



French Armenian Development Foundation

Newsletter  
October-December

# PROJECTS

## “What is Trafficking in persons –awareness begins from school”

September 15 was an important day for the FADF, as we launched the “What is Trafficking in persons – awareness begins from school” project with the objective to prevent trafficking in persons by raising the awareness of these issues among graduating class children their



families, educational staff and management of Yerevan special school # 12 (68 pupils), Yerevan Special Educational Complex of Children with Hearing Impairments (156 pupils) and Yerevan Boarding School for Children with Visual Impairments (99 pupils).

While working in these schools we identified that children are marginalized from the society due to their disability and very often they are deprived of parental authority. Although some of them have families, these persons in their turn are also very vulnerable because of their social conditions. Being in extreme poverty and constrained to earn their daily life by very precarious jobs they don't have enough time to understand and explain the risk and dangers of trafficking in persons to their children. Taking into account the importance of the issues and absence of any adapted information on trafficking in persons available for children with special needs, the French Armenian Development Foundation launched the implementation of this project.

The first month of the project was dedicated to creation of the schedules and agendas of the trainings to be held at schools as well as elaboration of the materials and the methodology of delivery. The trainings in special schools will start in October. Within the framework of the project already 6 meetings were held in the special schools.

## Legal Recognition of the Armenian Sign Language



On August 1, 2011 we launched the “Legal Recognition of the Armenian Sign Language” project with the objective to ensure fundamental Rights; particularly the right to Information and Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (DHHP) by elaboration of legislative

recommendations' and submission to the RA Government. The elaborated legislative proposal is aimed at recognition of the Sign Language for guarantying the Equal Rights for the DHHP in Armenia.

Armenia has a comprehensive disability law among 19 Governments in the world. Also we have national action plan on disability that adopted in 2009 together with 29 Governments of the world.

However, a thorough examination is required as to the exact content of standards and coverage. Armenia has acceded to more than 50 human rights international treaties and notably the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Additional Protocol.

Notwithstanding the progress that was done in national legislation for ensuring equal Rights for Disabled, the sign language is not recognized as a *per se* and there are not enough translators/trained teachers at inclusive schools and other educational institutions. The goal of the project is to elaborate legislative recommendations aimed at recognition of the Sign Language for guarantying Equal Rights for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons in Armenia.

On September 30 within the framework of the project a round table discussion was held at the French Armenian Development Foundation together with the representatives of NGOs, Ministries, school principles dealing with the deafness issues and our deaf beneficiaries for discussing the ways of acquiring legal recognition of the Armenian Sign Language.

## “Dialogue“ Project continues...



The French Armenian Development Foundation is happy to announce that the EU funded “Deaf-Dialogue is Possible” project continues its activities at the FADF premises. The “Dialogue” Center will continue to ensure fundamental rights; particularly the Right to Information and to Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (DHHP).

The main activities will be the provision of accompanying and translation services for the Deaf and organization of American and Armenian sign language courses by experienced professionals. Sign language trainings are planned to take place thrice per week with 2 hour duration for 6-10 persons group for 6 months. It should be noted that training courses will include practical and informative courses. Besides the educational courses, there will also be exchange of experience and discussions in order to ensure the provision of needed information for the protection of the Deaf Rights.

In addition, the Center will organize on-line international discussions with the Deaf who master American Sign language. By learning American sign language the DHHP will no longer be marginalized from the external world. They will be able to communicate with other Deaf all over the world and also will have an access to the necessary information via internet. As for the accompanying services, there will be a special schedule on weekly basis so that the interpreter is available for accompanying the Deaf for administration or right protection issues. Two persons on a rotation basis will ensure this position and support the Deaf.

# EVENTS

## 'Two Paths' Film Screening and presentation



On September 30 the 'Two Paths' film was screened in the Congress hotel at the film-makers meeting organized by the 'Insigate' organization.

The event was of particular interest for all participants due to the fact that the audience had the opportunity to ask question to the film director and the heroes of the movie: Hayk and Gohar. The film is about 2 deaf persons making their life path through all the difficulties and hardships that each disabled person faces every day. The film shows the daily hard work and efforts of the heroes to integrate into society.

This film was also screened several time for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons as well as university students at the French Armenian Development Foundation.

## Focus Groups Discussion



Focus Group discussion with the participation of the Deaf took place at the French Armenian Development Foundation. The Deaf were actively sharing their ideas on how to fill the gaps in the legislation related to the legal recognition of Armenian Sign Language.

## Sing Language Legal Recognition Project Final Round Table



On the 2nd of November 2011 at 11:00 a.m. a round table discussion, dedicated to the "Sign Language Legal Recognition" project took place at the Ani Plaza Hotel in "Dvin" Hall.

The Round table was attended by the representatives of RA Ministry of Education and Science, professors of the Yerevan State Pedagogic University, representatives of NGOs and, of course, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons.

The project is aimed at promotion of the Fundamental Rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons in Armenia by contributing to the realization of the Rights to Information and Education in particular.

The project is financed and implemented by the French Armenian Development Foundation.

## Return to Sources

Within the framework of the Return to Sources project 20 business projects have been approved in the areas of breeding, green house cultivation and service providing.

The main objective of the project is to assist Armenian nationals living in France irregularly in their voluntary return. Project was launched in 2005 and till present more than 446 persons returned to Armenian and more than 100 business projects was set up.

## International Day of Persons with Disabilities



On December 3, the French Armenian Development Foundation organized an event dedicated to the International Day of People with Disabilities in the "Moscow" Cinema. Within the framework of the event the "Two Paths" film was screened for public for the first time. As a continuation of the "Deaf Dialogue is Possible" project, the French Armenian Development Foundation initiated the creation of this film dedicated to the life stories of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons in Armenia. During the event, "Paros" Chamber Choir, the winner of International and National Awards (artistic director and conductor Raffi Miqayelian) had a beautiful performance.



Film presentation event was also organized in the Holy Echmiadzin Seminary where the film got a very positive feedback as well. The heroes of the film were very honored to get the blessing of priests.

## "Dialogue" Center Year Closing event



On December 19 the students of the State Pedagogic University of Armenia and "Dialogue" center Deaf beneficiaries organized a mutual beautiful event. Theaim of the event was to demonstrate that the dialogue between the Deaf and the Hearing IS POSSIBLE . The students were the trainees of the Sign Language courses organized at the Dialogue center. During the event the students demonstrated to their Deaf fellows what they have learned, recited poems, sang songs in sign language.

The Deaf were very happy to see the language advancements of their fellows and were eager to help them practicing and mastering the language more.

It was a very emotional evening for all of us seeing how loving and caring they were for each other.

# PERSONAL STORY

~Hayk~



I feel the music with my soul...

Today is a very special day in my life as I've had the opportunity to really get to know a talented, young dancer... a person living a happy life, putting goals and realizing them, having dreams and making them come true...

At one point one might think what is so special about putting goals and realizing them, having dreams and achieving them... nothing special, unless you are a person with special needs. Yes! I feel honored to have had a nice conversation with Hayk Hobosyan, a deaf dancer.

You might also remember him as the winner of the 'Dance if you can' TV program

Hayk is one of the most open, sunny people I have ever met in my life, I have never seen that much enthusiasm, passion and good will in a person with special needs talking about his life and how happy he has always been.

'I remember it all started when I was 4. I remember that my mother used to take me to hospital very often and the doctor consulted my ears, and I didn't understand why... then I remember my mother took me to Ukraine then to Moscow and the doctors told her that I should have either a surgery or a special hearing aid... so I had it for a while. I was playing with my friends in yard and didn't have any complexes about my hearing aid. Funny...I remember my friends used to get very surprised that I have something in my ears, and I was surprised about the fact that they didn't have any in their ears'.

We didn't talk much about the fact that he was deaf, but we talked a lot about dancing.

'I took my first dance classes when I was 11 at 'MENQ' dancing ensemble and a year and a half later I went to 'Aray dance show' and I'm still the part of Aray Dance show. I have always loved participating at dancing contests, though I wouldn't say I had a lot of opportunities here to participate. I remember I got my first Grand Prix Prize when I was 11 at the youth dance competition with my rap performance and the prize was...you will never guess... an iron, yes IRON... 'What am I going to do with this iron? I am not a girl!!!!' ... I was very happy about the prize anyway.

I studied at the Aray Dance Show dancing Studio College, finished it and got a diploma. Basically I have been dancing for already 17 years'.

'Participation at the 'Dance if you can' TV programs was a great experience for me, and it somehow even changed my life. All of the participants were wonderful dancers; we all worked really hard 10-12 hours per day... I've never thought about winning the competition, even at the last concert, standing on the stage I didn't realize that I took the first prize, everybody was shouting, congratulating me... I was very excited but couldn't realize that it was really happening to me'.

'Right now I teach dancing, I am doing what I have always dreamt to do, I have 2 groups and soon I'll have the third one

'All my life, I have always been told that I could never be a dancer, so all those who lost the faith of attaining their dreams...



**IT IS POSSIBLE**

*Happy Holidays*

*Have a fruitful and prosperous year ahead*

