



Khachmeruk Educational Consulting Center

Improving Access to Essential Services for Vulnerable Populations in Shirak, Armenia

- ▶ Presentation at Prague Network Meeting
- ▶ Karine Gyadukyan & Nara Melkonyan
- ▶ 12 June 2025

Historical Background

- ▶ The Armenian Apostolic Church's social service was reborn after Armenia's independence.
- ▶ During the Soviet era, Church services were banned.
- ▶ Post-independence, time was needed to rebuild models and train specialists.

Origins in Shirak

- ▶ The first experimental center was founded in the Shirak Diocese.
- ▶ Its success inspired about 15 similar centers in Armenia.
- ▶ These centers share a vision and values but operate independently.

Khachmeruk's Focus Areas

- ▶ We work in two interwoven directions:
- ▶ 1. Adult education
- ▶ 2. Child protection
- ▶ The shared goal is improving socio-economic well-being.

Complexity of Vulnerability

- ▶ Root causes of vulnerability are many and complex.
- ▶ Addressing a single issue alone often leads to limited results.
- ▶ Holistic approaches show more sustainable impact.

Why Holistic Matters

- ▶ Only 10–15% benefit long-term from isolated professional retraining.
- ▶ Working only with children without involving families may even cause harm.
- ▶ Sustainable change requires family-centered approaches.

Our Approach

- ▶ We treat the entire family as the beneficiary.
- ▶ Multidisciplinary teams conduct professional needs assessments.
- ▶ We identify both family-wide and individual strengths/needs.

The Social Change Plan

- ▶ Based on assessments, we create a joint change plan.
- ▶ It is a mutual agreement to tackle issues using all available resources.

Working Beyond Our Walls

- ▶ We can't solve all problems alone.
- ▶ We collaborate with:
 - ▶ - Local authorities
 - ▶ - State institutions
 - ▶ - Partner NGOs
 - ▶ - Clinics & service providers

Connecting to State Services

- ▶ Social workers guide families to state programs:
- ▶ - Housing
- ▶ - Education access
- ▶ - Medical care
- ▶ - Social benefits



Value of Partnerships

- ▶ Our network greatly strengthens our work.
- ▶ Partnerships expand available services and create more complete support packages.

Challenges We Face

- ▶ 1. High demand vs. limited resources
- ▶ 2. Lack of regional social funds
- ▶ 3. Pressure from refugee crises since 2020

Structural Obstacles

- ▶ Absence of state programs for:
 - ▶ - Social housing
 - ▶ - Guardianship
 - ▶ - Long-term family solutions
- ▶ NGOs can't fully substitute these needs.

Conclusion & Vision Forward

- ▶ Despite challenges, our mission continues.
- ▶ We strive to build resilience through education, care, and collaboration.
- ▶ We believe in the transformative power of holistic social work.

Thank You

- ▶ We welcome your questions and your ideas.
- ▶ Let's keep learning from one another.
- ▶ Karine Gyadukyan & Nara Melkonyan