



Press release
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COAF has received a grant to support development of tourism sector in the Lori region

European Association for Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA) and **Children of Armenia Fund (COAF)** signed a grant agreement for the project of “Citizens Voice and Actions on Local Development in Consolidated Communities in Armenia”.

“COAF’s mission is to foster sustainable development in rural communities through the activation and utilization of resources. The development of tourism and hospitality allows for significant economic growth. There is a big bunch of natural and man-made opportunities in the Lori region, the literate and innovative emphasis of which will lead to unprecedented growth in the tourism sector,” mentioned COAF Managing Director **Korioun Khatchadourian**.

With the support of the European Union, the project is implemented by a consortium of ALDA, Communities Finance Officers Association of Armenia (CFOA), and the Union of Communities of Armenia (UCA). While discussing the dozens of worthy programs for sub-grants, the organizers decided to centralize the resources in one area, the Debet Canyon of the Lori region.

The competitive and multi-field project presented by COAF is one of the two winning programs. The projects will be geared towards fostering the growth of tourism and outdoor activities in the Lori region by utilizing the resources of the COAF SMART Center and the Visitor Center by COAF.

“The experience of COAF in the sphere of tourism in the Lori region, with the components of its capacity-building, tourism development, and involvement of young people, is truly valuable for us. The opportunities and resources that COAF will invest in the grant program will enable us to achieve our goals in a faster and more efficient way,” explained **Abraham Artashesyan**, the Deputy Chairman of Communities Finance Officers Association.



The Project is funded
by the European Union

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The program implemented by COAF includes two broad spheres:

- With the establishment of the COAF SMART Visitor Center, a comprehensive collection of information about community guesthouses and places of tourist interest will be launched, as well as of the purchase of necessary equipment and devices for tourists, which will be available for rent at the Visitor Center, located on the junction of M6 and H22 roads.
- The COAF SMART Center offers resources for intensive Marketing, English, and Tourism management 15-week courses to build capacity for selected students from four nearby communities of the Center: Debet, Dsegh, Dzoraget, and Tumanyan.

Due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, the implementation of the educational component will shift to spring 2021, but the acquisition of travel information materials and equipment is already underway.

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About COAF

The “Children of Armenia” Charitable 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 64 villages in Armavir, Aragatsotn, Lori, Gegharkunik, Shirak, and Tavush regions.

Since 2015, COAF has developed and started implementing a new vision – SMART Initiative. COAF SMART is designed to advance a generation across the rural world through education that will benefit individuals, societies, and the environment. COAF SMART will become an exemplary model of development and 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.



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