

Fall-Winter 2009



MCA-ARMENIA'S WATER TO MARKET ACTIVITY MARKS ITS THREE PROJECT YEARS

On October 13-14, the Water-to-Market (WtM) Activity of the Millennium Challenge Account - Armenia (MCA-Armenia) Program celebrated its third anniversary at the EXPO held at Congress Hotel, presenting the results of its three years of project implementation in a unique exhibition that highlighted its programmatic work through displays showing modern technologies and practices related to irrigation, production and post-harvest handling. The exhibition also showed the success achieved in identifying market opportunities and helping the beneficiary farmers take advantage of these markets.

farmers through training, hands on application and access to finance, and support



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Ambassador Yovanovitch and Minister Yeritsyan cut the ribbon

to the entire agricultural chain by linking this more competitive producer/supply base to profitable agribusiness opportunities. Throughout the two days of the EXPO, the visitors also had a chance to meet the farmers, program experts and credit organizations, and to

discuss many issues that are important to farmers, agribusinesses and policy makers.

Present at the EXPO opening ceremony were Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan and the U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, Marie L. Yovanovitch. The EXPO opened with a video viewing session, which was followed by remarks by the dignitaries. They emphasized the significance of the event and the overall program as an excellent example of a fruitful collaboration between the U.S. and Armenia.

The various EXPO exhibits, presentations and posters highlighted the objective of the WtM, which is knowledgeable and prosperous

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USDA ARMENIA PROGRAMS

FCA New Members on the Way to New Achievements



Farm Credit Armenia (FC) is with Armenian farmers both in good times and in bad times. Surenavan residents, Armen Manoukian and his wife, have been in the business of dried fruit production for more than four years. They had started from scratch, using the fruits from their orchard and sun fruit drying techniques Armenian women acquire from their mothers. The family invested its entire savings in the business with the hope to expand and improve production.



Mr. and Mrs. Manoukian at the production unit

After joining the FC cooperative Mr. and Mrs. Manoukian received two types of loans. FC decided to finance the investment in refrigerator installation, as well as the working capital. Now the refrigerator room is equipped; the production process is fed by additional capital for increasing the production and marketing capacity.



At present the Manoukian family is already one of the largest producers of dried fruits in the region. Their sun dried fruits under label "Armenian fruits" in very fancy packages are marketed to 42 stores and supermarket chains in Yerevan.

Study and Internship exchanges in Armenia and Greece



Pursuant to an agreement between the International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (ICARE) and Dimitris Perrotis College DPC, three Agribusiness Teaching Center students spent their internships at the American Farm School. Anahit Nazaretyan, Tatevik Avetisyan and Vahan Melkumyan, third year students of

the ATC, were offered working positions in different farms of the School.

In turn, three DPC students interned at ICARE and at three Armenian agribusiness companies.



DPC Interns at ICARE

The internship in ICARE was a combination of internship and study: The DPC students participated in lectures, seminars, field trips, and the alumni reunion together with the ATC students and alumni. Communication with ATC Armenian and Georgian students allowed them to establish firm business and personal relations. These exchange programs have proven to be successful in terms of sharing business and cultural experience and establishing friendly relations between the young people from different countries.

Certification of CARD Food Safety Specialists as Lead Instructors by International HACCP Alliance



The Government of Armenia enacted a new Food Safety Law that requires Codex Alimentarius's Hazard Analysis Critical

Control point (HACCP) to be used throughout the food processing establishments in Armenia. In response to the state implementation of HACCP, CARD Food Safety Specialists have been trained as HACCP Trainers and, as of 2009, are listed as Lead Instructors by the International HACCP Alliance. This allows them to train and put the seal of the International HACCP alliance on certificates they award after the training. Having instructors of this caliber will help the state inspectors trained by CARD to know what to look for in HACCP plans. This will have a positive impact on food processing and supply, and will encourage the food industry to continue to meet the changes that the state is instituting to harmonize Armenia's Food Safety.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM CONTINUES TO PROVIDE RELIEF

Humanitarian Assistance to Institutionalized People (PHAIP)



There are 215 children between the ages of two and six attending Etchmiadzin #6 boarding kindergarten.

“The number of vulnerable children is increasing due to social-economic predicaments in the region,” said Sveta Abgaryan, director of the kindergarten. “There is a long waiting list of children whose parents want to put them in a stable, warm place where they can be fed and get some education. But unfortunately, we cannot accept all of them due to our limited capacity.”



Children at Etchmiadzin Boarding Kindergarten 6 are surrounded by love and care.

UMCOR is assisting the kindergarten through its U.S. Department of State-funded cheese nutrition program. Within the framework of the program the kindergarten receives 70kg of high quality cheese each month. This kindergarten is one of the 61 boarding institutions in Armenia receiving cheese as a supplement to their daily ration.

“We were in trouble with the increased prices of different food items in the market,” added Abgaryan. “That is why our staff and our parents highly appreciate the DOS-funded nutrition assistance program. It helps us provide children with protein- and calcium-rich dairy products and children eat cheese sandwiches with pleasure”.

To further assist with the basic needs, UMCOR also donates school kits, hygiene kits and blankets. Providing school or hygiene kits, along with a morning snack of cheese, enables the children to be ready physically and mentally for each new day of learning.



Rebuilding Safe Kindergartens in Armenia

Armenia is a country, where many public schools and kindergartens, built in the Soviet Era, are crumbling around the students and teachers.

IRD continues to provide upgrades to such facilities around the country. The latest, completed in May, are two kindergartens in the capital, Yerevan, which had been built in 1959 and 1960, respectively. The facilities were not contributing to aesthetic development and hygiene safety of the 168 children, especially considering that some of the children boarded there as well.



The children and their crocodile mascot are delighted with the improvements

With funding from the U.S. DoS and in cooperation with the Latter-Day Saints Charities, IRD replaced plumbing and electrical fittings, hot water heaters, and windows. Floors and walls were re-plastered. And a fresh coat of paint was the final touch. When the children returned to their kindergartens, they, and their families, were delighted to see how clean and nice the kindergartens became: Now it’s time to play and enjoy!



OFFICE OF DEFENSE COOPERATION IN ARMENIA



The EUCOM Excess Property shipment arrives to Chambarak school.

ODC Excess Property Program reaches out to Chambarak School

On September 30th, the United States Embassy and European Command Humanitarian Assistance office Stuttgart Germany, we were able to supply over \$4,000 worth of much-needed furniture to Chambarak School Number Two.

The U.S. Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation has provided

several such shipments in the past year, adding up to \$15,000 worth of material donated to schools and orphanages in rural Armenia; several more are on the way. Many of these projects would not be possible without the many non-governmental organizations working together, sharing information, and coordinating their efforts to fulfill the needs of the Armenian people. Although the donations are often small in monetary value, the impact and tangible results can be enormous.



Students unload the new furniture.

ODC-Completed Water Projects in Six Remote Villages

The Office of Defense Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan recently received the thanks of the mayors of six rural villages in Armenia upon the completion of its \$600,000 water supply project. Thanks to the work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and CESCO Co. Ltd. of Yerevan, over 9,000 people in the remote villages of Aghavnavank, Antaramej, Karmir-Agheh, Sevkar, Ttou Jour, and Vaghashen now have an adequate supply of fresh drinking water. The project included disassembling, rehabilitating and constructing reservoirs, fences, catch basins, wells and roughly 14 miles of intercommunity pipelines to assist the villages. The project was implemented by CESCO CO. Ltd., a construction and engineering company based in Armenia, which delivered all six projects on time, on scope and on budget.



Old damaged pipe led to 30 to 40% loss of water supply to the villages.



The new supply system allows clean water flow to the villagers in Sevkar.



CRDF/NFSAT PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY IN ARMENIA



Commercialization of Scientific Research Product



The Commercialization of Product/Results Support Program (CPSP) was launched in 2003. Funded by the Department of State and administered by the Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF), it is intended to support Armenia's economic revival through "pushing" research results obtained by Armenian scientists and engineers to the International market. In 2009 the National Foundation for Science and Advanced Technologies (NFSAT), the project implementer, has supported on a competitive basis 16 new technologies which are the results of recent research and have sound market potential.



"A new absolute-position sensor of nano-scale movement" developed by Dr. Samvel Gevorgyan and his team from the Yerevan State University is one of the 16 technologies supported by the NFSAT. The new technology developed by this team is called Technology Platform, and may be applied in various segments of the economy, such as medicine, military, global and homeland security, scientific instrumentation, micro- and nano-electronics, industrial market, and research and development tools.

Dr. Samvel Gevorgyan (center) and his team

Later, "Precision Sensors/Instrumentation Inc." (PSI) was created "to market this technology platform and to transfer this remarkable technology into products used in industry". PSI was recognized as one of six top finalists in the 2008 Global Security Challenge (GSC) competition in London.

PSI leverages the application of a new technology to produce Passive & Remote Zone Security Systems (PRZSS) that can detect human activities in remote areas without direct line-of-sight visibility. This new zone security system can serve to detect humans, cars, trucks, or tanks that might be moving over the rough terrain, or under the water, and hence has applications in border security, as well as port security.



Unprecedented for Armenia, such an international recognition of Armenian technology enabled this center to sign teaming agreements with "Singapore Technologies Dynamics" & U.S. "United Detection Technologies," and to move ahead to the commercialization of the fine SFCO technology. The Armenian Ministry of Defense also has stated its interest in this technology.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

VARIETY OF USAID PROJECTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY

Celebrating World Sight Day in Armenia

Propelling Armenia's Digital Future



On October 8, 2009, the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECP) medical team visited the Abovian penitentiary for women to help those with limited access to



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CAPS
COMPETITIVE ARMENIAN PRIVATE SECTOR



AECP screenings in Abovian penitentiary for women

eye care on the occasion of the World Sight Day, celebrated each October as a public awareness initiative to draw attention to blindness prevention worldwide.

This year the World Sight Day is dedicated to gender and eye health. Nearly two-thirds of blind people worldwide are women and girls, and in several countries their access to eye care is more limited than men's. In this light, the AECP, the Republic of Armenia Ministries of Justice and Health, and USAID/Armenia collaborated in a joint initiative to raise public awareness of eye health care and provide assistance to women in detention.

As part of this effort, the AECP team examined 103 women and 17 teenage girls in the Abovian penitentiary, prescribed appropriate medical treatment, and delivered a special presentation for the imprisoned on basic eye diseases and their symptoms. In addition, public education brochures on eye diseases and eye care hygiene were distributed and 80 out of the 103 women will soon be provided with eye glasses.

Within the context of the World Sight Day 2009, the AECP state-of-the-art Mobile Eye Hospital conducted examination of about 60-80 patients per day in Aragatsozn marz, starting October 6 until October 26.

The Union of IT Enterprises and the Enterprise Incubator Foundation organized the fifth annual DigiTec Expo 2009 on October 2-4 in Yerevan with support from Ucom, ADC, Virage Logic and USAID's Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) Project. Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan and the Head of Eastern Europe and Central Asia branch at Ericsson, Jan Campbell, marked the opening of the exhibition, noting the role information technologies can play in fostering the development of all the sectors of Armenia's economy. Over 50 companies were represented at the Expo, which attracted over 12,000 visitors this year, marking a 15% increase in the number of exhibitors and 50% increase in the number of visitors compared to previous years.



This year's event, titled "Your Digital Future", featured a Start-up Forum on new innovative solutions, DigiTec E-government Forum on electronic services provided by Government agencies, ArmRobotics Pan-Armenian Competition, and presentations of new solutions and technologies by leading local and international IT companies. DigiLife seminars were organized by CAPS to help educate tourism and pharmaceutical sector companies on how technology can make them more competitive and increase revenue through improved access to market information, increased customer outreach and improved management processes. CAPS also supported nine innovative start-up companies with booth space and development of high quality promotional and marketing materials.

VARIETY OF USAID PROJECTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The USAID-funded Maternal and Child Health Project marked its successful completion

On November 12, 2009, the USAID-funded Project NOVA marked the conclusion of the program by presenting its five-year achievements in supporting maternal and child health in Armenia. The project was implemented by a consortium of international organizations—Emerging Markets Group, IntraHealth International and Save the Children—in close partnership with the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Health, marz health departments, leading medical training institutions and healthcare facilities.



USAID/Armenia Project Manager for NOVA Astghik Grigoryan and RA Deputy Health Minister Tatul Hakobyan holding NOVA gift bags.

Project NOVA activities helped improve the quality of labor and delivery practices as well as advanced prenatal, postpartum, newborn, and infant care, family planning and reproductive health services provided by a wide range of healthcare workers—from community nurses at rural health posts to obstetrician/gynecologists and neonatologists at regional in-patient facilities.

Since its inception in 2004, Project NOVA has established 18 regional training sites and 29 quality assurance teams; trained over 2,500 healthcare providers in state-of-the-art aspects of maternal and child healthcare; established 12 popular Schools of Motherhood; equipped 277 rural health posts and 10 regional-level facilities with essential equipment, furniture and supplies; and renovated 12 regional healthcare facilities.

The Project also has contributed to the development and implementation of several national health initiatives and strategies; designed, produced and disseminated over 200,000 copies of health education materials; supported the establishment of the first evidence-based Armenian Journal of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Neonatology; and applied a Geographic Information System to support decision-making in the health sphere.

ArmTech Congress'09 – Armenia's Global High-Tech Industry Conference Returns to Silicon Valley

Armenia's IT industry has become visibly more cohesive in recent years and is well on the way to developing what is considered to be a typical industry 'cluster'. This was demonstrated at the 2009 ArmTech Congress now in its third year held from November 5-8 in Silicon Valley, California showcasing Armenia's high-tech industry capabilities and joint efforts of representatives of the U.S. and Armenian private sector, Armenian Ministries of Economy, Diaspora and Foreign Affairs, the Californian State Government, industry associations and Armenian universities.

The ArmTech Congress '09 took place under the patronage of the Armenian Prime Minister and was organized under the theme of "learning from the past and inventing the future". Recognizing the potential impact the event could have on the development of Armenia's high tech-

industry, USAID, through its Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) Project, provided continuous support to the organization of all three conferences.

This has provided an unmatched opportunity to obtain business and professional information, and to connect with government representatives, major players in the financial and services sectors, and leading academics from Armenia, the U.S. and elsewhere around the world.





PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS MAKING REAL DIFFERENCE IN RURAL ARMENIA

Poetry Festival in Berd

October proved to be a busy month in the Shamshadin Region of Tavush Marz. Peace Corps Volunteers were underway organizing the October 2009 Poetry Festival for Berd and its surrounding communities. On October 26 about 50 students from Berd, Chinchin, Choraton, Artsvaberd and Varenkarmir gathered in Cultural House, Berd to participate with their recitations that they had spent the last month working on and preparing.

The festival had been inspired by fellow volunteer Marilyn Matt's original poetry festival that she had organized in Hrazdan. Students were given poetry specific in length to their abilities and grade level. Interaction was encouraged between teachers and the students in preparation for the event. Students were expected to have their pieces memorized and be able to present it with poetic flow, individual interpretation and expression.

The goal of the Poetry Festival was to encourage a sense of community among all the students gathered from the local towns and villages to share what they had prepared and to give students practice in a participatory and individual competition setting.



Students and PC Volunteers working on poetry pieces

New fertilizing techniques introduced during Farmers Expo in Kapan

On October 16, the Kapan Small Farmers' Association (KSFA) held their fifth annual Farmer's Expo at the Cultural Center in downtown Kapan. Supported by PC Armenia, this annual event focuses on locally grown agriculture and dairy products while exposing the community to new and innovative techniques that farmers in the region are using to produce healthy and more viable food options. Sixteen villages from the Kapan region participated and each village presented their specific talents in agricultural and dairy production.



The Expo begins

KSFA's agronomist marketed a technique utilizing bio-humus fertilizer, which has proven very successful among farmers in the region. There are currently 13 bio-humus stations operated by the NGO, which produce 500 tons of bio-humus each year. Increasing the volume of bio-humus used in agricultural production can decrease the volume of necessary mineral fertilizers

and resolve ecological problems. Bio humus increases the volume and quality of the yield eight to twenty times more than manure due to the properties of a California worm used in production.

Overall the event was a huge achievement for both the farmers and KSFA. Sales of dairy and agricultural products totaled over 2 million AMD (about \$5,200). In honor of World Food Day, KSFA distributed information to farmers and the community about food security and sustainable local farming, including proper guidelines for growing and producing organic products.

PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS MAKING REAL DIFFERENCE IN RURAL ARMENIA



Renovation at Vardenis State College

On Wednesday, December 9, Vardenis State College saw a project come to fruition, aided by the Peace Corps and USAID. Vardenis State College is in the city of Vardenis, Gegharkunik Marz. It has an enrollment of 350 students studying vocational trades, languages, business and education.

The project originated with newly-returned volunteer Connie Speake and her counterpart, Anna Mkrtchyan, an English teacher at the college. Alongside wide-ranging and general renovation on the third floor of the college, the project involved new materials for the library, introduction of the Dewey Decimal system, vocational learning materials for beauticians and fashion designers, and space for a student cafeteria.

The project required much time and concerted energy. On her first day at Vardenis State College, Speake asked to see the college library, planning for future improvements. It seemed daunting at the onset, but motivation was plentiful. "I knew that it would take much effort, much work, but I knew we had to do it," said Mkrtchyan. Indeed, the hard work has paid off—the college librarian, Margarita Madoya, was clearly happy with the project: "Everything is great about this library," she said.

The hard work was shouldered by several different organizations. Funding was provided by the Peace Corps Partnership Program, which connects donors in the U.S. with projects in Armenia, and the USAID CHF BRIDGE Program, which teaches unskilled workers a trade while working on a project such as the Vardenis State



From left to right:
Nicholas Bruno, US Peace Corps Armenia Program and Training Officer; Margarita Madoya, Vardenis State College Librarian; Anna Mkrtchyan, Vardenis State College English Language Instructor

College renovation. College employees and students also played an invaluable role in the renovation, supplying guidance, input, and effort.

While Speake was unable to physically see the final results of the project, her presence was still felt. When asked what project will be next, Mkrtchyan and Madoya turned to the library and indicated that they will remain committed to hosting a sustainable and efficient center. "There is no way, seeing Connie's passion, to not continue this project," said Mkrtchyan.

For more information on the Peace Corps Partnership Project program or to contribute to a Peace Corps Volunteer's project in Armenia, please visit <https://www.peacecorps.gov> and click the "Donate Now" link, and then search for projects by country."

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 armenia.usaid.gov, USDA/Armenia www.usda.am, Millennium Challenge Account - Armenia www.mca.am