded and represent an active segment of civil society.

The overall volunteering program at Armenian Caritas is very structured. All 80 of our local and international volunteers are connected with specific programs based on their skills, preferences, and the project requirements. Another distinctive feature of AC volunteers is their willingness to provide social care and assistance to people with disabilities. Moreover, some of our volunteers are former beneficiaries of AC projects, and volunteering is a means to maintain their connection with the organization. The willingness of the volunteers to devote their time and resources to help ensure the well-being of others is a



unique form of volunteerism in Armenia, and a rare phenomenon in a post-Soviet society.

Another feature of the volunteering program at Caritas is the provision of opportunities to a wide range of people. Rather than seeking only educated, skilled, goal-oriented volunteers, Armenian Caritas is ready to provide an opportunity for any person, from any social background, to volunteer in a

professional environment, to learn, and to clarify their vision for their future. The most important characteristics of a potential volunteer for Armenian Caritas are the right attitude, a willingness to learn, a zeal for social justice, and a readiness to help.

The organization also provides internship opportunities for local and international students majoring in the social sciences.



## Equal Opportunities for Outstanding Volunteers

*“Caritas is our spiritual home”.*

*Elena, 17*

This project was initially launched as a three-month pilot project in June 2012 under the title “Equal Opportunities for Outstanding Students”. The successful outcomes inspired us to develop a more complex and long-term proposal, and in September 2012 Armenian Caritas Youth Corps began implementation of “Equal Opportunities for Outstanding Volunteers” as a five-year project.

The target group is composed of student volunteers from Aregak Day Care Center for Children with Multiple Disabilities in the city of Gyumri.

The aim of the project is to create capacity-building opportunities for students in Armenia and increase their level of social responsibility by involving them in the activities of Aregak Day Care Center.

The objectives of the project are:

- To provide assistance for talented young people to obtain an education, contributing to their personal development and career growth.
- To involve young talented students in Armenian Caritas Volunteer Corps, strengthening their ability and responsibility to perform social work through involving them in the activities of Aregak Day Care Center.

The assistance provision is based on the principle of ‘mutual help’. Students who participate in this project are selected from among the volunteers who serve in Aregak Day Care Center for Children with Multiple Disabilities, or who express the desire and commitment to do so, and meet the selection criteria for the project.

Selection criteria are based primarily on the personal skills of the applicant and the social conditions of his/her family:

Family profile:

- Young people having only one parent;



- Young people having no parents and who are placed in an institution or cared for by relatives;
- Families in which one or both parents have serious health problems or disabilities;
- Families in situations of extreme poverty having two or more children, especially in which the siblings are close in age (when two children attend university during the same period, one is often forced to stop attending due to financial constraints).

Personal Profile:

- Between 18 and 35 years old;
- Maintains high grade point average;
- Good behavior and civic participation;
- Volunteer with Armenian Caritas at Aregak Day Care Center for Children with Multiple Disabilities;
- Based in one of the regional cities where Armenian Caritas works, with the

exception of Yerevan (Gyumri, Gavar, Vanadzor, etc.)

In general, the selection process is carried out with attention to maintaining a gender balance, with an emphasis on promoting women's education.

Assistance includes:

- Tuition fee payment;
- Transportation fees (as needed);
- Living allowance (as needed).

Since the program began in September 2012, nine students have received financial support. Specifically:

- Tuition fees for all nine students were covered;
- Transportation fees were provided for four students;
- Living allowance was provided for two students.

Project annual budget:

7.296 EUR

Project location:

Shirak, Lori, and Gegharkunik regions

Project partners:

Caritas Austria (Feldkirch)

Project manager:

Sona Sahakyan



## ***I will always remember you in my prayers***

*Flora Sargsyan is a third-year student at the Musical College after Kara Murza. She is a singer by profession.*

*“I have been volunteering at Aregak Day Care Center for Disabled Children for nearly 9 months, twice a week. Working with these children is a two-sided process for me: besides giving care, I learn such characteristics from them as kindness, honesty, purity, and optimism.*

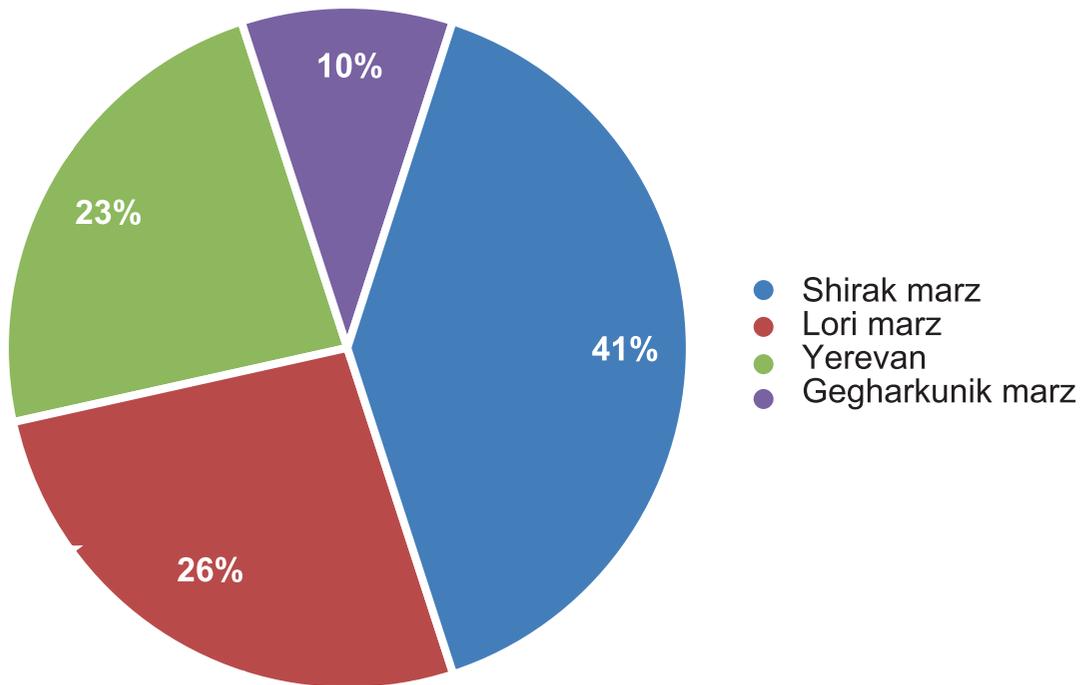
*I thank all the benefactors who have helped me. It was nearly impossible for me to continue studying and pay both the tuition fee and living expenses, since all of my family members are unemployed.*

*I will always remember you in my prayers”.*

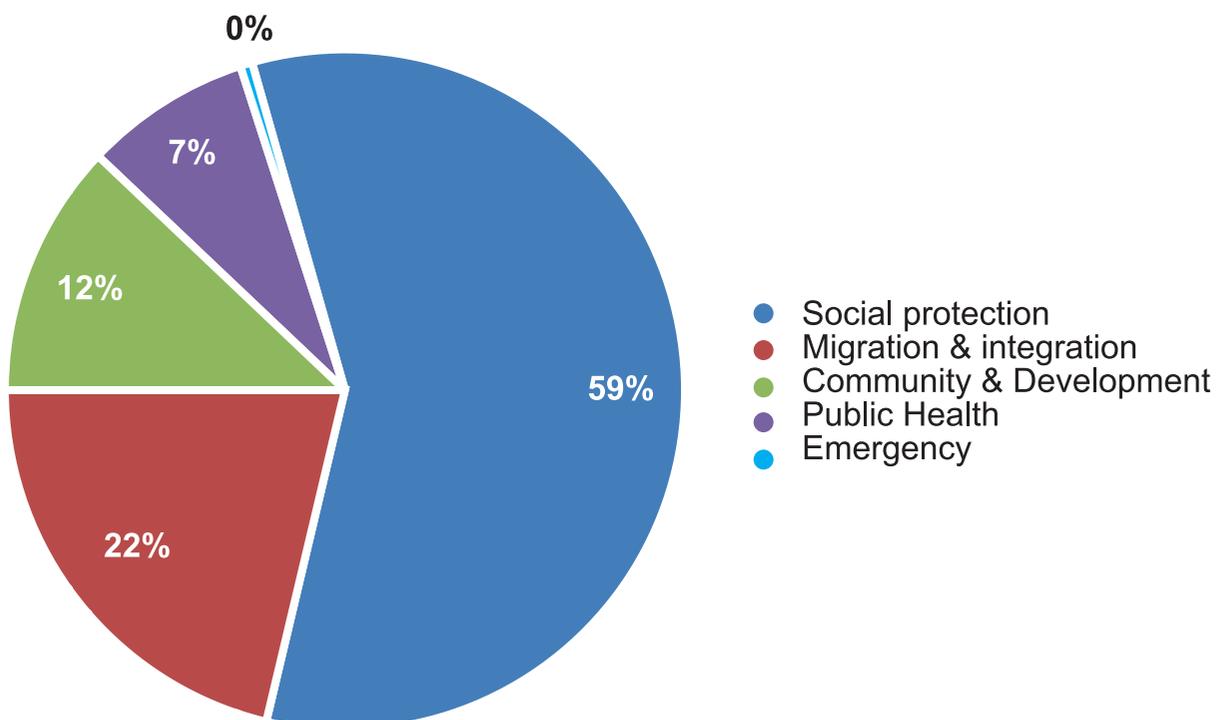
*Flora’s great achievement happened quite recently. One century after the launch of the Armenian opera “Anush” in Gyumri, the cultural capital of Armenia, the opera once again returned to Gyumri in 2012. It was an unprecedented event in the cultural life of Armenians, but it was even more significant for Flora, since she was one of the singers in the choir.*

## Financial report

Financial expenditures according to the RA regions



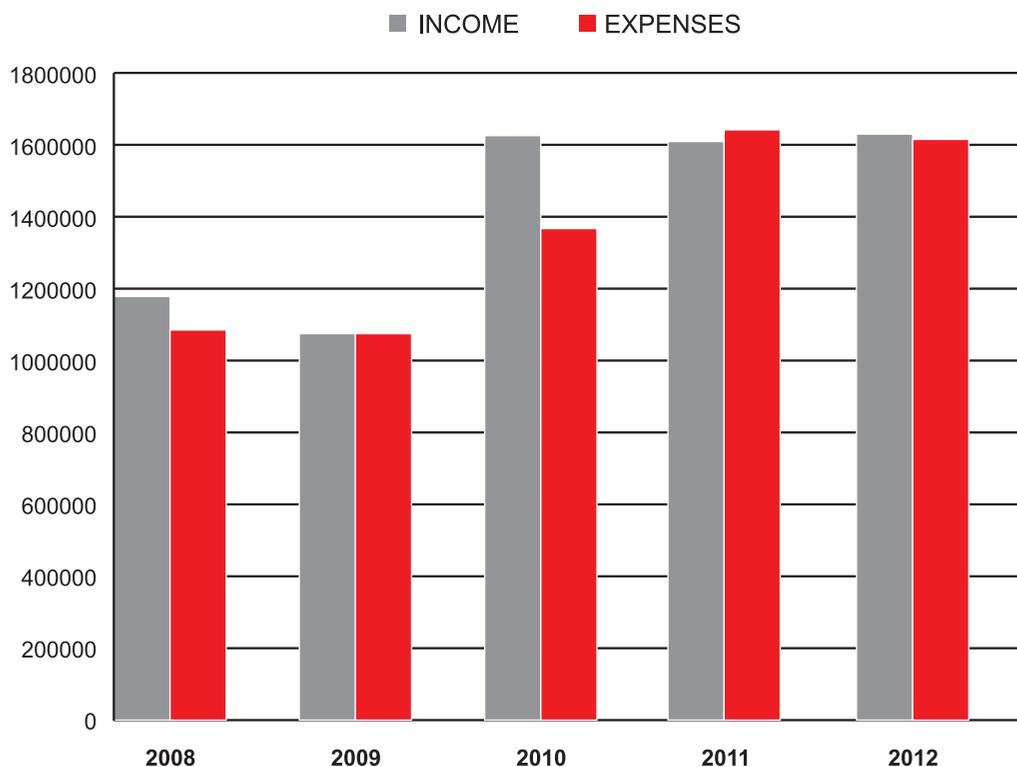
Financial expenditures according to the AC departments



Donations



Incomes & Expenses



**Armenian Caritas in Gyumri  
(ShirakMarz)**

***Armenian Caritas head-office***

H.Sargissian St., side-street 3, 8 bld.,  
Gyumri, 3118, Armenia  
Phone: +374 312 572 01  
Fax: +374 312 578 49  
E-mail: caritas@cararm.am  
Web-site: www.caritasarm.am

***“Aregak” Day Care Center for Children  
With Multiple Disabilities***

H.Sargissiani St., side-street 2, 27 bld.,  
Gyumri, 3118, Armenia  
Phone: +374 312 58 768

***“Little Prince” Social Center for Children***

Movses Khorenatsi St., side-street 1, 3 bld.,  
Gyumri, 3126, Armenia  
Phone: +374 312 379 61

***Day Care Center for the Elderly***

Shirakatsi St., 81 bld.  
Gyumri, Armenia

***Primary Health Care Center  
Handicraft Workshop for Women***

M.Mkrtchyan St., 41 bld.,  
Gyumri, Armenia  
Phone: +374 312 390 08

**Armenian Caritas in Yerevan**

***“Migration and Integration” Department***

Chaikovski St., 34 bld., apt. 23,  
Yerevan, 0010, Armenia  
Phone: +374 10 565 766  
Web-sites: www.armenianmigrant.com  
www.mtrcarm.com

**Armenian Caritas in Gavar  
(Gegharkunik Marz)**

***“Little Prince” Social Center for  
Children***

***“National Home Care For the Elderly”  
project office***

ArtsruniEghbayrneri St., 45 bld.,  
Gavar, 1201, Armenia  
Phone: +374 264 302 12

**Armenian Caritas in Vanadzor  
(Lori Marz)**

***“Little Prince” Social Center for  
Children***

Armenia, 2002, Vanadzor,  
Tumanyani St., 2 bld.,  
Phone: +374 322 219 94

***“National Home Care For the Elderly”  
project office***

Lazyani St., 33 bld.,  
Vanadzor, 2021, Armenia  
Phone: +374 322 217 97

**Armenian Caritas in Tashir  
(Lori Marz)**

***“Little Prince” Social Center for  
Children***

Nairi St., 12 bld.,  
Tashir, Armenia  
Phone: +374 254 228 39

***Day Care Center for the Elderly***

District 8, Kirovi St., 276 bld.,  
Tashir, Armenia  
Phone: +374 254 22 523