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Implementer: Armenian Lawyers Association

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Implementer: "Law for the Rule of Law" Non-Governmental Organisation

“LAW FOR THE RULE OF LAW” NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION

“ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION WITHOUT CORRUPTION RISKS AND DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH” SUMMARY PROJECT REORT

SYUNIK MARZ



“Law for the Rule of Law” Non-Governmental Organisation implemented the two-month “Accessible Education without Corruption Risks and Differentiated Approach” project with funds of small sub-grants provided in the framework of “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” project implemented by the “Armenian Lawyers’ Association” NGO and the partner “Freedom of Information Center” NGO. Project budget is 547 740 AMD. Project duration: October 1 – November 30, 2016.

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Kapan
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“Accessible Education without Corruption Risks and Differentiated Approach” Project
(Summary project report)

“Law for the Rule of Law” Non-Governmental Organisation (*hereafter LRL NGO*) implemented the two-month “Accessible Education without Corruption Risks and Differentiated Approach” project with funds of small sub-grants provided in the framework of “Multi-Faceted Anti-Corruption Promotion” project implemented by the “Armenian Lawyers’ Association” NGO and the partner “Freedom of Information Center” NGO with funds provided by the European Union and co-funded by OSCE Yerevan Office

I. Project Objective

The project was aimed to reduce corruption risks in the sphere of education, promote, and improve access to education and to exclude differentiated approach in the selection process to children, parents and education personnel. In particular, Kapan within the jurisdiction of the municipality and the community preschool education institutions (*hereinafter PEI*) and vocational education institutions (*educational, training, hereinafter referred to as VEI*) institutions, Kapan Children's Center (*hereinafter referred to as CC*) the role and functions in the field of education, as well as in identification, raising and solving the existing problems in the sphere. It was planned that that the monitoring, awareness, recommendations and intervention of the relevant authorities in the scope of the project would have a preventive effect.

II. Direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project

The direct beneficiaries are the target organizations and population of the region, including the children (*pupils, students, athletes and others*) attending pre-school educational establishments in Kapan (*No. 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13 PEI plants, total 12 including 8 kindergarten branch “Kavart”*), educational (*educational-training*) establishments (*“Kapan Youth Creative Center”, “Kapan youth sports named after David Hambardzumyan”, “Kapan No.1 music school named after Aram Khachaturian”, “Kapan No. 2 music school”, “Kapan No. 3 music school”, “Kapan Children's art school”, “Kapan Children's Art School”* community non-profit organizations (CNCO), *“the Municipality Cultural Center”, “Kapan athletics youth sports”, “Kapan gymnastics school”* community budgetary institutions (CBI), *a total of 10*) and “Kapan Children's Center” CNCO, or that have for some reasons stayed out of such education (*accepting, attendance, receiving services*), their families, employees of these institutions (*including directors, teachers, tutors, coaches and others*), as well as employees of relevant departments (*hereinafter of local governments, mainly in education, culture and sport department*) of municipality of Kapan.

The indirect beneficiaries are the users of our and partner organizations' Facebook platform (*profiles, pages, groups, websites*) which constitute our audience (*group members, followers, friends, and others*), the media (*"Khustup TV" and "Sosi" TV, "Syunik online" and other news sites, "Syunik Region" and other newspapers*) and others.

Note. Mistakenly, "Kapan Children's Center" was not mentioned in the list of target companies initially, in the Project application, and "Kavart" branch of # 8 PEI" of Kapan was not regarded as a targeted individual organizations, but surveys, observations and studies were also (*additionally*) conducted in these organizations, taking into account the principle and necessity of viewing these organizations as a separate target organizations for ensuring program integrity (*otherwise, it would be a differentiated approach*). Accordingly, the prepared questionnaires included 4 (four) instead of 3 (three) questions. However, no letter was sent to the CC as it would not be possible to maintain the "maximum" period of one month for receiving written information within the scope of the project terms.

III. Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative methods for needs assessment (*studies-research, surveys, analysis, including, SPSS program*), deduction (*from private to public the findings came out, generalization*) were selected.

IV. Proposed Actions

The following actions were planned:

1. A 3 (*three*) members group of experienced interviewers of monitoring was formed; the survey analyst/trainer and the project manager/trainer organized a three-day additional training course to carry out more effective surveys.
2. 1000 copies of the Information leaflet for distribution to the population (*including those who participated in the survey*), during the project were prepared.
3. 24 (*twenty-four*) letters and 4 (four) questionnaire with different questions (*total, 244 questionnaires*), for collecting information and conducting surveys in the target organizations were compiled with the support of the experts. The purpose was to distribute among the PEIs (*including those operation in Kapan district*), educational institutions (*including children's centre in case of questionnaire*), municipality and population.
4. Organize meeting discussions in public debates format and prepare a package of recommendations to submit to the relevant bodies, and to ensure the media coverage of the project implementation process.
5. Compile a summary report, a separate report (*30 copies*).

V. Expected Results

In addition to the education sector (*a part*), the monitoring included also included the assessment of the impact from the aspect of local elections, on recruitment and/or changes of staff. The program applied to the project team (6 people), 24 target education (*pre-school, after-school educational-training*) facilities and a children's centre, the municipality (*244 respondents*)

according to questionnaires, and the citizens that received 1000 Information Leaflets), and in general to the major part of the population of Kapan and adjacent settlements, as well as to the Internet users

The target issues of education sector were summarized and information leaflets were compiled. A package including the report and recommendations to submit to the relevant bodies was compiled and the media coverage of the project implementation process in local mass media was ensured.

VI. Implemented activities

The following project activities were implemented in the period of October-November 2016 according to the schedule of the project:

Week	Activity
1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Agreements for the provision of paid services were signed with the project team. ❖ Preliminary agreements were reached with the suppliers of office supplies and grocery, companies providing local and long distance taxi services. Sellers of toners for printers and cartridges, individual entrepreneurs having publishing/printing possibility and equipment for publication of leaflets handouts, and reports ❖ Information Leaflet to ensure dissemination of information about the project and its coverage was designed and prepared. Relevant information about the project was published in the internet. Preliminary awareness activities were conducted. ❖ Letters with reference to the legal acts that regulate the sector were prepared and sent to the local governments, PEIs and VEIs for the purpose of collecting information, (<i>due to the lack of time no letter was sent to the CC as the latter was considered as a target for organization on the recommendation of the staff conducting the surveys only in mid-October</i>). The letters with the attached documents were sent to the addressees via post on 13.10.2016. ❖ The analyst of the survey prepared 4 (<i>four</i>) different questionnaires (<i>instead of the 3 questionnaires as initially provided in the project</i>). The questionnaires were designed according to the types of the target organizations (<i>local governments, PEI, VEI and CC</i>) and “groups” of respondents. The questionnaires were designed so that 7 (seven) questionnaires should be completed with the representatives of local government; 3 questionnaires (total 72) with the representatives of <i>PEI, VEI and CC</i>; 4 (<i>four</i>) questionnaires with the parents of the children that attend <i>PEI, VEI and use the services of CC (also with the children of the age of 16, in the presence of a coach or parent of the child) total 96 (ninety-six) questionnaires; and 69 (sixty-nine) questionnaires with general public. In total 224 (two hundred and forty-four) questionnaires.</i> ❖ In the period of 14 – 16 October three-day training for the interviewers of the project with participation of the Project manager, analyst and representatives of the partner organizations was organized in Kapan Community Youth Center. The training was to teach the participants the skills for organization of trainings in the target organizations, familiarizing them with the legal acts regulating the training process and activities in the mentioned organizations; to correctly represent the

	<p>questions of the questionnaires to the respondents to facilitate the process of filling in the questionnaires so that the respondents view it from the user-friendly aspect and understand the importance to fill the questionnaires correctly. The discussion of the issues rose at the training and recommendations resulted in necessity to review the questions in the questionnaires and to compile a new questionnaire. At the same time the “role-play” game between the interviewer and respondent provided opportunity to have a clear picture of the planned monitoring. After the training the interviewers were provided with badges (<i>to ensure the representation of the project</i>), and the packages of print materials, which include the legal acts regulating the sphere to enable the interviewers to use the necessary information when needed.</p>
3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The project interviewers conducted surveys and observations among target organizations and population and at the same distributed leaflets. The survey was not carried out only in two target organizations: the Municipality Cultural Center" and "Kapan Gymnastics School" CBIs, where the directors did not allow the interviewers to conduct monitoring in the buildings. At the same time the staff of the mentioned organizations did not agree to participate in anonymous survey with the reasoning that the directors had forbidden.
4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parallel with the survey, the analyst conducted the analyses of the filled in questionnaires and the information collected by the interviewers through questions and observation beyond the questions included in the questionnaire (<i>SPSS program</i>) ❖ An interim report was presented to the ALA.
6-րդ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ On 11 November a meeting discussion in Public Debate format was organized to present the initial results of the project. Representatives of <i>PEI, VEI and CC of Kapan Municipality</i> or acting under the auspice of the municipality (one representative from each entity). However not all the invitees were present. “Khustup” TV and “Sosi” TV were invited and ensure the coverage of the event.
7-րդ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The summarizing and analysis of the obtained information (<i>all our letters sent to target organizations were not answered, so this is considered as a "product" as well</i>).
8-րդ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Preparation of the Report (30 colored copies) and the Recommendation’s Package. ❖ Preparation and presentation of the Report.

The results of the project are presented in the summary report version (Appendix 1) and “Accessible Education without Corruption Risks and Differentiated Approach” Project report (Appendix 2).

VII. Conclusion-summary

The summary of the information obtained as a result of and through the surveys, monitoring, the recommendations provided for consideration and study of the internet shows the following:

- The Republic of Armenia Anti-Corruption Strategy and its Implementation Action Plan for 2015-2018 lacks clear provision on corruption problems in pre-school and after-school education sector and their solutions.

- Local governmental elections have not become a move or motive for the changes in the personnel (“*personnel purge*”) in Kapan.
- Activities carried out in the *PEI, VEI and CC* of Kapan Municipality or acting under the auspice of the municipality in the education sector (*and the activities in general*) still remain without the coverage for the wide layers of the population and thus they are not transparent and/or accountable, because the website of Kapan municipality does not ensure such possibility. At the same time the mentioned target organizations lack opportunity to have such websites. Information about *PEIs or VEIs (information about CCs is missing)* is missing in the websites of Syunik regional administration or the corresponding Ministry and thus such information may be obtained from the website of Kapan municipality. This information is outdated and not updated or is filled in incorrectly (depending on the information provided).
- The public is informed about the bad, extreme and unbearable conditions and other problems that exist in the buildings of the target organizations (*including halls, rooms for groups bathrooms, etc.*) through the media and only in cases where it is impossible to further hide the fact or the repair works have already started (*evidence for it is Kapan children’s art school*),
- The distrust between the target organizations and civil society organizations and their representatives still continue to exist. At the same time the main type of cooperation between them is mainly negotiations on theoretical level, or at the best organization of joint holiday events (*entertainment*) events and other similar events (*evidence for it are the facts of the ban by some directors of target organizations or (the officials of the target sectors of the municipality) where they do not allow their employees or subordinates to speak and thus they limit their right to free expression and freedom of speech, and do not allow them to participate in the surveys. The fact of unawareness of the mentioned employees about their rights and/or failure to realize their rights is also evidence*).
- “Money collection” and other such occurrences that include corruption risks like “kickback” and “expression of gratitude” are still rooted in the mentality of the people. According to the perception of population the employees of *PEIs, VEIs and CCs* perform much more and in addition to the salary they deserve a “more materialized attitude”. The survey revealed that the major part of the public had no idea about the manifestations of corruption risks or corruption in the education sector and thus they are still far from understanding that instead of “closing eyes” they should fight against corruption and prevent it. (*many people are aware about the problems, but few raise the issue and actually represent it and are ready to fight against it, a phenomenon that undoubtedly encouraged and / or recognized by the general public*)
- A significant part of the public is not aware that they are entitled to participate in the processes of deciding the rates for tuition in *PEIs and VEIs*, as well as to present recommendations and to be heard.
- The process of filling in the job vacancies in the target organizations remains as “top secret” and does not provide accessibility of the job vacancies and participation in the recruitment process or possibility of a job for everyone on competitive base (*even the municipality fails to meet this requirement*).
- It is necessary to solve the problems of *PEIs, VEIs and CCs* the that work under subordination according to priority or create possibility which will enable to apply the investments of the sponsors (*businessmen*) according to the same principle (*expert for cases when the benefactor wishes to support a definite institution, at the same time learning that there are other problems*).

- Request for information and provision thereof are treated as a phenomena, which necessarily would lead to bad consequences. Whereas in our case the request of information was obviously aimed at identification of the problems and providing recommendations for their salutation, especially considering the fact that provision of information which we requested was not prohibited by law, and should have been prepared. Thus, it would have been possible to sum up and provide it within a few days, considering the fact that the activities of the institutions for which the information was requested were routine and conducted on everyday basis (*we believe that the information simply be updated regularly*).

Special Opinion on our Project Team and the Project - It is obvious that a two months period is really short for implementation (organization) of such value of work/activities of such direction and similar objectives. At the same time implementation of such projects requires additional human resources.

At the same time, it is not possible to identify all systemic issues in a short time, especially those issues about which many people do not want to talk. The public responds to the anti-corruption events and projects with difficulty. So, based on the aforesaid, we consider the work of the project team successful.

VIII. Recommendations

The project team **recommends and requests** form the Mayor of Kapan City, the directors of *PEIs*, *VEIs* and *CCs* that operate at the community, as well as Syunik Governor, the RA Minister of Education and Science, the RA Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs of the RA to implement (*realize*) the following recommendations:

Recommendation and a request to the head of Kapan community, the directors of PEIs, VEIs and CCs:

- It is necessary to place (mount) signboard with the names of *PEIs*, *VEIs* and *CCs* near the locations of these entities and at the entrance doors (*the yards*) of the buildings where the entities are located (*without removing the existing signboards*).
- It is necessary to ensure accessibility of information and to improve the website of Kapan municipality (*expand options*), or make necessary changes aimed to enable obtaining information about the existence of *PEIs*, *VEIs* and *CCs* that belong to the local community, their organizational-legal form (status), activity, location, available groups and the number of children involved, in case of *PEIs* about the maximum number of the children that may be accepted, as well as the number of children who had already been listed for attendance (*it is advisable that the PEIs would exchange the information and/or data of the already registered (listed) children to each other or to make it one centralized list to avoid replication with its after-effects*). If necessary, contact the listed organizations, as well as learn about the problems that exist in each of the organization, and provide assistance if needed (*include the number of bank account*) and see the result of the provided assistance (*the work done*). Of course it is desirable that the *PEIs*, *VEIs* and *CCs* have their own websites where possible, so that the necessary information is published there. But at meantime, it is at least desirable to review their Facebook profiles (*pages, groups*), which ensure the official “coverage” of these organizations.

- The information in the website of Kapan Municipality related to applying to the community musical school or kindergarten needs correction (*to indicate Kapan instead of Charentsavan for example*); the rates of the fees need to be specified; the provided services need to be listed and characterized.
- The information on vacancies in community administration, *PEIs, VEIs and CCs*, as well as the procedures of filling in the vacancies, recruitment and training of the staff should be accessible, transparent and accountable.
- The staff lists of educational establishments should be harmonized with the model staff lists. At the same time the staff (the employees and mostly the responsible of the sector) should comply with the training, substitution or otherwise provided requirements to exclude the additional extra-curricular activities as organization of dance, fine arts and other training, at the expense of the time when the children are in the kindergarten (*despite the fact that the parents did not touch or did not want to provide this information to our interviewers during the survey, however, even the information that we had in the past was sufficient to study the issue and if necessary intervention measures can be taken and clarifications provided*).
- It is essential to have security employees or staff that prohibit the entry of unauthorized persons into the territory (*buildings*) of *PEIs, VEIs and CCs* (*for example in case of PEIs, the position of the Guard is provided by the modal staff list approved by the decree no 29 of 26.01.2007 of the RA Minister of Education and Science, however in some PEIs the guard appeared in the corridors of some PEIs only after they received our letters*). There is no need to mention that there are no instructors of physical training (*or a choreographer*) in *PEIs* in Kapan, despite the fact that physical education is the key to a healthy lifestyle and at the same time education begins from kindergarten. We may not note about the absence of the positions of accountant, psychologist or social worker, because the Kapan municipality in these terms has offered more effective solutions by creating of an accounting office and the children's center (*ensuring centralization/*consolidation*).
- Kapan Municipality (*PEIs, VEIs and CCs*), Syunik Regional Administration, The RA Ministry of Education and Science, as well as the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should regularly provide updated information for making changes and adjustments as well as to have complete information in the websites of the mentioned organizations.
- It is necessary to organize awareness events (*seminars, discussions, workshops, etc.*) for the employees of the Municipality, *PEIs, VEIs and CCs* on corruption occurrences, the role of the state and local government bodies and the organizations under their subordination, the civil society, freedom of information, as well as the rights and responsibilities of the employees, taking into account the actual efforts that we made aimed at receiving information and the unnecessary and unreasonable reactions.
- It is necessary to strengthen the control and make more sensitive the reaction to cases of money collection, as well as to conduct activities in this direction among the parents and employees (*as well as among the children of VEIs based on the children's age*).
- It is necessary to inform the public (for the parents of children attending institutions, workers, children, based on their age, as well as the general public) and create favorable conditions for the public to participate in the process of deciding the rates of the fees in *PEIs, VEIs* and in general in educational processes (*parents*).

Recommendation and a request to the Governor of Syunik Marz, the RA Minister of Education, and the RA Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs

- Recommend to relevant authorities to include clear provisions related to the corruption risks in pre-school and out-of-school/extracurricular education and recommended solutions in the Action Plan of the next Anti-Corruption Strategy.
- Instruct Kapan Community Administration and the directors of *PEIs, VEIs and CCs* that operate under its subordination to submit to Syunik regional administration, the RA Minister of Education and Science and the RA Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the necessary information about the results achieved as a result of implementation of the recommendations to update and correct the latter on the relevant websites.
- Instruct Kapan Community Administration and the organizations operating under its subordination to ensure freedom of information, accessibility and transparency of the activities and other fundamental principles. Also ensure that organizations that have no license are licensed in due terms (*taking into account the report of "Asbarez" Journalists' Club, which is referred to in this report, which states that Kapan kindergartens do not have a license*).
- Instruct to ensure feedback related to this report, and that the issues raised and the events aimed at their solution are visible for broad layers of the society.

Recommendation and a request to the persons (natural or legal) who have ability and are willing to support in solving the existing problems

In case of providing support to the *PEIs, VEIs and CCs* that operate under the subordination of the communities the Project Team recommends to use the available resources and to address them to the relevant organizations taking into account the urgency and actuality of the problems. Thus, in this case, the Project Team does not speak about repair or renovation of a group room, hall, or bathroom of this or that *PEIs, VEIs and CCs*, here the Team suggest to repair or renovate the group room, hall, or bathroom that needs a major renovation and to leave the group rooms, halls, or bathrooms that may be renovated later in the same condition to the children for some time.

We are hopeful that the results of our project will be helpful and may provide opportunity to be more oriented in the choice and enable more effective and targeted in supporting of Kapan *PEIs, VEIs and CCs*.