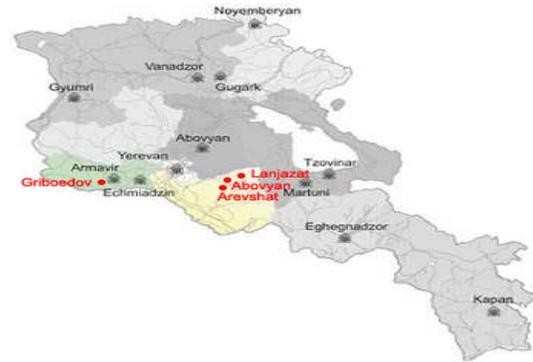




MCC'S TERTIARY CANALS CONSTRUCTION

On January 8, 2008, MCA-Armenia signed a construction contract for civil works on tertiary canals in four communities under the Irrigation Project. The four communities are Griboyedov in the region of Armaravir and Lanjazat, Arevshat and Abovyan in the region of Ararat. By the end of June 2008, 460 hectares of farmable lands will enjoy a reliable supply of water through the construction of 6.5 km of new pipeline and open canals benefiting over 630 farmers. The existing canals are in extremely poor condition, and the water losses are high, making irrigation of farmable lands either inefficient or impossible. The Mayor of one of the four beneficiary villages – Griboyedov – Sos Gabrielyan, assures that people in their community are eagerly looking forward to the tertiary canals to be rehabilitated. “People in our village know very well what the water loss is. We have 70 percent water losses. After the construction of the tertiary canal, there will be no losses at all. 60-70 percent of our village population will benefit from the rehabilitated tertiary canals. These people mainly grow grapes, fruit trees, wheat, alfalfa, leafy vegetables.”

All the communities selected for the tertiary canals construction project agreed to contribute 15 percent of the overall construction costs after discussions with various



stakeholders, including Village Councils and Water Users' Associations. The final applications are submitted to MCA-Armenia for approval and the procurement of a contractor.

The construction company for the tertiary canals rehabilitation project is “AGAT-777” LLC which will complete the works by June 2008. The contract price is AMD 116,862,152 (equivalent to USD 382,000).



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Millennium Challenge Account–Armenia, a State Non Commercial Organization established by the Government of Armenia, is responsible for overseeing the transparent implementation of the Compact signed between the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Government of Armenia. For more information regarding MCA-Armenia program please visit our website: www.mca.am



**MILLENNIUM
 CHALLENGE
 CORPORATION**
 REDUCING POVERTY THROUGH GROWTH



Prefab concrete canal sections



Contractors studying pipeline scheme

THE OFFICE OF DEFENSE COOPERATION WORKS TO IMPLEMENT ARMENIAN MILITARY REFORM



U.S. Charge d'Affaires a.i. Joseph Pennington and the Armenian Minister of Defense Michael Harutyunyan, try out the new English learning computer terminals.



Armenian Humanitarian Deminers conducts practice mine sweep under the observation of U.S. Kansas National Guard trainer SPC Lee Maier from the 891st Engineer Bn, based in Iola, KS



U.S. Sergeants Charles Boyles and Travis Eichhorn of the Kansas National Guard assist an Armenian deminer to fit his new protective suit

In late January 2008, mine detection and disposal equipment was provided to the Armenian Humanitarian Demining Center, timed to correspond with the arrival of U.S. Kansas National Guard soldiers who worked to familiarize the Armenian unit with their new equipment. The U.S. mine detection and explosive protective equipment, valued at about USD300,000.00, will be used by the Armenian unit to support their humanitarian demining mission in Armenia. The equipment will also support their deminers that deploy from Armenia to work with the Coalition Forces in Iraq, where they conduct demining and mine disposal missions.

Later in February Armenian Defense Ministry and U.S. Embassy top officials inaugurated the newly upgraded language laboratory at the Aviation Institute in Yerevan. The U.S. Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) provided the USD93,000 upgrade which featured fifteen new desk-top computers. The new computers enabled Armenian military students to individually

utilize the English language laboratory's learning software. Each student station is now networked to the instructor's computer to provide flexibility for instruction. The new lab upgrade will help fulfill the joint goal of the U.S. ODC and the Armenian Ministry of Defense to centralize English language instruction standards, and develop an intensive English language course to support Armenian military personnel preparing for their studies in the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation granted Armenia's Peacekeeping Battalion over USD3,000,000 worth of

communication equipment: the radios, antennas, various supporting equipment, and training, all purchased from the Harris Radio Corporation, further ensure the ability of the Armenian battalion to jointly operate with coalition and peacekeeping forces worldwide, and specifically in Kosovo and Iraq where Armenian contingents now operate.

The Armenian Humanitarian Demining Center (AHDC) concluded two weeks of training in early April 2008 with humanitarian mine clearing trainers from the U.S. Kansas National Guard. The event, which was funded through the U.S. European Command's Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) office, provided ten U.S. trainers from Kansas who reviewed and taught humanitarian mine clearing procedures and techniques. The training that the AHDC received can be applied towards the execution of their real world mission in Armenia, in which they clear live mines from civilian areas.





COLORFUL QUILTS WARM SPIRITS



Thanks to support from the U.S. Department of State and Lutheran World Relief, UMCOR distributed a generous donation of some 4,000 beautifully handmade quilts to the most vulnerable children and retirees living in orphanages, boarding schools, kindergartens and retirement centers in Armenia.

love. Each quilt has a story of its own like each of beneficiaries receiving them.

“God bless the people who have spent day and night making these wonderful quilts,” said one elderly woman living at Yerevan Retirement Center #1, as she embraced the gift.



retirement centers in Armenia.

Quilts have long been used to strengthen family ties, preserve memories and mark notable events. The donated quilts convey love and compassion to the elderly and children who often yearn for care and affection. It is clear that the colorful geometric patches were selected and meticulously stitched with

At Yerevan Orphanage, the quilts were neatly laid out on children’s beds. The unique patterns brought cheer and smiles to the children’s faces, brightening up the small bedrooms.

The vibrant quilts with a myriad of designs not only brought warmth and comfort to a child’s crib or elderly person’s bed; they warmed the spirits of both young and old.



UNIVERSITY CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM



The National Foundation of Science and Advanced Technologies, Yerevan State University and the U.S. Civilian Research & Development Foundation announced a “University Centers of Excellence Program” (UCEP) in early 2007. The program is projected to support the establishment of University Centers of Excellence (UCE) in the basic and/or natural sciences at Yerevan State University. The aim of UCEP is to integrate research into the academic curriculum, increase research opportunities for students and junior scientists, and support advanced, high quality research and openly accessible laboratory facilities that stimulate institutional collaborations within Armenia and internationally. Under this program three grants worth USD300,000 (up to USD100,000 each) were awarded via a merit-based, internationally competition. The international review was conducted by NFSAT with help and support of U.S. CRDF. Project components are Research Infrastructure Development, R&D works, Education program for YSU students, Research Networking & Linkage both inside the country and abroad, R&D Services. Grants were awarded for the period of 24-months, with precondition that 50% of funding was due to be spent on equipment purchase and 50% on Research Program and Networking. On a competitive basis one of three grants was awarded to the group of young researchers and students headed by Dr. S.G. Gevorgyan to create a Center of “Superconductivity and Scientific Instrumentation” in YSU The goal of this Program is an establishment of modern Center of Applied and Basic Superconductivity and precision Scientific Instrumentation.



ANALYZING LABOR MIGRATION TRENDS IN ARMENIA

USAID supports activities addressing labor migration in Armenia



NGOs play an important role in assisting migrants and shaping migration policy, particularly through raising awareness. For this reason, dialogue and cooperation between NGOs and government is important for developing and implementing effective migration policy,” USAID/Armenia Program Officer James Carlson noted in his opening remarks at the conference.

EPF is one of USAID’s key partners working on migration issues. As part of the USAID-funded Labor Migration program, the Foundation began working with seven regional NGOs in Armenia in 2007 to provide services and information to present, potential and returning migrants and their

On April 29, 2008, Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) in cooperation with the Armenian NGO “Zinvori Mair” convened a two-day conference in Yerevan entitled “Migration from Armenia to Russia: the Role of Civil Society, Networks, and Dialogue with Government”. The goals of the conference were to increase public awareness about Russian and Armenian migration policies, present the two countries’ experience in addressing migration-related issues, and forge stronger ties between government and non-governmental organizations in Russia and Armenia in their efforts to decrease irregular migration. A number of experts on migration issues from both countries delivered presentations at the conference, which was attended by representatives of the Armenian government, local NGOs, foundations and international organizations.

“USAID realizes the importance of migration and remittances for Armenia’s development and works towards improving the internal situation in the country, including labor market development and promotion of Armenia’s competitiveness so that there are enough competitive and well-paid jobs within the country to support Armenian families,” USAID/Armenia Program Officer James Carlson said in his conference-opening remarks. He differentiated general and elite migration, noting that while the first is directed towards meeting the basic needs of the population, the latter is considered to be an important source of added value for the country, as elite migrants are very likely to bring back their skills and knowledge, thus further fueling the economy.

Participants discussed current trends and concerns related to labor migration in Armenia, highlighting

the urgent need for a comprehensive state policy that would protect the rights of Armenian migrants abroad as well as assist them upon their return home. EPF also presented the findings of the new USAID-funded research on labor migration trends in Armenian regional communities, conducted by the Foundation in 2007-2008.

Based on recent sociological surveys, 96,000-122,000 people (or 3.0-3.8% of the population) migrated from Armenia between 2005 and 2006, with two out of three migrants mentioning lack of employment or low salaries as their main reason for departure. As Gagik Yeganyan, the head of the Migration Agency within the Ministry of Territorial Administration of Armenia, noted in his presentation, Russia and former Soviet republics rank first (75%) as a target destination for Armenian migrants, followed by European countries (15%) and the U.S. (10%). Underscoring the need to assist in the return and reintegration of Armenian migrants, Yeganyan introduced the Migration Agency’s new virtual system (www.backtoarmenia.com) which will now allow Armenian citizens abroad to learn more of migration-related concerns, risks and consequences, official announcements and publications, as well as direct their questions to an expert on-line. As a conference wrap-up, participants collaborated in the development of a resolution on migration policy and on a number of issues, including bilateral cooperation and diplomacy, special assistance and reintegration programs for migrants and their families.

CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

USAID helps prevent child abandonment and institutionalization in Armenia

A USAID Global Development Alliance (GDA) project launched in 2004, CEDC seeks to ensure the protection of children’s rights and well-being in residential and institutional facilities in Armenia, as well as promotes the integration of vulnerable children into mainstream educational fa-



A USAID Global Development Alliance (GDA) initiative aimed at preventing child abandonment and institutionalization in Armenia, the Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) project seeks to ensure the protection of children’s rights and well-being in residential and institutional facilities, and promotes the integration of vulnerable children into mainstream education facilities and homes.

Through CEDC support, the first national Multidisciplinary Assessment Center was established in Yerevan to provide a comprehensive assessment of children with special needs in Armenia. The Center will serve both the capital and the regions to identify children’s educational and social needs, help integrate children with

disabilities into society and mainstream life as well as provide proper education regardless of their physical or mental inabilities. “I am confident that the establishment of the Center will be a pivotal step toward serious reforms in the sphere of inclusive education in Armenia,” Kamo Areyan, Deputy Mayor of Yerevan, noted at the opening ceremony.

Through international consultancy and collaboration with expert NGOs, the Center has developed special assessment tools that will be used to identify and assess a child’s strengths and potential and organize their education correspondingly. In addition, the Center will work with families to prevent institutionalization of children and help develop inclusive educational facilities throughout the country.



CEDC works in five marzes in Armenia and has benefited 7000 children and 499 families since its launch in 2004

Launched in 2004 and implemented with World Vision Armenia, the four-year CEDC project works in five Armenian marzes (Syunik, Tavush, Shirak, Gegharqunik and capital Yerevan), and has benefited over 7,000 children and their families since its inception.

ARMENIA PLOTTING IN WATER RESOURCES CODING IN SOUTH CAUCASUS

USAID is helping to manage water resources in Armenia



The development of a national water resources registry and water resources coding system are among the key achievements of USAID’s Program for Institutional and Regulatory Strengthening of Water Management in Armenia. Launched in 2004, the USAID/ Armenia project provides technical assistance, training and equipment to Armenia’s Ministry of Nature Protection and its Water Resources Management Agency (WRMA) to improve water resources management and regulation of the

country’s decentralized irrigation and municipal water sectors. Through USAID’s assistance, WRMA completed the development of the State Water Cadastre Information System (SWCIS) after two years of data entry and coding based on European Union standards. SWCIS represents a multi-database electronic tool for information management with a geographic information system (GIS) component. The new tool assists WRMA in water resources management, planning and decision-making process by tracking information on water resources quantity and quality, technical data on catchment areas and water intakes,

water system use and permits, as well as water storage and wastewater treatment networks. In addition, SWCIS has allowed WRMA to digitalize Armenia’s water resources based on worldwide digital mapping norms and to assign a unique identifier to every river, significant tributary, lake and reservoir in the country, including corresponding catchments and inter-basins. The success of this initiative has led neighboring countries Georgia and Azerbaijan to adopt their own water resources coding system, which will enable regional cooperation in the water sector among the South Caucasian States.

2ND ANNUAL ARMENIAN NATIONAL ENGLISH SPELLING BEE

On May 3, 2008 US Peace Corps Armenia Volunteers Mary Fisher Gobble and Sydney Merz organized the 2nd Annual Armenian National English Spelling Bee in the town of Hrazdan, Armenia. The competition, which has become an annual event, was opened by US Charge d’Affaires to Armenia Joseph Pennington.

Over 70 students from the 7th-11th grades, representing nine different marzes/regions, competed in the competition which required the students to correctly spell English words. Students were given three weeks to study over 450 words and the contest was very competitive, with many parents and teachers in the audience cheering on their school’s participants.

"I felt such an honor to have the Charge' d’Affaires attend our event, and he made the entire audience laugh when he said that he was sure that the children could spell English words better than he could."

"It was a great event, and even though my student didn't win first place, she learned over 400 new English words," said a school teacher from the town of Vardenis.

After the competition, 30 participants stayed the night in the capital city, Yerevan, as their transport back to site was too far for one day. A pizza party was arranged at a local hostel and many of the students enjoyed

Yerevan’s life, sightseeing around the city. For some, it was their first time in Yerevan.

"We like English very much and we like to participate in it, especially the Spelling Bee competition. The Spelling Bee has numerous good things. Many different villages and cities come and we make new friends.

"The Peace Corps-sponsored Spelling Bee helps us learn English better," stated a competitor from the village of Halidzor.

Students who participated in the national contest were declared winners from their regional sites. Over 800 students participated at the local and regional sites, quadrupling the number of participants from the previous year. The Spelling Bee is an interactive



learning approach which focuses on pronunciation and audio learning skills and is sponsored by United States Peace Corps Volunteers and local school communities.

Anahit Aghagulyan from the city of Kapan felt proud of the Spelling Bee’s accomplishments:

"I liked the Spelling Bee. It was an exciting competition. The students like it and it makes them want to study English.

"Staying in Yerevan was great and students from one place met students from another place and they could see each other’s skills and compare."

The Spelling Bee was supported by the Deno Mining Company, Kapan; Armenian English Language Teachers Association (AELTA), Hrazdan branch; United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Armenia; family and friends of Peace Corps volunteers.



U.S. Charge’ d’Affaires a.i. Joseph Pennington speaks at the opening of the competition





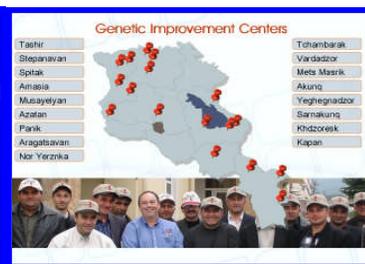
Doshab preparation



Doshab in clay pots



Introduction of AI tools



AI seminar participants with trainer Joel Margler



CARD CONTINUES EXPANDING THE NUMBER OF SKILLED AI TECHNICIANS THROUGHOUT ARMENIA



Since 2005 CARD has launched “Dairy Herd Management” project aimed at improving genetic traits of dairy herds in Armenia.

In the last two years CARD has provided financial and technical assistance in the implementation of a wide range of activities related to improving the genetic traits of cattle herds throughout Armenia. Thus, 15,050 doses of Holstein, Swiss Brown, Jersey dairy breeds and Angus beef breed semen have been imported to the Republic of Armenia. 10,000 doses have been distributed or purchased so far.

Every year, within the scope of the aforementioned program, CARD organizes seminars for cattle-breeders and veterinarians from different regions of Armenia, ASAU professors, students and specialists from the RA Ministry of Agriculture.

This time CARD took initiative of organizing a train-the-trainer (TTT) program designed for veterinarians invited from all over the Armenia. The purpose of this initiative was to prepare Artificial Insemination (AI) trainers who will further share the knowledge with other veterinarians and cattle-breeders in their

communities. Three-day training course started on April 1st, 2008 in Stepanavan town, Lori region. The seminar was delivered by Joel Mergler, representing the U.S. company “Select Sires.” Five main topics covered during the course were: AI techniques in cattle, anatomy and psychology of cattle, rules for managing body condition of cows, estrus cycle synchronization and semen handling. Practical training was conducted at one of trainee’s farms located near the training area.

CARD HELPS RURAL WOMEN BUILD SUSTAINABLE INCOME

Khachik village located in the Vayots Dzor region of Armenia continuously is in the center of CARD’s attention. Being quite isolated, the community suffers from widespread unemployment, which leads to large-scale migration.

The village’s women’s group has been heavily engaged in Doshab (sweet grape syrup) production. Doshab is not only considered a valuable food item, but it is also used for medical purposes. Some of women have mastered the unique preparation technology. The women’s group struggled to make the business sustainable. Manual

pressing of grapes led to significant losses of raw material and low efficiency. With scarce resources and limited sales the women were producing 80 liters of Doshab annually.

CARD assisted the women in acquiring a pressing machine, which significantly increased their labor efficiency and the amount of grape juice produced. In addition, CARD helped the women’s group with product bottling and labeling. Specially ornamented clay pots have been designed for the Doshab. To give the final touch the pot handles have been tied with colorful

threads beautifully woven by six CARD youth club members operating in Khachik village.

Today, there is great demand for Doshab in the local markets and among Sudjukh (walnut sweets) producers. The Doshab production business of the Khachik Village women’s group is successfully developing. Last year they had 175 liters in sales and in this year they plan to increase the sales to 350 liters. Through CARD’s assistance four people are employed and make income through producing good quality, natural ethnic food.

OPENING OF A NEWLY RECONSTRUCTED KINDERGARTEN



May 15, 2008, when the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, Ambassador Thomas Adams and Jerry Oberndorfer, Director of Humanitarian Programs, EUR/ACE, U.S. Department of State cut the ribbon marking the opening of the newly reconstructed kitchen and laundry of Boarding Kindergarten #14 in Yerevan was a special day in the lives of children and the staff of the kindergarten. It turned out to be an unforgettable time for the children, their parents and all the guests.

Maro Abrahamyan, the Kindergarten Director, underlined in her request letter addressed to Counterpart that children with special needs from socially vulnerable families, orphans, as well as weak-sighted, hearing-impaired and dysphasia-affected youngsters attend the kindergarten. For most of the children, the kindergarten became a second home and family. Though the kindergar-

ten faced lots of problems, of which, the most important was the renovation of the kitchen and laundry facility. There was an acute need for full reconstruction of the canteen to improve the unsanitary situation in the kindergarten, which served 210 children.



The project was initiated in response to the kindergarten's acute humanitarian needs and implemented by Counterpart International's Community & Humanitarian Assistance Program (CHAP) under the U.S. Department of State-funded Small Reconstruction Projects. The U.S. Department of State allocated USD10,000 for reconstruction of the kindergarten's kitchen and laundry facility and LDS charities made the most valuable in-kind contribution by purchasing all essential furniture, a refrigerator and washing-machines. The Small Reconstruction Project was implemented by Counterpart's CHAP in close cooperation with the kindergarten's management. CHAP/Armenia provided a financial contribution and carried out cleaning and preparatory work. It had the canteen renovated with bright colors. The children, however, were the ones who gave a special highlight to the event. They performed a concert that moved the audience. The children acted out scenes, danced, sang songs, recited poems in English to express their gratitude to the donors for their attention and care.

U.S. Government Assistance to Armenia Newsletter

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For more information about U.S. Government-funded projects in Armenia please visit our primary website at www.usa.am.

Please also visit individual programs websites:

USAID/Armenia www.usaid.am

USDA in Armenia www.usda.am

If you have any comments, please submit to them to: yerevanassistance@state.gov