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Press Release

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Highlights from the Third Annual Conference on Advancement of Rural Communities

YEREVAN - The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) held the third annual Conference on Advancement of Rural Communities (CARC) at the COAF SMART Center in Armenia's Lori region on October 8, 2022, in partnership with the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure. This year's conference theme - Business endeavors as a driving force for local development - brought together stakeholders committed to Armenia's rural development under one roof to share the best practices for sustainable community advancement and to find new opportunities for collaboration.

Over 200 guests were welcomed to the Conference by COAF Founder Garo Armen via video message, the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Vache Terteryan, COAF Managing Director Korioun Khatchadourian, and the Head of Administration of Debet Village Anush Sargsyan. Among the guests were international community representatives, partner organizations, investors, as well as participants of the previous conferences.

The Conference included 4 parallel panels with 16 speakers, who led discussions on hot topics related to rural development, such as rural startups, ecotourism, agritech, and small and medium enterprises. It was a full day of inspiration, as the panel speakers and participants shared stories about their experiences, challenges and ideas for solutions.

Over 40 entrepreneurs, SMEs, and artisans, from the regions of Armenia and Artsakh, showcased different products, services and initiatives, ranging from IT to agriculture at the Conference's Rural Expo.

"Interest in the conference has grown significantly since the first year and that tells us that it's actually serving its purpose of providing a platform for stakeholders in rural development to establish new, mutually beneficial connections, and take their businesses to the next level," stated COAF Events and Partnerships Manager Irina Igitkhanyan.



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The day was topped off with yet another sensational performance by the Tavush Diocese Children Choir (choirmaster Maria Galstyan), who won the Armenian public's heart at the Starmus VI Festival in September. The Choir connected the conference attendees even further with their medley of uplifting songs, calling for unity, perseverance and faith for the nation.

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.