



NEWS RELEASE
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U.S. Embassy joins RA Ministry of Education and Science and COAF to expand English Education in Rural Armenia

English opens doors. With English language skills you can study in the United States, access academic research, talk to potential clients, and check a variety of news outlets to expand your horizons. That is why the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan has joined forces with the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science and the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) to expand English education in rural Armenia.

On Wednesday, July 25, U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Richard M. Mills, Jr., signed an agreement with Armenian Minister of Education and Science Arayik Harutyunyan and COAF Deputy Director Innesa Grigoryan to provide two years of intensive, after-school and weekend English language training through the Embassy's English Access Microscholarship Program.

Through the renewed effort, 500 Armenians aged 13 to 18 in fifteen rural communities will build their English-language skills and develop their leadership abilities. The classes are hosted at various public schools and at community centers like the new COAF SMART Center in the Lori Region.

“This really is a partnership, three organizations – the Embassy, COAF, and the Ministry – coming together to give kids in rural Armenia better English. I am confident that they will use their new skills to improve their lives, strengthen their communities, and develop their country,” said U.S. Ambassador Mills. “I am proud we are able to continue this vital effort, because English is such an important language in today's global marketplace.”

“With the activities planned under this program, it will be possible to improve the English language proficiency of participants and develop the capacity of English teachers in the provinces of Armenia, and particularly in rural communities. Such education partnerships, and the efforts of the U.S. Embassy and COAF to assist with improving the quality of English language teaching, are much appreciated. This program can become a platform for developing English language teaching methodologies in schools, and for making teacher training practices more effective,” said Armenian Minister of Education and Science Arayik Harutyunyan.

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The \$411,000 expansion outlined in the agreement signed Wednesday, which includes the U.S. Embassy’s contribution of \$300,000 and COAF’s contribution of more than \$111,000, runs through 2021. This is just the latest round in the Embassy’s English Access Microscholarship program, which began in Armenia in 2011. So far, between COAF and another partner, Project Harmony International, 580 Armenian students have been served by the program.

“The Children of Armenia Fund considers education to be a catalyst for youth empowerment and continuous development,” COAF Deputy Director Innesa Grigoryan stated in her welcome remarks. “In this respect, English language education is an integral part of COAF’s Education Program portfolio, and today we are happy to celebrate another great accomplishment with the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan and the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science. We are delighted to witness that our students are now full of confidence and determination on their way to a brighter future thanks to the acquisition of English – the language of opportunities.”

Several of the current Access students and alumni from past classes attended the agreement signing ceremony on Wednesday at the U.S. Embassy, expressing their support for the program which not only helped improve their English but gave them the confidence and leadership skills allowing them to lead community improvement projects.

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