



NGO Coalition Building

Autumn 2008



NGO Coalition Building Project Update

In July, the League of Women Voters (LWV), the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly), and the NGO Center Civil Society Development NGO (NGOC) launched a project in Armenia designed to provide NGOs with the skills necessary to successfully build and maintain coalitions. The program is implemented in collaboration with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) which provides technical support for program implementation.

The six NGOs, representing a variety of sectors from the Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions, quickly became a unified group, supportive of one another, and very enthusiastic and motivated about this opportunity.

In September, the NGOs discussed civil society development, worked on public speaking & presentation skills, and discussed leadership basics, project planning,

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NGOs Establish Clean Community Coalition

During Session II of the NGO Coalition Building program, and as part of their training, NGO participants were required to select an issue, around which their NGOs could form a coalition. Prompted by issues such as increases in infectious diseases, breast and cervical cancer; air and water pollution; unclean drinking water; threats to tourism; unsafe trash burning practices, unsafe processing of sewage water, and more, the 12 NGO participants, representing 6 diverse NGOs in southern Armenia, chose the protection of the environment as their issue. The vision of their coalition—Clean Community—is to support the protection of the environment of the Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions, and promote the healthcare and health improvement of the population through research activities on garbage cleaning systems, awareness raising and advocacy. The training team of Sara Diefendorf (LWV), Barbara Bartoletti (LWV) and Hripsime Nazaretyan (NGOC), worked with the NGOs to help them refine their vision.

During the November educational session, the NGOs will continue developing their goals and objectives, further explore advocacy, working with the media, and will meet with local officials and others to present their goals and objectives.



From Theory to Practice: Non-governmental Organizations in Southern Armenia Trained to Maintain and Cooperate

By Julia Hakobyan
Managing Editor
ArmeniaNow.com

October 31, 2008—Several non governmental organizations (NGO) from the Armenian provinces of Vayots Dzor and Syunik completed today the second session of the Coalition building educational program organized by the Armenian Assembly of America, the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWV) and NGO Center Civil Society Development Organization (NGOC). The sessions took place in Yeghegnadzor, about 120 kilometers south of Yerevan.



Julia Hakobyan
ArmeniaNow.com

Leadership, Coalition Building and Advocacy are the main topics the NGOs discuss during sessions, which started in September. The training, presented through a series of focused coaching sessions, homework assignments and team building exercises, is led by American lecturers, while topics range from the basic skills of addressing issues, to public presentation and coalition building and maintaining.

"We have knowledge, but we did not know how to apply it," says Arine Harutyunyan, a program manager from the Women's Association of Kapan region. "We learned here how to create the mission, see its perspective. We acquired the skills for public presentation, and in fact for some of us this training was the first ever chance to publicly express opinions."

There are more than 5,000 registered NGOs in Armenia, with more than 4,000 based in the capital. The Vayots Dzor and Syunik provinces have 70.

NGOs in provinces and in the capital address the same issues, such as environment, human rights, problems related to the disabled, women's issues and others, but Yerevan-based NGOs have incomparably more opportunities for expanding their knowledge and have more means and chances for communication.

To compare: In Vayots Dzor with a population of 53,000 there is only one periodical, a municipality sponsored newspaper which is being published once a month. Only 2 out of the Armenian (local) 18 channels are watched

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TRAINING TEAM

Zaida Arguedas

Deputy Executive Director;
and Senior Director of
Global Democracy
Programs, LWV/USA

Barbara Bartoletti

Legislative Director, LWV/
New York State

Sarah Diefendorf

International Trainer,
LWV/USA; and
Faculty, Dominican
University of California

Ellen Olson

Board Member of the LWV
of the Piedmont Triad,
North Carolina

Hripsime Nazaretyan

Trainer/Consultant and
Board Member, NGOC-
CSDO; and
Project Coordinator, NGO
Coalition Building Project



(Continued from page 2)

in Vayots Dzor, while the internet is hardly available, not only to residents, but to organizations as well. As initiators of the program mentioned, the NGOs, especially those in the southern part of Armenia, lack the basic experience of NGO management.

"The important part of the training was to teach them how to communicate, to work closely together, how to establish trust, speak with one voice," says Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director, League of Women Voters, New York State.

"In this term the training was a new world of communication and getting ideas together. These NGOs have never had an experience of looking at advocacy to accomplish their goals. There are many services provided by these NGOs, but they are not used to working together. We hope that at the very grassroots level which is here, in the region, we can motivate them to begin to work to bring people together and eventually they can work with NGOs from other provinces to impact the government."

"What really amazed me is how strong the willingness of volunteering in Armenia," says Sarah Diefendorf, International Trainer, League of Women Voters of the United States, Faculty, Dominican University of California.

"Each of these NGOs has a lot of volunteers and it is something that you don't see in many countries. That made the whole process of education easier because these people are really eager to make changes."

The most exciting part of the program, according to participants, was the creation of the "Clean Community" coalition, which embraces two provinces and through collective efforts, aims to address to local authorities the issues related to garbage collection and keeping towns clean.

Kamo Davtyan, President of Voghji NGO for Supporting Disabled in Syunik says seeing first-hand the creation of this coalition and its mission was the best experience from the training.

"This training just proved once again that until there is solidarity among people, no one goal could be reached. Today we are joined around a common problem—garbage collection—and hopefully we will be able to attract other NGOs into coalition as well," says Davtyan, whose organization was founded in 2004 and is one of the most active in the Syunik province.

Arpi Vartanian, Assembly Country Director for Armenia and Karabakh believes that this training is only a start for local NGOs to better understand the goals and mechanism of their achievements.

"I believe that such training is of vital importance for local NGOs," says Vartanian. "The NGO sector in Armenia is a lively and vital part of Armenian society. This six week training is probably not enough for effective maintenance, but it's a great start to apply the skills and address some of the issues these NGOs represent. Voices are louder when they are joined."

2008 Program Dates

Sept. 22-Oct 3

Oct 20-31

Nov 17-28



October Educational Training team of Sarah Diefendorf (LWV), Barbara Bartoletti (LWV) and Hripsime Nazaretyan (NGOC)



Assembly, ATP, ArmeniaNow.com Visit NGOs

**No one
wins,
unless
everyone
wins.**

—Jeff Masarjian
Armenia Tree Project

On October 23, longtime League of Women Voters member and Armenian Assembly of America Trustee Gail O'Reilly, Armenian Assembly Country Director Arpi Vartanian, Armenia Tree Project (ATP) Executive Director Jeff Masarjian, ATP Country Director Mher Sadoyan, ATP Public Outreach Manager Bella Avetisyan, and Managing Editor of ArmeniaNow.com Julia Hakobyan traveled to Yeghegnadzor to visit the NGO Coalition Building Program.



NGO Trainees and LWV Training Team with visitors from the Armenian Assembly and ArmeniaNow.com, in Yeghegnadzor, October 23

In the morning, the visitors listened to several individual presentations by the NGO participants. Later in the morning, ATP's Masarjian, Sadoyan and Avetisyan spoke about ATP's work in general, and specifically about their work in coalitions, both within and outside of Armenia. Based on his experiences, Masarjian shared his 8 principles of successful coalition building. (See insert, page 5.) He shared a documentary film on the successful coalition campaign to protect the Shikahogh forest reserve in southern Armenia. Sadoyan discussed some of the problems they faced with a current issue, that of copper mining in Teghut, and subsequent environmental impacts. He invited the NGOs to work more closely with community members to expand the army of their allies.

(l-r) ATP Country Director Mher Sadoyan; ATP Executive Director Jeff Masarjian; NGO Coalition Building Project Program Coordinator Hripsime Nazaretyan during October 23 visit



During the afternoon session, O'Reilly spoke about her work in the League, the Assembly, and other initiatives, also describing the genesis of this program. She presented a few words to the NGOs on behalf of the donors for this project, longtime AAA Trustees Charles Talanian and Peter Vosbikian. Vartanian then briefly presented the work of the Assembly and spoke of some specific issues that the Assembly addressed by working in coalitions. Both O'Reilly and Vartanian expressed encouragement and hope for the work the NGOs are doing in their communities.

ArmeniaNow.com Managing Editor Julia Hakobyan, in addressing the NGO representatives, provided them an unique opportunity to hear firsthand, from an experienced journalist, how best to provide information to journalists and how to interact with journalists. Finally, she interviewed many of the NGO participants, in preparation for a report on www.ArmeniaNow.com. (See page 2)

NGO Coalition Building Project

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advocacy, and principles of coalition building.

In October, they reviewed the concepts covered in September, and delved deeper into coalition building. As part of their training, they were required to form a coalition, so they could put into practice what they were learning in theory. Cleaning up garbage and combating pollution problems are issues around which all the NGOs were unanimously united. They formed the Clean Community Coalition, established relevant subcommittees, began developing a plan of action, and more. NGOs were presented with five varying scenarios and encouraged to discuss how their coalition would likely react, given an ever-changing world.

Julia Hakobyan, Managing Editor of ArmeniaNow.com, met with the NGOs to discuss the importance of media, how best to present issues to the media.

She interviewed NGOs, trainers, and program implementers, and wrote an article on the program. Guest speakers from the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenia Tree Project visited the NGOs to share and discuss their experiences.

During the November session, the NGOs will continue to flush out the goals and objectives of their coalition, and committees will carry out tasks assigned to them. Guest speakers will discuss their experiences in advocacy and working with the media. Meetings with local officials are being set up so the Coalition can present its issues, gain practical experience in advocacy, and set in motion achieving the goals of the Clean Community Coalition.



Longtime League Member and long-time AAA Trustee Gail O'Reilly (left) talks with NGOs during a visit on October 23. Program Coordinator Hripsime Nazaretyan translates.

8 Principles of Effective Coalition Building

From the Experiences of Jeff Masarjian, Executive Director, Armenia Tree Project

1. Develop a shared vision.
2. Develop a sense that 'We are in this together.' It is important to have a commitment to each other, one that is even greater than the vision.
3. Have a division of labor so that everyone has clear responsibilities.
4. Put aside egos. No one wins, unless everyone wins.
5. Develop an effective strategy for winning.
6. Develop a broad base of grassroots support, through public education. This is the source of your power.
7. Be able to both give and take. Your goal is not to win by having everyone accept your point of view.
8. Listen. Consider other points of view. In my own personal observations, Armenians sometimes have difficulty collaborating, because in the Armenian paradigm, "There is only one way. It's my way. And it's the right way."



Participating NGOs



Armenian Young Women's Association, Yeghegnadzor Branch, focuses on advocacy service delivery, education and overcoming stereotypes. AYWA's mission is to enhance the status of and encourage the participation of young women in public, political, economic, educational, cultural and other fields, by working with young women and men.

Trainees: Anna Hovhannisyan, Program Officer
Anna Markosyan, Coordinator

Contact: Lilit Asatryan, President
info@aywa.am ♦ (+374-91) 41-79-12 ♦ www.aywa.am

This training has given me new insights into leadership, advocacy and civil society.

— Anna Hovhannisyan
AYWA

Huys-98 (Hope-98) NGO, from Vayk, concentrates primarily on issues in the social, cultural, health and education sectors by providing consultations on social, psychological, and legal issues and organizing community development activities.

Trainees: Arpine Sayadyan, Vice-President
Vahagn Vardanyan, Volunteer

Contact: Almast Safaryan, President
arminemsk@yahoo.com ♦ (+374-94) 12-13-05



Teamwork! (l-r) During Session II, Arpine Sayadyan (Huys-98), Varduhie Sahakyan (Women's Association of Kapan), Varditer Khachatryan, FAVL, Yeghegnadzor work on a "wind tunnel" team building exercise as they develop the Clean Community Coalition

This training approach helps us discover common problems and find solutions to them.

— Arpine Sayadyan
Huys-98



Karine Mushkambaryan, FAVL, Vayk, during Session II

Fund Against Violation of Law, Vayk Branch, works primarily in the legal sector, supporting the establishment of democracy and peace building initiatives, through community development, to victims of war and violence, in particular, refugees, former hostages, prisoners of war, etc.

Trainees: Mane Avagyan, Herher Community Coordinator
Karine Mushkambaryan, Martiros Community Coordinator

Contact: Norayr Hovakimyan, Coordinator
(+374-91) 74-50-84

Fund Against Violation of Law, Yeghegnadzor Branch, working in the Vayots Dzor, Syunik, and Gegharkunik regions of Armenia, addresses legal, community development, health, and youth issues. Services are provided to victims of war, ethnic minorities, and others whose rights have been violated.

Trainees: Tigranuhi Asatryan, Volunteer
Varditer Khachatryan, Sally Community Coordinator

Contact: Arthur Harutyunyan, Branch Head
arthar71@mail.ru ♦ (+374-93) 41-92-92



Varditer Khachatryan (FAVL/Yeghegnadzor) and Kamo Davtyan (Voghji), work on a "wind tunnel" team building exercise during Session II

Syunik Disabled People Support Organization, Voghji, advocates for the rights of those with special needs, and assists the integration of the disabled into society by addressing their social, legal, education, and health related issues.

Trainees: Kamo Davtyan, President
Anush Hakobyan, Volunteer

Contact: Kamo Davtyan, President
voghji@rambler.ru ♦ (+374-94) 62-52-89



These educational sessions have given me new professional approaches to finding solutions to any issue. We would like similar sessions to be held in the Syunik Region.

—Anush Hakobyan
Voghji

Women's Association of Kapan, promotes gender equality and the active participation of women in the public, political, economic and social issues in the Syunik Region.

Trainees: Arine Harutyunyan, Program Manager
Varduhie Sahakyan, Coordinator

Contact: Susanna Martirosyan, President
susmartiros@rambler.ru ♦ (+374-93) 36-24-83



Such training sessions for NGOs in the Syunik and Vayots Dzor *marzes* are very important: both *marzes* lie on the borders of Armenia and training opportunities are not frequently available here.

—Varduhie Sahakyan
Women's Association of Kapan

What People Are Saying



Our task is to make cooperation between leaders of civil society, as well as between leaders in the civil society, state, and private sectors, a wide-spread, acceptable and comprehensive viewpoint. Legislation certainly should also promote this...I am confident that this program will have its continuation not only in the form of programs which will be implemented in the future, but also in the form of raising public awareness about the phenomenon of "cooperation", thus, contributing both to the development of civil society in our country, and to more systemic approaches in solving community-wide problems.

—Lilit Asatryan
Armenian Young Women's
Association

NGOs play an active part in all areas of society. In Armenia one can be impressed by the number of NGOs and the work and achievements of some NGOs, but in general most NGOs are very small, not well-structured or accountable and often achieve few or very limited results. This situation could be changed through cooperation and shared goals. I think that this programme, and particularly the formation of the Clean Community Coalition, is very important, as it is a long-term initiative, tangible and builds on cooperation between NGOs. It is crucial that this group of active and enthusiastic people understand the need and importance for a common agenda and for collaboration.

—Tsovinar Harutyunyan
OSCE / Armenia



NGO Representatives & October Training Team:

Standing (l-r): Norayr Hovakimyan, FAVL/Vayk; Arpine Sayadyan, Hope 98; Mane Avagyan, FAVL/Vayk; Varduhie Sahakyan, Women's Association of Kapan; Varditer Khachatryan, FAVL/Yeghegnadzor; Anush Hakobyan, Voghji; Karine Mushkambaryan, FAVL/Vayk; Arine Harutyunyan, Women's Association of Kapan; Anna Hovhannisyan, AYWA; Anna Markosyan, AYWA; Vahagn Vardanyan, Hope 98; Hripsime Nazaretyan, NGOC CSDO;

Seated (l-r) Barbara Bartoletti, LWV; Kamo Davtyan, Voghji; Sarah Diefendorf, LWV





This program gives us an opportunity to see the global picture of NGO activity. As Einstein said, "The illusion that we are separate from one another is an optical delusion of our consciousness." Armenian Civil Society needs strong coalitions, with leaders who have effective leadership and advocacy skills. This program helps NGOs in southern Armenia get involved in a practice in which people directly participate in the decision making processes which affect their lives.

—Hripsime Nazaretyan
 NGO Center Civil Society Development NGO



I found the program to be so inspirational. It's building on empowering the people of Armenia to take control of their own lives and future, and establish priorities that are important to them. This is powerful stuff.

—Jeff Masarjian
 Armenia Tree Project

NGOs in Armenia are finally realizing that sharing resources and expertise is not another donor driven element of civil society, but a fact of life in an environment that is increasingly more competitive, while less rich in funding. I'm happy to see Armenian NGOs demonstrating the maturity and the will to take the first step toward creating a coalition. I look forward to seeing how the coalition moves forward with its activities.



—Alex Sardar
 USAID Civic Advocacy Support Program (CASP)
 Implemented by Counterpart International

I've actually become a better trainer by working with these NGOs. I felt like I had to keep probing the limits of their knowledge. I had to work to come up with unique and different exercises to make sure they grasped the concepts. Now, light bulbs are popping off and it's exciting when you see they're "getting it."

—Sarah Diefendorf
 League of Women Voters



Day by day, the NGO representatives in this program are learning new skills, gaining more confidence, and discovering new ways to implement *real* change in their communities. Strong NGOs are an integral part of the foundation for any strong democratic nation. Our NGOs are laying those foundations today, for stronger communities tomorrow.

—Arpi Vartanian
 Armenian Assembly of America



Selected Useful Links

ARMENIA

President	www.president.am
National Assembly	www.parliament.am
Government*	www.gov.am
Constitutional Court	www.concourt.am
Central Bank	www.cba.am
Human Rights Defender	www.ombuds.am
Public Prosecutor	www.genproc.am
Yerevan City Hall	www.yerevan.am
Armenian Embassy / USA	www.armeniaemb.org
St. Etchmiadzin	www.armenianchurch.org
Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute	http://genocide-museum.am
Hayastan All-Armenian Fund	www.himnadram.org
Millennium Challenge / Armenia	www.mca.am
Zvartnots International Airport	www.aia-zvartnots.aero

NAGORNO KARABAKH (ARTSAKH)

President	www.president.nkr.am
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	www.nkr.am/en
Permanent Representation / USA	www.nkrusa.org

INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURES

BSEC	www.bsec-organization.org
Council of Europe	www.coe.am
CSTO	www.dkb.gov.ru
EBRD	www.ebrd.com/country/country/armenia/index.htm
European Commission	www.delarm.ec.europa.eu
ICRC	www.icrc.org
IMF	www.imf.org/external/country/ARM/rr/index.htm
NATO	www.nato.int
OSCE	www.osce.org/yerevan
United Nations	www.un.am
World Bank	www.worldbank.org.am

* Ministry websites may be accessed through this site.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Millennium Challenge Corporation	www.mcc.gov
Peace Corps / Armenia	www.usa.am/peacecorps.php
US Embassy / Armenia	www.usa.am
US House of Representatives	www.house.gov
US Senate	www.senate.gov
US State Department	www.state.gov
USAID / Armenia	www.usaid.am
White House	www.whitehouse.gov

SELECTED OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia	www.amcham.am
American University of Armenia	www.aua.am
Armenia Tree Project	www.armeniatree.org
Armenian EyeCare Project	www.eyecareproject.com
Armenian General Benevolent Union	www.agbu.am
Armenian Genocide Museum of America	www.armeniangenocidemuseum.org
Armenian Missionary Association of America	www.amaa.org
Armenian National Institute	www.armenian-genocide.org
Armenian Young Women's Association	www.aywa.am
Birthright Armenia	www.birthrightarmenia.org
Caucasus Environmental NGO Network	www.cenn.org
Caucasus Resource Research Centers	www.crrc.am
Children of Armenia Fund	www.coafkids.org
Counterpart International	www.counterpart.am
EcoLur Network	http://ecolur.org
Eurasia Partnership Foundation	www.epfound.am
Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets	www.fpwc.org
Fund for Armenian Relief	www.far.am
Jinishian Memorial Foundation	www.jinishian.am
Junior Achievement	www.jaarmenia.org
National Democratic Institute	www.ndi.org
Open Society Institute	www.osi.am
Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus	www.rec-caucasus.org
Save the Nature Campaign	www.savethenature.am
SunChild	www.sunchild.am
Tufenkian Foundation	www.tufenkianfoundation.am
WWF	www.panda.org/caucasus



MISCELLANEOUS

Armenia Directory / Yellow Pages	www.armenian.com
Cilicia.com	www.cilicia.com
Famous Armenians	www.persons.am
HayPost	www.haypost.am
TourArmeniaCentral	www.TACentral.com
Yerevan Scope	www.yerevanscope.am

SELECTED MEDIA / PRINT

Agos	www.agos.com.tr
Aravot	www.aravot.am
Azg	www.azg.am
Chorrort Ishkhanutiun	www.chi.am
Demo	www.demo-nk.org
Emergency Weekly	www.emergency.am
Golos Armenii	www.golos.am
Hayastani Hanrapetutiun	www.hhpress.am
Haykakan Zhamanak	www.hzh.am
Hayots Ashkharh	www.armworld.am
Hraparak	www.hraparak.am
Iravunk	www.iravunk.com
National Geographic Traveler / Armenia	www.traveler.am
Novosti Armenia	www.newsarmenia.ru
Novoye Vremya	www.nv.am
Respublica Armenia	www.ra.am
Yerkir	www.yerkir.am
Zhamanak Yerevan	www.zhamanak.com

SELECTED MEDIA / RADIO

ArRadio Intercontinental	www.rradio.am
Armenian National Radio	www.armradio.am
City FM	www.cityfm.am
FM 107	www.fm107.am
Impuls-Mayak	www.impuls.am
Radio Ardzagank	www.ardzagank.com
Radio Hay	www.radiohay.am
Radio Liberty	www.rferl.org/listen
Radio Van	www.radiovan.am
Vem	www.vem.am
Voice of America	www.voanews.com/armenian
Voice of Russia	www.ruvr.ru

SELECTED MEDIA / ON-LINE & AGENCIES

168 Hours	www.168.am
A1+	www.a1plus.am
A-Info News Agency	www.a-info.org
Arka News	www.arka.am
Armenia Liberty	www.armenialiberty.org
ArmeniaNow.com	www.armenianow.com
Armenpress	www.armenpress.am
ArmInfo	www.arminfo.info
De Facto	www.defacto.am
Groong	www.groong.org
Hetq	www.hetq.am
Itar Tass	www.itar-tass.com
Karabakh News	www.karabakh-news.com
Karabakh Open	www.karabakh-open.com
Lragir	www.lragir.am
Mediamax	www.mediamax.am
National	www.natnews.info
Noyan Tapan	http://noyan-tapan.am
Pakagic	www.pakagic.narod.ru
PanArmenian.net	www.panarmenian.net
Panorama.am	www.panorama.am
Regnum	www.regnum.ru
Ria Novosti	www.rian.ru
Taregir	www.taregir.am
Tert.am	www.tert.am
Yerevan Press Club	www.ypc.am

SELECTED MEDIA / TELEVISION

ArmenAkob TV	www.atv.am
Dar 21	www.dar21.tv
Kentron TV	www.spyur.am/kentron_tv.htm
Mir	www.mirtv.ru
Paradise	www.paradise.am
Shant TV	www.shant-tv.com
Shoghakat	www.shoghakat.am
Public TV-1	www.armtv.com
Public TV 2	www.tv.am
Yerevan TV	www.yerevantv.com





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The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 88 years of experience and 850 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

The NGOC was established in 1994, as a project of the Armenian Assembly of America to promote democracy through civil society development. In 2005, it registered as a separate, local entity in Armenia. Targeting NGOs, community based organizations (CBOs), civic action groups (CAGs) and other elements of civil society, the NGO Center continues to help them in their efforts to develop a strong NGO sector in Armenia.

Established in 1972, the Armenian Assembly is the largest Washington-based nationwide organization promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issues. It is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-partisan, membership organization.

This project is made possible through the collective efforts of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the Armenian Assembly of America and the NGO Center Civil Society Development NGO.

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www.lwv.org



www.aaainc.org



www.ngoc.am