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## ARMENIA INSERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

EDUCATION | INDEPENDENT MEDIA | CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT



### KEY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

- Initiated instructional and curriculum reform in primary and secondary schools by training local specialists and teachers
- Addressed the training cycle of education professionals by improving pre-service teachers' student teaching practices

### PROJECT RESULTS

- Over 10,000 in-service teachers from over 700 primary and secondary schools trained by a 65 member Teacher Trainers Corps
- Over 100 clinical faculty from primary and secondary schools trained for mentoring pre-service teachers during their student teaching
- Published 12 handbooks on primary and secondary school curriculum design and teacher training methodologies



### IREX IN ARMENIA AND PROJECT HISTORY

Established in Armenia in 1992, IREX has been implementing basic education programs since 1998. The Elementary and Middle School Teacher Training and Curriculum Development Programs were programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State and implemented by IREX. The programs were based on comprehensive, child-centered education methodologies and served children, teachers, and parents in elementary and middle schools. These programs were complimented by educational leadership training programs for school administrators, which helped support the advancement of a child-centered school environment. Over 10,000 in-service and pre-service teachers and school administrators received rigorous training in modern teaching methodologies, curriculum design, and educational leadership.

### ARMENIA IN PROFILE

Armenia gained its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. With a population of 3 million, it is a mountainous country with 29,800 sq km territory. Armenia shares borders with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran and Turkey. Currently the labor force is engaged in agriculture--45%, industry--25% and services--30%.

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- **Curriculum Development:** Local pools of education specialists were selected to examine US methods of integrated curriculum development for primary and secondary schools. Together with US education experts, Armenia participants developed integrated curriculum units for social sciences and language arts that were pilot-tested in select schools. Program alumni continue to train their peers in curriculum design, which has resulted in the creation of integrated curriculum in other areas such as math and science.
- **Teacher Training:** Local pools of trainers were created to train in-service teachers in child-centered interactive teaching methodology. Teachers conducted student lessons that promoted multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, and creative thinking. By building the capacity of individual teachers, the programs' bottom-up approach to educational reform resulted in a profound impact on the educational system in Armenia.
- **Improving Student-Teaching Practices in Primary and Secondary Schools:** Select primary and secondary schools served as clinical schools where pre-service teachers from pedagogical institutions could observe and use child-centered teaching methodology. Pre-service teachers worked collaboratively with trained in-service teachers, actively aiding clinical faculty, co-teaching, developing lesson plans, and creating teacher portfolios before finally teaching on their own.

## IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS



IREX is an international nonprofit organization providing leadership and innovative programs to improve the quality of education, strengthen independent media, and foster pluralistic civil society development.

Founded in 1968, IREX has an annual portfolio of \$48 million and a staff of over 500 professionals worldwide. IREX and its partner IREX Europe deliver cross-cutting programs and consulting expertise in more than 50 countries.



The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State (ECA) fosters mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through international educational and training programs. ECA does so by promoting personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad, as well as by presenting US history, society, art and culture in all of its diversity to overseas audiences.

## IREX HIGHLIGHTS



### **Summer Training-of-Trainers Program has an Exponential Effect on Teacher Training in Armenia**

In 2003, IREX and its basic education programs' teacher trainer corps created a training-of-trainers program. The program was offered as a 10-day summer school to 64 teacher trainers and pedagogical institutions in Armenia. The program covered learning theories and circles; interactive teaching and learning methods; integrated curriculum and backward design; assessment; and educational leadership. After completing the summer program, the teacher trainers created a 70-hour training program that has since been conducted in seven teacher training facilities and over 500 schools. The teacher-training program participants receive joint certificates from IREX and the Ministry of Education and Science's National Institute of Education. In the 2004-2005 academic year alone, 2,000 teachers and school administrators participated in the training program.

### **IREX Teacher Trainer is Named Armenia's Teacher of the Year**

Every year the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia designates a Teacher of the Year. In 2004, the ministry chose Anush Grigoryan, vice principal of Yeghegnadzor Middle School No. 4, and a member of the teacher trainer corps. Grigoryan is one of over 3,000 Armenian middle school teachers from over 200 schools that have participated in the teacher training programs.

For the competition, Grigoryan presented her "teacher's portfolio," a program requirement that evaluated effectiveness, knowledge, and skills in teaching across disciplines with innovative, interactive, and student-centered methods. Grigoryan's portfolio presented lesson plans, student work, and collaborative work with colleagues and students. Since this competition, teachers' portfolios have become required as part of the ministry's mandatory evaluation process of in-service teachers.

### **Changing of Teaching Methods Brings Changes in Mindset**

IREX basic education programs in Armenia have changed how teachers work in the classroom and how they view the world. Teachers have overwhelmingly said that participating in the programs changed their attitudes towards themselves and society. "I have become a more active and opinionated citizen. Through teaching critical thinking I have come to think more critically myself about issues in our society," said Tamara Atayan, middle school teacher in Goris School # 4. Atayan worked with her peers and parents to establish a debate club in the school where students and parents can discuss economic and political issues.