

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



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CHILDREN OF ARMENIA FUND

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2014 could be featured as a year of growth in terms of expanding both the nature of programs and new initiatives, as well as geography in all areas of COAF activities.

Villages:

In addition to the existing villages, Arteni and Aragatsavan of Aragatsotn Marz, Vanand, Yervandashat, Bagaran, Sardarapat, and Hatsik of Armavir Marz were added for full scale programs implementation.

Expansion:

Expansion strategy was defined and developed for implementation. Standardized operating procedures were developed for expansion process including assessment process and selection of new communities, database created, team model created, first expansion process piloted.

Lori was chosen as the first new marz for expansion. Assessment of villages in Toumanian region of Lori marz were conducted, as a result of which Tumanyan, Dsegh, Martz and Karinj villages identified as the first cluster for COAF assistance.

Approach:

More emphasis on local capacity building has been the major shift in programs. This resulted in increased involvement of local people in COAF initiatives, including coordination of various activities, volunteerism.

In addition to new initiatives in all program areas, management approaches have been changed to address expansion and exit strategies.

Greater participatory and partnership approach was adopted throughout the year in all of COAF-supported communities, with a special focus on the new villages as a new start for cooperation and collaboration. Beneficiary schools, libraries, kindergartens, municipalities, marzpetarans, as well as communities as a whole were engaged in both planning and designing stage, as well as all phases of program implementation taking more responsibility and ownership of the programs and becoming bigger contributors to the change. Engaged participation and time contribution of the partner institutions such as schools, kindergartens, libraries were part of the process. In addition, in all infrastructure development works co-financing contributions were made by local and/or central/state budgets. List of financial contributions to the infrastructure works is listed below:

- Hatsik School Renovation: Gasification of school and installation of the central heating system by marzpetaran. Cafeteria renovation by mayor's office. Cafeteria and part of classrooms furniture by school.
- Getashen School Reovation: Gasification of school and installation of the central heating system by marzpetaran. Works continued into 2015.

- Aragatsavan School Auditorium and Cafeteria Renovation: Furniture for the cafeteria by the marzpetaran. Furniture/seats for the auditorium by the mayor's office.
- Argina Community Renovation: Co-funding by the mayor's office.
- Shenik Kindergarten: Additional furniture/tables and chairs by the mayor's office.

Partnerships/Memberships:

Extended partnerships with a number of corporate partners and NGOs were enjoyed throughout the year. Some of the major examples are listed below:

- Extended partnership with VivaCell whereas Viva sponsored 5 creativity labs
- Partnership with Beeline on youth crafts skills development
- Partnership with HSBC - providing scholarships to 20 youth from COAF villages to study in universities
- Partnership with Ameria Bank to make furniture for newly-renovated Hatsik school
- Established partnership with IDEA Foundation: negotiations and initial discussions regarding possible partnership in Syunik around Tatev Revival Project area
- Membership in international network of Aflatoun social and financial education and presentation of COAF in the Europe and Central Asia division
- Discussions with DAR Foundation regarding collaboration, namely in the village of Tsakhkunk, Gegharkunik. COAF health team assessed health service provision in the village of Tsakhkunk and advised on improvements
- Engagement of Tsakhkunk school in COAF's network of healthy schools training
- Partnership with OneArmenia on Aragatsavan cafeteria project
- Partnership with the Ministry of Defense of Armenia and Prime-Minister's Office of Nagorno Karabagh, visit of *My Theater* group to Artsakh, performances for army soldiers, first hand experience living army life for COAF youth
- Partnerships with US Embassy, USAID several projects, World Vision, Shen, ATP, AUA, British Council - working jointly on programs
- Joint One-Village Project together with AMAA, FAR, World Vision, Shen, Heifer and COAF to mark commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

Infrastructure:

Infrastructure support has grown as well with capital renovation of two schools, establishment of 5 creativity labs, 4 libraries, 4 cafeterias, one school auditorium, and 6 playgrounds and partial renovation of a community center. List of financial contributions to the infrastructure works is listed below:

- Hatsik School Renovation: Gasification of school and installation of the central heating system by marzpetaran. Cafeteria renovation by mayor's office. Cafeteria and part of classrooms furniture by school.
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PR - COAF Visibility

Throughout 2014 COAF gained a tremendously big visibility, reputation and standing in Armenia, both among partner institutions as well as broader public. It's been possible through the active participation in a number of programs, discussions, conferences, TV appearances, partnerships with big international and local organizations and companies, as well as social media. New website was launched with both English and Armenian pages. Promotional materials developed and printed both about COAF programs in general as well as program specific.

Administrative Issues:

Yerevan office remodeling was done in order to allow for more work spaces: renovation of the whole office area completed, new furniture installed in completely new design and style.

Electronic transportation system has been installed and put into operation for all of COAF Armenia transportation needs.

The major accomplishments per program areas are presented below:

EDUCATION

Overall number of direct beneficiaries was around 2,500 with the following breakdown:

- 1,100 students enrolled in Professional Orientation program (since the same kids have been enrolled in below activities as well, this number is not included in the sum of 2,500). Methodology recognized by the state as a good model and recommended for implementation in other schools in Armenia
- 571 students attended the summer schools
- 400 students participated in International Children Day celebration
- 325 participants attended after school activities ranging from sports to arts, crafts, and music
- 200 students improved their English skills and are able to communicate in English freely

- 170 children participated in various sports events
- 150 students enrolled in democratic initiatives (not included in the sum of 2,500 as they have been involved in other activities as well)
- 80 teachers trained in use of technologies as part of teaching
- 31 students attended TUMO summer schools and are able to use technologies, including making movies, animations, making photos more professionally
- 21 students received scholarships to further their studies in higher educational institutions
- 20 students from Dalarik and Miasnikian attend regular TUMO classes 2 times per week
- 5 Creativity labs have been established catering around 750 students
- 1 community and 3 school libraries have been renovated to serve approximately 1000 students. Library management programs installed in 6 libraries, 9 librarians trained in library management software and techniques.
- 10 community projects implemented by scholarship recipients, ranging from after school activities for school students to community cleaning.
- 2 new youth connectivity programs launched: regular skype connections with Singapore International School, student exchange programs with 4 schools of IB system from Russia (different cities including Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Perm)
- Afaltoun social and financial education program launched.
- Network of COAF school principals established and first opportunity of the network to interact with non-COAF partner institutions: AYB school

HEALTH

- Over 3500 students from 12 schools continuously received healthy messages through health education seminars and whole school events resulting in improved knowledge and promoting healthy behavior among children.
- 4 schools joined the European Network of Health Promoting Schools. At present 10 COAF schools are members of European Network of Health Promoting Schools.
- 22 health educators were trained to provide health education seminars and mentor healthy lifestyle clubs. Training of health educators is viewed as local capacity building which facilitates passing ownership of the health education activities to schools.
- Over 1200 children from 8 schools and 4 preschools were provided with healthy meals on a daily basis.
- Four new brushodromes were established in addition to 3 already existing ones bringing the number of facilities up to 7 functional brushodromes where 350 primary school children brushed their teeth every day.
- Around 440 children benefited from COAF-sponsored free dental care, 800 children underwent dental fluoridation.
- Around 50 health providers improved their skills through Supportive Supervision, trainings and Network meetings.
- Around 682 women from 7 villages underwent breast and thyroid gland screening program. Pap smears were taken in 462 women.

- Around 575 rural residents from 16 villages were screened for eye illnesses. 35 patients underwent free eye surgeries in AECP mobile clinic.
- Around 281 patients with hypertension, diabetes and asthma and around 208 pregnant women and young mothers participated in seminars on Patient Education and pre/postnatal care respectively.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Over 32 people participated and successfully accomplished ceramics and silversmith classes
- 25 high school students participated in Entrepreneurial Trainings and Practices for Youth and successfully implemented their communities development projects
- Within a framework of COAF and FAMicroloan collaboration Haykanoush Sahakyan received an interest free loan to purchase dough mixing machine essential for her production. The financial campaign of two new borrowers is launched.
- Over 719 farmers in COAF supported villages became aware of E-agro platform that can serve as an additional source of sales and a place where they can get consultancy on interested agriculture practices. Over 420 farmers were successfully registered in E-Agro system and became its beneficiaries
- 4 borrowers of interest free loans provided within “Successful Business” project have successfully finished their obligation of fully covering the loans.
- Kindergarten of Shenik community received 65 new beds and beddings and had an opportunity to increase the number of kids attending.
- 7 women received an opportunity to produce and sell knitted items through online shop organized by COAF. Over 60 different types of produce were knitted by women

CHILD AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

- 1120 home visits were made by social worker and social-legal consultancy was provided to beneficiaries.
- 239 beneficiaries were assessed and received social services.
- 241 children, parents and teachers attended trainings, workshops and discussions on a range of topic including prevention of violence and overcoming of its consequences, human and children/women rights.
- Professional development and supervision of 10 school psychologists was ensured
- 152 beneficiaries were assessed and received psychological counseling
- 1279 children, parents and teachers attended psychological trainings
- 12 community events were held for 1400 participants.
- 150 children were assessed for school readiness and counseling to their parents was provided
- 49 children received speech therapy services throughout the year
- 52 children with learning difficulties benefited from assistance provided by a group of professionals
- 2 child development centers established (in Karakert and Miasnikian)

- 65 preschool children attending Child Development Centers

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Capital renovation of 2 schools: Hatsik (completed) and Getashen (in progress)
- Establishment of 5 creativity labs in villages Arteni, Vanand, Hatsik, Dsegh and Tumanyan
- Renovation of 4 libraries in villages Karakert (2), Hatsik and Vanand
- Renovation of 4 cafeterias with brushodromes in villages Aragatsavan, Vanand, Sardarapat, Getashen (in progress)
- Renovation of a school auditorium in village Aragatsavan
- Installment of 6 playgrounds in villages Shenik, Arteni, Vanand, Yervandashat, Aragatsavan and Sardarapat
- Partial renovation of Argina Community Center

EDUCATION PROGRAM

The goal of the COAF Education Program is to improve overall quality of education in beneficiary communities by both providing infrastructure and learning environment as well as improving capacities of teachers and students so that the education activities are directed to whole child development. Overall, the program aims to develop leadership potential to equip rural students with knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to adapt to the changing needs in the world. In 2014, The Education Program included the following components:

- Capacity Building of Teachers
- Summer Schools
- After School Activities
- Championship Events
- Establishing a model library for Karakert community
- Democracy and Civic Activism
- Professional Orientation and Aflatoun/Financial and Social Education
- English Language Instruction
- Scholarships

Other items to be covered through Education Program include renovation of football field in Karakert, Shrijadards newspaper, assistance to schools, and other events for teacher-students exchanges.

1. Programmatic Direction: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR TEACHERS

Background

Capacity building and professional development of teachers is considered as one of the key areas to be addressed for overall education quality improvement. 2014 programs supported teachers by providing both technical and financial support through academic grants, best teacher award, IT and methodology training, and visits to schools in Yerevan.

Implementation

- **ICT/Technology skills training**

Under this activity, teachers of Arteni, Aragatsavan, and Sardarapat have been trained on use of smart boards. Overall, around 70 teachers attended this training. As a result, more subject teachers use the creativity labs to conduct their lessons.

- **Best teacher award**

The program targeted homeroom teachers in 6 schools. A comprehensive mechanism has been developed for final selection:

-the program was announced in 6 schools, and 12 teachers applied

-the standards, according to which the assessment was planned to be conducted, were presented to the teachers.

-training and workshops have been conducted for the participant teachers by mentor teachers trained by Step by Step

-lesson observations were conducted by mentor teachers to identify how the knowledge and skills obtained during training are being applied

- feedback was provided to teachers based on lesson observations
- final lesson observations was conducted by Step by Step experts and COAF to assess the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms
- case studies were developed to identify how the participating teachers collaborate with school administration, parents and colleagues
- overall, participation of teachers in workshops, final lesson observations, and assignments of case studies have been assessed, and the best teachers have been identified.

Strengthening school administrators

The goal of this component is to bring together the beneficiary school principals to open a dialogue about the best practices and create a platform to discuss opportunities for overall quality improvement in their schools. It is intended to conduct each meeting in a school in Yerevan offering high quality alternative educational programs. In April 2014, the school principals visited Ayb high school in Yerevan.

Outputs

- 70 teachers trained to use ICT as part of their teaching
- 4 mentor teachers of elementary schools have been able to apply what they have learned and improved their mentorship skills
- 8 primary teachers trained on planning, teaching and assessment strategies
- a network of 14 school administrators created to share their practices in school administration and instructional process management
- 2 grant projects implemented to improve sports and arts teaching in Sardarapat and Lernagog accordingly
- Network of 14 school administrators initiated to create a platform for experience exchange

2. Programmatic Direction: SUMMER SCHOOLS

Background

The goal of the summer schools is to provide meaningful and fun summer pastime for rural kids who have limited opportunities for summer rest and recreation. This year, with the expansion strategy, the COAF summer schools were implemented in 6 villages involving 2 new communities of Vanand and Sardarapat. The students of 7-15 years old had a chance to be enrolled in a subject-specific group with focus on a particular area of their interest, such as arts, theater, music, pantomime, etc. Excursions have been organized with consideration of the areas of interests of the students. For example, the group of pantomime had a chance to attend a performance in Theater of Pantomime in Yerevan. The summer schools provided opportunities to meet and interact with various people. A performer on the national music instrument "tar" and composer Mikayel Voskanyan, a famous Armenian soprano Hasmik Papyan.

Implementation

Summer schools were conducted in 3 shifts as follows:

Shift 1: June 23-July 4

Karakert: 108 students participated in the arts, pantomime, music, and reading sessions.

Shenik: 92 students, 18 out of which from Argina, participated in the theater, arts, ethnography, and circus arts.

Shift 2: July 14-25

Lernagog: 83 students participated in arts, theater, and reading sessions.

Dalarik: 100 students participated in theater, reading, circus arts, and healthy life style sessions.

Shift 3: July 29-August 8

Vanand: 76 students participated in ethnography, music, reading, and healthy life style sessions.

Sardarapat: 112 students participated in theater, arts, and circus arts sessions.

Along with the area specific sessions, the students enjoyed sports and playing games. Upon completion of each shift, all the participants came together and demonstrated the products of their 2-weeks learning.

The summer schools play a key role in providing the kids with opportunities to learn skills which are not included as part of their curriculum. In addition, meeting with various people, visits and excursions are unique opportunities to broaden their perspectives.

One of the major accomplishments of this year, along with curriculum enrichment, was involvement of volunteers - younger students from the schools and members of student councils. The volunteers organized games and activities for primary school students, they were involved in everyday planning and agenda preparation. Lernagog students volunteered in Lernagog and Vanand schools. Sardarapat high school students have been actively involved as well, having 1-2 key volunteers assigned to each of 4 subject-specific groups to help the group leaders with overall management and logistical issues. In addition, AGBU and AYPF volunteers Nicole Papazian and Sona Dagley helped COAF with the summer schools implementation.

Outputs

- 571 students from 7 villages attended the summer schools, which is 62% more compared to 2013.
- 8 out of 16 teachers implementing the program were selected from the villages, which means that there is a core group of capable teachers, which are able to develop and offer a quality program for summer schools implementation.

3. Programmatic Direction: AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Background

The goal of COAF After school clubs is to balance academic learning with fun and enriching activities so that a whole child development is emphasized. Overall, these activities will improve the student' academic performance with a focus on writing and reading skills, creativity skills, thinking skills, will contribute to their physical and social-emotional development.

Implementation

Overall, 16 clubs of arts, crafts, and sports have been implemented in 8 villages throughout the year.

The clubs operated two times per week, with an exception of Social-emotional course in Lernagog, which took place once per week. The duration of the activities range from 1 to 2 hours per day.

Outputs

325 participants from 8 villages were involved in afterschool activities in 2014, which is 17% more compared to 2013 figures.

4. Programmatic Direction: CHAMPIOSHIP ACTIVITIES

Background

The goal of the program is to provide rural children with opportunities to participate in intercommunity sports events. In 2014, sportland for kindergartens from 4 villages, football games for children from 8 communities, and participation in chess championship organized by the Chess Academy of Armenia have been organized.

Implementation

- 72 kindergarten students from Lernagog, Dalarik, Karakert, Myasnikyan, and Sartarapat participated in Sportland in June, 2014.
- The Chess Academy of Armenia organized IX International Open Youth Chess Tournament in Jermuk on June 26 – July 6, 2014. Seven COAF chess club students participated at this tournament this year: six boys and a girl. The results will be announced in July.
- Children aged 10 to 14 from 8 communities of Armavir and Aragatsotn Marzes competed at the games hosted by the village of Arteni located in the Aragatsotn province of Armenia. The teams competed strongly against one another with Arteni coming in first place against Karakert in the final match.
- Two COAF teams competed with Ayb and Tsaghkunq schools' students in a football championship event. As a result, COAF Aragatsavan School was the winner.

Outputs

- Around 170 children participated in various championship events.
- COAF students become more professional in various sports, such as football, basketball, and chess.

5. Programmatic Direction: ESTABLISHING MODEL LIBRARY IN KARAKERT

Background

The COAF vision is to establish a library which can serve as a model for other communities to demonstrate the role of the libraries, including a digital cataloguing system, up to date resources, digital content, and of course overall library management. An environment that will attract school students, youth as well as community members to visit the library and use its services is one of the priorities. The objectives are to:

- Strengthen the librarian so that he/she can better manage the library, use technologies, organize various events to attract readers, etc.
- Improve students reading skills as well as their global awareness by engaging them in different activities and events.

Implementation

The actual implementation of the project was conducted at a larger scale than planned.

From April 15, 2014 the new library project of renovating and improving rural school and community libraries in Armavir Region, namely in Karakert, Lernagog and Vanand, has been initiated. The project included both infrastructure improvement and librarians training.

Infrastructure: Karakert community library has been renovated. School Libraries in Karakert and Vanand have been linked with Creativity Labs, thus creating information recourse centers for children and young people to have wider opportunity to exercise their entitlement to access information and to develop literacies in a supportive environment.

Training: On July 14-16 a 3 days training course in National Library of Armenia for 10 librarians from Armavir region, namely Karakert community and school librarians, Vanand and Lernagog school librarians, and Hatsik and Shenik Community librarians, to improve the skills and knowledge of the staff. The training covered the following topics:

- Classification and directory-search
- Electronic databases and digital libraries
- Preservation, restoration and maintenance activities in libraries
- Promoting reading among schoolchildren
- Librarian ethics

As a result of the project, the libraries cater more students as the environment has changed and the librarians have recognized their role taking the responsibility to promote reading among school students.

Outputs

- 10 librarians trained
- 3 libraries renovated and furnished
- electronic database establishment initiated in Karakert community library

6. Programmatic Direction: DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Background

The program includes Student Councils and Debate Clubs that discuss community needs and implement projects supporting solving those needs.

The programs aim at

1. bringing up civic values in students
2. developing critical thinking
3. implementing community and school based projects

Initially, the direct beneficiaries of the program were the 50 members of the student councils of 6 beneficiary schools and more than 40 students that are involved in debate clubs of 4 schools. However, with expanding COAF programs, student councils of 4 more schools have been involved in the project.

Implementation

Student Councils

In 2014, local capacity development was emphasized. The teachers responsible for student councils activities have been trained on how they can support the student councils in order to improve their operations. Overall, COAF support activities to student councils increased students participation in various events, taking initiatives to address various problems within their communities, and volunteerism activities.

Debate Clubs

In 2014, COAF supported Debate team was awarded a chance to take part in an interactive debate training course in Aghveran on 14-17 July. The training was organized by Junishyan Memorial Foundation and the best 8 teams were chosen to participate according to the final result of Republican Debate Contest. The training lasted three days during which team leaders and students learnt new debate techniques and debate formats, had several debate games and watched debate-related films.

Regarded as one of the well- trained teams, COAF Debate clubs team was invited to have a debate on 23rd of August on the motion of “This House believes that the government must support the newly-married couples in the foundation of their families” broadcasted by Yerkir Media TV. Eventually, COAF-supported team won the debate.

Outputs

- 20 members of student councils volunteered during summer camps
- 6 teachers trained to effectively manage student councils activities in their respective schools
- 40 students improve critical thinking skills by participation in Debate Clubs activities

7. Programmatic Direction: PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION

Background

This project provided mid to high school students with access to information and resources required for improving their college and career readiness in order for them to make informed decisions about viable professional opportunities that match their strengths.

Objectives of the program are:

- Increase beneficiary students' access to information about college/University education options and labor market tendencies
- Support and guide beneficiary students in their self-assessment and self-recognition process through identifying their core qualities and inclinations
- Build local professional capacity in counselling and professional orientation in schools

The group of the program beneficiaries included 7-11th graders (about 1100 students) from 9 schools of Armavir and Aragatsotn regions.

This was a two year project funded by HSBC. The project was completed in June, 2014. However, as a follow up activity grants to schools have been provided to continue professional orientation in beneficiary schools. Four schools from Lernagog, Aragatsavan, and Karakert have successfully implemented the grant program.

Implementation

Implementation of school-based PO programs through the following activities:

- Student testing and assessments to identify interests and strengths;
- Training of local teachers to conduct counselling and work with students in beneficiary schools
- Regular student and parent counselling to help close the gap between home and school demands;

- Enhancement of selected school subjects with professional orientation modules in order to provide viable curriculum support and guidance;
- Establishment of a detailed and comprehensive database to track relevant information on each individual program beneficiary. This tool was critical in following up with student lists and ensuring that each and every student take part in events, visits or tests.
- Publication of a manual and other brochures promoting professional orientation in schools
- Other activities, including workshops, visits, and events in conjunction with the above three program components will be a main support mechanism.

At the end of the program, a conference on “Career Guidance Issues and Development Trends” was held at Armenia’s Marriott Hotel in Yerevan, in an effort to establish a network and to exchange experience in the field. The conference was initiated and organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs of Armenia, the Professional Orientation Methodology Center of the Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs, and the Children of Armenia Fund. The USAID-funded LIFE program administered by Save the Children International Organization was another participant of the conference. UN’s International Labor Organization was also among the contributors of the initiative.

The Conference brought together over 100 decision-makers, representatives from secondary, vocational and higher educational institutions, professionals in the field. The plenary session was followed by three round table discussions as follows: Professional Orientation Development Strategy Discussion, Professional Orientation in Schools: COAF Model, and Professional Orientation Programs for Young People with Disabilities.

The conference was a great opportunity to raise awareness on the professional orientation development in Armenia, activities of the key players as well as to demonstrate best practices in the fields. This was also an extremely successful example of cooperation among state and donor organization.

Outputs

Overall, COAF’s PO program has made a significant impact in promoting the concept of professional orientation on a national level. Armenia’s Professional Orientation Methodology Center recognized the high level of impact of the program both on schools and communities. The following are the outputs of the program:

- Six different tests were chosen and administered with the purpose of revealing interests and abilities of individual personality types with a particular focus on various fields of professions. Test results have been instrumental in addressing the needs of students and revealing personality types.
- All 7th-9th graders of the 9 beneficiary schools participated in a carnival of professions, giving them a unique opportunity to present professions in the form of performances. The best teams were selected to take part in the final phase, which was held in Yerevan in February, 2014.

- All 10th and 11th graders of the 9 beneficiary schools received individual counselling and reflected on their own personal changes and transformation throughout the program, as well as practical information acquired by the use of professograms and psychograms designed by experts.
- All 12-graders of the 9 beneficiary underwent "Exams without stress" trainings to help them overcome tension and stress experienced prior to taking university entrance exams.
- Over 35 different visits were organized to expose participants to university curriculums, admission requirements, aspects of student life, and employment opportunities. Program participants were selected based on results of test known as the Holland's test (online version accessible at www.mycareer.am) which revealed their interests in particular fields. Visits to local/rural institutions were highly encouraged since they familiarized students with the demands of the local market.
- Database created to track students' involvement in various activities.
- PO Manual published for teachers.
- Small brochures published for school students.

8. Programmatic Direction: ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Background

English is considered as a second foreign language in Armenia after Russian, along with German and French. Very low percentage of rural population has Basic English skills due to several reasons: not skilled English teachers in villages, using teacher-centered old methodology of teaching, limited teaching resources, low motivation of teachers and students, no opportunity to learn English in the community, etc.

In 2014, English programs included English Access Microscholarship Program (EAMP) and Online English program both co-funded by the US Embassy in Armenia.

Implementation

EAMP

In 2014 English Access Classes of total 252 hours were continued in the villages of Arteni, Hatsik, Karakert, Lernagog and Sardarapat, as a part of 2013-2015 ACCESS, with a total of 96 students, and 5 auditors enrolled.

EAMP

Two intensive sessions: Environmental Week and Summer Camp have been held during the reporting year.

The Environmental Week was celebrated through various educational and engaging activities. The students were exposed to various environmental issues (global warming, air pollution, solar energy

etc). They were engaged in various activities aimed at enriching their vocabulary, as well as knowledge on the importance of environmental protection. The Environmental Week involved also outdoor activities, during which the students cleaned their school yard, collected rubbish and planted flowers.

2014 English Summer Camp was organized in the villages of Sardarapat, Karakert and Arteni communities. The main topic of the English Summer Camp was democratic elections with a focus on the U.S. election system. Students learned about election campaigns and studied the recent election campaign of U.S. President Barack Obama. The camp program included regular English lessons and was also enriched with lots of games, energizers, interesting tasks and activities, through which they were not only practicing and improving their English language skills but also got to know each other, broadened their way of thinking and developed their life skills.

Throughout the year the students of both rounds of ACCESS program (2011 -2013, 2013-2015) had a chance to be actively involved in various high-level events, organized by COAF.

On April 24 over 25 graduates from the 2011-2013 English Access Microscholarship Program in Lernagog community met with a visiting US Congressional Delegation, led by Chairman and Ranking Member of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee Ed Royce (R-CA). US Ambassador to Armenia John A. Heffern also accompanied the delegation which included Ranking Democrat Eliot Engel (D-NY), House Foreign Affairs panel members David Cicilline (D-RI), and Lois Frankel (D-FL). The congressmen were eager to engage with students in rural communities of Armenia and learn more about COAF's efforts.

Online English Program

Approximately 100 students, aged 17-35 participate in the English classes in a blended format and by improving their English proficiency to become more competitive in labor market, enrolled in the Online English program, representing 4 learning hubs: Armavir, Gavar, Yeghegnadzor and Goris. The breakdown of participants by training location is the following: Armavir learning hub – 30, Gavar – 20, Yeghegnadzor 33, Goris -17. However, the students are not just from those four cities but also from near-by located villages and cities. The course covers Work and Social English. They Work English sessions were related to various professions: airline agent, bus driver, bank teller and manager, beautician/barber, computer service technician, medical laboratory technician, movie theater employee, police officer, dental assistant, hospitality service worker, paramedic assistant, telecommunications engineer etc. The social English sessions were related to various social contexts, ranging from greeting, introducing people, making polite and impolite requests, to asking for a favor, writing a formal letter, making presentation, dating etc.

The program was added to the annual plan of education program per request of the US Embassy. The preparations included identification of venues for learning hubs in 4 cities, selection of local teachers for face to face sessions, selection of participants, curriculum development. Overall, the program proved to be successful as some of the participants found jobs, where knowledge of English was a precondition, others participated in training programs in English, etc.

Output

- 200 students improved their English skills

- 3 local teachers from Gavar, Goris, and Yeghegnadzor trained by an experienced teacher on teaching methodologies
- online platform created

9. Programmatic Direction: SCHOLARSHIPS

Background

To achieve one of its goals to increase the number of students entering vocational and higher educational institutions, COAF has approached HCBS seeking opportunities to provide financial support for underprivileged and excellent students from beneficiary villages to further study at higher educational institutions. As a result, USD 20,000 was allocated to support 20 students from beneficiary villages.

Implementation

August was a busy month for identification of scholarship recipients. Overall, there were more than 100 students entering universities from 9 schools involved in COAF professional orientation program. Out of those 100, around 60 have been identified based on the following criteria:

- Merit-based:** These awards are based on a student's academic, artistic, athletic or other abilities, and often factor in an applicant's extracurricular activities and community service record.
- Need-based:** These awards are based on the student and family's financial record. They can also be given to students with disabilities.
- Career-specific:** These are scholarships awarded to students who plan to pursue a specific field of study, usually for careers in high-need areas, such as Psychology, Pedagogy, Social Sciences/Social Work, and Agriculture.

Those students were interviewed by COAF staff to determine the level of their motivation and readiness to provide services in their communities. As a result, 21 students have been selected.

Output

- 21 students received scholarships to further their studies in higher educational institutions
- 10 community projects implemented by the scholarship recipients, including various after school clubs for school students, environmental projects, etc.

Other initiatives include:

- Celebration of International Day of Child Protection in Sardarapat clubs to showcase the accomplishments of COAF's various extracurricular clubs and share creative ideas with participation of over 400 COAF kids from 11 villages
- Enrollment of 31 students in TUMO summer schools
- Dialogue between EAMP students and students of Chinese International School in Singapore

HEALTH PROGRAM

COAF Health Program works with rural population and health providers to ensure high quality of primary health services, promotion of healthy behaviors and early detection and timely management of diseases. Our main programmatic directions implemented in 2014 were:

- School Health Promotion
- School Nutrition
- Dental Health
- Improving Primary Health Services
- Transferring Women Health Screenings and Community-based Health Education to Rural Health Providers

1. Programmatic direction: SCHOOL HEALTH PROMOTION

Background

All types of health promotion activities for schools implemented through health education training sessions, healthy lifestyle clubs, school campaigns, small grants for schools, whole school events and other activities. This year's focus is on expanding local HE training capacity and integrating Health Education and Health Promoting School programs into one School Health Promotion program and strategy. The project is designed for *school students, parents and teachers* of 13 beneficiary schools in 11 villages namely Miasnikian, Shenik, Lernagog, Arteni, Karakert, Dalarik, Argina, Hatsik, Getashen, Vanand and Sardarapat.

The *goal* of the project is to improve health literacy and develop life skills as well as ensure healthy environment which are conducive to individual and community health. Due to the plan carried out in 2014 all school health promotion activities will be transferred to the villages.

Implementation

The following activities were carried out within the program

Health education seminars: School-based health education seminars covered healthy nutrition, general and oral hygiene, eye care. Children from all grades participated in seminars on healthy nutrition and oral hygiene, while 5th to 7th graders participated in seminars on eye care. The seminars were carried out by trained-by-COAF health educators from target schools.

Training of trainers: Continued support and professional development of local health educators was ensured throughout the year in old and new villages, particularly

- Training on first aid as a new topic to be included in Healthy Lifestyle Club curriculum for all target schools

- Training on nutrition, oral and general hygiene, eye care and healthy lifestyle mentorship training for 4 newly involved schools (Hatsik, Getashen, Vanand, Sardarapat).

Healthy lifestyle clubs enrolled new cohorts of students in the existing villages and 4 new healthy lifestyle clubs were established in new villages. Healthy lifestyle club trainers were trained in the abovementioned TOT sessions. The clubs are designed for 15-20 high school students who are particularly interested in health promotion. They meet once a week for 2 hours throughout academic year. As the most active group promoting health at school the healthy lifestyle clubs members arranged whole school events on various topics such as oral hygiene, hand washing, promotion of physical activity, healthy food, and others.

European Network of Health Promoting Schools: On behalf of the schools from target villages COAF applied to the Ministries of Health and Education to officially include another group of schools in the European Network of Health Promoting Schools. Along with the schools registered in 2013 the total number of schools- members of SHE Network totaled to 10. There are only 13 HPS schools in Armenia at present. Newly involved schools thus adopted the philosophy of whole school approach using every occasion to promote health. For the newly involved schools to successfully implement the program we have implemented

- Introductory session on development of health promoting school strategy was carried for school teams consisting of health educators, nurses, teachers, students and parents
- Small grants for health promoting schools for them to implement healthy projects requiring financial investments. As a result 7 schools received grants to implement series of events and campaigns to promote physical activity, healthy nutrition and buy sports equipment, install clean water machines for their schools.

Summer School on First Aid: In addition to a series of health promotion activities carried out throughout the year summer vacations were also used to promote health. Thus, high school students participating in summer camp in Village Vanand underwent a training on basics of providing First Aid. Given low accessibility of emergency health services in target villages COAF tries to involve youth and young adult in providing first aid and thus save lives before specialized medical aid is made accessible.

Outputs

- Health education seminars on important health topics were carried out throughout the year for all children from **12 schools**. Health education was launched as a new activity in 4 out of 12 mentioned schools in the reporting period.
- **22 health educators** were trained to provide health education seminars and mentor healthy lifestyle clubs. Training of health educators is viewed as local capacity building which facilitates passing ownership of the health education activities to schools.
- **193 high school students** participated in healthy lifestyle club meetings on weekly basis
- **4 schools** joined the European Network of Health Promoting Schools. At present 10 COAF schools are members of European Network of Health Promoting Schools.
- **7 schools** received small grants for implementation of health promoting projects within their schools such as installment of clean water machines, buying sports equipment, celebrating fruit days and others. Local initiative and ownership of programs improved due to small grant opportunities for schools.

- Over **3500 students** from 12 school continuously received healthy messages through health education seminars and whole school events resulting improved knowledge promoting healthy behavior among children.

2. Programmatic direction: SCHOOL NUTRITION

Background

Poor nutritional status of children has been shown to have a detrimental effect on their general health and academic performance. Provision of healthy meals at schools is very important for a growing body. Unfortunately, most of Armenian schools do not provide nutrition due to lack of appropriate infrastructure and resources. Majority of Armenian children skip the breakfast and stay hungry at school or consume unhealthy snacks sold in and around the schools resulting in development of unhealthy habits and health problems. COAF's Nutrition program is trying to address the issue in rural areas by providing healthy meals to primary school children in rural schools. In a given school the program covers the costs of the following interventions

1. Renovation of cafeteria and water supply system
2. Installation of new furniture and equipment, provision of kitchen utensils
3. Provision of food
4. Cafeteria utility costs
5. Salaries of cafeteria staff

Implementation

Overall 8 cafeterias were supported by COAF in 2014. The type and the extent of assistance varied depending on the presence of cafeteria in a given school, school capacity to maintain cafeteria and cooperativeness of school principle. Due to lack of school funds COAF undertakes cafeteria running costs for one or two year expecting that the schools will be continue in the future.

1. Rehabilitation, renovation and furnishing of school cafeterias

v. Aragatsavan

The cafeteria was fully renovated, equipped and furnished in cooperation with One Armenia, a brushdrome was installed.

v. Hatsik

Renovation of the cafeteria was done by the school, which was further furnished and equipped by COAF, a new brushdrome was installed.

v. Vanand

Partial renovation and full equipment and furnishing of cafeteria, including renovation of a water supply system and installation of a brushdrome.

v. Lernagog and v.Karaker

These cafeterias were renovated and launched in 2013. In 2014 COAF provided new electric heaters to replace the broken ones.

v. Miasnikian, v. Sardarapat

The schools were able to launch cafeterias on their own. Minor renovation and installation of equipment and kitchen utensils was sponsored in Sardarapat school and installation of a sink and an electric heater in Miasnikian schools.

2. Food provision to elementary school children on daily basis

v. Karakert-2 schools, and v. Lernagog, v. Vanand, v. Hatsik, v. Aragatsavan

In addition to the basic nutritional package (flour, cereals, vegetable oil) provided by World Food Program COAF supplemented with fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry and dairy products.

v. Miasnikian, v. Getashen, v. Sardarapat

Provision of food is sponsored by World Food Program only. The schools have some input through the parents and local farmers.

3. Cafeteria utility costs and salaries

v. Karakert-2 schools, v. Lernagog, v. Getashen

Salaries of up to 3 employees running the cafeterias were covered by COAF throughout the year. COAF covers salaries of cafeteria where limited school budget does not allow to pay the salaries.

v. Vanand, v. Hatsik, v. Aragatsavan

These three cafeterias launched in 2014 were able to employ staff working only for the food for work provided by World Food Program. COAF covers here only utility costs and hygienic supplies.

Outputs

Over **1200** children from **8** schools and **4** preschools were provided healthy meals on a daily basis. The number of direct beneficiaries has increased by 900 as compared to 2013 (300 direct beneficiaries).

Overall **8** cafeterias actively functioned through COAF support including **3** cafeterias which were newly renovated and launched in 2014.

In addition to providing meals on a daily basis throughout the school year the following cafeterias were also utilized for tasks including

- Provision of food to children attending summer camps – **670** children from **8** villages
- Catering and provision of food related to school events, guests and donors attending villages were also successfully done by school cafeterias
- Cafeteria kitchens were utilized to teach healthy nutrition, cooking and serving techniques by teachers of life skill lessons and healthy lifestyle clubs

3. Programmatic direction: DENTAL HEALTH

Background

Prevalence of dental caries is extremely high in Baghramyan region of Armavir marz. Dental screening of kindergarten and primary school children revealed 95% prevalence of caries, whereas 75 % of children had at least 10 decayed molar teeth. Even newly erupted permanent teeth in children were already decayed. Reasons for high prevalence of dental caries are complex including lack of knowledge and skills on dental hygiene in children and their parents, unhealthy nutritional habits, low affordability and accessibility of dental care and fluoride deficiency in drinking water. This multidimensional program including education, prevention and treatment components is directed to combat dental caries – a major public health issue among rural children.

Implementation

Oral hygiene: The intervention consists of health education activities and oral hygiene activities. School children from 12 villages were educated on proper oral hygiene. Brushodromes- school based tooth brushing stations were utilized to promote oral hygiene. Many of the school children have no running water in their houses, others do not have a toothbrush. COAF provides first and second graders with toothbrushes and toothpastes they use to brush their teeth every day in brushodrome. We believe that it will help them to develop a lifelong habit.

Dental Fluoridation: Topical dental fluoridation through application of fluoride gel on teeth is another another component of the program directed to protect teeth from decay. The intervention is done twice a year in all primary school children from 9 villages. This service is provided by a trained nurse. We intend to evaluate program effectiveness before expanding it to other villages.

Free Dental Care: Treatment of decayed teeth is not affordable for families of children living in target villages. COAF provides free dental care to children from socially vulnerable families in two dental clinics established by the Fund. Types of free care include dental fillings and extractions. The service is provided by contracted local dentists. Special effort is made to save and treat permanent teeth in children.

Outputs

- Around **1200 primary school children** were educated on oral hygiene
- Four new brushodromes were established in addition to 3 already existing ones bringing the number of facilities up to **7 functional brushodromes**
- Around **350 first and second grade children** received toothbrushes and toothpastes. These children brush their teeth every day in brushodromes throughout academic year.
- Around **800 children** from 9 villages underwent topical dental fluoridation to prevent tooth decay
- Around **440 children** benefited from COAF-sponsored free dental care. **Overall 662 tooth filling and 125 tooth extractions** were done for free among children from socially vulnerable families.

4. Programmatic direction: IMPROVING PRIMARY HEALTH SERVICES

Background

The program includes a set of activities for local health providers and health facilities including supportive supervision, continuous medical education, networking of doctors, supporting health facilities with equipment and provision of some basic medication.

The *goal* of the program is to improve the quality of primary health services in rural areas.

Implementation

Supportive supervision (SS) was implemented through observations, monitoring and hands on trainings of family doctors. The goal of this program is to improve skills of health providers by putting evidence based guidelines into practice where possible and using specific quality assessment indicators. COAF Supportive supervisor Lusine Antonyan focused more on new villages (Art, Aragats, Hats, Sard, Get, Van) throughout reporting period.

Continuous medical education: Rural doctors and nurses participated in seminars mainly delivered by Diaspora Armenian doctors and nurses including Yepraksia Sargsyan (nurse), Kevoork Hopyan (family doctor), Lorky Libaridian (general practitioner), Hasmik Arzumanyan (endocrinologist), Gohar Der-Simonyan (gynecologist), Ani Tajirian (dermatologist).

Network of rural doctors: Doctor and nurse network meetings were dedicated to discussion of important primary healthcare topics and implementation of new programs in rural health facilities. Topics of network meetings including School Screenings, Men's Health Issues at primary level, Podiatric problems, Transferring Women's Health Screening and Community – based health Education to rural health facilities.

Men's Health Services: Urological services were introduced in Miasnikian Health Center to address health needs of male population.

Equipment and drugs: Rural health facilities were provided with some basic equipment, supplies and medication including ECG machine repair parts, laboratory strips, prenatal vitamins, antilice shampoos, etc.

Outputs

- Supportive Supervision of around **50 rural health providers** was carried out.
- **15 rural doctors** attended seminars held by Diaspora Armenian doctors
- Around **30 rural health providers** were involved on the Doctor/Nurse network meetings
- Rural population of Baghramian region benefited from improved primary health services, diagnostic tests and medications.

5. Programmatic direction: TRANSFERRING WOMEN HEALTH SCREENINGS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION

Background

This program implies passing ownership of 2 programs previously implemented solely by COAF doctors to local doctors and nurses providing them with financial and technical support for program implementation. Above-mentioned 2 programs include Women Health Screenings and Community-based Health Education. The goal of Women Health Screenings is early detection and better management of breast cancer, thyroid diseases, cervical cancer, and prevention of abortions. The main goal of Community-based Health Education Program is better management of chronic illnesses among patients with high blood pressure, asthma, etc. and ensuring healthier pregnancy, delivery and child care among pregnant women and young mothers. Transferring of health services will be carried out in villages having longer history of COAF presence namely Karakert, Argina, Dalarik, Lernagog, Miasnikian, Shenik, Baghramyan. In addition, eye screenings among rural adult population were carried out in cooperation with Armenian Eyecare Project for early detection of preventable blindness.

Implementation

Initial phase: Before launching the program we have taken the following steps to ensure its smooth implementation:

- Introduction of the program among rural health providers
- Selection of program implementing teams from each facility
- Development of a training schedule and implementation plan by rural health providers
- Submission of proposals to COAF
- Training for teams on their specific tasks
- Signing contract with Miasnikian Health Center to provide ultrasound and laboratory services.

At the initial phase teams consisting of a doctor and 1-2 nurses were selected from each health facility. Each team covered their respective village and a smaller village affiliated to their facility. Rural nurses played a key role by performing most of the screening and health education tasks supervised by rural and COAF doctors.

In the *Implementation phase* the teams carried out the following tasks:

- *Early detection of breast cancer and thyroid diseases:* Trained health providers carried out breast and thyroid gland palpations. Where necessary women were further referred to Miasnikian health center for ultrasound examination. Surveillance of findings, patient follow-up and referrals were ensured. All women also got individual counseling and booklets on breast self-exam techniques.
- *Early detection of cervical cancer:* Pap smears were taken in rural women for early detection of cervical cancer. Collected material were sent to cytological laboratory in Miasnikian Health Center for examination.
- *Health Education on Prenatal and Postnatal Care for Pregnant women:* Groups of expecting women and young mothers were educated by trained health provider based on COAF educational modules.
- *Patient Education for Patients with Chronic Illnesses:* Group seminars for patients with hypertension and diabetes were carried out by a trained nurse based on COAF educational modules.
- *Counseling on Family Planning:* All women involved in screenings received counseling and educational leaflets on modern methods of contraception and early detection of breast and cervical cancer.

Eye screenings: This component was implemented in cooperation with Armenian Eye Care Project (AECPP) for early detection of preventable blindness in XX villages. Detected cases were then referred to AECPP Mobile Eye Hospital for free surgeries.

Outputs

- Around **682 women** from **7 villages** underwent breast and thyroid gland palpations by rural health providers. All women received counseling and leaflets on modern methods of contraception and early detection of breast and cervical cancer. **476 women** further underwent breast and thyroid gland ultrasound exam in Miasnikian Health Center.
- Pap smears were taken in **462 women**.
- Around **281 patients** with hypertension, diabetes and asthma and around **208 pregnant women and young mothers** participated in seminars on Patient Education and pre/postnatal care respectively.
- Around **575 rural residents** from 16 villages were screened for eye illnesses. **35 patients** underwent free eye surgeries in AECPP mobile clinic.
- **7 rural health facilities** took over women health screenings and community-based health education responsibilities previously implemented by visiting contracted health providers. The program focused on strengthening capacity of rural nurses. 12 Nurses, 5 family physicians and 1 pediatrician were trained to provide all of the abovementioned services.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The main goal of COAF Economic Development Program is to reveal competitive advantages existing in rural communities, promote and introduce innovative methods in the development of agriculture, support and sustain small and medium businesses and entrepreneurship in rural areas. Main programmatic programs implemented in 2014 were:

- Vocational Education for Youth
- Entrepreneurial Trainings and Practices for Youth
- Microloans for Socially Vulnerable Families
- Marketing Assistance to Farmers
- Creating additional sources of income for rural women

1. Programmatic Direction: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

Background

Lack of finance and income opportunities in communities made many people choose do not continue their study in University after school graduation, but find work and earn some money for their family. Thus, many unskilled labor is appearing in a market, but because the market is small enough to provide jobs to all these people, many of them left the country and is still continuing to leave.

COAF continued providing opportunity for rural youth to obtain skills that can become source of income for them in future. The project financed by Beeline and collaborated with Levon Galchyan Art Studio engaged 32 participants from 3 COAF supported villages. Younger aged participants obtained skills of making statues and pots from clay and the older participants were studied the nuances of silversmith.

Implementation

During the implementation of the project following activities took place:

- Organization of ceramics classes three times a week
- Organization of silversmith classes for youth twice a week
- Presentation of art works during the celebration event of June 1 in Sardarapat community
- Presentation of art works during the celebration of Vardavar in Garni
- Preparation of the closing event of the project and final presentation of the art works made during the whole implementation of the project

Outputs

- Over 32 people were participated and successfully accomplished the ceramics and silversmith classes
- Participants received essential skills that can be useful for them and can become a source of their income
- The works of participant were presented in different events that had large coverage by media and more population became aware of the art works done by people from COAF supported villages.

1. Programmatic Direction: ENTERPRENEURIAL TRAININGS AND PRACTICES FOR YOUTH

Background

Most of creative ideas that have potential to become good business opportunities are hidden in youth's minds and most of the time the ideas don't come up because the youth is not provided the opportunity to express themselves and become originators.

In order to empower youth and provide them opportunity to express their creative ideas of businesses COAF continues to organize Entrepreneurial Trainings and Practices for Youth (ETPY) Summer school project in COAF supported villages.

During the reporting period ETPY was organized for high school students of Hatsik, Sardarapat and Shenik communities.

The project consists of 3 main components

- Intensive in classroom trainings on entrepreneurship, local economy, market, finance etc., combined with the educational exercises that in practice show the model in a small scale.
- Community development projects development by groups and presentation to panel consisted of representatives of COAF, School and Municipality
- Implementation of the best projects selected by the panel and their opening.

Implementation

During the implementation process high school students from Hatsik, Shenik and Sardarapat communities received trainings on local economy, market, 4Ps, entrepreneurship, finance, social responsibility etc. Based on knowledge they have gained the students started to write projects that could assist to their communities' development or make their communities more attractive and conformable to live and work in.

Each of the group wrote 2 projects and presented to the panel for selection. Out of presented 6 projects 3 were awarded and the groups started the implementation.

Following projects were awarded and efficiently implemented by the groups:

- "Amazing reading room"- Hatsik community
- "Innovative school" – Sardarapat community

- “Born of a new stage” – Shenik community

The aim of “**Amazing reading room**” project was to renovate the community library of Hatsik and make it more user friendly as well as correspond to needs of youth. Besides the renovation the group planned implementation of different activities in the reading room to buster the interest of local villager towards reading.

The aim of “Innovative school” project was to build lockers in the school for the kids that are attending to different after school activities and had to carry on all the books and wearing during the day.

The aim of “Born of a new stage” project was to obtain curtains for a school hall and make it more useful. Due to the curtains the hall can be used as a place where kids can watch training videos and can organize puppet shows for the primary school pupil and kindergarten kids.

Outputs

25 high school students were participated in Entrepreneurial Trainings and Practices for Youth

- Students get basic knowledge of local economy, entrepreneurship and other essential topics that increase their self-confidence.
- 3 project were awarded and implemented by participants

2. Programmatic Direction: MICROLOANS TO SOCIALLY VULNARABLE FAMILIES

Background

COAF and FAMicroloans are collaborating on making financial means be accessible for sociality vulnerable families to organize small businesses that can generate income.

Within a framework of the collaboration FAMicroloan (crowdfunding organization) has organized financial campaign for Haykanoush Sahakyan to help her obtain needed amount to purchase dough mixing machine for her family’s small business.

Implementation

During the implementation process following activities took place.

- Search for a social venerable family
- Evacuation of the business idea and the risks
- Development of the profile for financial campaign
- Follow up of the paybacks and provision of consultancy and assistance to day to day activities

Output

- Haykanoush Sahakyan received an interest free loan
- 2 families were selected and their profiles were sent for a financial campaign

3. Programmatic Direction: MARKETING ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Background

COAF in collaboration with Microsoft Innovation Center in Armenia is engaged in assisting the farmers with obtaining alternative source for sales through E-Agro project.

The E-Agro platform offers different opportunities for farmers to sell their produce or obtain farm inputs through internet eliminating transactions costs as well as get interested information or consultancy. As it is an innovative approach in Agriculture many farmers lack the knowledge of system use and thus getting benefits out of it.

COAF involved in increasing the awareness of farmers in supported villages and assisted them with understanding of the system use.

Implementation

During the implementation process following activities were performed

- Organization of meetings with farmers
- Individual meeting with farmers to help them with the registration process
- Dissemination of informative leaflets

Outputs

- Over 719 farmers in COAF supported villages become aware of E-agro platform that can serve for them as an additional source of sales and a place where they can get consultancy on interested agriculture practices.
- Over 420 farmers were successfully registered in E-Agro system and become its beneficiaries

4. Programmatic Direction: EMPLOYMENT FOR SOCIALLY VULNERABLE WOMEN

Background

During the reporting period COAF started experimental project of assisting women to earn additional income for their families. The aim of the project is to evaluate the increasing demand of knitted product abroad, understand the tendency and requirements and organize small production of knitted product by women in COAF supported communities. The product is proposed to be sold through online store developed by COAF and through other existing channels.

Implementation

- Following activities were undertaken during the implementation period:
- Examples of the possible produce were knitted and showed to the NY office
- Based on the feedback the group of 7 knitters was formed and small training on knitting process was provided to them
- Materials were purchased and provided to the group to knit
- Ready produces were collected passed the quality checkup and sent to NY.

Outputs

- 7 women received an opportunity to get skills of knitting and get additional source of income
- Over 60 different types of product were knitted by women

Other projects implemented:

COAF with the financial assistance of Beeline supported kindergarten in Shenik Community with provision of 65 beds and beddings that was not changed since its establishment in 1970. Due to the provided assistance the kindergarten besides changing old and already destroyed furniture had an opportunity to increase the number of kids attending by 30. Increase of number of kids attending kindergarten will provide opportunities to their parents especially mothers to start working and earn additional income for the families.

The head of the community also participated in the process of refinishing and provided the kindergarten with a shelves to put kids' cloths in.

CHILD AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Child and Family Support program is designed to provide rural children and parents with psychological and social assistance helping them to solve various issues and become adequate and informed members of society. CFS Programmatic Directions for 2014 included:

- Social Assistance
- Psychological Assistance
- Support to Children with Learning and Speech Difficulties
- Child Development Center

1. Programmatic Direction: SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Background

Under this program COAF social workers provide social-legal counseling and support to vulnerable children and their families to enhance their awareness and use of different state systems of social support and benefits. Through provision of social-legal information and support the program enhances protection and full social integration of beneficiaries thus improving the overall community environment.

Implementation

The proposed Social Assistance Program was implemented *in two main directions*, each of which has its own sub- components,

Support to vulnerable children and their families program, including:

- Provision of social-legal services;
- Organization of community based events targeting special social groups or social causes.
- Membership in the Child Protection National Network.
- Continuous capacity building
(Focus on additional capacity building-including hiring a consultant and engaging 4-5 local volunteers for training and field work)
- Trainings and workshops on Prevention of violence and overcoming of its consequences, Legislation on social protection, Human and children/women rights.

Social fund provided financial support to three groups of beneficiaries:

- Scholarship program for University students from vulnerable families.
- Support to talented children who need to develop their talent but lack sufficient resources
- Humanitarian aid in emergency cases.

Summer Camps for socially vulnerable and disabled children

- During the reporting period 6 children with physical disabilities from Dalarik, Karakert and Miasnikian villages participated in a summer camp organized by Pyunic NGO. Camp activities included special rehabilitation exercises and procedures for disabled people.

- Social workers worked closely with the population to select 20 socially vulnerable children from cluster communities to attend summer camps in Tsakhkadzor organized by Tiramayr Hayastan organization from Gyumri. The children included in the list are either orphans or socially vulnerable children left out of their parents' attention. The children were further referred to COAF physicians for medical examination.

Outputs

- 1120 home visits were made by social worker and social-legal consultancy was provided to beneficiaries
- 239 beneficiaries from 7 villages received social services
- 28 professional enhancement sessions were held for local social workers.
- 241 children, parents and teachers attended trainings, workshops and discussions.
- 8 events were held in 7 communities for a total of 1200-1700 residents
- 21 students studying in different universities and colleges received scholarships from COAF
- As a result, 20 children participated in a summer camp for socially vulnerable children in Tsakhkadzor.

2. Programmatic Direction: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE

Background

Individual and group psychological counseling in beneficiary communities; corrective and developmental interventions to address communication, behavioral and other related issues. Program beneficiaries included children, families and professionals working with children in Miasnikian, Dalarik, Lernagog, Karakert, Baghramyan, Hatsik, Sardarapat communities. The program seeks to create positive and supportive environment for child development through preventive and corrective psychological services and counseling.

Implementation

Psychological Assistance Program was implemented *in four main directions* with its specific components

Psychological assistance included

- Individual and group psychological counseling.
- Art & Crafts therapy.
- Training sessions, workshops, round tables and different events.
- "Happy motherhood"-school for pregnant women.
- Assessment of pre-school children for school readiness and undertaking corrective actions.
- Continuous local capacity building.
- Publication of psychological leaflets.

Support to school psychologists assumed continuous professional assistance and supervision to 9 school psychologists:

Psychological theater included performances on socio-psychological issues and inter community performances and festivals

Psychological support to kindergartens including

- Preparation of pre-school children for school emotionally and cognitively through individual and group activities including creation of tales, art therapy, sand therapy and others.
- Capacity building of kindergarten teachers on how to work with preschoolers.
- Working with preschoolers' parents.

Outputs

- **152** beneficiaries were assessed and received psychological counseling.
- **1279** children, parents and teachers attended trainings on various topics.
- **12** community events were held for **1400** participants.
- Capacity building to **9 psychologists** through 196 individual meetings was carried out
- **148** children were assessed for school readiness and counseling to parents was provided.
- Over **223 kindergarten children** participated in group psychological trainings.
- Weekly work with **20 children** to prepare theater performances. **4 inter-community performances** were carried out.
- An informational leaflet titled "Hyperactive Children" was developed and printed out for distribution in rural communities.

3. Programmatic Direction: SUPPORT TO CHILDREN WITH LEARNING AND SPEECH DIFFICULTIES

Background

Specialized assistance was provided to children experiencing speech and learning difficulties by a speech therapists/ special education teacher, who work with children and their parents to address identified difficulties. The goal of the program is to identify children with speaking disorders and delays in general development leading to learning difficulties, and helping them overcome causes and consequences of their situation.

Implementation

Support to children with speech and learning difficulties included

- Screening and assessment of elementary school children
- Corrective and developmental interventions
- Teacher and parent involvement into intervention activities
- Local capacity building

Tutoring program/support to homework preparation in 3 villages (Karakert, Lernagog and Dalarik)

- Children assessment
- Support in homework and class preparation;
- Teacher and parent involvement into intervention activities;
- Local capacity building.

Output

- Around **117 children** from 4 schools were screened for speech difficulties
- Around **49 children** having speech difficulties received speech therapy services 4 provided villages. Speech difficulties were corrected in 25 children. Obvious progress was encountered in 24 children. It is strongly recommended to continue working with these children. Speech therapist worked with children on weekly basis.
- **158 school children** participated in speech development group seminars
- **150** first graders screened and assessed for learning difficulties, as a result **52 children** and parents were involved in a tutoring program.

4. Programmatic Direction: CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Background

Many rural children have no or limited access to kindergartens (6 months out of the year given the lack of heat in buildings), while elementary school children often do not have the support and help of their parents in preparing for classes, learning key skills such as reading, writing, and math. Many of them also have no place to go for after school activities. The Child Development Center fill in these gaps in the educational, social, and psychological development of children. Program beneficiaries included children, families and professionals working with children in the communities of Miasnikian, Karakert.

The goal of the CDC is to provide comprehensive developmental assessment and treatment programs for toddlers (3-4 years old), preschoolers (4-5 years old), school-age children (5-12 years old), their families and teachers.

Implementation

CDC provides the following services:

- Emotional and Cognitive development of pre-school age children through reading and creating tales, art, dance, and music therapy, sand therapy and other developmental games.
- Multi-aspect diagnosis and provision of specialized services - psychological, social, speech, educational needs and others.
- School preparation of children not enrolled in kindergarten.

Outputs

- 65 children from Miasnikian and Karakert villages benefited from the CDC program. The benefits included
 - Children were taken off of the streets and put into a supportive environment with child development specialists.
 - Children were provided with necessary means to complete activities and school work that fits their age group.
 - Children could play toys and games that exercise cognitive abilities, teach them how to solve problems, think creatively, work as a team, and ultimately prepare them for practical daily activities outside of the classroom.
 - Children were taught proper rules of conduct, how to share, to follow rules, to think outside the box, and to help others.