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EUROPEAN UNION FOR ARMENIA



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giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
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Press Release

04 September 2023

COAF & GIZ HOST ARTS, CRAFTS, AND MUSIC FESTIVAL TO PROMOTE TOURISM IN LORI, ARMENIA

YEREVAN — The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) announce the upcoming COAF Fest: Arts, Crafts, and Music, which will take place on September 16 at the COAF SMART Center in Debet village, Lori region. The festival will bring together Armenian musical talents, skilled craftsmen, and local producers from the Lori region, with the aim of fostering economic growth in the area and further enhancing its attractiveness as a premier tourism destination. The COAF Fest is an integral component of the larger "Lori, Your Next Destination" project, a collaborative endeavor between COAF and GIZ, supported by the EU4Business ITTD project.

COAF's Managing Director, Liana Ghaltaghchyan, emphasizes, "Our partnership with GIZ under the 'Lori, Your Next Destination' initiative has been instrumental in promoting the untapped tourism potential of the Lori region, all while bolstering sustainable development. Beyond our commitment to providing non-formal education, our initiatives in Lori now encompass cultivating a thriving ecosystem centered around the SMART Center. In this context, our festival presents an excellent opportunity to bring the entire community together at our SMART Campus, allowing them to enjoy a remarkable blend of arts, crafts, music, and the rich flavors of traditional Armenian cuisine."

In addition to the festival, COAF will mark the grand opening of Concept by COAF on the same day—the largest social enterprise in Armenia. This establishment features a boutique hotel, an expansive conference center, and a modern restaurant. Concept by COAF is set to become a coveted destination for leisure, professional gatherings, and formal occasions, contributing significantly to the continuous expansion of COAF's educational and social initiatives. The inauguration of Concept by COAF commemorates COAF's two-decade journey and heralds a new era of transformative change, underscored by the launch of four new SMART Centers across the regions of Syunik, Shirak, and Armavir, as well as the steady progress of programs in Artsakh.

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COAF Fest will serve as a platform for local businesses, enabling them to promote their products and expand their visibility. The festival will showcase more than 30 booths from various companies, offering a diverse array of products, including tea, agricultural goods, clothing and fabrics, skincare and cosmetics, handmade items, bags, and souvenirs. Furthermore, the festival will unveil Ardēan's captivating art installations adorning the COAF SMART Campus in Lori. These 12 exquisite art pieces draw inspiration from the region's ancient monasteries and cultural heritage. The festival will also feature live performances by renowned artists such as "Hayat Project," "Lav Eli," "Miqayel Voskanyan & Friends," "Vahagn Hayrapetyan Quartet," "Bambir," and DJ Alen Hertz.

To encourage active participation in bringing about positive, lasting change, donation boxes featuring QR codes will be placed throughout the SMART Campus during the festival.

The "Lori, Your Next Destination" initiative, launched in 2021, has already achieved success through a series of impactful initiatives. These include the "STARMUS Day at SMART" Festival hosted in 2022, the development of an extensive network of hiking and biking trails, professional training programs aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of local tourism service providers, and the establishment of the Visitor Center, complete with a roadside café, designed to serve as a welcoming gateway for visitors to the region, promoting tourism.

About COAF

The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) aims at improving the quality of life in rural Armenia, with a particular focus on the projects and needs of children and youth. COAF's target development areas are education, healthcare, as well as social and economic development. COAF launched its programs in 2004, starting in one village and expanding to more than 82 communities in Armenia and Artsakh with an investment of more than \$70 million, impacting well over 100,000 people across rural Armenia.

About the EU4Business “Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia (ITTD)” project

The EU4Business “Innovative Tourism and Technology Development for Armenia (ITTD)” project is ongoing in Armenia. It is co-funded by the European Union (EU) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by German Development Cooperation (GIZ). It has an overall objective to ensure shared and balanced inclusive growth in tourism and innovative industries.



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This will be achieved through innovative tourism ventures in the Northern regions of Armenia, support to high-tech and innovative entrepreneurs, international knowledge exchange for high-tech researchers as well as networks to enable entrepreneurship culture for students and the general population.

Within the framework of the project, more than 100 ventures have already been supported, assistance has been provided in sustaining and/or creating 400 jobs, and more than 800 people have undergone various trainings.

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