***The Ideology of Volunteering of “Armenian Caritas”***

"Armenian Caritas" (NGO) volunteer is a core carrier of organization's mission and ideology. Since the very establishment of the organization volunteers have been involved in different fields of its operations. Understanding the potential of united volunteers, since 2010 volunteering practice implementation process in “Armenian Caritas” has become institutional. "Armenian Caritas" has committed itself to set up *Armenian Caritas Youth Corps (ACYC),* which united the current and potential volunteers around common interests and issues. In 2014 the ACYC was renamed to *Armenian Caritas Volunteer Corps* (ACVC) since the aim was not only to involve young people but encourage volunteer work.

Currently about 80 volunteers are involved in various “Armenian Caritas” projects. They work with elderly people, disabled children, socially vulnerable families, teenagers, participate in various community programs, as well as assist with the administrative work in “Armenian Caritas” offices and centers.

Overall volunteering practice in “Armenian Caritas” is very structured. All of 80 local and international volunteers joining the organization are attached to different projects based on their skills, preferences and projects’ requirements.

The most vital features for being considered a potential volunteer for “Armenian Caritas” are - right attitude, willingness to learn, aspiration for social justice and helpfulness. The organization also provides internship opportunities for local and international students studying social sciences. Since 2010, the organization has more than ***330*** volunteers from different cities of Armenia, as well as from Czech Republic, Austria, Germany and the United States.

***Volunteer involvement and employment regulations***

***Organizational standards for volunteer involvement and work***

All people wishing to volunteer can join ACVC. In order to organize the admission process, there were compiled an application form and the memorandum of understanding which regulates relations between the organization and the volunteers.

In September 2016 the volunteer application form has been changed. Before that, the volunteer enrollment system was open and a volunteer was able to submit an application at any time, and then, the application process got the appropriate outcome. From September 2016 the new process of volunteer application submission is launched. Now, an information meeting is held after which an “open day” for people wishing to volunteer is organized. During the meetings, staff members present projects of the organization and involvement opportunities for volunteers and current volunteers share their experience.

After the meeting, any person wishing to volunteer will have an opportunity to visit the centers to get acquainted with the conducted works.

Only after sufficient understanding of volunteer work an application can be filled out. The volunteer work is regulated by job descriptions and a memorandum of understanding. Each volunteer is given a description of the expected work under the project or in the organization. To normalize relations with volunteers a memorandum of understanding is also signed. It defines the rights and duties of the volunteer and the organization.

The majority of the ACVC volunteers are 21 to 30- year-old students, who combine education with volunteering.

Below you can see volunteers’ age chart.

Volunteers’ involvement geographically:

Nearly 40 volunteers from different communities of Armenia are involved in Armenian Caritas’ projects.

Volunteers’ involvement by sectors is as follows:

Volunteers’ involvement by gender is as follows:

During 2010-2016, 43 volunteers had started their work in "Armenian Caritas." It is about 13% of the total number of volunteers.

The average number of active volunteers, working in all centers, varies between 70 -80.

ACVC is an institute full of new development prospects and potential. It’s particularly important not only for “Armenian Caritas,” but also for Armenia - in formation of the volunteer culture and its further development.