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*Livelihood Improvement through Fostered Employment (LIFE)  
For People with Disabilities Program*

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## **Network of NGOs Dealing with Issues of People with Disabilities**

# **LONG-TERM ADVOCACY PLAN 2016-2019**

**This document is a long-term advocacy plan of the network of NGOs dealing with issues of people with disabilities developed in February of 2016. The elaboration of the plan was carried out within the framework of the Save the Children's Livelihood Improvement through Fostered Employment for People with Disabilities (LIFE) Program funded by USAID.**

**The viewpoints expressed in the document may not reflect those of USAID, THE US Government and Save the Children.**

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## INTRODUCTION

More than one billion people in the world have some kind of disability and 200 million people experience significant difficulties in their activities. Across the world, people with disabilities manifest relatively low indicators of participation in the areas of health, education and economy, as well as higher levels of poverty. This is partly due to the fact that very often people with disabilities have no access to healthcare, education, employment, transportation and information services. Factors impeding accessibility include inadequate criteria and procedures, negative attitude, unavailability of services, non-satisfactory level of information provision and communication, gender discrimination, and unsatisfactory participation of people with disabilities in decision-making processes on issues that affect them.

Over the past twenty years, Armenia has significantly improved its economy, infrastructures and public services. Nevertheless, the majority of approximately 200, 000 disabled people officially registered in the Republic of Armenia are continuing to confront public's wrong perceptions of disabilities and improper application of laws and regulations, which people with disabilities are mostly unfamiliar with. The greater number of special training schools have no capacities and possibilities to include people with disabilities in their educational programs.

Due to lack of retraining and employment opportunities, people with disabilities have to be content with the governmental pension. They have no relevant information about their own rights and live a much-marginalized life shunned by the public and subject to discrimination in workplaces. The Government of the Republic of Armenia ascribes great importance to the problems of disability and employment. Its Decree # 996 dated July 13, 2006 came as the first incentive for employers to hire people with disabilities (PWDs).

Over the past decades, numerous organizations working on the issues of PWD have been established availing the disabled with job opportunities. These organizations focus on defending the rights of people with disabilities and securing jobs for them.

Nevertheless, they have limited capacities to assist the disabled. They need assistance in developing their institutional capacities, improving the necessary skills for conduct of assessments and retraining, as well as cooperation and coordination mechanisms.

Although there has been a positive shift in attitudes towards people with disabilities in the country, the RA Government and NGOs dealing with issues of the disabled still lack the necessary resources to meet the needs of people with disabilities. There is still a need for a holistic approach to properly classify disabilities and to provide for large-scale professional retraining opportunities and job matching services.

To overcome the obstacles confronting people with disabilities, the *Livelihood Improvement through Fostered Employment* (LIFE) program aims at promoting equal working conditions and work accessibility for people with disabilities as a basic human right.

The LIFE program (2012-2016) is implemented by Save the Children with funding support from US Agency for International Development. The program partners are the *Activa* International Foundation, *Unison*, *HDPF*, *Professional Education Reforms* and *Full Life* NGOs. The program is closely cooperating with the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues, the State Employment Agency (SEA), employment centers, NGOs dealing

with issues of people with disabilities, people with disabilities, other NGOs, local and regional authorities, service providers, municipalities, TVET institutions and employers.

The program's strategic goal is to develop an effective model for providing Armenia's people with disabilities with employment opportunities through the following ways:

1. Assessment of personal development, skills enhancement and work placement of people with disabilities;
2. Capacity development of service providers, NGOs dealing with PWD issues, employers and TVET institutions to help them meet the needs of people with disabilities;
3. Public awareness raising through mass media outlets, Internet and conferences and engagement of people with disabilities;
4. Advisory services to the RA Government to assist in developing policies and strategies on work opportunities for people with disabilities and in carrying out their implementation and oversight.

## JUSTIFICATIONS

In September of 2015, within the framework of the program, a network of NGOs dealing with PWD issues (DPO Network) was established. The purpose of the network is to enhance the organizational capacities of NGOs dealing with PWD issues to promote comprehensive reforms in the disability area, as well as to help effective participation of local, regional and national organizations dealing with issues of the disabled.

Presently the Network engages 20 organizations involved in different components of the LIFE program.

##	Organization/ Contact Person	Mission	E-mail/Address /Telephone
1	<i>Unison</i> NGO Armen Alaverdyan	Defense of the rights and lawful interests of people with disability	<a href="mailto:armrasmil@yahoo.com">armrasmil@yahoo.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:marianna_chal@yahoo.com">marianna_chal@yahoo.com</a> Address: 36 Demirchian Str., Yerevan 0002 Tel.: (010) 52-21-70
2	<i>Human Dignity and Peace Foundation</i> NGO Ruzanna Ter-Ghazaryan	Promotion of dignified and peaceful life in Armenia through community, individual, family, educational, and cultural programs	<a href="mailto:ruzanna.ter-ghazaryan@hdpf.am">ruzanna.ter-ghazaryan@hdpf.am</a> ; <a href="mailto:kristina.hovhannisyan@mail.ru">kristina.hovhannisyan@mail.ru</a> ; <a href="mailto:marine.manukyan@hdpf.am">marine.manukyan@hdpf.am</a> Address: Apt. 45, 14 H. Kochar Str., Yerevan Tel.: (010) 27 47 86, 26-17-61
3	<i>Full Life</i> NGO Suren Maghakyan	Help empowerment of people with disabilities through educational, legal, healthcare, social, psychological, and informational services	<a href="mailto:suren@fulllife.am">suren@fulllife.am</a> ; <a href="mailto:lusatu@yandex.ru">lusatu@yandex.ru</a> Address: 17/23 Gareghin Nzdeh Str., Stepanavan, Lori Marz, RA Tel.: (+374 56) 23023, (+374 93) 58 58 44, <a href="http://www.fulllife.am">www.fulllife.am</a>

4	<i>Pyunic</i> Union of Armenia's Disabled Hakob Abrahamyan, Ruzanna Sargsyan	Physical, social and psychological rehabilitation of the disabled, defense of the rights of the disabled, public awareness raising	<a href="mailto:rsarg@mail.com">rsarg@mail.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:Pyunic@arminco.com">Pyunic@arminco.com</a> Address: 16 Tsitsernakaberd Crossroad, Yerevan 0086 Tel.: 374 10 56 070 7; 093 88-10-66
5	<i>Skarp</i> Health Center NGO Ashot Mkrtchyan, Ani Harutiunyan	Addressing primary healthcare issues of the disabled and vulnerable groups of the population, development of sports for the disabled, professional rehabilitation, and solution of employment problems	<a href="mailto:info@skarp.am">info@skarp.am</a> Address: Apt. 2a, #10, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lane, Bashinjaghyan Str., Yerevan Tel./Fax: +374010 35 02 91, 055-35-02-91
6	<i>Prkutiun</i> (Salvation) Center for Disabled Children and Youth Charitable NGO Arpine Abrahamyan	Helping solution of social, educational and healthcare problems of disabled children and youth and particularly of those mentally sick, as well as of their families	<a href="mailto:prkutyun@netsys.am">prkutyun@netsys.am</a> Address: 33 Chekhov Str., Yerevan Tel.: +374 10 42-78-50, 093 000-757
7	The Siunik Marz <i>Tsiatsan</i> (Rainbow) Center of Young Leaders Susanna Martirosyan	Formation of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century young leaders, provision of continuous education, and development of managerial skills, etc.	<a href="mailto:susmartiros@gmail.com">susmartiros@gmail.com</a> Address: Kapan, Siunik Marz Tel.: 093 362483
8	<i>Lernayin Tsaghikner</i> (Mountainous Flowers) NGO Khachanush Sargsyan, Argam Dovlatyan	Promotion of the education and knowledge of the marz's youth, protection of the rights and interests of women, children and people with disabilities	<a href="mailto:dovlatyanar@gmail.com">dovlatyanar@gmail.com</a> Address: 3 Spandarian Str., Yeghegnadzor, Vayots Dzor Marz Tel.: 093 876 199
9	<i>Partnership and Teaching</i> NGO Promoting Civil Society and Education Artashes Torozyan	Advancement of education and cooperation for the sake of civil society development	<a href="mailto:artashesgum@gmail.com">artashesgum@gmail.com</a> Address: 13/14 Narekatsi Str., Goris, Siunik Marz Tel.: 094 201817
10	<i>Hope, Life, Faith, and Future</i> Youth NGO Susanna Astoyan	Promotion of formation and development of civil society, activation of the relatively passive segment of society	<a href="mailto:astoyan.susan@mail.ru">astoyan.susan@mail.ru</a> Address: 63 Miasnikyan Str., Gyumri, Shirak Marz Tel.: 094 000229
11	<i>Astghatsolk</i> (Star Shine) NGO for Protection of the Interests of Disabled Children and Youth Irina Hovhanessyan	Help improvement of the quality of life of people with disabilities	<a href="mailto:i.hovhan@gmail.com">i.hovhan@gmail.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:astghatsolq@gmail.com">astghatsolq@gmail.com</a> Address: 37 Getapnya Str., Chambarak, Gegharkunik Marz Tel.: 0265 2 36 36, 093 311955
12	<i>Center for Regional Development and Research</i> NGO Satik Badeyan	For the sake of securing welfare life and developing rule-of-law country	<a href="mailto:rdrngo@mail.ru">rdrngo@mail.ru</a> Address: 164 Nairyan Str., Sevan, Gegharkunik Marz Tel.: 094 445230
13	<i>Martuni Women Community Council</i> NGO Anahit Gevorkyan	Promotion of formation of a participatory behavior of the residents in the community development process and of their participation in decision-making processes	<a href="mailto:kananc7@gmail.com">kananc7@gmail.com</a> Address: 8 Proshyan Str., Martuni, Gegharkunik Marz Tel.: 094 211396

14	<i>Together</i> NGO Tigran Shirinyan	Defense of the interests of the people with disabilities residing in the Ararat Marz and promotion of their involvement in public and cultural life	<a href="mailto:tigran.shirinyan@gmail.com">tigran.shirinyan@gmail.com</a> Address: 36 Shahumyan Str., Ararat, Ararat Marz Tel.: 0234 4 13 93, 091 57 53 30
15	Fund for Children's Assistance Kamo Arakelyan	The mission of the organization is to provide for the social, healthcare, and educational rights of Armenia's vulnerable children, convinced that they can live a healthy, happy and meaningful life	<a href="mailto:childfund@gmail.com">childfund@gmail.com</a> Address: Kindergarten 16, Kentron District, Hrazdan, Kotaik Marz Tel.: 093 894 276
16	<i>Khoran Ard</i> Intellectual Center NGO Seiran Martirosyan, Armen Petrossyan	Promotion of society development, advancement of human rights protection in the area of intellectual property and copyright	<a href="mailto:star@gyumri.am">star@gyumri.am</a> Address: 38a/1 M. Mkrtchyan Str., Gyumri, Shirak Marz Tel.: 091 43 42 56; 094 826 876
17	Armavir Development Center Naira Arakelyan	Cooperation for the sake of socio-economic progress promoting partnerships between the marz's state, public and business sectors	<a href="mailto:info@armavirdc.org">info@armavirdc.org</a> ; <a href="mailto:armavirnaira@gmail.com">armavirnaira@gmail.com</a> Address: 68a Shahumyan Str., town of Armavir, RA Tel.: +(374) 237 23034;
18	The Siunik Marz <i>Khariskh</i> (Anchor) NGO for the Disabled Susanna Isajanyan	Help improvement of the quality of life of the Siunik Marz's disabled and solution of their problems	<a href="mailto:khariskh@mail.ru">khariskh@mail.ru</a> Address: 8/18 Vorotani Str., town of Sisian Tel.: 093/646580
19	A Round Table of Churches Karen Nazaryan, Karine Kocharyan	Promotion of poverty reduction in Armenia and NKR, development of society guided by moral and spiritual values and living in accordance with rule-of-law principles	<a href="mailto:armwcc@etchmiadzin.am">armwcc@etchmiadzin.am</a> ; <a href="mailto:karinkocharian@gmail.com">karinkocharian@gmail.com</a> Address: Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, the Headquarters of the Armenian Church, 1101 town of Etchmiadzin Tel.: (+ 374 10) 517-157/216; 093 827 312
20	Huysi Metsamor NGO Margaritta Sedrakyan	Protecting the rights of the disabled and their families, providing for education of the parents of disabled children and creating parental groups of mutual assistance	<a href="mailto:huysimetsamor@yahoo.com">huysimetsamor@yahoo.com</a> Address: Kindergarten #2, 2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Metsamor, Armavir Marz Tel.: 077 901188

Network members carried out a number of public awareness raising events and activities for the protection of the interests of people with disabilities in November and December of 2015 within the framework of *Discrimination Does Not Work* nation-wide campaign initiated within the framework of the LIFE program.

To enhance the purposefulness of the network's main activity direction, i.e. of the activities targeting the protection of interests of the employment right of the disabled, in February of 2016, the DPO Network members came together and developed a long-term DPO Network advocacy plan.

# THE LONG-TERM ADVOCACY PLAN

## 2016 -2019

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### NETWORK MISSION

The DPO Network strives to improve the standard of living of people with disabilities residing in the Republic of Armenia through defense of their interests, employment provision and capacity development.

### NETWORK STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1. To promote PWD employment through awareness raising on PWD working capacities and rights among people with disabilities and their families, employers and state structures, and through their capacity building.**

Public awareness raising activities organized in support of this goal, will aim to present PWD employment rights, its importance, especially in terms of inclusion in society to selected target groups, as well as to increase their awareness of state programs, privileges stipulated in the legislation and the possibilities for engagement in working relations.

The main capacity development directions will include training and retraining of the PWD seeking employment, development of their self-presentation skills, and assistance in enhancing their self-esteem.

The capacity development component will also target to change the attitudes of employers towards employment-seeking and working people with disabilities.

- 2. To promote the improvement of the legislation related to PWD right to work through policy oversight and initiation of legislative reforms.**

In support of this goal, the DPO Network will aim to carefully and regularly monitor the legislation and policies pertaining to PWD right to work, to prepare reports and policy papers and to present them to the stakeholders, and particularly to decision makers, to plan and carry out advocacy campaigns in defense of PWD interests targeting to create a favorable environment for employment-seeking and working people with disabilities.

- 3. Help the capacity development of the Network, both at the level of individual member organizations and at the level of the entire network.**

In support of this goal, the Network will strive to develop its internal organizational capacities through structure streamlining, elaboration of internal policies and procedures, and conduct of capacity building training courses. The network capacity building will be approached both from the perspective of developing organizational capacities of individual member organizations and from the perspective of empowering the network as one unit. For this purpose, the members will seek funds to benefit from external opportunities, as well as will mobilize the network's internal professional resources.

## NETWORK RESOURCE MAPPING

<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to develop and conduct training sessions on PWD employment rights, relevant legislation, management and leadership, and social entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Establishment of social entrepreneurship, experience in the area of document development and activity area selection</li> <li>• A large army of volunteers in the activity areas of member organizations: Kapan, Gyumri, Stepanavan, Yerevan, Chambarak, and Sevan</li> <li>• A multi-professional group, knowledgeable specialists: lawyers, special pedagogues, and social workers</li> <li>• Experience and skills to conduct policy research, development of suggestions targeting policy changes and their submission to decision makers</li> <li>• Policy oversight capacity</li> <li>• Capacity to manage and coordinate networks</li> <li>• Experience in implementation and management of multi-component programs</li> <li>• Fundraising capacity, including the capacity to develop competitive programs</li> <li>• Knowledge of the English language</li> <li>• Negotiations skills</li> </ul>
<b>Material Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meeting space adapted to the needs of people with disabilities: Yerevan /20 people/, Gyumri /20 people/, Kapan /20 people/, Stepanavan, Chambarak, Sevan, Yerevan/Shengavit -20 people, a meeting space in the Achapnyak Community/, Goris /20 people/, Metsamor, Armavir, Etchmiadzin /30-50 people/</li> <li>• A camp in Stepanavan</li> <li>• Equipment/computer, projector, equipment for organization of video conferences/</li> <li>• A vehicle adapted to PWD transportation needs</li> </ul>
<b>Ties/Accessibility to Decision Makers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ties with local self-government bodies and decision makers at the marz level in all marzes and Yerevan</li> <li>• Good relations with mass media at the local level, availability of free airing time</li> <li>• Ties and positive working relations with employment agencies</li> <li>• A library, literature and materials relevant for the area</li> <li>• Unison maintaining a coordinated and filtering database on beneficiaries</li> <li>• Web sites and pages in social networks /disability.jobs.am, disability.am/</li> <li>• A PWD Choir</li> <li>• Membership in the National Commission on PWD issues associated with the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues</li> <li>• Membership in the Commissions on PWD issues at the marz level</li> <li>• Possibility for participation in the sessions of the Medico-Social Expertise Commission</li> <li>• Membership in the independent European Network</li> <li>• Capacity to engage European and Peace Corps volunteers</li> <li>• Donor positive rating</li> <li>• Ties and positive working relations with priests and the clergy, as well as a positive experience in engaging priests in issue solutions</li> <li>• A free sport club for people with disabilities</li> </ul>



The network resource mapping has also been carried out in terms of considering the necessary and missing resources with a view to achieving the strategic goals. The results are presented below.

GOAL	MISSING RESOURCES
<b>To promote PWD employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ties with the target audience 50%</li> <li>• A data bank /beneficiaries+ stakeholders+ target audience/ 75%</li> <li>• Printed materials 75%</li> <li>• Human resources, professional potential 50%</li> <li>• Tools for working with mass media 25%</li> <li>• Adequacy of mass media human resources 75%</li> <li>• Cooperation with businesspeople 50%</li> <li>• Advocacy campaign skills 75%</li> <li>• Utilization of web sites, social networks 75%</li> <li>• Elaboration of competent plans for personal development and their consistent application based on special needs</li> <li>• Lack of information and a comprehensive data base</li> <li>• Limited airing time opportunities for engaging beneficiaries</li> <li>• Inadequate technical resources /transportation of a large number of the disabled, specific-area specialists/</li> <li>• Absence of a workshop</li> <li>• Lack of willingness on the part of stakeholders to engage in these processes</li> <li>• A non-satisfactory impact of mass media conditioned by lack of competent and full coverage.</li> </ul>
<b>To promote legislation improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of a segmented analysis of society to help understand the peculiarities</li> <li>• A clear and accurate analysis of PWD needs</li> <li>• Clearly and fully developed methods for joint actions /package, manual/</li> <li>• Lack of financial resources</li> </ul>
<b>To help the network capacity development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of specific-area specialists</li> <li>• Lack of resources to engage organizational development specialists</li> <li>• Workload of the network member organizations and programs</li> <li>• Lack of donor organizations to provide funding for the network capacity development</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITIES

### **SG 1 To promote PWD employment through awareness raising of PWD working capacities and rights among people with disabilities and their families, employers and state structures, and through their capacity building.**

- 1.1 *Mapping of job seekers* by the network member organizations (in activity geographical areas, creation of databases on employers and people with disabilities) and *referral* of the identified job seekers *to employment centers*.
- 1.2 Creating and publicizing *success stories* on employed PWDs and employers who hired them.
- 1.3 Organizing awareness raising meetings with the stakeholders: employers, the disabled and members of their families.
- 1.4 Planning and implementing awareness raising advocacy campaigns: dissemination of printed and visual materials, flash mobs and forum theaters, utilization of the opportunities provided by social networks and mass media engagement, subscription to job announcement web sites, talks by successful PWDs on TEDx platforms. Preparing a special version of awareness raising materials for the visually impaired and people with hearing problems.
- 1.5 Organizing job fairs in cooperation with territorial employment centers (development of a timetable of joint activities with SEA, identification and fixation of the responsibilities and expectations of the sides, information exchange on organization of technical assistance activities).
- 1.6 Spreading the idea of a social enterprise among stakeholders, using all possible online and traditional platforms /meetings, discussions, information provision/.
- 1.7 Conducting surveys to gauge the dynamics of employment among the disabled.
- 1.8 Organizing professional orientation training and retraining sessions; organizing self-presentation classes, and master classes by PWDs.
- 1.9 Referral to and/or organization of vocational training, establishment of pre-professional workshops.
- 1.10 Updating the databank to reflect the actual situation after capacity development activities.
- 1.11 Studying and localizing the international experience.
- 1.12 Creating an educational information base, including literature, training materials, etc.

### **SG 2 To promote the improvement of the legislation related to PWD right to work through policy oversight and initiation of legislative reforms.**

- 2.1 Carrying out research among people with disabilities to identify the legislative gaps, conducting analyses of documents (international and national legislation, agreements, etc.), developing suggestions and submitting to decision makers and other stakeholders.
- 2.2 Monitoring of the quota system results and publishing the data.
- 2.3 Publicizing the research results (round tables, meetings, discussions, utilization of social networks) to mobilize the adherents and supporters.
- 2.4 Carrying out participatory monitoring of the legislation/policies pertaining to the network's activity area by engaging NGOs, beneficiaries, and expert groups.
- 2.5 Planning and carrying out advocacy campaigns targeting to create a favorable legislative environment for job seeking PWDs.
- 2.6 Establishing permanent ties with stakeholders (TV and radio programs, print media articles, maintaining and refreshing ties with the National Assembly deputies, tea party with the National Assembly Standing Committee on Social Issues, the National Assembly calendar).

- 2.7 Human rights protection activities, defense of the rights in specific cases, including in court.
- 2.8 Cooperating with organizations introducing changes to the Law on Social Advertising and assisting them in the process of defense of interests.

**SG 3 Help the capacity development of the Network, both at the level of individual member organizations and at the level of the entire network.**

- 1.1 Creating a database with relevant contacts (volunteers, specialists, consultants).
- 1.2 Conducting retraining sessions by utilizing the network’s internal and external resources.
- 1.3 Carrying out programs targeting the network’s institutional capacity development to enhance the possibilities of influencing decision makers.
- 1.4 Developing the network’s capacity for elaboration of competitive programs, fund raising, and crowd funding.
- 1.5 Developing the network’s internal regulations (a timetable of meetings, roles and responsibilities).
- 1.6 Experience sharing and mutual visits between the network’s member organizations.
- 1.7 Planning and carrying out fundraising for the network’s programs.
- 1.8 Carrying out an evaluation of the network capacities, working out a plan to address the gaps, and developing the network’s self-assessment skills.
- 1.9 Studying the international experience of the networks with a similar mission and organizing study tours for experience sharing purposes.
- 1.10 Developing and introducing internal information provision and sharing mechanisms.

**BUDGET**

In line with the decision of the network’s member organizations, the budget for the implementation of the network’s first-year activities is as follows.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Requested Donor Amount</b>	<b>Network Contribution</b>
Database development	\$1000	Human resources for conduct of surveys and data entry, technical means of the network’s member organizations
Development of the network’s internal regulations and structure	\$ 800 – 1000	This activity requires the availability of a capacity development specialist the network has no such resources at present.
Three awareness raising events	a. December 3 - \$20000 b. Two smaller-scale events - \$2000 c. Printed materials for the network – \$800	Volunteers for coordination of the events; technical means for organization of the events, including computers, duplicating machines; a scriptwriter specialist for the events; an office space for the working group
Regular meetings of the network	\$1000	An office space for the working group