




**Peace
Corps**
ARMENIA

Annual Report 2017



163 Peace Corps
Volunteers served

 in **100** schools

 and **55** NGOs

Peace Corps Volunteers
implemented

 **16** grant projects
with **+\$55K** total budget



200+ Armenian families
hosted Peace Corps Volunteers
in their homes



3500+ students improved
their English proficiency



800+ young people improved
their employability skills



Message from the Director

I am pleased to present this Peace Corps Armenia annual report of activities for 2017. Peace Corps in Armenia began in 1992 at the invitation of the Government of Armenia. In 2017, we celebrated 25 years of service in Armenia and our 1000th Volunteer was sworn in. It was a very remarkable year for us, which we were happy to celebrate together with all of our friends and partners in Armenia.

For the past 25 years, Peace Corps has promoted peace and friendship in Armenia, while also contributing to the development of education, youth, and non-governmental organizations.

Our American Volunteers and their Armenian counterparts have made significant progress in helping Armenian students improve their English language. More importantly, they have helped countless students achieve academic and professional goals and dreams.

Peace Corps Volunteers have contributed significantly to the development of non-governmental organizations in Armenia and have helped thousands of youth to gain competitive skills and broaden their professional and educational opportunities.

Peace Corps Volunteers have also taught Armenians about American culture and have brought what they've learned of Armenian culture back home to their communities in the United States.

As we look back over the past years, we are enormously grateful to the government of the Republic of Armenia for its support and endorsement. Our partners, including the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, have graciously embraced us and collaborated with us in all of our joint endeavors. We are immensely thankful to our counterparts who work hand in hand with our Volunteers as well as all the Armenian families who have generously opened their homes and their hearts to our American Volunteers.

Thank you all for your continuous support of the Peace Corps program in Armenia. We look forward to many more years of friendship and partnership.

Sincerely,
Sonny Luu
Peace Corps Armenia Country Director



About the Volunteers

- Volunteers work in two programs: English Education and Community and Youth development
- Volunteers live and serve in rural Armenian communities, as well as bigger cities
- Volunteers live with Armenian host families for at least six months
- Volunteers serve with standard two-year commitment
- Volunteers learn and speak Armenian language and follow the local customs
- Besides their primary work Volunteers also do such activities as clubs, camps, teacher trainings, youth employability workshops
- Volunteers range in age from around 22 to 75 and represent America's diverse population
- Volunteers are carefully selected through a competitive application process in the U.S. based on their prior work experience and/or educational background
- Volunteers do not have access to implement big projects, instead they focus on sharing their skills and knowledge with their communities
- All Volunteers are citizens of the United States



English Education Program

Volunteers in the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) project are teaching English at village and town secondary and high schools, colleges, and other institutions of higher learning together with Armenian counterpart teachers. Volunteers work with local school teacher to develop lesson plans and teaching materials for effective co-teaching. They also facilitate student activities and clubs.

The main goals of the program are to help students improve their academic performance and to help teachers improve the effectiveness of their classroom English instruction.

Achievements in 2017

- Over **3500** students working with Volunteers have demonstrated improved English proficiency.
- Over **4400** students have demonstrated increased confidence and motivation through participation in a class club or camp organized by the Volunteers.
- Over **200** local English teachers working with Volunteers improved their English instruction by using new techniques for teaching language skills.
- Over **190** teachers working with Volunteers conducted a higher proportion of their procedural language in English in a class or extracurricular activity.
- Over **190** teachers increased their participation in teacher professional development activities in English.



Community and Youth Development Program

Community and Youth Development Volunteers work with local nongovernmental organizations, community based organization or groups and educational institutions. The program aims to empower youth through building their personal and professional skills, in conjunction with developing organizations' human and institutional capacities. Volunteers involved in this project help their organizations to co-facilitate camps, clubs, workshops and trainings for the community youth on such topics as fundraising, interview, resume and grant writing, social media and many other.

Achievements in 2017

- Over **1500** youths received training/coaching by Peace Corps Volunteers to improve their level of employability in the local job market. Around **800** of the young people trained, demonstrated improved employability skills.
- Over **2400** individuals were trained by Peace Corps Volunteers in leadership and around **1500** demonstrated increased civic engagement in 2017.
- Over **1100** young people were trained/coached by Peace Corps Volunteers to enhance their Vocational Skills in English.
- **90** organizations working with Volunteers improved their project design and management practices due to trainings/coaching received by Peace Corps Volunteers.
- **60** organizations improved their planning processes and **50** organizations have improved their internal management

Stories from the Field

"In order to develop the employability skills for the youth of Syunik Marz, together with my organization we facilitated a series of trainings for the youth on such crucial topics as fundraising for community projects, developing a business proposal, marketing, accounting for small businesses and strategy development. We also empowered the youth on how to make a powerful CV and helped them to develop the skills needed for interviews and networking. In addition to trainings, we also hosted a panel of local professionals to discuss career opportunities and professional advice for youth. Over the course of 6 months, 85 youth were able to further develop their employability skills through this program." - Community and Youth Development Volunteer Gwendolyn Hersh.



"I started Sports Club during my first summer in Darbas (a village in Syunik Marz). I started bringing my sports equipment to the soccer field almost daily in order to play with my students and get to know them. Getting together weekly to play has become a tradition now— every week, we gather and play together. In the winter it's card games and coloring indoors, but during warm months we are able to be active outside and play volleyball, football, frisbee, and schoolyard games. I have this club for three reasons—to keep kids active and playful, to give kids access to the sporting equipment and games that they want, and to reward my students for their hard work in class and clubs throughout the week. The result has been awesome, and Sports Club has become one of the highlights of my week. I enjoy spending time with my students and playing with them, while my students love the opportunity to learn about new sports (frisbee has been a big hit) and have a chunk of their week that is just dedicated to having fun. I think it's important for kids to be active and learn to work together, and I think playing together is a great way to foster those values." — Teaching English as a Foreign Language Volunteer Alia Thorpe.



"I first came to Lor, a tiny village in the south of Armenia, in a late November day. It was snowing, and I was seeing snowflakes for the first time in my life. As we entered Lor, I couldn't believe my luck; I was going to be living in such a pretty place, full of apple and walnut trees and surrounded by white mountains. I was brought to live with Qnqush and Karen's family and eventually realized what I had lucked out. They are one of the best liked and most respected families in our village for being generous and humble. Qnqush and I have established a very close and special relationship. We often wonder at the odds that brought us together, she has always lived in Lor, a place used to exile dissidents in the early Soviet era due to its remoteness; while I was born in a small village on the mountains of central Mexico. I have marveled at her strength in the face of the trials she has undergone. Although my family had never had a foreigner living in their house before, and I had never lived through a winter with snow and frost, and the need to be close to the burning stove, I feel so grateful for having been allowed into their home, and for having had a share of their pain and joy for more than two years." - Teaching English as a Foreign Language Volunteer Laura Arreguin.

In 2017

163

Peace Corps Volunteers
have lived and worked

in over **160** Armenian communities:



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