



Approved by
Order of the Director of "WAOM" TDA PO
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Report of the "We Are Our Mountains" territorial development agency for 2023

"We Are Our Mountains" functions as a territorial development agency, hereinafter referred to as the Agency, established in late 2022 by Ruben Vardanyan and a group of like-minded allies. The Agency initiates and executes development programs (projects) in close collaboration with state and local entities, as well as public and private institutions and organizations. Primarily, the projects undertaken by the Agency are designed to support the population of Artsakh.

EXECUTION OF SOCIAL IMPACT PROJECTS IN ARTSAKH **(November 2022 - May 2023)**

Between November 2022 and May 2023, the Agency primarily focused on **executing social impact projects in Artsakh**. These initiatives aimed to address the immediate needs of the population under blockade while also contributing to long-term social development. Throughout this timeframe, a comprehensive range of projects spanning nearly every aspect of the Artsakh people's lives was successfully implemented.

1. ARTSAKH FOOD RESERVE REPLENISHMENT

The goal of the project was to replenish the food reserve for the residents of Artsakh with long-shelf-life products of high nutritional value. Preference was given to purchasing powdered and/or flake food, cereals, and pasta, which were optimal in terms of transportation, storage, and energy value to ensure the normal functioning of the population of Artsakh in emergency conditions.

As part of the project, the Agency and partners purchased and transferred to the Government of Artsakh's warehouse in Armenia (Goris), for its use, **more than 177 tons** of food worth **over \$449,800**. Some **94 more tons** of food were transferred directly to the Government by the Agency's partners.

Due to the blockade, the Government was unable to transport most of the food received to Artsakh. In collaboration with other charitable organizations, the Agency coordinated a collective distribution of this food to families forcibly displaced in Armenia.

2. ASSISTING THE ENERGY SYSTEM OF ARTSAKH

The goal of the project was to increase energy security, as well as the reliability of water supply to the population in case of an energy blockade of Artsakh. Within the framework of the project the following was carried out:

- Acquisition and installation of **emergency diesel generators and electric batteries** at key points of the pump water supply system in the cities of Stepanakert and Martuni, which made it possible to ensure water supply to these cities in conditions of power outages;
- Purchase of **portable solar power generators** for use in the field;
- Purchase of **wood stoves** for families in need, and for educational and medical institutions. This made it possible to heat houses, schools and hospitals in Stepanakert and the regions during the energy blockade, especially vital in the winter months. The stoves were purchased and transferred to the relevant government organizations for further distribution by partner organizations with the Agency's support.

The above goods were transferred to government bodies and organizations in Artsakh to meet the needs of the population. The total amount allocated for the implementation of the project was **over \$186,700**.

3. GIFTS FOR CHILDREN OF ARTSAKH

The goal of the project was to provide gifts to more than 12,000 Artsakh children under the age of ten. Gifts including toys, children's books, and educational games were presented to children for Easter. The project cost was **about \$171,700**.

4. MOBILE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TEAMS

The project involved the creation of three mobile teams (including a general practitioner and a nurse) to provide primary health care to residents of the villages of Martuni, Askeran and Martakert regions of Artsakh. The partners in the implementation of the project were the HENAR Charitable Foundation and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Artsakh. One of the teams operated successfully for several months and served the Martuni region of Artsakh. The creation of the other two teams was prevented by the blockade of Artsakh. The total amount expended on the partial implementation of the project was **over \$109,800**.

5. RESTORATION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN ARTSAKH

The project involved the purchase of building materials and repair and restoration work in residential buildings damaged as the result of shelling during the 2020 war.

However, because of the blockade, the Government was unable to transport most of the construction materials to Artsakh. The Agency's partners purchased building materials and transferred them directly to the Government of Artsakh at the corresponding warehouses in Armenia (Goris).

6. “EDUCATIONAL KALEIDOSCOPE” ARTSAKH FESTIVAL FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNING

The project included a series of educational programs for all age groups of the population in the cities and villages of Artsakh. The implementation partners of the project were the Matena International School of Leadership and Professional Development, the educational program for high school and university students “Climate Uturn” and the “Scholae Mundi Armenia” Charitable Foundation.

The project involved the implementation of several initiatives such as the Agrocamp, the Matena leadership development program, the CaseKey entrepreneurship competition, first aid courses, computer training courses, etc. The number of participants was around 500. The total project cost was about **\$45,600**.

7. “DAVID BEK” SPORTS AND TACTICAL GAMES

The project involved the organization of sports and tactical games “David Bek” with the involvement of 120 schoolchildren aged 15–17 years, including an outdoors children’s camp for boys and girls. The implementation partner of the project was the Alliance of Youth Clubs. The project itself was successfully implemented in July-August 2023. The project cost was **\$84,000**.

8. CALL-CENTER “3333”

To improve the targeting and efficiency of implemented projects, the Agency established a system of feedback with the population of Artsakh through the establishment of a multi-channel call center in Stepanakert. During the 5-month period of its activity, the call center received more than 4,000 calls and requests. The project cost amounted to **over \$18,400**.

Concern for the preservation of the national culture of the Artsakh Armenians, and the development of the spiritual, linguistic, and intellectual environment was also on the Agency’s radar. To address it, the Agency initiated the establishment of the “Our Mountains” community center, as well as a new Armenian language radio station.

9. “OUR MOUNTAINS” COMMUNITY CENTER

The “Our Mountains” community center, created by the Agency in Stepanakert, was a platform for many cultural, educational, and other initiatives carried out by partner organizations and which began to play a significant role in the public life of Artsakh. Films, concerts, exhibitions, various courses, psychological assistance for children with special needs, a forum of youth organizations and retraining courses for women are examples of activities held at the center by various public organizations and groups. With the library as a resource for the public, the platform was provided for free use by partners, and they were supported in other ways as necessary. The cost of the center’s activities for 8-month operation amounted to **over \$242,800**.

The analytical activities of the center included procuring a report “**Economic losses of Artsakh due to the blockade**”, which was produced by a group of economists and other experts.

10. RADIO “OUR MOUNTAINS”

The news and music radio station “Our Mountains” began broadcasting on 1 May 2023 in Stepanakert and other regions of Artsakh. At the time it was the only non-state Armenian-language radio station in Artsakh. The project cost amounted to over \$47,000.

The projects described in paragraphs 11-13 below were initiated by the Agency in cooperation with government institutions of Artsakh. They were designed to make a significant contribution to increasing the level of Artsakh’s energy and food security. However, due to the total blockade of Artsakh by the Azerbaijani regime, these projects could not be implemented.

11. SOLAR WATER HEATERS FOR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The project involved the installation of water heaters in 70 kindergartens and medical institutions, as well as in an orphanage. Its implementation was designed to significantly reduce the dependence of these institutions on external sources of electricity and increase their autonomy, which was especially important given the energy blockade.

12. NEW LIFE FOR GREENHOUSE FARMS OF ARTSAKH

The project involved equipping about 20 greenhouse farms with a total area of more than 14,000 sq m with the systems necessary to increase their efficiency (heating etc.) and achieve a year-round harvest. The implementation partner of the project was Artsakh’s Ministry of Agriculture.

13. SOLAR POWER PLANT FOR ARTSAKH’S MEDICAL CENTER

The goal of the project was to create a backup source of electricity for the country's main medical institution – Artsakh’s Medical Center. It was planned to create a solar hybrid power plant with a capacity of 517 KW, ensuring the operation of vital departments of the center for up to 12 hours in the event of disruption of the electricity supply.

EMERGENCY RELIEF PROJECTS

(June - September 2023)

From June 15, the blockade of Artsakh by Azerbaijan became all-encompassing when even cargo transportation by the Russian Peacekeeping Contingent and the International Committee of the Red Cross was not allowed through the Lachin corridor. In those conditions, the continuation of most of the Agency’s projects to provide the assistance to the population of Artsakh became almost impossible. Due to the ongoing energy blockade and the inability to import food and fuel, the population of Artsakh was facing a humanitarian catastrophe. Hence, we had to reconsider our plans and implement several emergency relief initiatives at a cost of **about \$282,700**. The description of the most important efforts is given below:

- Setting up soup kitchens for those in need (every day more than 500 people were provided with full hot meals);
- Production of wood-burning stoves for the population to cope with the coming cold

weather;

- Provision of food packages with high-calorie foods to all pregnant women;
- Manufacture of horse-drawn carts for delivering food from villages to cities;
- Construction of 15 shelters in the village of Aterk of the Martakert region;
- Assistance to the farms breeding rabbits and poultry;
- Manufacture of equipment for producing gas and liquid fuel from household waste;
- Renovation of the monastery complex of St. Hakob, including the houses and community buildings in Kolatak village;
- Acquisition of electric vehicles from local sources to provide transportation for medical appointments for pregnant women as well as people with acute health problems and disabilities (more than 1000 cases).

SUPPORT PROJECTS FOR FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN ARMENIA **(October – December 2023)**

Following the tragic events of September, the Agency steadfastly upheld its mission by persisting in its activities in Armenia. It actively implemented support projects aimed at assisting forcibly displaced persons from Artsakh who found themselves facing challenging life situations.

1. WINGS: REHABILITATION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN DISPLACED FROM ARTSAKH

“Wings” is a dedicated 6-week rehabilitation program, designed for children aged 4-18 forcibly displaced from Artsakh due to the tragic events of September 2023.

The program focuses on enhancing the overall well-being of children by addressing their physical, psychological, and mental health. This is achieved through a range of activities, including sports and art therapy (such as swimming, football, art therapy, fairy tale therapy, sand therapy, etc.). Additionally, the program aims to rebuild mental resilience, foster adaptation, and cultivate leadership and entrepreneurial qualities among adolescents.

The inaugural phase of the "Wings" initiative accommodated 43 children hailing from 28 Artsakh families in Dilijan during November-December 2023. Collaborating partners for this project included the Dilijan Community Center, UWC College Dilijan, the educational organization Climate Uturn, and the Impulse Football Academy. The budget for the pilot stage amounted to **approximately \$13,400**. The program is set to extend into 2024.

2. SUPPORT FOR ARTSAKH CRAFTSMEN

The project's objective is to aid craftsmen compelled to leave Artsakh in swiftly resuming their work in Armenia, thereby enhancing the socio-economic conditions of their families. The initiative encompasses the organization of upskilling and reskilling courses and the provision of grants for the acquisition of essential tools to facilitate the resumption of their respective trades. During the initial pilot stage, 33 craftsmen, including shoemakers, jewellers, potters, confectioners, furniture makers, repairmen, beauty professionals, etc., received support from a pool of 115 applicants who

successfully passed the qualifying stage. This stage not only provided financial aid but also served as a platform for beneficiaries to connect and collaborate in their endeavours.

As of the conclusion of the reporting year, the project incurred expenses totalling **approximately \$18,300**. The initiative is slated to continue in 2024, with plans to extend support to over 100 craftsmen in the upcoming stage.

3. "LEADERS-2-LEADERS": CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR ASPIRING LEADERS

"Leaders-2-Leaders" stands as a transformative, ongoing development program designed for aspiring leaders forcibly displaced from Artsakh, rooted in a peer-to-peer approach. The collaborative execution of this program is the result of combined efforts from the Territorial Development Agency "We are Our Mountains", an experts and the alumni of the International School of Leadership and Professional Development "Matena," as well as Armenian alumni from prestigious educational institutions like Harvard and Oxford. The program's objective is to foster comprehensive processes of advanced training and retraining, elevate the competitiveness of participants in the job market, aid in the cultivation of entrepreneurial initiatives, and, crucially, establish a robust network of like-minded leaders.

The inaugural module of the program, accommodating 25 participants, unfolded in November-December 2023, with plans for ongoing sessions in 2024. Currently, the program operates without the infusion of financial resources, with trainers and psychologists generously contributing their expertise pro bono. A financial evaluation of their contributions will be presented in subsequent reports upon the program's completion.

4. PRIMARY EQUIPMENT FOR TATEV COMMUNITY RESIDENTS FROM ARTSAKH

Due to the hasty exodus, the majority of Artsakh residents who were forcibly displaced and resettled in Armenia found themselves without their essential belongings. As a component of the project, 49 Artsakh families who established their homes in the Tatev enlarged community of Syunik marz were presented with certificates on New Year's Eve for the procurement of vital household items, including stoves, dishes, household appliances, furniture, and more. The overall expenditure for the project **exceeded \$24,400**.

5. GIFT THE SEASON

Within the framework of the project, in collaboration with the Halidzor Community Center and the Tatev Municipality, children from Artsakh families temporarily residing in the Tatev community were presented with Christmas gifts. This initiative aimed to bring joy to the children who, due to forced displacement, had left behind their toys and books. The festive offerings included Christmas trees, decorations, books, stationery, and a New Year's performance organized for them in the village of Shinuhair.

Simultaneously, a festive gathering was arranged for children from Artsakh situated in Gyumri. In total, approximately 200 Artsakh children were recipients of the program, with local children also actively participating in the events. The project's financial allocation amounted to **about \$2,900**.

SUPPORT FOR PARTNER PROJECTS

ACTIVITIES OF THE ALLIANCE OF YOUTH CLUBS IN ARTSAKH

The Alliance of Youth Clubs was formed by a group of young like-minded people with the goal of discovering and developing young leaders in the regions outside Stepanakert, so that they could unite and mobilize society to solve urgent problems. The Alliance's activities included volunteer, sports, extreme, cultural, and educational programs, and other projects. During 2023 the Alliance implemented the following projects involving a total of more than a thousand participants:

- survival skills program,
- emergency medical care courses,
- self-management courses,
- folk songs and dances,
- mind games,

Delivery by volunteers of food to pensioners and disabled people living on their own.

The total amount of support for the Alliance's activities amounted to **about \$106,600**.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S SUMMER RECREATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The Agency supported the **MUNK** technology camp, organized by the "I" Educational Foundation for 210 children with the aim of introducing them to the IT sector, providing them with basic skills and developing their algorithmic thinking.

The Agency also supported a children's camp by the **Davit Ghazaryan Charity Foundation**.

The total amount of this assistance was **about \$10,600**.

DIRECT SOCIAL SUPPORT

The Agency provided direct financial support to people in special cases - families of the dead, those in need of urgent medical care, and individuals from other vulnerable social groups. The amount of this assistance for the entire period was **about \$69,500**.

In the year 2023, the Territorial Development Agency "We are Our Mountains," in collaboration with its partners, successfully executed projects and programs totalling a value **exceeding \$2 million** (refer to the table for details):

Projects*	Cost (USD)	Number of beneficiaries
Social impact projects, including:	\$ 1 355 697	
<i>1. Artsakh food reserve replenishment</i>	<i>\$ 449 807</i>	<i>20 000</i>
<i>2. Assisting the energy system of Artsakh</i>	<i>\$ 186 741</i>	<i>38 300</i>
<i>3. Gifts for children of Artsakh</i>	<i>\$ 171 674</i>	<i>12 000</i>
<i>4. Mobile primary health care teams</i>	<i>\$ 109 802</i>	<i>20 000</i>
<i>5. Restoration of residential buildings in Artsakh (financed by partners)</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>6. "Educational Kaleidoscope" Artsakh festival for life-long learning</i>	<i>\$ 45 567</i>	<i>500</i>
<i>7. "David Bek" sport and tactical games</i>	<i>\$ 84 000</i>	<i>120</i>
<i>8. Call-center "3333"</i>	<i>\$ 18 396</i>	<i>4 000</i>
<i>9. "Our Mountains" community center</i>	<i>\$ 242 755</i>	<i>5 000</i>
<i>10. Radio "Our Mountains"</i>	<i>\$ 46 955</i>	<i>70 000</i>
<i>11. Solar water headers for social institutions (Initial Project Cost: \$159,160)</i>	<i>-</i>	
<i>12. New life for greenhouse farms of Artsakh (Initial Project Cost: \$266,000)</i>	<i>-</i>	
<i>13. Solar power plant for Artsakh's medical center (Initial Project Cost: \$835,000)</i>	<i>-</i>	
Emergency relief projects	\$ 282 675	5 300
Support projects for forcibly displaced people in Armenia, including:	\$ 58 980	
<i>1. Wings: Rehabilitation Program for children displaced from Artsakh</i>	<i>\$ 13 378</i>	<i>233</i>
<i>2. Support for Artsakh Craftsmen</i>	<i>\$ 18 270</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>3. Leaders-2-Leaders: Continuous Development Program for Aspiring Leaders</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>4. Primary Equipment For Tatev Community Residents From Artsakh</i>	<i>\$ 24 438</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>5. Gift the Season</i>	<i>\$ 2 895</i>	<i>292</i>
Support for partner projects	\$ 117 197	1500

Direct Social Support	\$ 69 488	
Public events	\$ 235 506	
Other projects	\$ 17 602	
Project management and administration	\$ 580 755	
Total	\$ 2 717 900	

*** This report does not include communication and expert consulting services that were not funded by the Agency, but were carried out with the involvement of the founders and the Agency's team.**

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