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Love and compassion

Since its foundation, "Armenia Caritas" has been focusing its efforts on bringing social justice to the most vulnerable social groups all over the provinces of Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik, Ararat, and Yerevan, providing for them in different areas such as education, health, and social inclusion. Besides that, the institution is also responsible for helping returnees and immigrants from various countries, who needs help in readapting and reengaging in a new environment.

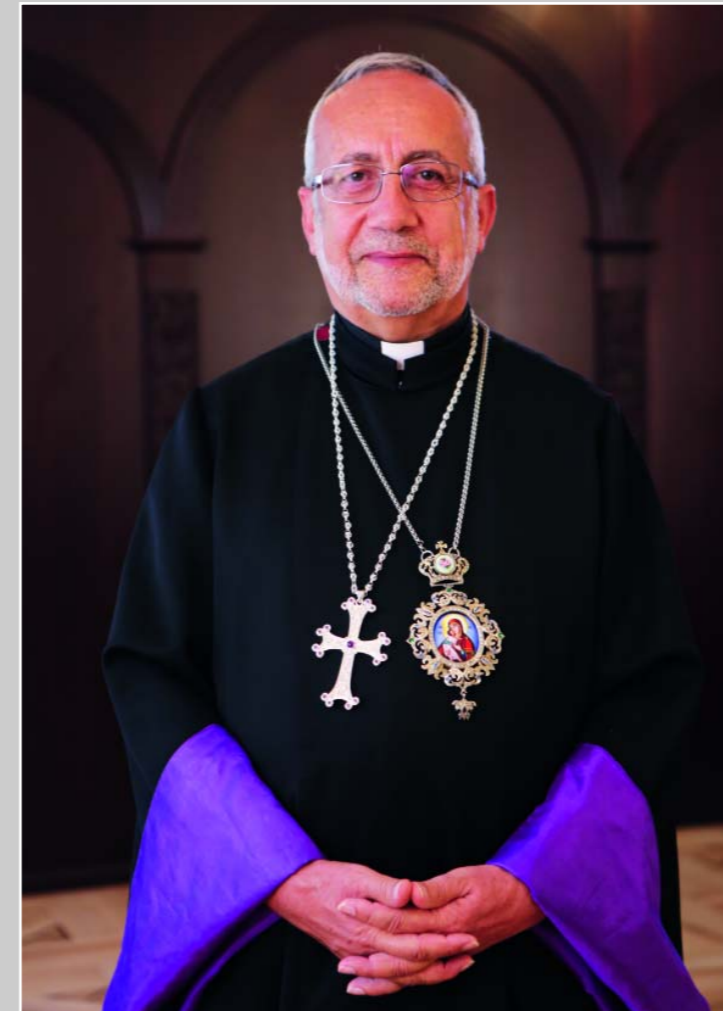
"Armenia Caritas" currently implements community-based programs that aim the development of more than 125 communities throughout the five provinces.

There are seven directions of the "Armenian Caritas":

- ◆ Social Protection of Children
- ◆ Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities
- ◆ Social Inclusion and Care of the Elderly
- ◆ Disaster Risk Reduction and emergency response
- ◆ Community Development
- ◆ Migration and Integration
- ◆ Institutional Development of AC

"Armenia Caritas" headquarter is based in Gyumri, Armenia, where more than 270 people volunteers and staff - are working on behalf of the mentioned projects.

"Armenia Caritas" continues its rewarding and challenging work in the country with, above all, the sincere intention to bring dignity and to respect the lives of each individual, planting a seed in them that will germinate in the future and will bring good fruits to the society.



FR. RAPHAEL ARCHBISHOP MINASSIAN
Ordinary of Armenian Catholics in Armenia,
Georgia, Russia, and Eastern Europe
President of "Armenian Caritas" BNGO

*To define "Armenian Caritas" as a benevolent public institution, to give its real definition, it is necessary to touch upon two points. One is the definition of the ideology of "Armenian Caritas", which can be summarized in the following words of Jesus Christ: **"When you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me" (Mt.25:40)**. The second is the definition of the essence and belonging of "Caritas". "Armenian Caritas" is the charitable organization of the Armenian Catholic Church, whose activities and mission are carried out in the whole territory of Armenia, as well as in Artsakh, providing service and support when necessary.*

*"Armenian Caritas" is dedicated to serving all Armenians without regional restrictions. Its essential goal is to be accessible to everyone, without discrimination; and work making own image a reality, which is summarized on the organization's coat of arms - the Cross of Christ - and the word "Love" placed in the Cross, defining inexhaustible sacrifice and dedication to everybody. The practical evidence of this coat of arms is the serving the most vulnerable with inexhaustible care, following the message of Christ which says: **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt.11:28)**. This is the real essence - the definition of "Armenian Caritas", which is available to all those who are eager to become part of "Armenian Caritas" through their work as employees, volunteers and service providers.*

Concluding all this, I would like to refer to the activities that have been carried out during the last two years and are still being carried out.

First of all, I would like to note that Caritas' activities in Armenia are summarized by charitable, humanitarian, social and development services. It operates in seven areas: social protection of children, social inclusion of persons with disabilities, social inclusion and care of the elderly, disaster risk reduction and emergency response, community development, migration and integration, and institutional development. The above-mentioned directions are implemented through more than fifty programs in four regions of the Republic of Armenia and in Yerevan. Such activities are impossible without dedicated staff. "Armenian Caritas" has more than two hundred and seventy employees and volunteers who faithfully serve with great dedication, putting their skills and professional knowledge to create common good. Respecting the dignity of all our beneficiaries, I will just touch upon the fact that their number exceeds tens of thousands.

One of the best and exclusive features of "Caritas" is working in silence and spreading good as we read in the Holy Bible: **"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that**

your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matt. 6:3-4). Today we can speak with admiration about the projects implemented by "Armenian Caritas", noting that for twenty-five years it has been diligently serving to give a small smile to the vulnerable, the disabled, the elderly, the sick and those in need.

"Caritas" itself is a supernatural mission, so it does not pursue its own interests or honorable rewards in this world. Its apostles - managers, employees, benefactors, partners, and especially volunteers, who with noble silence and complete devotion, make a sacrifice in caring for our brothers and sisters, who at the cost of every difficulty, lend a helping hand to everyone, will be openly rewarded by God the Father, who sees all this.

Finally, as the President of "Armenian Caritas", I bow down to all the employees of the organization, expressing my deep gratitude for their devotion, and asking for the divine blessings and graces for everybody, and the protection of the Mother of God.



A message from the executive director Mr. Gagik Tarasyan

Dear charity brothers and sisters,

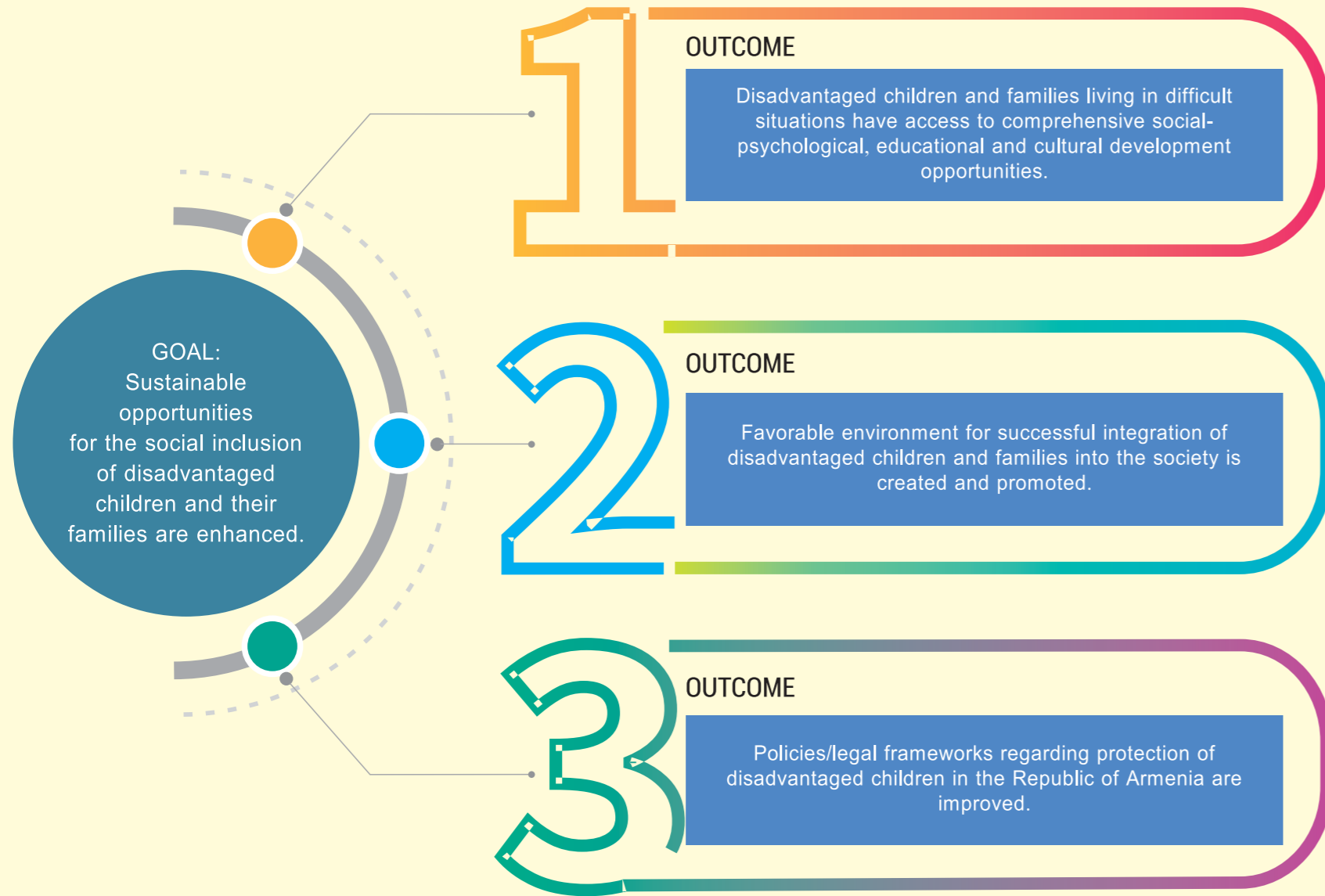
In continuation of the serious and committed work that "Armenia Caritas" has been developing since 1995, the years of 2018 and 2019 were very productive and vital in the five regions where the program operates. This report intends to show how the provinces of Shirak, Lori, Gegharkunik and Ararat have benefitted with such progressive and supportive projects, which are focused on providing the necessary subsidies for the development of underprivileged communities.

Since the beginning of our journey, we have faced various challenges especially the country's recovery after the earthquake and the rebirth of a young post-independence nation - nevertheless, we have always remained very optimistically on what we could achieve in the future. Today, we have more than 51 projects that are impacting more than 125 communities in Armenia, which are providing protection and resources for children, creating opportunities for people with disabilities, including and caring for the elderly people, and supporting the newly arrived immigrants. Moreover, our institution helps to develop these communities in different areas.

We want to express gratitude to all of our supporters, our staff, and our 80 volunteers, who are working hard with the mission to build a brighter future for Armenia. In 24 years of our institution's existence, we are glad to offer support for these communities since our main and most important goal is to impact their lives in the long run; in essence, we are thankful for the opportunity to continue spreading the message of love and compassion, helping to protect human dignity and integrity.

SOCIAL PROTECTION OF CHILDREN





- PROJECTS:**
- Since 2009 five “Little Prince” day care centers have been operating in Gyumri, Vanadzor, Tashir, Gavar and Artashat cities for 350 disadvantaged children of 10-18 y.o. and their families annually.
 - Four kindergartens children have been provided with healthy food by the project and conditions for food preparation and storage were improved.
 - Annually 317 children of 3-6 y.o. benefit from the project in two kindergartens of Gyumri city and Sepasar and Ghazanchi villages.
 - “Art therapy” day care center has been operating in Vanadzor for 50 children with disability (annually) of 5-12 y.o. and their families.
 - Annually 900 poor families with many children and single mothers have been receiving material assistance.
 - Since May 2018 Small Group House is operating in Vanadzor for 8-10 children without parental care.

Thus, in total 1600 children and their families benefit from children/families projects annually

DONORS:
Caritas Germany, Caritas Austria, Action of the Three Kings, Italian Bishops' Conference, USA Bishops' Conference, Renovabis, German Government.

"Little Prince" day care centers

Through social group works and trainings the life-skills of 350 disadvantaged children and their parents were developed in "Little Prince" centers.

Enhancement of Parenting skills of 203 disadvantaged families was implemented through the workshops and social work.

Skills for coping with the children/parents everyday life was developed by the social workers and psychologists through individual and group activities.

Healthy life-style is practiced by the majority of the children who participated in sport, hygienic and cooking educational classes. Interpersonal relation between the children and family members were improved through social-psychological work and different events. Environmental protection is practiced by the children during events, campaigns, training and community work.

Disadvantaged children are integrated into society through joint events, summer camps, celebrations, study visits.

Social-psychological state of disadvantaged children and families is improved through individual, group work and family work.

Children are ready to make plans for their future profession and well-being through educational and vocational group activities.

Raised self-confidence and self-esteem among the disadvantaged children and their parents.

Children and parents gained self-support skills through self-organized groups of active children/mothers.

Increased positive attitude in the community towards vulnerable children and increased feeling of ownership and social responsibility among the community.

Disadvantaged children enjoyed their summer vacations in summer camps, excursions and countryside.

Disadvantaged children and families benefited from material support.

Nutrition condition of 317 beneficiary children in four kindergartens of Gyumri city and Ghazanchi and Sepsar villages is improved. Social support networks of stakeholders were created in 5 target locations of "Little Prince" centers.

Close ties are established with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, UNICEF, International and local organizations that deal with Child Protection issues. Armenian Caritas is the board member of Child Protection National Network of more than 40 organizations.

"Sabine" Small Group House for Children

The children (sister and brother) were placed in the Vanadzor orphanage having parents alive when the youngest was only five years old. During the three years they spent here, the relationship with their mother was severed, and the relationship with the father was not particularly warm. On June 2018, when the "Sabine" Small Group House started operating in Vanadzor, the children moved here. As a result of long and hard work, the warm and heartfelt relations between the children and their father were restored. Thanks to the efforts of the staff, in 2019 it was finally possible to find the mother of the children and the relations between the mother and maternal relatives that were broken for 6-years were re-established. Today, the children have regained their lost childhood, valued and redefined their lives. One can only hope that the most faithful companions on their new journey will be their own parents...

Hovsep was accepted to Gyumri "Little Prince" Center in 2014. His father abandoned the family living in poor conditions. As a result of individual and group socio-psychological work at "Little Prince" center, the boy and his sister stopped attending boarding school, and the family conflicts were resolved. Hovsep's communication, organizational and leadership skills were improved - his self-esteem was raised.

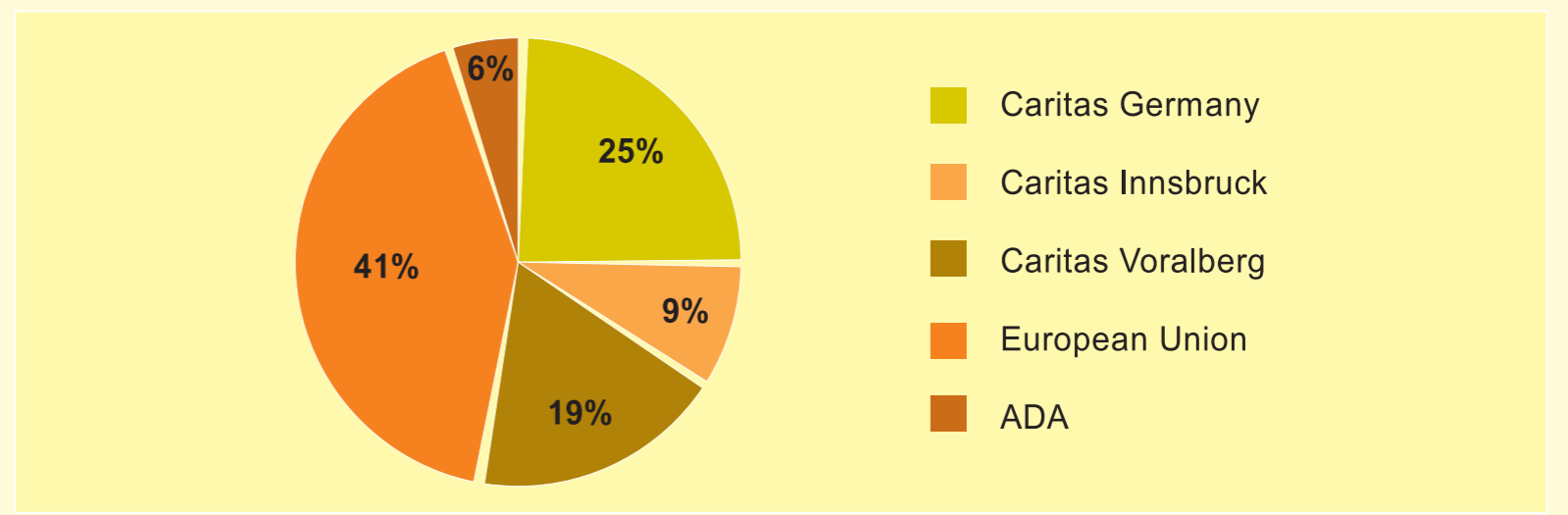
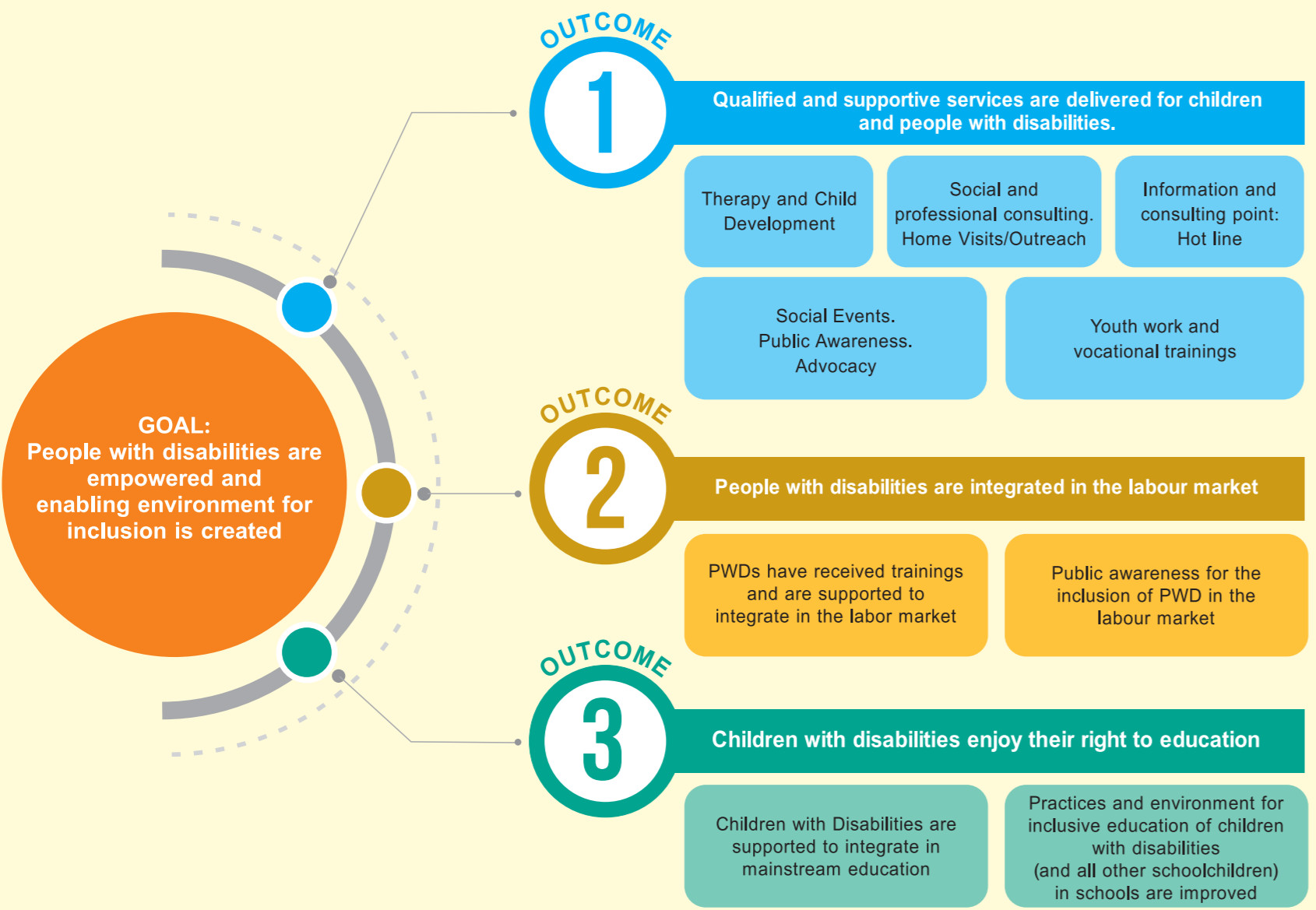
Involved in volunteering, he created the center's dance group. Recognizing his valuable work, the managers employed the boy as a group leader.

"Before coming to the center, I was alone, I had no one to help and motivate me. My worldview changed with the exchange visit to France organized by "Armenian Caritas", when I realized that I could make my dreams come true".

After finishing the service in the Army, he wants to create a charitable organization to help families in need and change their way of thinking.

***SOCIAL INCLUSION OF
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES***





"Emili Aregak" Center for Children and Youth with Multiple Disabilities

The "Emili Aregak" Center enables 100 children with disabilities in Gyumri (Shirak Province, Armenia) between the ages of 2 and 20, as well as their families, to integrate into society and be treated equally. During the course of 2017, "Emili Aregak" Center provided young PWD with no-cost quality therapy and child development services on an ongoing basis. 50 children received rehabilitation services, 100 children received therapeutic services and 55 children received medical aid.

Social and professional consultations were provided to family members of beneficiaries. Additionally, 110 parents received coaching and 15 problematic cases were identified and solutions developed.

In 2017, "Emili Aregak" also enabled community children to more easily interact with beneficiaries through the installation of a new playground. As the communication platform between "Emili Aregak's" beneficiaries and neighborhood children, the playground promotes integrated play.

One of the greatest challenges at the Center was cooperation with schools regarding the implementation of inclusive education. School is not only an educational institution, but a socialization platform for building connections, making friends and changing mindsets. It is a place where new mindsets can be cultivated: mindsets free from stigmas and stereotypes. This is a challenge that needs continuous attention. Public awareness raising events directed at educating the school teams are one way to tackle the issue.

Due to AC work 118 school-aged children with disabilities in Shirak region (7 communities) were enrolled in mainstream schools, thus enjoying their right to education, as described in the Art. 24 of the UNCRPD.

In order to ensure quality education for them internationally used "Index for Inclusion" toolkit was translated into Armenian and piloted in 12 schools of Shirak region, which aims to make the school inclusive for everyone changing cultures, policies and practices. 76 participants have been trained on Index for Inclusion.

Besides, 118 families of CWD were provided with ongoing counseling through social workers' periodical home visits, as well as online consultation of international experts.

A database of CWD, who are currently out of education or face difficulties in learning process, was established.

Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable during disasters. AC also supported the government in reflecting the needs and rights of the most vulnerable children, including children with disabilities, in the national disaster risk reduction policy. In 2017 TOT training for Shirak Region 12 Inclusive Schools' participants on DRR took place. The 2 days training for 39 participants was conducted by "Lore" Rescue team staff. Informative/awareness raising materials on DRR have been prepared and published for three different age groups of children.

Innovative indoor garden plots were established as a means for children with a range of limitations to still contribute to gardening efforts. 18 youth participated. Then, the land behind the "Emili Aregak" Center was primed as a barrier-free herbal gardening plot. In 2018, PWD began learning and practicing the therapeutic skills of caring for herbs and flowers which will be sold or utilized in the cafe.

Six handicraft workshops were also established. Beneficiaries learned motor and cognitive skills in the creation of such goods as greeting cards, postcards, dolls, bags, bracelets and gypsum souvenirs. 500 postcards, 260 Christmas cards, eight dolls, 40 bracelets, 60 gypsum souvenirs, and 15 bags were created. The handicrafts produced were either sold at exhibitions or given as gifts to "Emily Aregak" donors and visitors. Now these crafts are sold in the cafe.



"First Inclusive Bakery and Cafe in Gyumri" program

When Anush and Misha first met in 2018, they were both participants of "9 Steps to the Labor Market" employment preparation course specifically adapted for people with disabilities.

Though Anush had to quit the training earlier because of family issues, attending the course gave her a lot of skills and experience. "The Nine Steps course was very, very helpful, I obtained life skills, like how to improve my communication. It was also the first time I met people with Down Syndrome."

The "9 Steps" experience was similarly useful for Misha. "It helped me to understand that people with disabilities aren't ignored," he adds, "It gave me self-confidence for my work."

Eventually, the experience was fruitful for both of them. They received a job offer for the EU-funded "First Inclusive Bakery and Coffee Shop in Gyumri" project.

After attending the grand opening of Aregak Bakery & Cafe, Anush asked about volunteering and earned a job after proving her excellent capability as a server and cleaner. Customers routinely comment on the way her bright smile and joyful personality boost their mood.

Although she spends much of her day's work interacting with customers and keeping things tidy at the cafe, her favorite task is something different. "I love to look after the flowers and plants we have out front," she says.

Misha also has such a task. In spring 2019, he began to work in the barrier-free garden at the "Emili Aregak" Centre.

"I like working in the nature," he says, "And I like the people at "Emili Aregak" very much. They are good, kind and always ready to help."

Regarding his future, Misha says that time will tell. "I just want this project to be continuous. Everybody deserves to find work."

But there is one thing that is clear for Misha in the future. In addition to finding a job within the framework of the project, he also found his second half. Anush and Misha married on October 2019 and are very thankful that, in addition to their work, they found something even more important: love.

Mariana

Mariana is 12 years old. For some years, she has been involved in the home education program of school #12 in Gyumri. The school was far from her home, so she rarely went to school. The teachers used to come to her home to give her lessons and sometimes classmates visited her. When she was still a student of school #12, they had a home visit and her parents were interviewed; it turned out the girl's brother was studying at school #5 which was very close to their house. Neither her mother nor her brother wanted her to attend the same school as her brother felt bad for the attitude of his classmates.

Due to our efforts, consultation, home visits carried out in the framework of the project, Mariana's parents and her brother changed their approaches and agreed to take her to the nearest school, #5, where she would receive the regular education instead of home-schooling.

Since September Mariana has been regularly attending the school, participating both in regular classes and multidisciplinary team lessons. She spends at least 4 hours a day at school. Now Mariana has favorite classmates who are ready to help and support her any moment she needs. She is accepted and loved by the teachers, who are happy with her success and achievements.

Inclusive Education in Armenia and Kosovo

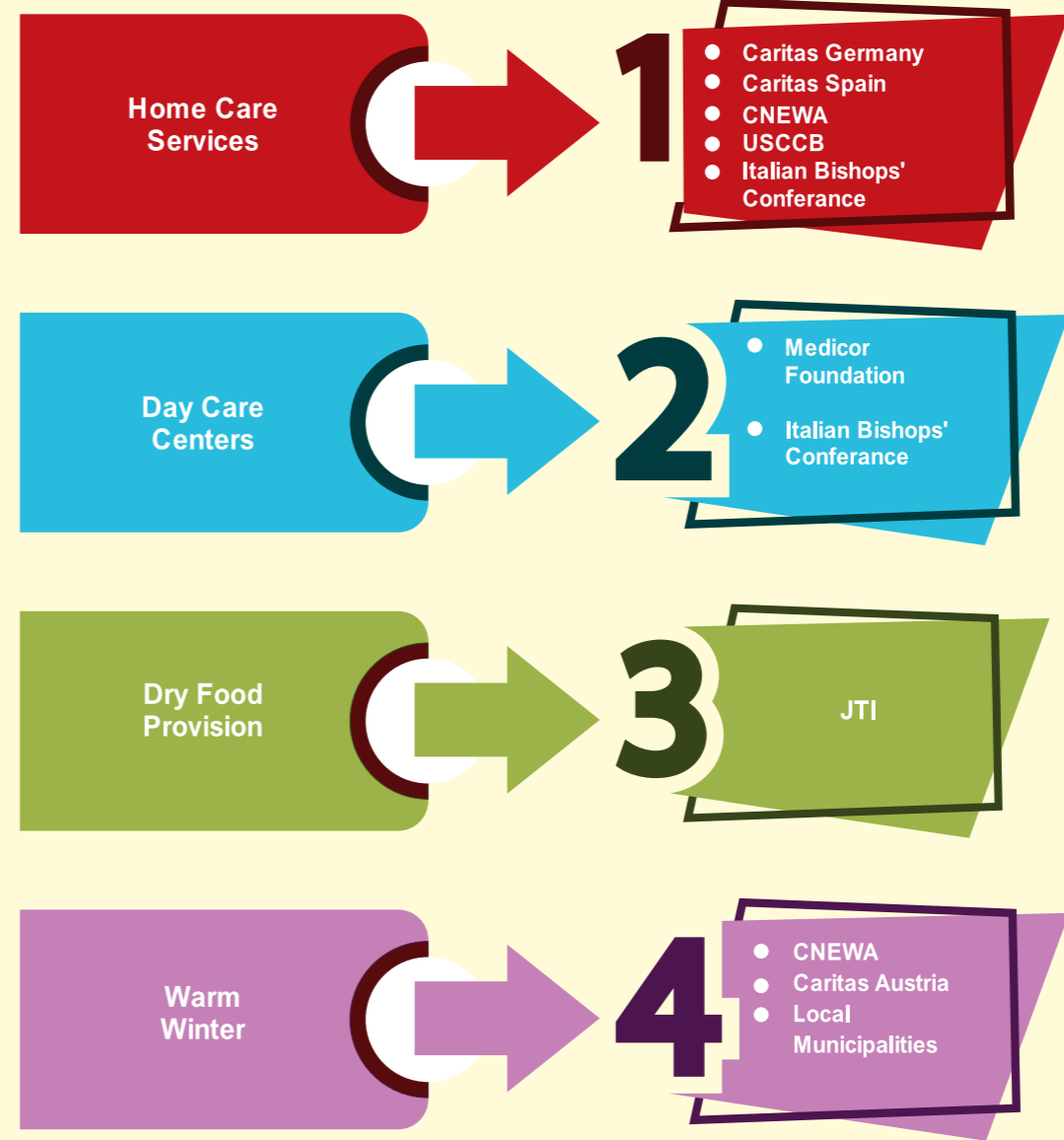
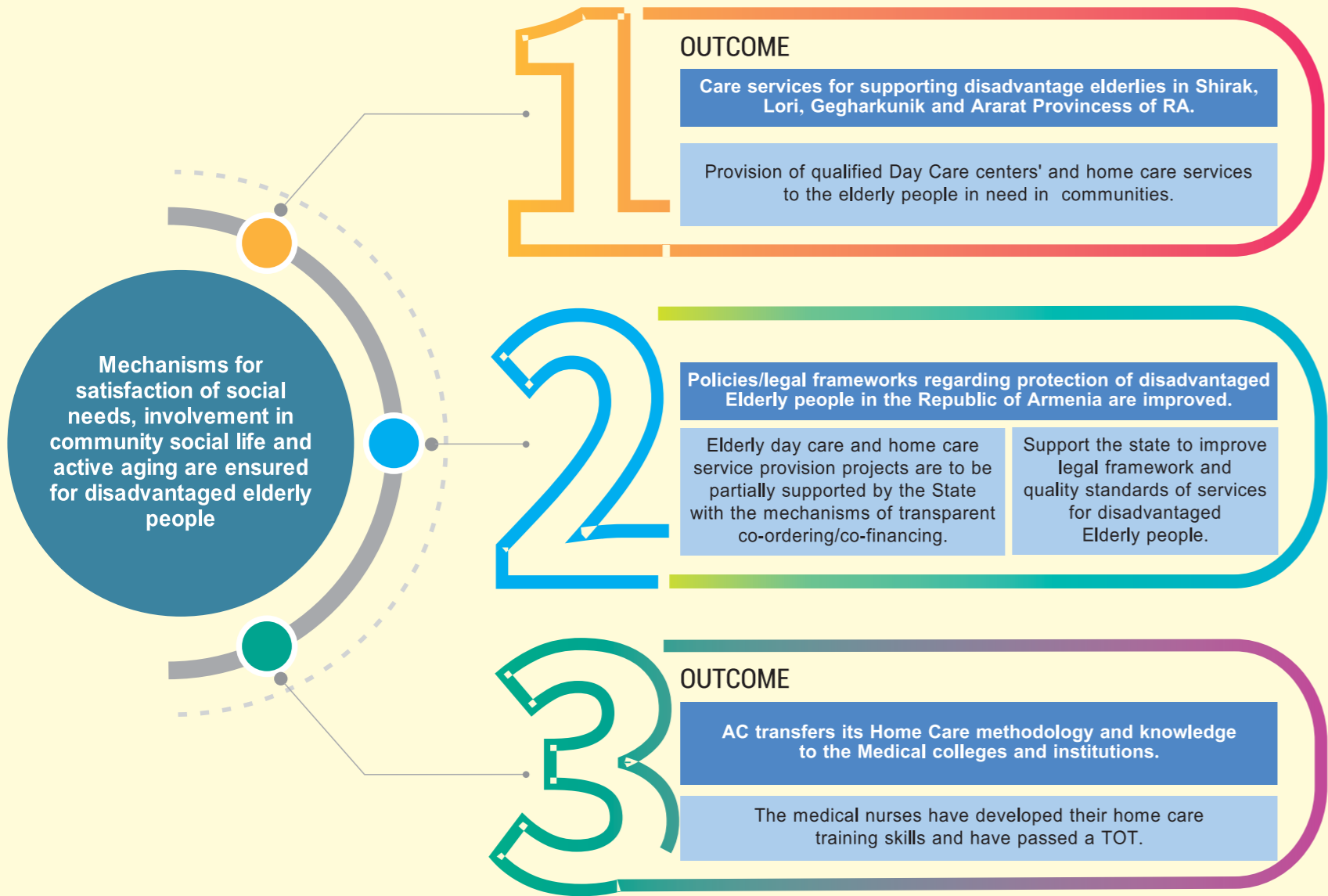
On 1st of February, a beautiful event was organized at school devoted to the Birth of Jesus, where Mariana took the role of Holy Mother. During the event, an incident took our attention - when the girl started her speech, the class' teacher began to applaud with great enthusiasm, but she paused immediately and whispered: "Wow, I should not have applauded only for her and thus segregate her."

This is a vivid proof of an inclusive environment created step by step and where all the children are accepted and treated equally. Inclusive values are primary both inside and outside the school.

"I am very happy that I finally can go to school like my brother and have my own friends," says Mariana. This is a very important and huge achievement for Mariana, her family, her school and, also, for us on the long way to the overall inclusion.

***SOCIAL INCLUSION AND
CARE OF THE ELDERLY***





Social Inclusion and Care of the Elderly

Through the implementation of diverse projects on elderly issues the elderly people are provided with professional social and health care services, combined with direct support, based on the adapted and integrated European home-care model.

They are provided with necessary supportive, rehabilitative items (hand sticks, crutches, supporters for moving, round pillows, neck supporters, moving toilets, anti-decubitus materials). The elderly people get medical support, social and daily individual care services, moral assistance and psychological rehabilitation, physical and psychological protection, communication, contact.

Medicine and medical/health care supplies become accessible, as well as provision of proper healthcare services and regular control result in betterment of the chronic diseases and poor social or health situation.

Sustainable care services include primary health care services, medicine/ nursing/care items provision, social care services, protection of hygiene, social workers' services for conducting inter-mediator works with state structures, leisure activities, dietary food provision, etc. They are entitled to receive appropriate services and live a dignified life.

AC sees the future of these services more sustainable only through ensuring they are co-funded by the state, as well as other diversified sources.



A Day in the Life of a Blind Elderly

Tamasyak Hakobyan

"The morning starts for me at 5 o'clock. I rub my eyes as if intending to see something around as I used to do it before, but unfortunately it's only imagination because for the lack of my eyesight everything has merged with blank darkness."

Tamasyak has been an experienced teacher in kindergarten for many years. "I didn't marry and devoted my life working with children. They were my life", says the old lady. "I have a brother who takes care of me occasionally. When I was young I was surrounded by friends, my days were filled with happiness. Now I live completely alone. It's awful to be alone and moreover to be blind. The years fly by too fast, I find myself in my late elderly age and I didn't understand how fast the life passed," says grandma Tamasyak, with shedding tears over her pale and sunken cheeks.

"I spend my days sitting behind the door and waiting for someone's knocking on it. But the knocking comes rarely because I am rather forgotten by my former close people. Who knows, maybe they are in a similar situation and have difficulties in being in touch with people. I am so happy being a Home Care Project beneficiary. The employees are my only visitors who try their best to care for me, for keeping me aware of the outward world. My life became rather interesting for I am visited by the project nurse, social worker and volunteer who care for my health, helps me with different household services, helps in outdoor cores, and provides me with the first aid medication", said grandmother Tamasyak.

Day Care Center for Elderly People in Gyumri and Tashir

Gevorg Zakaryan, 72, Tashir

I have been attending Day Care Center for Elderly People in Tashir since 2014. I was in a desperate situation. I had been away from my family for many years. I was living in Russia with a woman and, at that time, it seemed to me that she was better than my wife and we understood each other well. From time to time I sent money to my family to cover their needs, but I gradually stopped being concerned about them. I was so short-sighted!

When I had a stroke and was unable to stay and work in Russia, I had to return back to Armenia. My son already had his family and he could not forgive me and endure living together anymore. He moved with his family to Russia, taking with them also his mother. Until recently, he was randomly visiting me, but now, he is not coming at all and probably forgot about my existence. His children perhaps must have grown up by now.

I am completely alone now and I am having my punishment, but Armenia Caritas shows the love of God and gives a helping hand that supports everyone without exception.

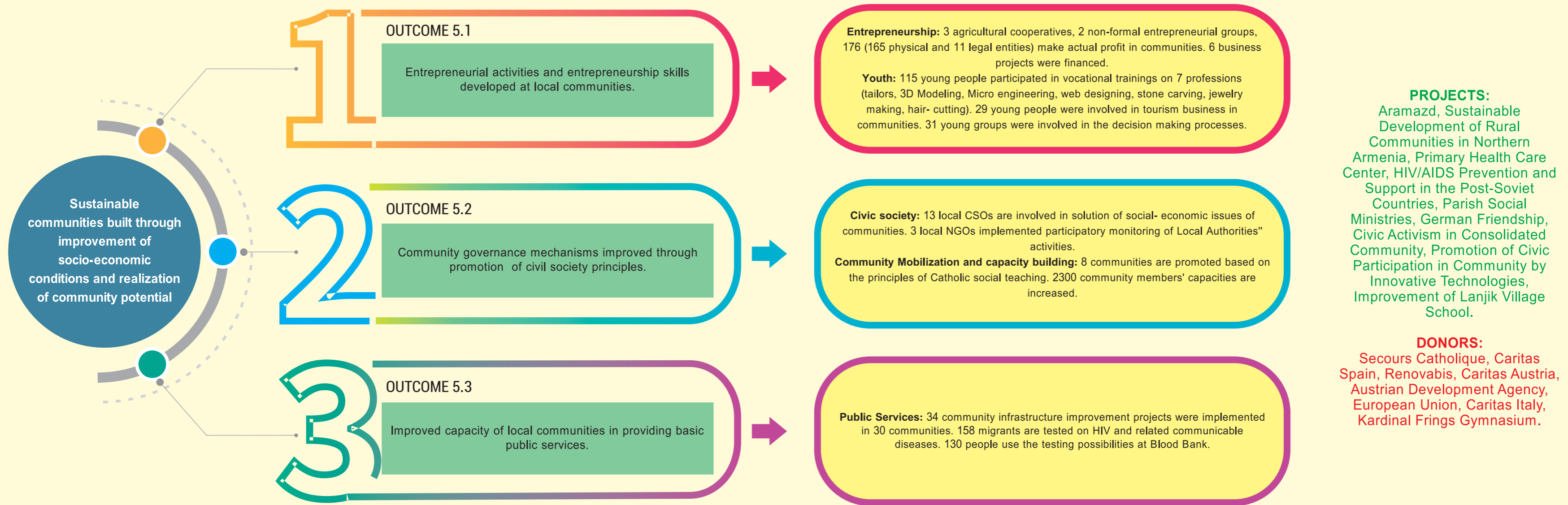
The Center for Elderly People in Tashir is my home, is where I am treated as a human. There they help everyone and are supportive and caring in every matter. I have made friends there with whom I spend my time - playing table games, cards, backgammon, etc. I am constantly under the supervision of a medical nurse at the Center.

The "Warm Winter" project gives safety for us against cold. I have stopped waiting for my son's favor to send some money for heating. Unfortunately, it's not possible to turn back the wheel of time but Armenia Caritas is a God's light in our life. God bless all the project supporters and let that light of God shine in everyone's heart. It is a real salvation for those who feel alone and are suffering.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT





Community Development

Within the framework of the community development strategic direction "Armenian Caritas" has built its strategic intervention that specifically address key issues identified and achieve sustainable changes in the lives of those people who are living in the target communities. The selection of proposed directions goes back to AC past and present operations, a solid needs assessment of interventions as well as high-level donor, partner and Government interest in those interventions as development programming, such as limited land resources that increase the importance of productivity in agriculture and due to the high-interest rates and pledges the subsidizing of agricultural loans remains inaccessible for the majority of farmers.

Most of arable lands are not irrigated effectively and cause immense water losses. The majority of existing irrigation systems are old and worn-out. There is a lack of small food processing companies located in rural communities. There is a high level of synergies between different projects of this strategic directions to allow for more effective planning and higher cost-effectiveness level.

Majority of farmers do not use efficient methods of work, mainly because of the lack of knowledge on modern and more effi-

cient methods. Moreover, the rural infrastructure of the RA is old and doesn't meet rural demands, affects to the capacities of all players in the sustainable energy market.

The SME sector is marked with low competitiveness and under-explored financing issues. The unemployment is high among youth and women and exposed in secondary cities and rural areas. Capacity of public administration to apply the principles of access to information needs to be significantly enhanced.

In the scope of civil service, the operational activities are too narrow. In the majority of Armenian CSOs, there is a lack of professional staff (experts in specific areas), which is partly because of the lack of financial resources, and also the lack of engagement of volunteers.

Within the framework of the implemented projects of the community development strategic direction the number of farms has been built with modern technologies, such as modern greenhouses or modern agricultural equipment in 10 rural communities, which helps to improve the efficiency of agricultural production. There were also some improvements in the community infrastructures through reconstruction of drinking and irrigation water systems, promotion of educational conditions in rural schools.

Community Development

In case of vocational education, the opportunities have been provided to 123 women and youngsters in 6 professions from 10 communities and 4320 residents of Gyumri have been provided with health care services, including 56 pregnant women and 156 mother-child psychological groups. As well as 807 residents from communities of Shirak province have been provided with consultancy. 222 people had the opportunity of free anonymous HIV testing with the aim of prevention. Peer to peer sessions were conducted among 316 students from 10 rural communities of Shirak province aimed at raising awareness about HIV/AIDS.

The community work carried out through 22 comprehensive small grant projects, targeting women, youth and farmers, makes a considerable change in the lives of people living in 77 rural communities of Shirak, Gegharkunik, and Lori provinces of the RA. Rural tourism and viticulture have started and developing, bringing new sources of income to rural areas. On one hand the work local authorities has been assessed within "Transparency, Budgetary Publicity and Public Participation in Monitoring Process in the Frame of the Community Four Year Development Projects in Three Regions of the RA" projects, which have been implemented by three local partner NGOs in 15 target rural communities. On the other hand, the role of at

least 18 local NGOs in the process of the solution of social and economic problems in vulnerable communities was strengthened through a number of capacity building and civic engagement initiatives.

Entrepreneurial activities aiming at the income generation and establishment of employment opportunities have enhanced the income of population in communities and increased their self-confidence and livelihoods.

Taking into consideration the fact, that young people are the driving force of the society, the youth thematic clubs are established and working. Young people are actively involved in key areas of community life: health, media, social protection, culture, inclusion, social entrepreneurship and environmental protection.

More than 50 young people from rural communities were provided innovative skills and knowledge in IT sphere (web-designing, microengineering, and 3D-modeling).

Parish Social Ministries in Northern Armenia

The building of the music school in our community was almost collapsing. Prioritizing the existing issues in the community, we started with the renovation of the roof, then installed a central heating system. Akhurian municipality also had its financial contribution to the process of project implementation so that we could complete the renovation activities.

"As a result of the activities, the number of the students attending music school increased, and now, besides the piano classes at school, we also have bass and folk instruments, as well as vocal departments. Almost all of our students are involved in the choir of our school, they take part in various competitions and always have success. Music schools play an important role, especially in rural communities and have an enormous impact on the overall development of children." - says Armenuhi.

Armenuhi Msryan,

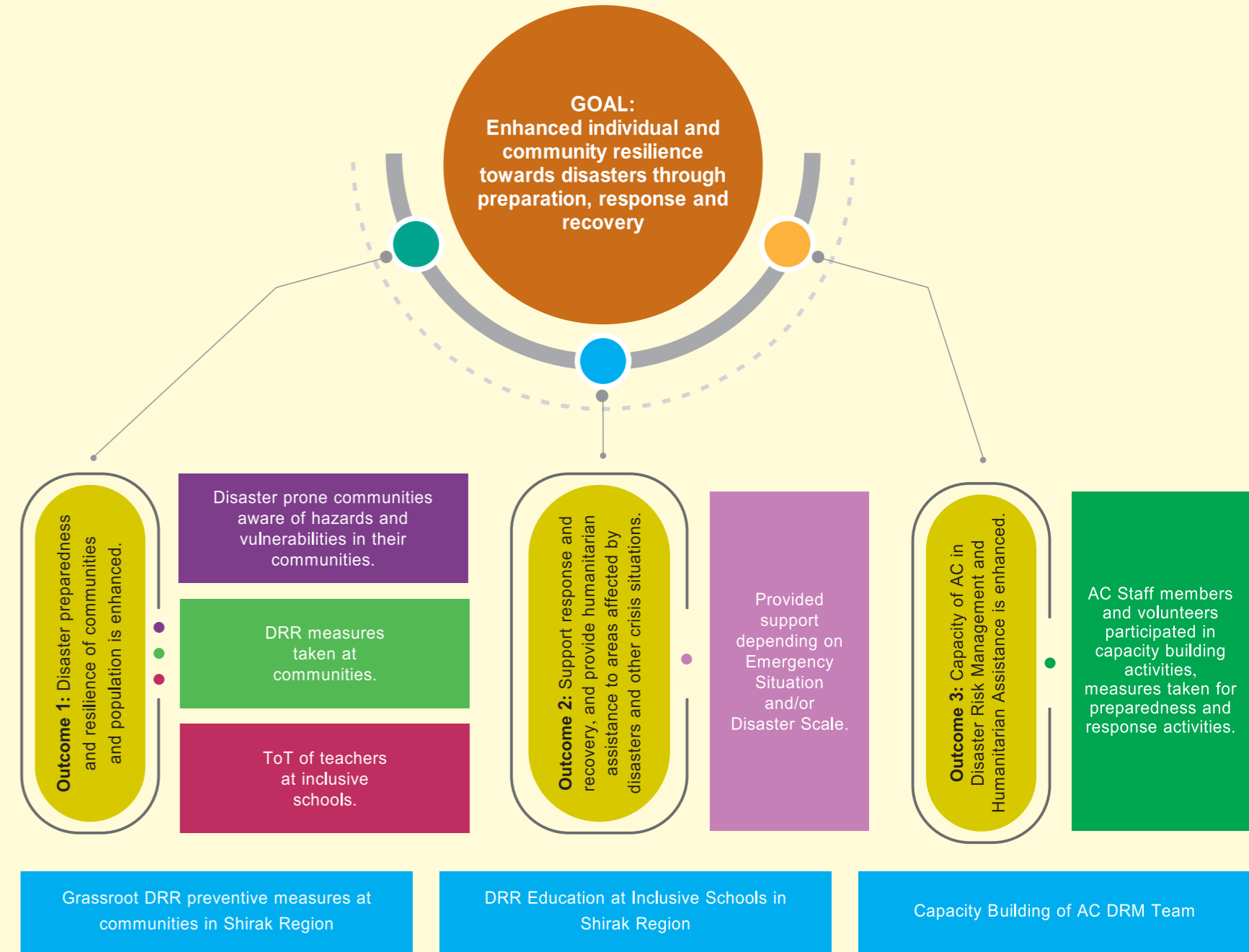
the Headmaster of the music school in Arevik

Sustainable development of Rural Communities

The change and outcome have been especially great in the Jrapı community. The village was not supplied with irrigation water for many years: even the part of the village that had an irrigation system. Due to the persistent efforts of the project staff, this problem was also resolved.

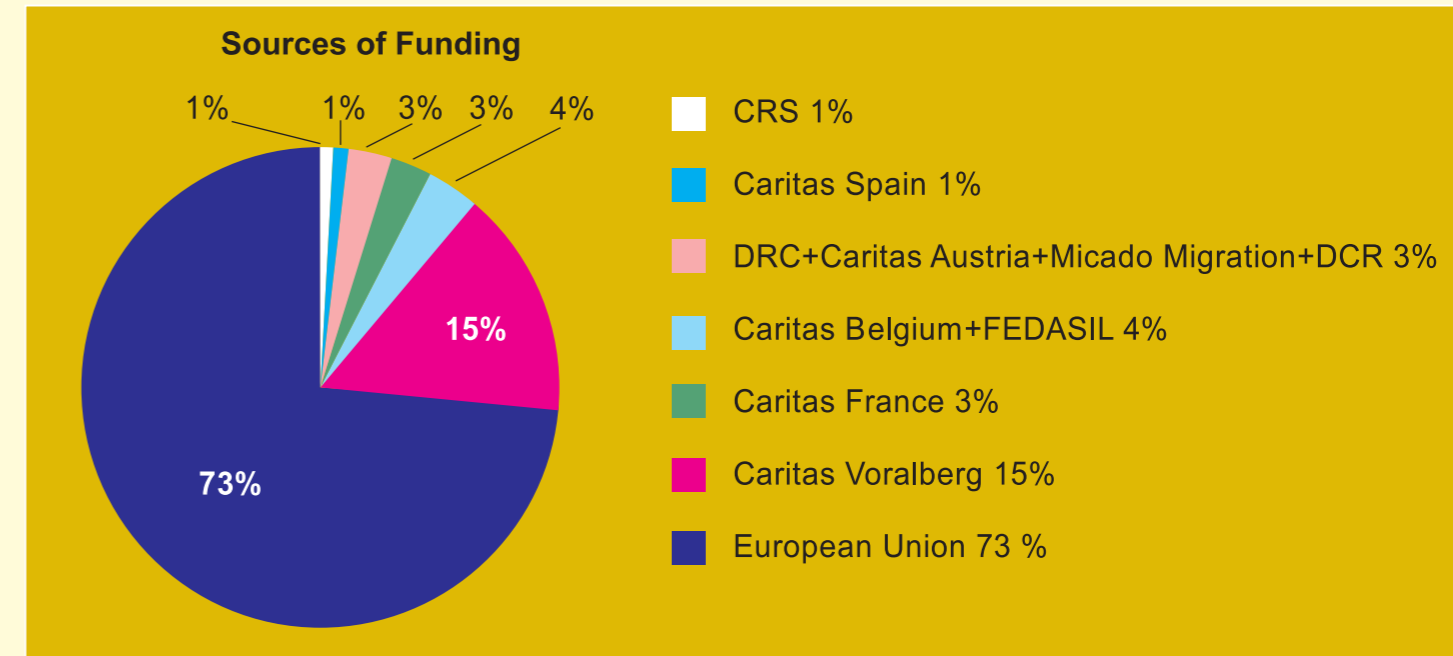
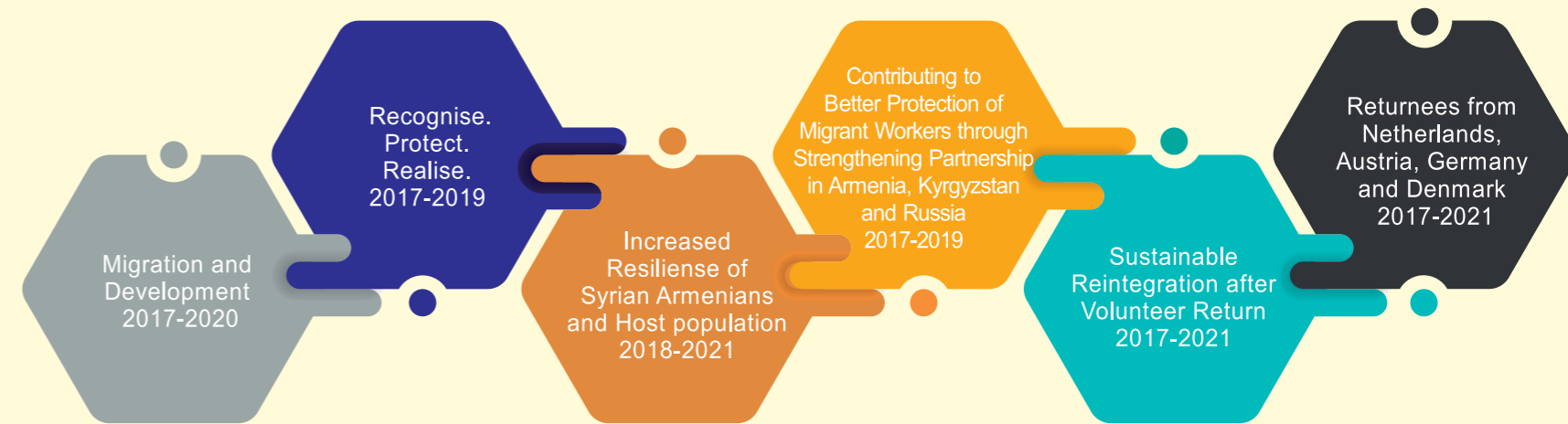
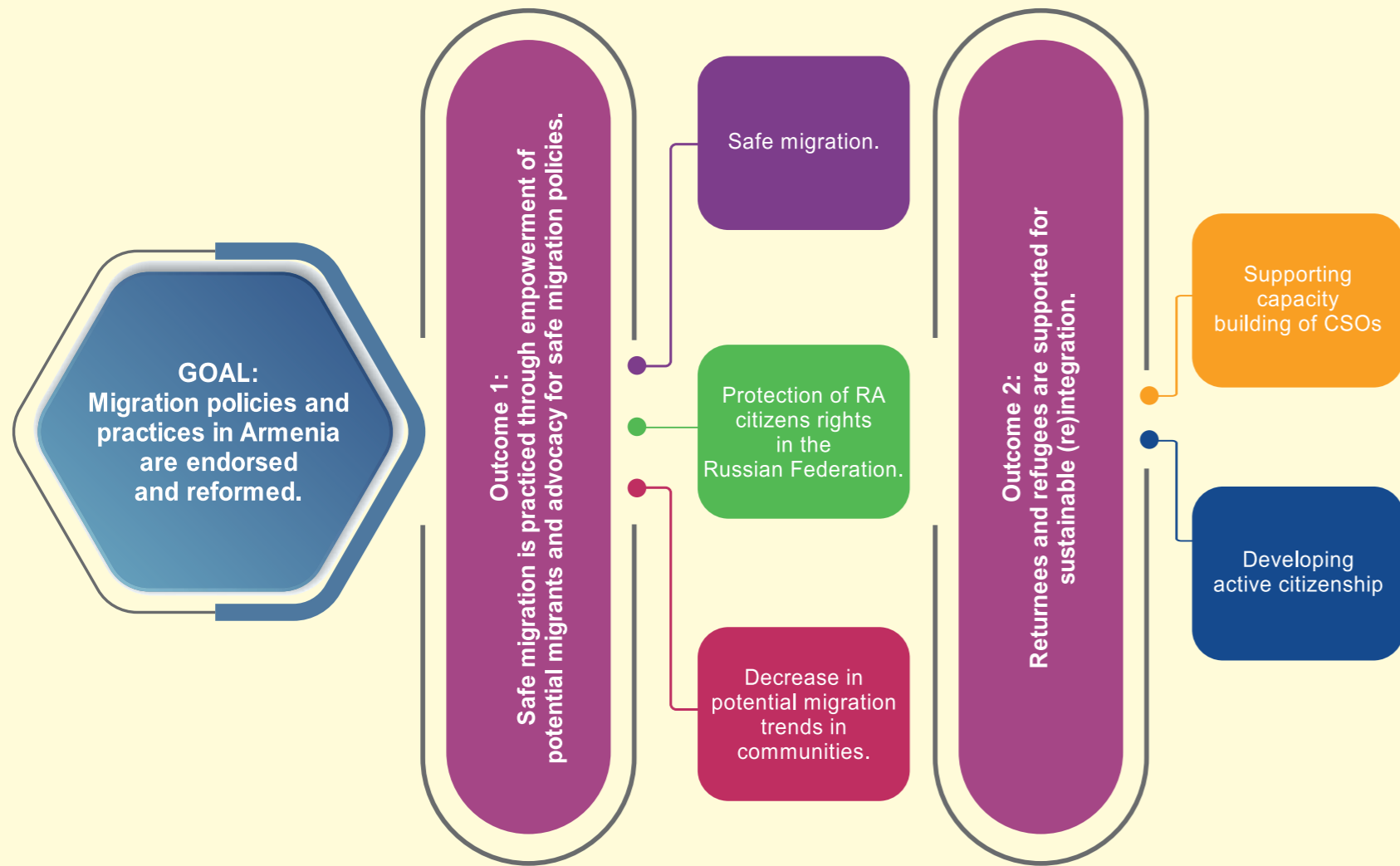
Beneficiaries who received potato or wheat seeds were able to fully cultivate their plots. The largest crop was obtained by Hakobyan Hamlet - 1800 kg of potatoes from 200 kg of seeds of E reproduction, Martina type. Hamlet particularly emphasized the importance of the exhaustive answers and helpful tips given during the trainings and cultivation period, confessing that they have lived and worked in the village all their lives, but had a wrong approach to many issues.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE



MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION





Migration and Integration

"Armenian Caritas" is one of the key players in the field of Migration and Refugee Issues. Through participation in the Public-Private partnership networks like the Inter-Agency Committee on Syrian-Armenians' Issues established by the Decree of the RA Prime Minister, Interagency Committee on Migration Policy of RA established by the Decision of the RA Government taken in November 2017, "Interagency Committee coordinating the "Syrian Armenians' Economic Integration Working group, "Armenian Caritas" has been actively advocating for Migration and Refugee relating policy improvement. As a result, the RA Migration Policy for 2017-2021 has been developed with contribution from all state and non-state stakeholders including "Armenian Caritas".

Two Reintegration Cooperation and Coordination Forums (round tables on return and reintegration related issues), two round table discussions on Syrian Armenians' Issues were organized with participation of state and non-state stakeholders to raise the issues returnees, refugees face and find durable solutions. As a result, cooperation and coordination among the stakeholders has been strengthened which in its turn has increased the positive impact of the integration and reintegration projects implemented by various actors.

Task force on the employment issues of Syrian Armenians was created at the initiative and under the leadership of the "Armenian Caritas" and the State Employment Agency (SEA) under the RA

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. All state and non-state bodies somehow involved in the Employment Issues of SA are participating in the Task Force, like Ministry of Diaspora, Migration Service (MS) under the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development, UNHCR, "World Vision", "Armenian Red Cross Society", "KASA" Swiss Humanitarian Foundation, three Syrian Armenian NGOs, "Center for Coordination of Syrian Armenians' Issues" NGO, "Aleppo" Compatriotic Charitable Organization NGO, "Syrian Armenian Union" NGO etc. As a result, recommendations of improvement of SEA programs have been developed, Public-Private partnership has been strengthened.

In the frame of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between "Armenian Caritas" and Migration Service, within the "Migration and Development" (MD) project funded by "Caritas Austria" and Government of Liechtenstein a research on the international experience regarding Civic orientation courses was conducted, based on which two different Programs of the Civic Orientation Courses (1 for the Persons Recognized as Refugees and Granted Asylum in the Republic of Armenia, Long-term Immigrants, another for RA citizens returning to Armenia) were elaborated and approved by the stakeholders during the Reintegration Forum. The program was approved by the RA Government and included in the Integration/Reintegration state programs.

"Production of medical supplies can bring Armenia's economy to a new level."

Harout Kasbar

Harout Kasbar is a Syrian-Armenian, until 2012 he lived in Aleppo, an Armenian-populated city in Syria, where he worked as a pharmacist. The war that began in 2011 changed the lives of Syria and Syrians, including Harout Kasbar.

In 2012, Harout came to Yerevan from Aleppo, and, like many other Syrian-Armenians fleeing the war, he planned to stay here for only a few months before peace would return to Syria. But fate had prepared a different life for Harout.

Time was running out, and the war was not over. Harout decided to stay in the Homeland and try to start his own business. At first it was very difficult, although everyone in the homeland spoke Armenian. There was a problem of understanding, not only because of the difference between Eastern and Western Armenians, but mainly because people in Armenia use many Russian words, especially in the field where Harout was trying to settle.

At first, he started importing medical plasters from Syria to Armenia. However, the escalating war in Syria in 2013 became a major obstacle for that business. Harout decided to produce the plasters in Armenia instead of importing them.

With the support of SME DNC, he established the production of iPlast medical supplies. But as he says, "I am a pharmacist, not a producer. The support of the SME DNC was about to become a great problem for me. I didn't know the Armenian market, the laws, I wasn't ready to face the economic competition."

During one of the events organized for Syrian-Armenians, Harout heard about the program of Armenian Caritas - "Recognize. Protect. Realize." He was registered as a participant and took part in the pilot program of business incubation.

"As a producer entering a new field, I learned a lot. This was more helpful than all the assistance I had received before. This was like teaching to fish instead of giving fish, and I appreciate it."

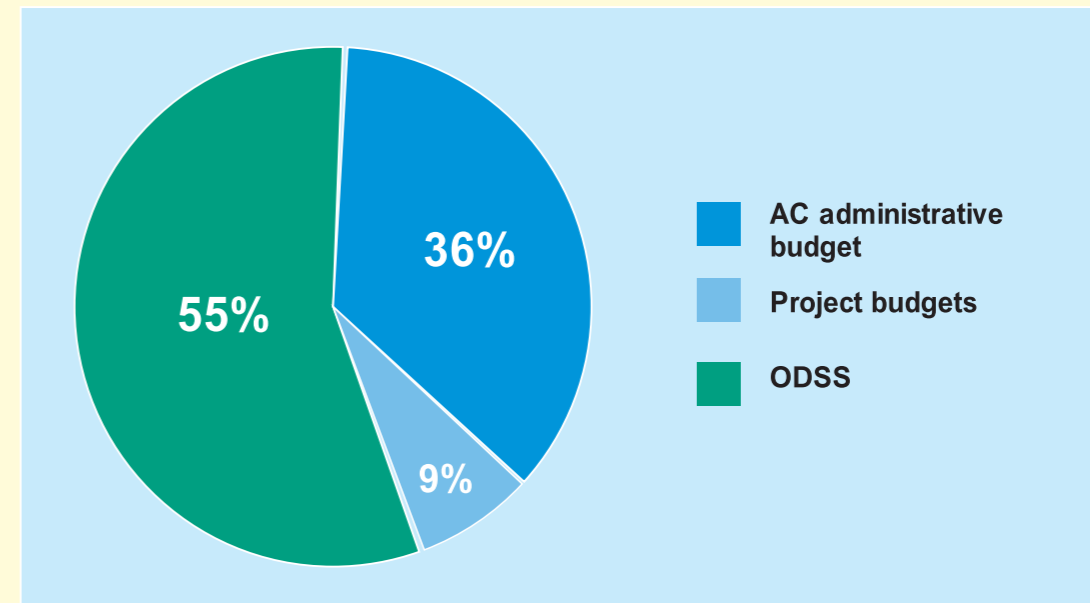
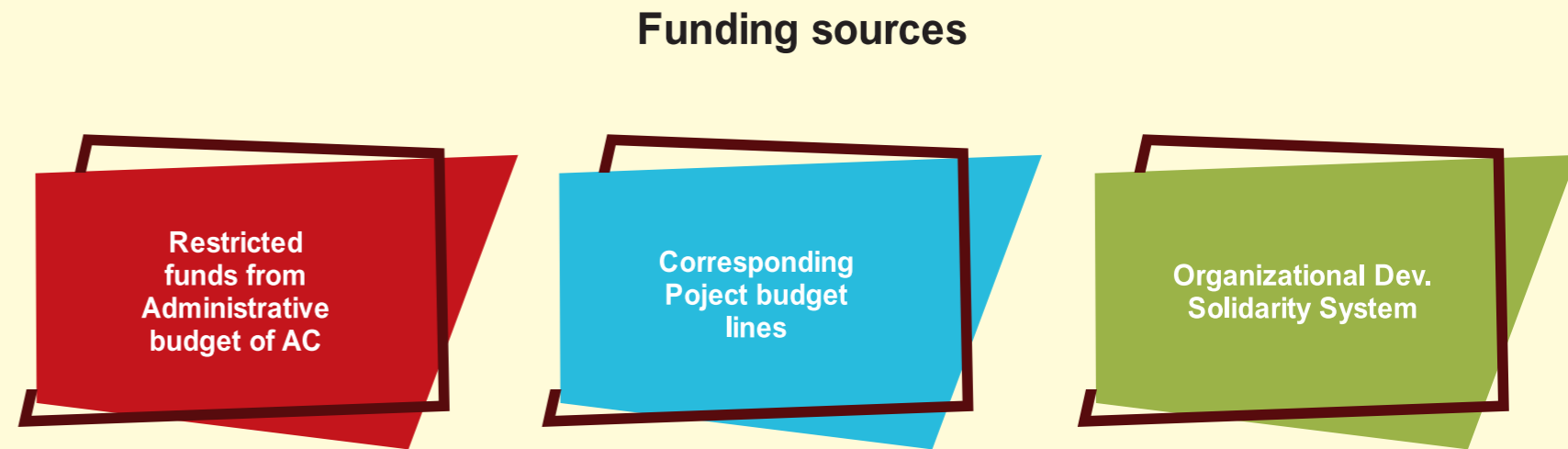
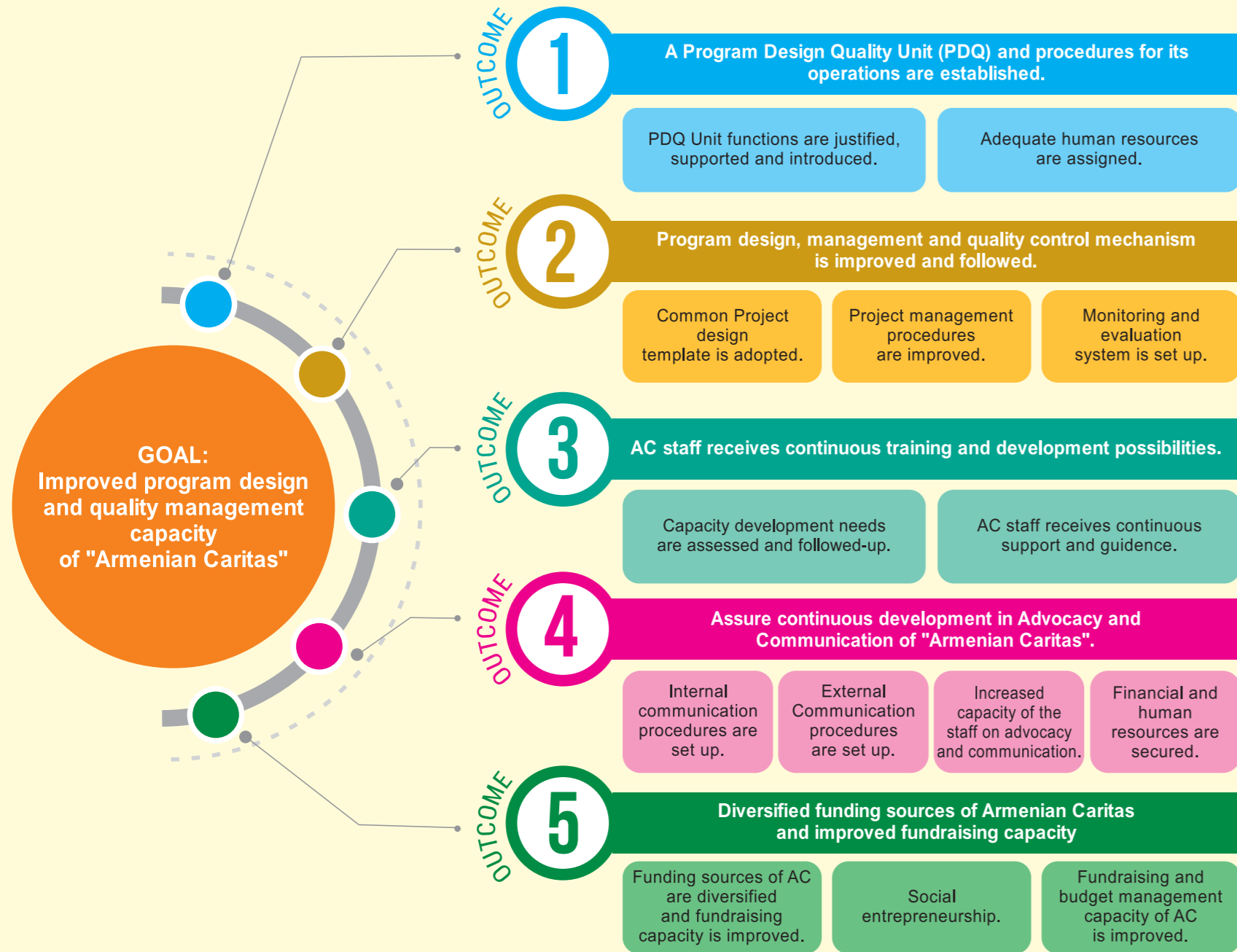
Successfully overcoming the stage of business incubation, Harout acquired sterile bandage production equipment through the interest-free loan received from the "Migration and Development" Circulation Fund of "Armenian Caritas" and the "World Vision Armenia's" Grant, and expanded the production. Today he produces the great bulk of sterile bandages and plasters in the Armenian market, and thinks about expanding the types of medical supplies.

Sustainable reintegration

The returnee from Belgium, Avag Avagyan, receiving business assistance amount foreseen by the project, quickly started his activities. He renovated his barn and purchased pigs with the assistance budget of the program. Shortly after the business proved to be successful, he applied to assistance again to purchase new sorts of pigs to expand his business. Now he is self-employed and successfully carries out his business and he has even received business assistance as an additional budget to expand his business. In Armenia he and his family feel themselves very safe and they don't feel like departing abroad any more.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF AC





VOLUNTEERS



Who are we?

“Armenian Caritas” (NGO) volunteer is a core carrier of an organization's mission and ideology. Since the very establishment of the organization, volunteers have been involved in different fields of operations.

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.

Number of applicants by years:

2010 → 51
 2011 → 47
 2012 → 41
 2013 → 80
 2014 → 50
 2015 → 39
 2016 → 22
 2017 → 27
 2018 → 97
 2019 → 80

Volunteers' involvement by sectors is as follows:

Emili Aregak → 22
 Little Prince → 17
 Social inclusion and care of the elderly → 24
 Migration & Integration → 1
 Sabine Small Group House for children → 2
 My Right → 4
 Administrative activates → 7

What do we do:

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 the administrative work in Armenian Caritas offices and centers.

Some of our volunteers are former beneficiaries of AC different projects, and volunteering is a means to keep their rapport with the organization.

ACVC is an institute full of new development prospects and potential. It is particularly important not only for “Armenian Caritas” itself but also for Armenia - information of the volunteering culture and its further development.

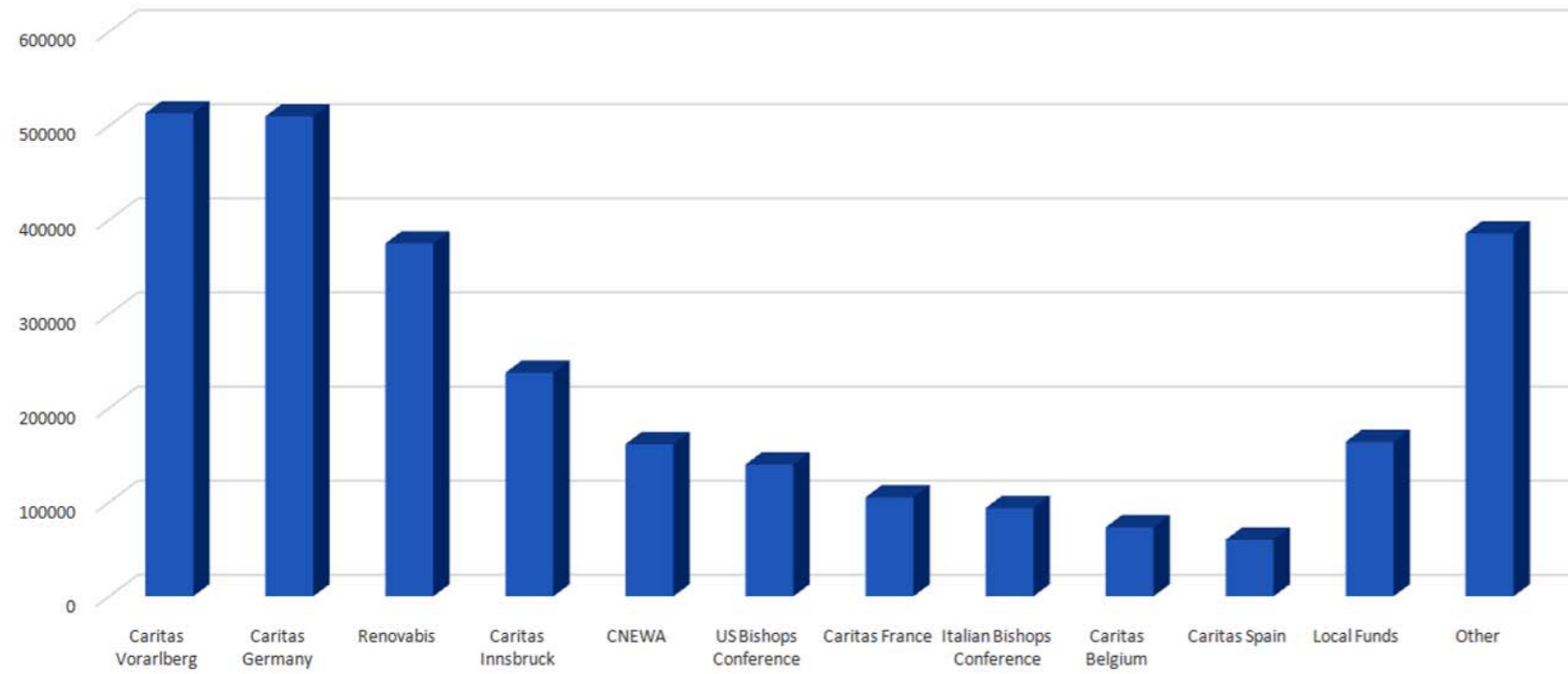




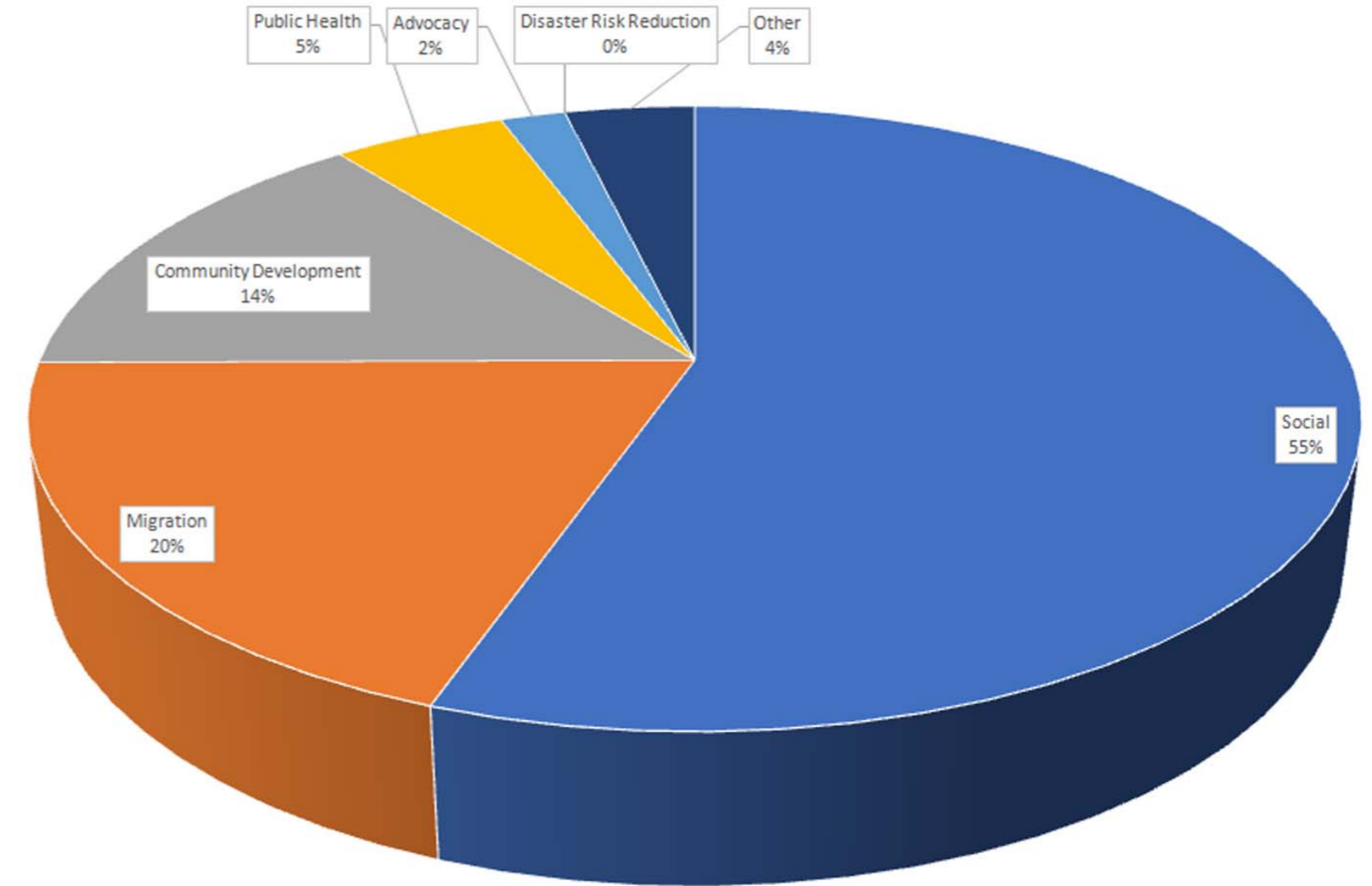
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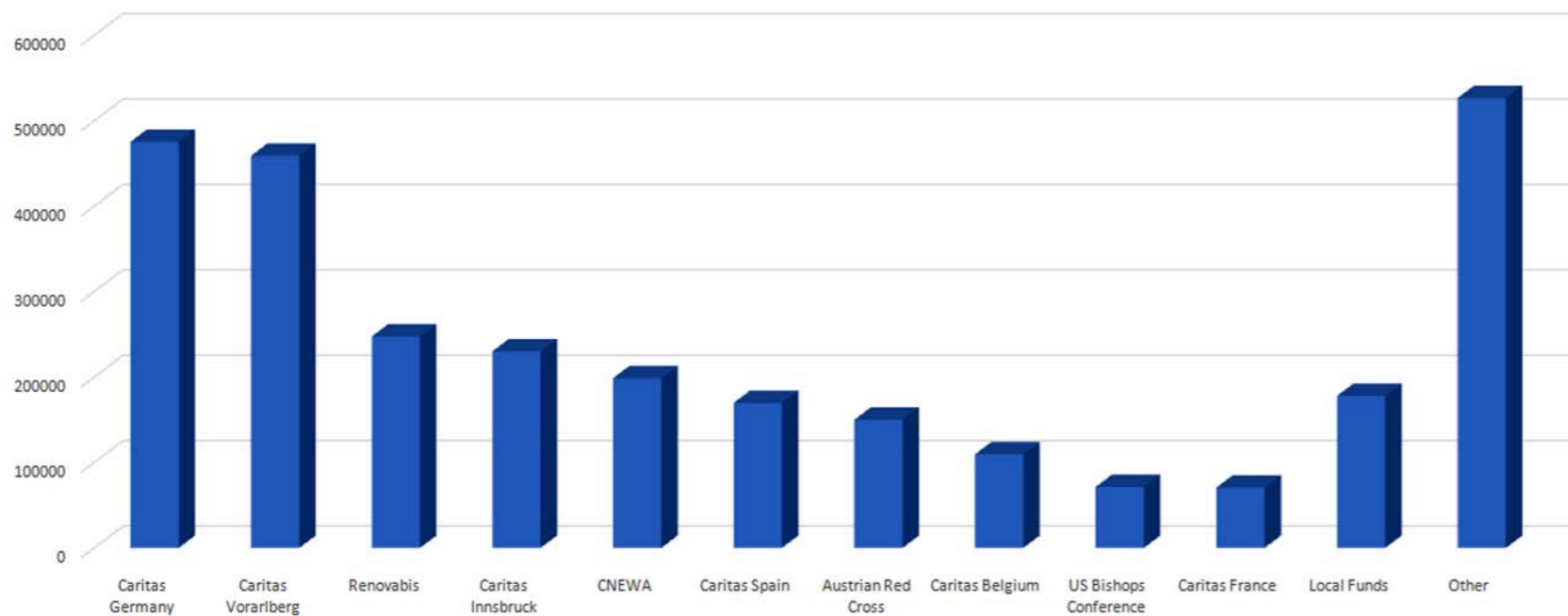
Donors 2018 (EUR)



Strategic Directions 2018



Donors 2019 (EUR)



Strategic Directions 2019

