

Active in more than 70 countries around the world, the Open Society Foundations (OSF) support justice and human rights, freedom of expression, and access to public health and education.

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## HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

### OSF-Armenia Launches Policy Fellowship Initiative

In October 2010, the Open Society Foundations-Armenia (OSF-Armenia) invited research proposals for the newly-launched Policy Fellowship Initiative to enable members of the public policy community to pursue projects that will stimulate and deepen public debate about the most critical problems in this country.

Given the virtual absence of independent policy-oriented think tanks, OSF-Armenia was impressed to receive a substantial number of applications covering a wide range of policy issues and original themes. After an extensive selection process, including expert reviews and in-depth interviews, seven fellows were announced to be the 2010 recipients of the Policy Fellowship.

The fellowships are primarily intended for individuals who aim to undertake an independent policy-oriented research on fundamental policy challenges that will potentially enrich public understanding of those challenges and breed inventive solutions. The new Initiative aims to enhance the research capacity and policy formulation skills of individuals from the academic, business, government, and media communities. ■

#### In 2010

- *The Embassy of The Netherlands extended support to the strategic litigation program.*
- *OSF-Armenia supported the new monitoring board over special schools.*
- *OSF-Armenia, the Human Rights and Governance Grants Program and the Open Society Information Program supported the human rights community in improving data collection, management and sharing practices.*

### The Embassy of The Netherlands in Tbilisi Supports Strategic Litigation

OSF-Armenia and the Embassy of The Netherlands in Tbilisi started a new project focusing on human rights protection and policy improvement through strategic litigation. The project comes to support OSF-Armenia’s human rights protection and NGO capacity development efforts and is a continuation of its long-term collaboration in these efforts with the Embassy of The Netherlands in Tbilisi. ► see p.2

#### In 2010

- *OSF-Armenia Strategic Litigation Program took on 20 cases in the areas of right to life, property rights, women’s rights, right to access to justice and children’s rights.*

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

►cont. from p.1 The project will aim at building capacity of the NGOs and legal community to use strategic litigation in human rights protection as well as support litigation of cases in the areas of fair trial, freedom of assembly, domestic violence, torture, and freedom of information, right to health and social/economic rights.

OSF-Armenia sees strategic litigation as a tool that can facilitate access to justice and restore rights as well as invoke legislative and policy improvement in the area of human rights.

The Strategic Litigation Project was launched by OSF-Armenia in 2006 and is run operationally since 2008, extending support to a diverse range of cases. Currently, nine cases supported by the Project are pending ECHR review, four cases are pending decision by RA Constitutional Court and a number of cases are in process at various local instances.▪

### OSF-Armenia Launches Armenia Debate Program

In December, OSF-Armenia and the Open Society Youth Initiative started the Armenia Debate Program, which aims at engaging youth in critical, reasoned discussion about issues important to their lives and communities. As part of the Program, from December 1-3, OSF – Armenia, the Open Society Youth Initiative and the International Debate Education Association (IDEA) provided an introductory workshop for 18 participants from non-governmental organizations, universities, high schools and other interested young people. The training focused on important aspects of debate, such as what debating and argumentation are, choice and formulation of topics, use of proper techniques in public debates, introduction of Karl Popper debate program, etc. Further training sessions are envisioned for those active young people who will practice the knowledge gained during the training to train teams and organize debate events.

Debate is a flexible learning tool that can be used in classrooms, after school-activities, rounds of competitions and tournaments where it stimulates and inspires discussion on important issues in a broader community. The Armenia Debate Program seeks to foster the practice of debate within schools, youth clubs, NGOs actively working with youth, or community centers as a space for youth to practice debate.▪



Debate participants at the workshop, December 1-3, 2010

In 2010

- OSF-Armenia supported creation and presentation of the film "Teghut: Children's Bread," raising the awareness of the public of Teghut deforestation and ecological dangers.
- OSF-Armenia supported 10 new regional human rights NGOs in implementing projects on various human rights issues.

### OSF-Armenia Supports International Conference on Environmental Safety of Teghut Mining Project

On December 14, 2010, OSF-Armenia and the OSCE Office in Yerevan supported an international conference on the environmental safety of Teghut Copper-Molybdenum Mining Project. The conference was co-organized by the Teghut Defense Group, a civic initiative in Armenia and Georgian Green Alternative NGO with an aim to reveal and discuss the safety of operation of the mine. One day before the conference, the initiators of the conference had organized a field trip to Teghut to visit the areas that will be affected by the mining project. A group comprised of media and civil society representatives from Armenia and Georgia took part in the field trip.

Armenian experts say the project will have a serious negative impact on the environment, such as a loss of about 1000 ha of forests, drainage of water sources, soil erosion, destruction of entire ecosystems, including habitats of endangered plants and animals. The likelihood of landslides will increase.



Listening to the economist's remarks on Teghut project, December 14, 2010

Dumping tails containing 500 million tons of tailings and 600 million tons of various waste categories will contaminate the valley of watershed Shnogh River and affect food safety and human health. Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center environmental policy expert Sona Ayyvazyan added that, "Decisions related to the Teghut mine operation have violated laws of the Republic of Armenia as well as international obligations. The government has not sought international non-biased environmental impact assessment. There could be transboundary effects at some point in time during or after termination of mining project. In that case, the country and future generations might be obliged to compensate the neighboring countries for the damage."▪

## Environmental Activists Get Together to Learn New Skills

In November 2010, OSF-Armenia, the Open Society Youth Initiative and 350.org organized an Environmental Leadership Camp to bring together new and emerging environmental leaders for networking and collaboration as well as for extensive training on how to effectively build a momentum for campaigns. About thirty young activists participated in the interactive camp, designed campaign strategies and learned new online and offline campaign techniques under the guidance of Will Bates from 350.org.

350.org is an international campaign that is building a movement to unite the world around solutions to the climate crisis—the solutions that science and justice demand.



At the Environmental Leadership Camp, November 5-8, 2010

## OSF-Armenia Supports New Civic Monitoring Board

OSF-Armenia extended its support to a new Civic Monitoring Board over Special Schools, established by the decree of the Minister of Education and Science following the scandalous events of alleged harassment and sexual abuse in the Nubarashen special school. The Board is comprised of civil society representatives working on human rights, children's rights and education issues. The Charter of the Board was developed on the model and in cooperation with the already existing Penitentiary Monitoring Board to ensure full access to special schools.▪

*In 2010*

- *Photo Exhibition Featuring Life in "Domiks" 22 years after the earthquake opened at Lover's Park.*
- *"Shirak Center" NGO presented "Monitoring Report on Social Housing Allocations in Gyumri in 2009-2010" to make social housing allocations processes subject to public scrutiny.*

## OSF Organizes Training on Documentation and New Technology for Human Rights Organizations

On October 18, 2010 OSF-Armenia, the Information Program and the Human Rights and Governance Grants Program of the Open Society Foundations organized in Yerevan a professional development seminar for human rights organizations focusing on documentation management and new technologies. The purpose of the seminar was to address interconnected issues of human rights documentation, data management and new technologies for human rights organizations. Allison

Gill from the Human Rights Watch, Katherin Machalek representing HURIDOCS, Tony Bowden from MySociety, Jonne Catshoek representing CRRC and Eric Barret from the Open Maps Caucasus made presentations at the seminar, focusing on the tools that civil society representatives use in documenting and gathering evidence, information management assessment for organizations, use of open mapping tools, crowdsourcing and use of new tactics for advocacy.

*In 2010*

- *"Tumanyan Fairy Tale Day" gathered more than 2000 children in Dsegh village of Lori marz at its 5th "International Festival of Puppet Theatres."*
- *"Black Life" Photo Exhibition, by an Armenian photojournalist and documentary photographer Ruben Mangasaryan, opened in Yerevan.*

## HURIDOCS Trains Armenian Human Rights NGOs

The Information Program and the Human Rights and Governance Grants Program of the Open Society Foundations and OSF-Armenia supported the Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems (HURIDOCS), a Swiss-based international human rights NGO, to develop the capacity of Armenia's human rights NGOs in collecting, managing, securing and sharing information. HURIDOCS will work closely with the Victims of State Needs NGO, Asparez Journalists' Club, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office and Protection of Rights Without Borders NGO to provide tailored solutions and interventions to improve their file management, document sharing systems, websites, advocacy tools and tactics.

Prior to the launch of the program, HURIDOCS had conducted a needs assessment of each of the organizations to reveal the problems that the NGOs encountered when using ICT in their daily work and to tailor solutions to each of the needs.▪

## Armenian Experts Take Part in "Capacity Building of Foreign Policy Community in Latvia"

In December 2010, two experts from Armenia traveled to Latvia as part of the "Capacity Building of the Foreign Policy Community in Latvia" project. The initiative was to organize visits of experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Central Asian countries and Georgia to Latvia to participate in discussions on topics such as the country's foreign policy, economic situation and economic relations with neighboring countries, geopolitical situation and tendencies, as well as security policy.

The Armenian experts presented Armenia's existing political and economic systems, the key challenges the country is facing and Armenia's place and role in South-Caucasus countries' relations vis-à-vis Russia and Turkey.

During the three-day visit, the experts had meetings at the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, and held a number of lectures at the Riga Stradins University.▪

## Charity Exhibition Opens at Artbridge

A charity photo exhibition *Everyone Shall Have the Right to Housing* opened at Artbridge Bookstore Café on December 1. The theme of the exhibition was the living conditions of people in Gyumri residing in temporary shelters “domiks.” The photos were taken by a young photographer Anush Babajanyan, in the framework of a project, supported by OSF-Armenia and implemented by the Third Nature NGO, to raise the voices of thousands of people and draw attention of state authorities and relevant stakeholders to the problems of the people still suffering the consequences of the earthquake.

The charity exhibition was open until December 8. The raised funds will go to families living in “domiks” in Gyumri.

The photos can be viewed online at <http://anushbabajanyan.com/2010/03/19/living-in-gyumri-domiks/> and <http://anushbabajanyan.com/2010/03/22/photoalbum/>.

## OSF-Armenia Board Meets with Staff and Partner Organizations

On November 26-27, OSF-Armenia Board met with the OSF-Armenia staff and representatives of partner organizations to discuss the main ongoing activities and the directions that OSF-Armenia is working in.

The meeting was a unique opportunity to learn the partner organizations’ analysis of the situation in the areas they work in and their views and for these organizations to find out the Board’s perspective and get some feedback.▪

## People with Disabilities Celebrate Disability Rights Protection Month in Gyumri

On December 3, “Agate” Centre for Women with Special Needs initiated a peaceful march to celebrate the month dedicated to protection of the rights of the people with disabilities. The march started from the Independence Square to Vardants Square (Central Square) in Gyumri.

The goal of the peaceful march was to enhance public awareness of the rights of people with disabilities. The participants held many posters with slogans of their rights and appeals for creating equal opportunities for all. At the end of the march, the participants wrote their wishes on colorful stickers, putting them on the balloons and let them fly high in the sky, hoping that one day their wishes would come true.▪



Celebrating Disability Rights Protection Month in Gyumri, December 3, 2010

## MEDIA

### OSF-Armenia Support Makes Reading News on Mobiles Possible

In Armenia, online news resources have become the only source of unbiased information. While most of the people in the country have mobile phones, internet penetration is quite low (7% by end of 2009, by the International Telecommunication Union estimates). Despite the increasing popularity of online resources and an ever-increasing number of mobile phone users, reading Armenian websites was not possible on mobiles, since mobile phone operational systems did not support the Armenian language. In view of the increasing popularity of online sources, a large number of mobile phone users and the existing demand to read online news on phones, the Information Program of the Open Society Foundations-Armenia supported development of Armenian language localization for popular mobile phones platforms, which enabled viewing online content in Armenian. As a result, localization packages were developed for Symbian (Nokia S60 platform), Maemo, Android and Windows Mobile.▪

*In 2010*

- *The first internet TV in Armenia started its broadcast with OSF-Armenia support.*
- *CPFE, with OSF-Armenia support, carried out monitoring of freedom of media in Armenia according to the Freedom House methodology, conducted monitoring of transparency of government sites and the digitalization process in Armenia.*
- *OSF-Armenia supported 5 online media and 2 regional TV companies, selected through competitive tenders.*
- *OSF-Armenia supported production and broadcast of "Interactive" TV Program on Public Television, a truly interactive program on ICT technologies.*

## CPFE Publishes Recommendations on Transition from Analogue to Digital Media and Presents Report on Freedom of Media in Armenia

On December 21, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression (CPFE) published the recommendations of its working group on transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. The document contains recommendations on making amendments to the broadcast legislation, rational solution of technical issues, as well as on how to prepare the population to becoming consumers of digital media. The working group inside the organization was created with the support of OSF-Armenia as part of a bigger project.

On December 13, CPFE experts presented results of their study on freedom of media in Armenia, conducted with OSF-Armenia support.

The organization used the Freedom House methodology in conducting the study.

According to the study, freedom of press in Armenia is still in the “partly free” zone but bordering the “not free” zone. The average score was 58.64, while the Freedom House gave Armenia the score of 66, putting Armenia in the “not free” zone (the higher the score, the worse is the situation with freedom of press). Ashot Melikyan, CPFE Chairman, explaining the difference in scores, said “I attribute the difference of 7,36 points to the fact that we interviewed not only independent experts, but also representatives of mass media, and their self-assessment is usually not very critical.”

Both monitoring reports can be found on [www.khosq.am](http://www.khosq.am) and on [www.partnership.am](http://www.partnership.am).▪

## PUBLIC HEALTH

### Specialists Meet to Discuss Urgency of Palliative Care in Armenia

On December 15, 2010 the Open Society Foundations brought together representatives from non-governmental organizations, state officials, physicians and lawyers to participate in a workshop “Campaign Mapping on Pain Relief and Palliative Care in Armenia” and identify the current problems that patients and physicians face in Armenia, with the lack of availability of opioids.

Palliative care services are not developed in the country and there are no pain control policies in the country. “Being unable to help the terminally ill patients and leaving them suffer with pain is simply inappropriate and inhumane,” says Hrant Karapetyan from the Pain Control and Palliative Care Association. “We need to inform and educate people on their rights at the end of their lives. There is an urgent need to organize advocacy campaigns aimed at improving the quality of life for those with terminal illnesses.”

There is an estimated number of 1500-2000 patients who need palliative care now in Armenia. The need in palliative



Participants at the “Campaign Mapping on Pain Relief and Palliative Care in Armenia,” December 15, 2011

care in the country is dramatically increasing, while patients have limited access to opioids and have to endure unnecessary pain at the end of their lives.▪

## EDUCATION

### “Kids Across the Caucasus” is Launched in Yerevan

On December 13, the Open Society Foundations’ Education Support Program, in cooperation with OSF-Armenia, launched the publication “Kids across the Caucasus: Integrating Vulnerable Children and At-Risk Youth in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the North Caucasus Region of Russia.” The publication was presented by Kate Lapham, the Senior Manager of the Education Support Program, Open Society Foundations Network. Representatives of local and international organizations, as well as officials from ministries were present at the event.

The publication is a resource for organizations dealing with

integration of children with disabilities into mainstream education and the society at large. It also features success stories and contains policy recommendations to improve policies and practices of inclusion of children with disabilities.▪



Kate Lapham, Senior Program Manager of OSF Education Support Program, presenting the book “Kids across the Caucasus,” December 13, 2010

In 2010

- OSF-Armenia reaches out to 1500 schoolchildren and community members in five marzes to introduce universal human values
- OSF-Armenia helped 100 children with disabilities to study in mainstream schools; teachers obtained more knowledge and skills to educate these children.
- OSF-Armenia supported the creation and publication of a guidebook on Methodology for the design and implementation of competency-based study programs. The Guidebook was approved by the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Institute of Education as a reference for universities.
- The National Institute of Education approved retrospective planning as a tool to achieve subject standards piloted within OSF-Armenia funded project as an advanced way of teacher training.

## EMERGENCY FUND

### Providing Assistance to Kindergarten Children in Dovegh

“Voske Tsghi” NGO in Noyemberyan supports the kindergarten in Dovegh, a borderline village with Azerbaijan, founded and supported by active members of the community in collaboration with the local administration. The kindergarten faced difficulties in securing funds to provide for the children’s food and reached out to different organization for assistance to provide funds to the kindergarten to make purchase of food possible until January.

To help the kindergarten and the community, OSF-Armenia made a \$2,040 contribution to the NGO to provide for the children’s food.

Thanks to the project, which started in September 2010 and



Kids having a meal at the kindergarten in Dovegh village, October, 2010

finished in December 2010, thirty children aged 2-6 attend the kindergarten where children get basic pre-school and cultural education, and are provided with a meal. The project was supported by all the members of the community and the local administration. The Governor’s Office promised to support the kindergarten from January onwards. ■

### Extending Support to Gavar Special School

OSF-Armenia joined the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) in supporting physical rehabilitation and vocational training of more than 90 physically and mentally disabled children from Gavar Special School N1.

In 2010

- Mitigating the plight of the people hardest hit by the economic crisis the Emergency Fund reached about 53,000 beneficiaries during 2010 with a special focus on the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable children and youth in the light of increased child poverty.

The Emergency Fund contributed \$25,000 (FAR’s contribution was \$45,000), making it possible to renovate and equip the sewing/knitting/embroidery, shoe making and wood carving workshops, and to provide the workshops with supplies. The project also envisions establishment of a rehabilitation center (renovation, equipment, and training of therapists) to make physical training available to children with physical disabilities.

By the end of the project (July 2011) all the pupils of the school will get a possibility to obtain vocational skills and physical rehabilitation thanks to the renovated workshops and physical rehabilitation center, equipped with the skills that would make them more compatible in the job market after leaving school. The rehabilitation center will also reach out to all the children in Gavar who need physical rehabilitation. ■

## FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM 2012

The Open Society Institute is pleased to offer Faculty Development Fellowship to the outstanding faculty teaching social sciences and humanities in the universities of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Faculty Development Fellowship is a non-degree program that seeks to encourage faculty to generate innovative approaches to curricular and pedagogic reform, to develop and introduce new content in university courses, to raise the quality of instruction in higher education in the countries served, and to build and sustain local and international academia networks.

### Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Currently hold a teaching position in the field of **art history, cultural anthropology, history, law, philosophy, political science, public health, religion, social work, or sociology** at an accredited university in Armenia
- 2) Have an excellent academic record.
- 3) Possess strong written and spoken English language abilities.
- 4) Hold an advanced degree (minimum: five-year diploma) from a recognized institution of higher education.
- 5) Able to begin the program in January 2012 and continue through May 2013.
- 6) Have approval of home institution rector, vice-rector, dean or chair to be absent January-May 2012 and January-May 2013.
- 7) Legally residents of Armenia

### Ineligibility

The following are ineligible:

- 1) Teachers of any other subjects outside of those listed in point one "Criteria" above.
- 2) Teachers of English as a foreign language.
- 3) Faculty Development Fellowship Program alumni.
- 4) Persons enrolled in a US academic program.
- 5) Persons earning a salary or living in the United States.

**DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 10, 2011**

*For questions and further queries, please visit [www.osi.am](http://www.osi.am) or refer to Anna Gevorgyan at [anna@osi.am](mailto:anna@osi.am); tel: 010 533862.*

## OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM ACADEMIC FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

invites applications for the

### **Returning Scholars Fellowship Program 2011-2012 Academic Year**

The Returning Scholars Fellowship Program invites applications from talented scholars who seek university positions and academic careers in their home countries after studying abroad. The program operates in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.

The Returning Scholars Fellowship Program supports scholars from these countries who have received (or will receive by September 2011) an internationally competitive Master's or postgraduate degree in the following fields: anthropology, area/cultural studies, economics, gender studies, history, human rights & public law, international relations, journalism/media studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, public policy/ environmental studies, public policy/public health, social work, and sociology. The program does not support scholars in philology, the visual and performing arts, and business.

Academic Fellowship Programs (AFP) fellows are placed in carefully selected university departments that are amenable to change and demonstrate a realistic and clear vision for future development. The program, which represents part of a conscious strategy to combat "brain drain," helps universities in the region retain promising young scholars, who are essential to the revitalization of departments and to the sustainability of higher education reforms.

Fellowships comprise monthly stipends and various allowances, including departmental, professional development, and mobility funds, and are renewable. Returning Scholars and partner departments also benefit from the presence of AFP-supported International Scholars, who provide expert mentorship in such areas as professional development, curriculum development and reform, research methods, and teaching/ learning methodologies specific for their discipline.

The program supports placement of Returning Scholars only in AFP partner departments. An interested scholar already as-

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

sociated with a department that is not supported by AFP either will be ineligible or may discuss the possibility of relocating to a qualifying department at another university. A list of current AFP partner departments can be found on the program's website (<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hesp/focus/afp>). The list is subject to change in the 2011-12 academic years.

Potential applicants are advised to explore placement possibilities with an AFP Region Manager or Country Coordinator before applying. Please see the full list of contacts at <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hesp/focus/afp/contact>

**Application deadline: April 11, 2011.** Fellowships begin in August or September 2011 and last one academic year.

Applications should be submitted via the [Online Application System \(https://oas.soros.org/oas/\)](https://oas.soros.org/oas/). For application procedure and guidelines, please see the program's web site: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hesp/focus/afp>

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## Call for Departmental Partners 2011-2012 Academic Year

The Academic Fellowship Program (AFP) is expanding its cooperation with university departments in the social sciences and humanities. AFP is seeking departments interested in forming new partnerships with the program in the academic year 2011–2012.

To be eligible, departments must be at universities in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, or Ukraine.

An ideal AFP partner department is part of a classical state university and is devoted to one of the following disciplines: anthropology, area/cultural studies, economics, gender studies, history, human rights & public law, international relations, journalism/media studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, public policy/environmental studies, public policy/public health, social work or sociology. Interested departments should contact AFP regional offices for further details. Please see the full list of contacts at <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hesp/focus/afp/contact>

Interested departments in Armenia should contact:  
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E-mail: [susanna@osi.am](mailto:susanna@osi.am)

Final application deadline: April 11, 2011

Detailed information on the AFP program can be found at: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/hesp/focus/afp>  
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