



WE ARE OUR MOUNTAINS

Development
Agency



REPORT

January – June
2024

CONTINUING RUBEN'S LEGACY

The **"We Are Our Mountains" Territorial Development Agency** was founded at the end of 2022 by Ruben Vardanyan and colleagues to implement support and development projects for Artsakh and Syunik. During 2022-2023, in Artsakh, under the conditions of blockade by Azerbaijan, the Organization implemented more than USD 2 million worth of projects (programs). The report on the projects is available at this [link](#).

Despite the fact that the founder of the organization, Ruben Vardanyan, was illegally captured by Azerbaijan on September 27, 2023 and is still imprisoned in Azerbaijan, he has remained loyal to his humanitarian principles and has urged to continue the charitable activities of the organization to support the forcibly displaced people from Artsakh.

From October 2023, "We Are Our Mountains" resumed its activities in Armenia, with the aim of helping the people of Artsakh to recover from the ordeal and overcome the problems caused by the displacement.

In March 2024, the organization was renamed **"We Are Our Mountains" Development Agency**.



RECOVER, STABILIZE, DEVELOP

Continuing the support programs in 2024, "We are Our Mountains" focused its efforts on restoring the mental health of Artsakh families, stabilizing the socio-economic situation and realizing their potential in Armenia.

The main targets of the support programs are children, active young people, and artisans of Artsakh.

In January-June 2024, the agency, together with its partners, implemented projects and programs worth more than 200,000 USD (see table), benefiting about **8,000 people**.



SUPPORT FOR ARTSAKH CRAFTSMEN

Description

Work tools and equipment were provided to artisans forcibly displaced from Artsakh to resume their activities in Armenia (up to USD 1,300 each). Professional courses have been organized for those who want to acquire a new profession or improve their profession.

Budget

About \$ 88.8 K

Time period

January-April 2024

Geography

Yerevan and RA marzes

Beneficiaries

437 displaced Artsakh citizens, including:

Direct

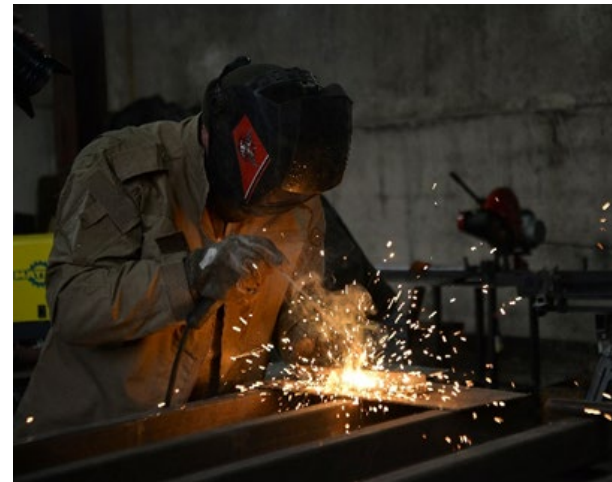
87 craftsmen (tailors, jewelers, shoemakers, welders, potters, woodworkers, blacksmiths, stonemasons, confectioners, furniture makers, repairmen, hairdressers, etc.)

Indirect

Family members - about **350 people**

Impact

87 craftsmen received tools and equipment, including **28 beneficiaries** also participated in a training course (hairdressing, manicure, confectionery). **80 out of 87 beneficiaries** have already restarted their activities in Yerevan and RA regions.



“WINGS”: REHABILITATION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS DISPLACED FROM ARTSAKH

Description

The program includes complex measures for the rehabilitation of forcibly displaced children from Artsakh:

- Psychological rehabilitation through art therapy,
- Physical rehabilitation through sports training (swimming, football, volleyball, etc.),
- Developing intellectual resources through a non-formal education course.

2023 based on the experience of the pilot phase, two new components were added to the program:

- psychological healing of families through individual and group therapy
- social integration and familiarization with the new settlement through cognitive excursions, community events and hikes.

Budget

About \$ 32.6 K

Time period

March-May 2024

Geography

Dilijan

Beneficiaries

About **485 displaced** Artsakh citizens, including:

Direct

76 children from Artsakh aged 4-18 and **41 parents**

Indirect

Family members - about **360 people**

Impact

The impact is noticeable in most children overcoming existing problems (insomnia, anxiety, fear, mistrust, hopelessness, emotional instability) and a positive shift in psychological well-being towards flexibility, stability and hope for the future. Specialists will continue to work individually with **12 participants**. **70% of parents** who completed the therapy course stabilized their psychological condition, the rest expressed their desire to continue working with specialists in the next phase.



"LEADERS-2-LEADERS" CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Description

The program was organized for Artsakh graduates of "Matena" International School of Leadership and Professional Development in order to increase their competitiveness in the labor market, develop entrepreneurial initiatives and create a reliable network of like-minded leaders. The program consists of 8 modules. In the first half of 2024 "Building the future and setting goals" and "Employment placement and employment promotion" modules were organized.

Budget

About \$ 22.9K, which was fully supported by the trainers' pro bono services.

Time period

March-May 2024

Geography

Yerevan

Beneficiaries

135 displaced Artsakh citizens, including:

Direct

30 young leaders

Indirect

Family members - **105 people**

Impact

Participants gained new knowledge and skills, which, according to their own testimony, helps them integrate and find their place in a new environment. **About 50%** of the beneficiaries were able to find a job, of which **about 10%** found a job in their profession, regardless of the fact that providing the beneficiary with a job is not the main goal of the program.



FRENCH LANGUAGE PROGRAM FOR ARTSAKH STUDENTS

Description

In cooperation with the secondary school named after Misak Manushyan in Yerevan, 60 hours of additional French lessons were organized in the months of March-June 2024 for the 4th-9th grades of Artsakh children who took refuge in Yerevan after the deportation and entered the school with advanced French education. . The goal of the program was to help children forcibly displaced from Artsakh to recover the lessons missed due to the blockade and displacement, to learn new educational material and to stay behind in the school curriculum.



Budget

About \$ 1.4 K

Time period

April-June 2024

Geography

Yerevan

Beneficiaries

108 citizens of Artsakh, including

Direct

24 schoolchildren from Artsakh

Indirect

Family members - **84 people**

Impact

90% of the participants who did not learn French in Artsakh acquired initial language skills, **10%** recovered the program gap.

“TREE OF LIFE”: BENEVOLENT INITIATIVE CULTIVATING AN ORCHARD IN TATEV

Description

"We are Our Mountains" development agency, in cooperation with partner organizations, established a new orchard in the area adjacent to the Tatev Monastery. 1000 trees were planted: apple, pear, cherry and plum. More than 268 individual donors from 23 countries and more than a dozen organizations participated in the establishment of the orchard, uniting the desire of all of us to do good and expressing their support to the Armenian prisoners held illegally in Baku prison. On May 25, at the initiative of the Agency, a pilgrimage to the monastery complex of Tatev took place. More than a thousand pilgrims participated in a united prayer for the freedom of the prisoners. On behalf of Ruben and his friends, the symbolic "Tree of Life" was planted, with a plane tree (platanus) symbolizing the endurance, mercy and unity of the Armenian people. Thanks to the supporters of the project, a drip irrigation system was created.



Budget

About \$64.8K

Time period

April- May 2024

Geography

Syunik, Tatev community

Beneficiaries

About **7 250 people**, including:

Direct

1 062 people

Indirect

More than 6 000 people

Impact

The created orchard will have a lasting impact on the socio-economic development of Tatev community.

“TREE OF LIFE”: BENEVOLENT INITIATIVE CULTIVATING AN ORCHARD IN TATEV

Impact

A part of the funds generated as a result of the implementation of the project was directed to meet the needs of the Tatev monastery. Most of the collected funds were directed to the development of Tatev's youth.



12 Tatev boys and girls participated in the UWC Dilijan international summer camp in Dilijan.

DIRECT SOCIAL SUPPORT AND OTHER INITIATIVES

Description

The agency provided direct financial support to people in difficult life situations: military disabled in need of prosthetics, socially disadvantaged families.

Budget

More than \$5.4K

Time period

April-June 2024

Geography

Yerevan, Aragatsotn Marz, Aghdzk village

Beneficiaries

About **20 Artsakh residents**, including:

Direct

12 people

Indirect

8 people

Impact

A large displaced family with **9 children** was provided with beehives for beekeeping.



DIRECT SOCIAL SUPPORT AND OTHER INITIATIVES

On April 23 and 24, in support of Ruben Vardanyan, who declared a hunger strike in Baku prison, "We are our mountains" joined the organization of a march to the Tsitsernakaberd memorial complex demanding the release of all prisoners illegally held in Azerbaijan, reminding the whole world that the genocide continues as well today.



At the invitation of France's "Satar Artsakh" union, Narine Aghabalyan and Sona Hovhannisyan, representatives of the "We are Our Mountains" Agency, participated in the seminar entitled **"Unification for Armenia and in Support of the Displaced People of Nagorno Karabakh"** held in the Senate of the Republic of France on May 14, to which they were invited by representatives of the French structures supporting displaced Artsakh citizens, high-ranking diplomatic officials.

PROJECTS	Cost of implemented projects (USD)	Approximate number of beneficiaries	Including direct beneficiaries
Support projects for the forcibly displaced people from Artsakh, including:			
▪ HELP FOR ARTSAKH CRAFTSMEN	\$ 88 752	437	87
▪ “WINGS”: REHABILITATION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS DISPLACED FROM ARTSAKH	\$ 32 578	485	117
▪ "LEADERS-2-LEADERS" CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	\$ 22 855	135	30
▪ “TREE OF LIFE”: BENEVOLENT INITIATIVE CULTIVATING AN ORCHARD IN TATEV	\$ 64 766	7 250	1 062
▪ FRENCH LANGUAGE PROGRAM FOR ARTSAKH STUDENTS	\$ 1 424	108	24
DIRECT SOCIAL SUPPORT AND OTHER INITIATIVES	\$ 5 405	20	12
TOTAL	\$ 215 780	8 435	1 332

"**We are Our Mountains**" development agency expresses its deep gratitude to all **supporters**, thanks to whose donations and efforts, the organization's programs have been implemented and continue to be implemented.



+374 60 700 800



info@ourmountains.am



www.ourmountains.am



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The background of the slide is a photograph of a vast, arid landscape with rolling hills and mountains. In the foreground, a calm body of water reflects the sky and the surrounding terrain. A large, solid orange rectangular box is superimposed over the middle of the image, containing the text 'THANK YOU' in white.

THANK YOU