

Press Release

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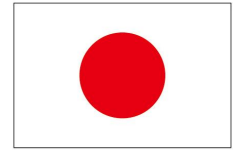
## COAF & Embassy of Japan Launch Public Transportation Upgrade in Armenia's Lori Region

YEREVAN — The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) and the Embassy of Japan in Armenia celebrate the inauguration of a new bus service as part of a larger initiative, designed to improve rural public transportation in Armenia's Lori region. This collaboration will expand the region's transit system and upgrade it with four key objectives in mind: ensuring public transport is accessible to all, including people with disabilities; boosting the quality of transport services to better match passengers' needs; reinvigorating intraregional mobility; and improving environmental compatibility.

Earlier this year, COAF and the Japanese Embassy in Armenia signed a grant agreement, channeling over US\$90,000 into the modernization of Lori's transit system. Within the scope of the initiative, COAF purchased a new, state-of-the-art bus, making travel accessible to everyone crossing the region, including the elderly and those with disabilities. The new service will operate at higher frequencies, connecting seven rural communities, with integrated stops at the COAF SMART Center in Debet village and the forthcoming Dsegh Health Center.

To offer passengers easily identifiable stops equipped with necessary travel information, COAF will build four shelters and two bus signs in communities located along the Dsegh-Vanadzor route starting this month. These efforts complement a previous project implemented by COAF, whereby the organization established a new, fully-equipped bus stop within the scope of its SMART Village initiative implemented in Lori's Debet village.

Alongside infrastructure modernization, COAF will promote the use of digital technology to increase access to public transportation. This will include launching an



**From  
the People of Japan**

app to provide real-time travel information and a cashless payment option. Residents will also be provided with reloadable bus cards to facilitate travel.

The event takes place at the COAF SMART Center in Debet, Lori, featuring opening remarks by the Japanese Ambassador to Armenia H.E. Mr. Masanori Fukushima, the Deputy Governor of Lori Province Hovhannes Avetisyan, and COAF Managing Director Korioun Khatchadourian. During the ceremony, attendees are taken on an inaugural bus ride to the Debet Municipality where COAF will hand over the bus to the “Pambak Communal” community-serving non-profit organization.

### **About COAF**

*The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that employs community-led approaches aimed at improving the quality of life in rural Armenia, with a particular focus on children and youth. COAF's target development areas are education, healthcare, social and economic development. COAF launched its programs in 2004, starting in one village and expanding to 66 villages in Armavir, Aragatsotn, Lori, Gegharkunik, Shirak, and Tavush regions, impacting more than 107,000 beneficiaries.*

*Since 2015, COAF has developed and started implementing the SMART Initiative. COAF SMART is designed to advance a generation across the rural world through education that will benefit individuals, societies, and the environment. As an exemplary model of development, COAF SMART will be replicated in other regions and communities throughout Armenia. The first COAF SMART Center was inaugurated on May 27, 2018, near the village of Debet, Lori Region.*