

OSF ARMENIA 2014-2017 STRATEGY

SUMMARY

The situation in Armenia has changed dramatically since the flawed presidential elections of 2013 led to widespread public outcry. Recent months have shown that the citizenry, far from being passive or apathetic, is increasingly ready to demand its rights. This changed environment gives us an unprecedented opportunity to shift from the defensive stance we and our partners have adopted over the years to an active and change-oriented approach, one that seeks to foster an environment where human rights and dignity are valued and protected.

To sustain the current energy and fine-tune methods for public mobilization around open society values, we will work through local government elections in selected communities in 2014-2016 empowering and encouraging citizens to demand and achieve issue-based change. This will raise public trust in and expectation of the possibility of accountable and issue-based parliamentary elections in 2017. At the same time approaching the EU integration as a choice of societal direction most compatible with open society, we will promote a policy discourse around integration in order to secure durable and irreversible change.

Through our own concepts we will fight the existing hierarchical and discriminatory narratives and institutional practices by challenging laws, policies, and social norms which contribute to structural violence against the vulnerable. We will use our extensive experience in the context of the ongoing judicial reform to lead a drive to end inhumane practices in the police and penitentiary systems. We will continue in our established role as a leader in fighting for the right to health through policy and practice changes in palliative care and mental health. With donors increasingly funding education reforms, we will refocus our work on democratic governance and the integrity of high school and higher education by challenging and overturning the existing system of comprehensive executive control and corrupt practices.

The fields we have chosen reflect our continuing commitment to advancing rights and accountability and to the advocates and organizations who champion these values. Our support will focus on four areas: securing access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized groups, advancing gender equality and women's leadership, combating corruption through government transparency and accountability, and reforming the regulatory environment for media to preserve the space for free and independent media in the ongoing digital switchover.

The Strategy demands mobilization of all capacities, tools, and skills that the Foundation has built as well as networking with OSF thematic programs and advocacy offices. Strategic litigation, policy fellowships, advocacy, our expertise and experience of media outreach, including new media, will be extensively used and expanded.

We are realistic in our assessment of risk. The authoritarian structures of "managed democracy" remain strong. There could be a populist hijacking of the new activism, and the authorities could engage in traditionalist-patriarchal manipulations to discredit or co-opt the course towards openness. We will work to counter these risks by strengthening a popular base, bringing narratives of justice, equity, and accountability into civic discourse, and supporting the identified fields.

FOUNDATION HISTORY AND CONTEXT

History

OSF Armenia was established in 1997 as an operational/grant-making foundation with a wide range of programs focused on capacity building of local civil society and on changing practices in a closed totalitarian system in the areas of culture, education, media, and information. In the early 2000s the Foundation thoroughly restructured, revising both the methods of work and also shifting strategic priorities towards human rights, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms in all program areas. It also downsized, spinning off or closing some programs. Evaluations of the Foundation itself, as well as of different programs, specifically the Media, and Higher Education, played a critical role in the foundation's evolution.

As the Foundation and its partners have increased capacity, we have become a civil society hub and a strong local human rights advocate. Essentially, the Foundation is the main resource for civil society engaged in human rights protection and promotion, and accountability, not only in terms of funding, but also as a means of access to a wide range of expertise and innovation. We have empowered the human rights community with advanced monitoring, reporting, and policy analysis skills and systematically developed legal and advocacy capabilities by introducing strategic litigation. The Foundation engages directly in policy development, shadow report preparation, and advocacy in its own name in the areas of the right to health, human rights in closed

institutions (including the army), human rights of marginalized groups, reform of the penitentiary system and the credibility and accountability of the electoral system, and education.

To carry out effective advocacy, the Foundation started a policy fellowship program thus filling in the void of independent and capable policy thinkers. We also initiated and supported civil society's collective advocacy initiatives. The fellowships and collective advocacy have had great demand from civil society, both as tools for strengthening organizations' own work and as a means to mount public discussions and debate on issues of direct relevance to open society; this is of paramount importance considering the absence of any meaningful opposition, any issue debate within political elites or an independent media.

Context

Over time the regime's authoritarian tendencies have consolidated oligarchic governance and government control of most public space, including media, academia, and a large segment of civil society. The authorities systemically manipulate democratic reforms and dilute safeguards for human rights and freedoms. These policies and actions have produced spiraling emigration and increasing public mistrust of institutions of governance and the overwhelmingly centralized system of one-party domination of parliament, biased prosecutions, a subservient judiciary, and a non-functional opposition.

The presidential elections in 2013 (and parliamentary elections in 2012) revealed the authorities' lack of intention to end corrupt and unaccountable practices and to maintain its hold on power by all means, including massive abuse of administrative resources, electoral bribes, and undisputedly inflated voters' lists. Notwithstanding this deeply entrenched context of authority and governance, in recent months the domestic socio-political situation has shifted quite remarkably. In February, Armenian voters turned out for the presidential election, voted with their conscience, and delivered a surprisingly large anti-government vote. **Consequently we are now in a unique moment in modern Armenian history – a moment conducive to transformation and meaningful change if we focus our leadership to mainstream ideas and practices of justice, accountability, public ownership, and human rights for all.**

Activism is gaining momentum and making it possible, firstly, to expand our discourse and deepen our engagement with diverse actors, and secondly, to confront potential hijackings of our agenda by (non-issue-based) political confrontations among corrupt elites. This is a real and exciting opportunity to lead pro-actively, engage more and diverse social actors, and strategically build from "defensive" positions we were limited to in the past. In addition to this domestic shift, European integration processes, particularly the negotiation of the EU Association Agreement (AA), provide a specific leverage point for our strategy. We will use our well-developed capacity to monitor and our ability to speak out about implementation of required reforms to demonstrate European integration processes offer an alternative to imposed "sovereign democracy."

Methods and tools

In implementing the strategy, the Foundation will use grants giving and operational work that includes engagement with policy research, civil society capacity building, mobilization of collective advocacy, and advocacy in its own name. The long-standing partnerships with media, academia, and social activists will be expanded and strengthened to reach out to broader constituency, specifically outside the capital. The strategic litigation will be targeted to primarily address the specifically-defined legislative aspects of rights and freedoms within the concepts. The Policy Fellowship that serves as both policy community support and resource for targeted research will be further focused to support our own advocacy goals laid down in concepts. For last several years a core team of local civil society and social activists came together under an umbrella of open society forming Partnership for Open Society (POS). The POS has addressed large-scale programs and development agendas as well as urgent concerns in the country through joint policy development and advocacy. POS's research and monitoring reports and the collective advocacy that the POS has mounted around these policies and positions have gained recognition in and outside Armenia¹. The POS will be critical in implementation of the strategy for expanding the discourse and debate thematically and regionally.

In developing this Strategy, we substantially narrowed down our foci in both fields and concepts compared to our previous "program area" approach. Thus, we withdrew from support to information

¹ The POS was crucial in shaping such large-scale policies such as the National HR Strategy (2012), EU assessments of the ENP AP implementation (2007-2013), the agenda of the criminal procedural reform (2013). POS monitoring and advocacy played a role in the MCA implementation. The POS served for a venue for most professional and active public discourse in the Armenian society. It is a source for alternative un-controlled and uncensored information and public education content.

communication technology capacity/tool development, policy and capacity support to education reform, and from general support to media organizations. While the human rights are of high priority, the focus of our work has narrowed to those areas where we find openings for change.

FIELD 1 – ACCESS TO JUSTICE/LEGAL EMPOWERMENT OF THE POOR & MARGINALIZED

Lack of adequate legal and practical safeguards for vulnerable groups results in structural barriers for them in claiming their rights in health settings, at workplace and in basic service provision, stripping them of the possibility to fully participate in public life and equally benefit from the protection of the law. Armenia's failure to adhere to fair trial standards² aggravates the situation resulting in further marginalization of already vulnerable groups and growing mistrust towards the possibility of a legal remedy. At the same time, the increased popular support for justice presents a new opportunity to challenge the atmosphere of impunity through litigation and advocacy.

Support to this field will further a rights protection mechanism through a broad partnership in the field to ensure access to justice for vulnerable groups hereby identified as the following: army conscripts, LGBT community, religious minorities, drug users and people with disabilities, including psycho-social disability. This mechanism is realized in the form of legal clinics that address the systemic nature of the problem by rendering justice to victims and putting an end to disenfranchisement of the mentioned groups through litigation.

Four organizations will be leading this field – Real World Real People, Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK), Helsinki Citizens Assembly – Vanadzor (HCAV) and Armenian Helsinki Committee (AHC). The HCAV and AHC are leading human rights organizations with capacity and experience of working with conscripts, religious minorities, drug users, and people with psycho-social disabilities, including children in special boarding facilities. OSF-Armenia has invested in building up organizational and particularly legal and management capacity of the NGOs. Real World Real People and PINK are key organizations in working on LGBT rights through legal assistance and representation.

Outcomes: NGO legal clinics work as a rights protection mechanism providing legal advice and litigation; disadvantaged communities use the law to promote their rights.

FIELD 2 – GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

A lack of general acceptance of the concept of women's rights and equality in society and even within the women's rights groups, means that women's rights advocates do not have a comprehensive political identity, or organizing principle, to effectively challenge power structures that limit and oppress women in diverse ways. The Foundation will support a coalition (Coalition) of dedicated advocate-organizations working along with the Women's Resource Centre to work towards consolidating and energizing the feminist agenda, by strengthening their grassroots advocacy skills and movement building capacity. The Foundation has invested in the professional and managerial capacity of the Coalition through its members. The Foundation support has an added value because it will allow the women's rights field to mobilize citizens on the grassroots level to pressure policy makers to respond to their demands.

Outcomes: A common agenda for women's rights movement is designed and championed by the human rights community, civil leaders, activists, and citizens.

FIELD 3 - COMBATING GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION

Corruption affects all areas of life in Armenia; political corruption, bribery in the private sector, and manipulation of foreign aid projects are some manifestations of it. At the same time, the government has committed itself to a number of initiatives such as implementation of GRECO and UNCAC³, which stipulate an entirely new level of government transparency and can be an entry point for civil society to demand more accountability. OSF – Armenia will support four leading organizations Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center (TIAC), Journalists' Club "Asparez" (Asparez), Hetq NGO, and Community Finance Officers Association(CFOA) to scale up work on government transparency and accountability.

TIAC has years of watchdog experience focusing on government policies and practices on issues ranging from elections to natural resource use. The TIAC is also indispensable in providing support and guidance to the emerging youth transparency movement.

² More than 35% of ECHR rulings against Armenia are on violation of the right to fair trial

³ GRECO – Group of states against corruption; UNCAC – UN Convention against Corruption

Asparez is a standard-setter in utilizing the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and litigation to guarantee public access to information and to open up critical data disclosing corrupt practices in the use of public funds. Asparez also has years of experience in watchdogging implementation of aid projects, including the Millennium Challenge Compact. Among other violations Asparez reported COI cases in governance, money disbursement as well as incompliance of country indicators with the eligibility criteria was reported. Both TI and Asparez have benefitted from evaluations commissioned by the OSF as well as from data management initiatives to secure their systems.

Hetq NGO is the most professionally apt and unprecedentedly courageous investigative journalist organization. It is particularly demanded in the current situation when citizenry has regained its “ownership” of the public resources. Only last months reporting covered investigation of corruption at the very top of the government and the Armenian Apostolic Church and shady oligarchs and banks.

CFOA is a leading organization in local governance issues and has been at the forefront of decentralization process providing policy support to the government within this process. The OSF thematic programs and the Foundation have invested in developing their professional and advocacy capacity. CFOA’s expertise in budget monitoring will provide instrumental support to budding popular demand for local government accountability and efficiency.

Our support will enable these organizations to strengthen their policy work and carry out evidence-based advocacy, build up on data-mining initiatives and multiply the use of FOI Act to demand accountability. Our support will also provide targeted budget monitoring skills development, which is key for achieving our concept objectives, particularly those of concepts 1, 5, and 6.

Outcomes: Legislation, securing efficient anti-corruption measures, and transparent and accountable management of public resources; policies and mechanisms ensuring transparent public procurement; changes in the Electoral Code providing against voters’ list manipulation and administrative abuse; consistent disclosure of information on the use of public funds is implemented by local communities and activists through use of FOI Act and budget monitoring.

FILED 4 – REFORM OF THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT FOR MEDIA

The ongoing digital switchover of broadcasting poses real corruption risks for misappropriation of public funds and the digital dividend, i.e. the part of spectrum that will free up upon switching off analogue broadcasting. It has also resulted in decreasing broadcasting diversity and threatens further concentration of the media ownership. There is new field emerging in the form of individual research efforts and activist voice in support of ensuring the public nature of the digital dividend. The need for our engagement with this area is exacerbated by the current situation by which the traditional media organizations that work on regulation issues do not possess sufficient expertise in digital media sphere, whereas those with such expertise are mostly concerned with technical and business aspects of the area. They are not concerned with either freedom of speech or public accountability perspectives of the area. The OSF through its long work in both the information and communication technologies and in media regulation has the unique perspective and expertise to embark on developing a comprehensive aptitude to address the task of transparent regulation of the digital field. Therefore, OSF-Armenia must support development of this field and envisions working with media and communication specialists to help raise professional capacity in the sphere. Initially together with the OSF Media and Information Programs we will invest in professional development of the researchers through fellowships and scholarships. Afterwards we envision supporting one or two organizations along with individuals to advance this field.

Outcomes: An independent policy and advocacy capacity is formed within the civil society to protect public interest and ensure accountability of resource management in the digital sphere; limitations on media concentration are put in place; media ownership is transparent for local and international owners through relevant procedures and access to information.

CONCEPT 1: Leading the Transformation towards an Issue-based Society⁴

With this concept, we aim to harness the momentum of the unique situation in which Armenia finds itself after the 2013 presidential elections, and transform it into a force for positive change in the run-up to the 2016-

⁴ This Concept provides an overarching framework for the Strategy: to change the discourse and bring in the justice and accountability narratives and, hence, to lead the transformation, it “feeds” from the fields and other concepts. Yet, it furthers all other objectives by complementing the top-down approach of our policy and advocacy work.

2018 elections cycle. The unexpected empowerment of the electorate indicates an opening for consolidating already existing sentiment into an organized, intentional, and strategic effort that can expose the deeper issues of a lack of accountability and justice.

The Foundation will expand public discourse on these important issues beyond the capital and the coalition of civil society organizations, and closer to the active groups of citizens enabling a multiplicity of public spaces throughout the country and encouraging partners to be more mobile. Our work in this concept will cluster in three dimensions - empowering civil society to expand thematically and be able to engage with active groups on socio-economic, anti-corruption, and local governance issues; expanding debate geographically to wider constituencies through the use of new public spaces, including new media; and transforming the current vacuous political discourse into one based on concrete issues prior to local and national elections.

Most systematic empowering of leading civil society organizations for proper engagement with activism will happen through our field support. Specifically, their reinforced budget monitoring skills and the monitoring projects at local and central budget level will provide the ground for engaging the local communities to demand local government accountability, as well as for engaging the entire electorate on the ground of accountable and quality education and health systems. The outcomes of the first field empower the socially vulnerable, and provide tools for addressing the social justice problems locally.

For years the Foundation has substantially contributed to the growth of this momentum, supporting and strengthening a network of civic groups, safeguarding the integrity of democracy, and developing tools for media outreach, policy work, collective advocacy, and work with youth. The local capacities that we will use are demonstrated graphically in the Annex 1. Within OSF, our partners are the HRI, the Media Program and the Brussels office. For these concept activities, we will use grant-making, capacity building, policy research, public discussions, TV debates, and direct advocacy.

Two days prior the deadline for submission of this strategy, a semi-official announcement was made about ruling coalition's intention to initiate Constitutional changes through a national referendum. The stated goal is changing the type of governance from the current semi-presidential state to a parliamentary republic. The announcement is still not official policy decision. In the event if such initiative materializes, a referendum would provide an additional opportunity to implement this concept for expanding public engagement and issue-based discourse on an issue of great national importance and public interest.

Goal: Transform the positive post-election energy in broad segments of the population and civil society into a change of political and social processes in the run-up to the next election cycles – local government (2016), parliamentary (2017), and presidential (2018)

Outcomes and proposed supporting actions:

Civil society groups prioritize socio-economic issues and transform the dominant narratives in such key areas as labor rights, corruption in education, and local government accountability: *Policy research and briefs are produced on specific labor issues that are manipulated by employers for restricting the rights of their workforce (contracts, salaries, minimum wage, maximum working hours), uneven SME environment policies (taxation, import/export), predatory lending practices towards rural communities; In the communities where local elections are in 2014-2015, youth are trained in legal methods of pursuing election fraud and are mobilized for election integrity monitoring in each such community. These communities' experiences – their success stories and failures – feed the media narrative and fine-tune our approach to 2016.*

Civil society builds its audience in the regions by reaching out to wider constituencies and advancing new public spaces on the ground: *Regional HR hubs (civil society resource centers), and already existing community centers are used for initiating debates on topics of local concern and to extend the discourse on rights and justice to local communities; Three civil society resource facilities (NGO hubs) will be used both for expanding the geographic reach of the key civil society and the POS, and for identifying and strengthening new and emerging partners throughout the regions. Through the production of print and online newspapers, issues of public interest are discussed. A frontline club is established to assist local media joining the discourse on the above issues. Three mobile teams of key civil society partners are formed serving the communities with elections in 2014-2015.*

Civil society organizations and groups of active citizens in Yerevan and the regions work together to articulate human rights and social justice agenda: *Monitoring reports and policy briefs are used to engage with respective labor and SMEs and rural communities. Key partners organize town hall meetings and local seminars about community issues and the role of elections. In partnership with key HR organizations, new and emerging partners work together through the HR hubs, mobile teams of activists, lawyers, and journalists, to*

bring mainstream discourse into the local agenda and to raise local community issues to the level of formulated policy asks; local elections observations are used to protect the integrity of the process and demonstrate new avenues of citizen engagement. Local government referendum mechanism is used to inject issue-based demands, and implement policy changes. Every local election cycle is used as an opportunity to force issues to the forefront of electoral discourse in the pre-electoral cycle.

Alternative policy discussions effectively challenge the mainstream political discourse and the current elite interests-driven model of policy making: *Parliament monitoring is expanded to socio-economic issues; Policy discussions, and debates with political elites (government and oppositional parties) are organized through POS, the frontline club, and media platforms, including TV debates, around alternative civil-society formulated policy briefs; Local issues and local stories are brought to the forefront of the national discourse and are made “unavoidable” in the political debate in the runner up to 2016, 2017 elections. POS uses evidence-based policy solutions in its advocacy efforts with the local and national government bodies and uses the Legislative Agenda Advocacy Days (LAAD) program to bring the asks up to the Parliament level.*

Assessment: *Local government elections in 2016, followed by national elections in 2017 are conducted in open and competitive environment with competition stemming from issue-based debate; demonstrable changes in local governance are a proven record of solved local issues identified in the course of the strategy period; civil society has been capable of effectively partnering with activism and the two together exerted substantial pressure to achieve changes in labor conditions and other recognized socio-economic regulations. Two types of networks – one nation-wide civil society/media/local activists and the other civil society advocates/media/decision-makers are instituted to secure participatory mechanisms of governance.*

CONCEPT 2: Fighting the existing hierarchal and discriminatory narratives and institutional practices

In certain areas where discrimination is excessive, specifically related to women, sexual and religious minorities, disabled persons, and drug users, there is an unprecedented degree of public misperception and wide-ranging structural violence explicitly manifested in institutions, practices, and norms. Paradoxically, this systemic denial of certain groups’ human rights is embedded in the existing social normative framework including the general education system, social and health care policies, and media, the very same sources that are called to create conducive environment for protection of vulnerable communities and promotion of equal opportunities. Apart from the discriminatory social norms and continuous public stigmatization, another crucial issue is the government’s failure to enact appropriate legal acts and policies containing prohibition of discrimination, which further incites violence against “marginalized groups”. With Armenia entering the final negotiation stage for the Association Agreement and anti-discrimination legislation being one of the conditions for visa liberalization with the EU, we seek to seize this political momentum to challenge the existing social norms and practices influencing these groups’ access to opportunities, as well as change the legislative framework for anti-discrimination. Essentially, the concept will contribute to international efforts to hold the government accountable to its commitments by closing loopholes in legal frameworks, increasing access to formal protection services, guarantying enforcement of the legal procedures, and mainstreaming the concept of equality in education, public health and legal systems and in public and media discourse.

Policy research, advocacy, strategic litigation, technical support to the government, capacity building trainings and mentorships for human rights organizations and the legal community, and TV debates will be used.

Goal: Reduce manifestation of discrimination in policies, laws, societal norms, and practices by advocating for adoption and enforcement of legislative acts corresponding to the needs of marginalized groups and by challenging the dominant discourse of inequality that condones discrimination all along.

Outcomes:

- Legal instruments and enforcement mechanisms guarantying protection to marginalized groups such as *Draft Law on Anti-discrimination, Domestic Violence legislation, Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations* legal norms regulating access of injecting drug users to methadone substitution treatment are adopted/amended and enforced.
- Practices and social norms reinforcing intolerance and stigmatization in education, public health, and legal systems identified and the attitudes towards marginalized groups in these systems as well as in media and public discourse are transformed.
- Social, legal and health services for those suffering extreme discrimination and social exclusion are institutionalized based on the civil society-designed model and budget is allocated.

- A coalition of lawyers and human rights defenders' is established to pursue discrimination-related strategic litigation cases that can set important legal precedents and empower marginalized groups to claim their rights.

Assessment: Anti-discrimination legislation is adopted, including a comprehensive definition of discrimination and legal provisions prohibiting it; domestic violence is criminalized and sufficient measures of protection and rehabilitation are adopted in legislation; dominance of Armenian Apostolic church, its exclusive access and expanded authorities over secular public domain are stripped from legislation; practices ostracizing of citizens of other denominations as well as LGBT and disabled in education, public health and legal systems are conclusively reported and adequately addressed through normative acts, public awareness and professional ethics norms; legal acts are developed to guarantee access of injecting drug users to non-discriminative health services; CRPD Optional Protocol is ratified.

CONCEPT 3: End inhumane practices in penitentiary, police and penitentiary institutions for juveniles

Both civil society and international organizations report on instances of ill-treatment and torture, deaths in custody, appalling conditions, lack of access to justice and services in penitentiaries, police detention and penitentiary institutions for juveniles. Widespread corruption affects all aspects of institutionalization leading to backtracking from internationally accepted standards. Minimal use of alternatives to detention and absence of preventive and restorative services for juvenile offenders results in a high incarceration rate posing additional challenges to establishing favorable human rights frameworks.

This concept aims to use the ongoing (2012-2017) justice system reform as an opportunity to make critical legislative changes and to enforce human rights standards in institutions by consolidating and empowering existing civil society oversight mechanisms. The Foundation and partners are uniquely positioned for this work given the extensive policy capacity and direct access to penitentiary and police institutions through civil society monitoring boards.

By employing a two-tier approach, i.e. focus on both legislative and practice aspects of compliance to standards, we aim to achieve systemic improvement of rights protection mechanisms in places of detention⁵. Along with the current reform, the timeline of binding human rights commitments within the EU integration and UPR allows us to pursue transparent and full implementation of human rights standards in these institutions.

The goal will be achieved through increased policy capacity of boards; supporting data analysis and development of policy alternatives/recommendations on justice reform, particularly focusing on fair trial and review of pre-trial detention and early conditional release through court monitoring; achieving legislative changes and practical implementation of standards on access to medical services, lawyer, torture, conditions of detention through litigation of strategic cases.

Goal: Enforce human rights standards within penitentiary, police and penitentiary institutions for juveniles by providing legislative and practical safeguards for human rights protection

Outcomes:

- By 2017 adequate standards on age of juvenile offenders, torture definition and liability are secured through draft Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code and relevant policy documents
- Conflict of interest policies for penitentiary and police institutions are adopted and institutionalized; policy for transfer of jurisdiction over health services from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Healthcare is developed, legislative provisions are adopted for Monitoring Boards' access to all detention facilities
- Monitoring Boards empowered to monitor rights in institutions, shape their findings as policy recommendations and advocate with government, monitor budgets and expenditure of the institutions and use this data to advocate for improvement of standards
- Civil society's efforts to enforce human rights standards are backed by strategic cases on right to life, overcrowding, access to basic health services of people in penitentiary and police detention
- The UN and EU mechanisms are used to enforce human rights standards

Assessment: Definition of torture, perpetrators and liability are accepted; minimal age of juvenile offenders is not lowered; alternative sentencing, rehabilitation/reintegration are implemented; civic monitoring is extended to all detention facilities at all times; medical conditions of detainees at all stages of detention and inter-

⁵ Primarily, access to health, access to legal aid and enforcement of norms for physical conditions of detention facilities.

institutional transfer are recorded and exclude unreported torture; conclusive data on rights situation in the institutions is produced through monitoring and is considered and used by authorities to improve human rights standards.

CONCEPT 4: Right to health through policy and practice change in Palliative Care and Mental Health

The Foundation plays a key role in the current mental health and palliative care reforms to guarantee rights to health for these groups and human rights based approach to the fields, to eliminate social exclusion and violation of patient's rights. The work has been greatly complemented by the OSF Network expertise and delivered substantial advancement of both the institutional framework (legalization of oral morphine) and the practice (trained medical staff, pilot sites).

Currently, given the government's commitments to institutionalize the improvements through comprehensive legislative reformation and our access to the process through participation in two Working Groups for Mental Health and Palliative Care there is a unique opportunity for the Foundation to further engage and influence on the course of the reform, and set parameters for state mechanisms guaranteeing human rights based services for patients. The concept will be implemented in cooperation with partner NGOs, Working Groups, the Ministry of Health, universities, law and health fellows and with expert support of the PH program. The following tools will be applied: advocacy, policy research, strategic litigation, monitoring to move forward the reform based on humane treatment standards.

Goal: Guarantee access for people with mental health problems and life-threatening diseases to adequate services through adopting and enforcing policies and legislation, building resources and capacity, and institutionalizing community-based services in palliative care and mental health

Outcomes:

- Policies and legislation regulating mental health and palliative care areas are enacted and enforced
- Palliative care and mental health community based services are institutionalized.
- Academic and professional educational courses on palliative care and mental health are integrated and institutionalized
- Public demand for a rights based approach is created to ensure the implementation of rights of patients with mental health problems

Assessment: Oral morphine for palliative care patients is approved by the government, patient's rights violations documented, reported, and followed; funding is allocated for palliative care needs and mental health community-based services; sub-specialization and specialization in palliative care and mental health are part of university curricula; two public campaigns are organized.

CONCEPT 5: Promoting democratic governance, integrity and quality of high school and higher education through challenging comprehensive executive control and corrupt practices

Large donor-driven reforms in high school and higher education in Armenia are assessed by donors and the government as highly successful processes and deemed to have contributed to quality of the education system. In reality, however, the backsliding in quality, access, and independence is endemic⁶. The study commissioned by the Foundation⁷ identified the existing comprehensive executive control over the education system as the key fundamental reason for stagnating reform and rampant corruption in the system. To challenge this grip over the system and hence address the root cause of corruption and stagnating reform, it is not enough to engage and mobilize the local stakeholders, but rather one needs to engage the two main donors, the WB and the EU.

Currently there is an opportunity to engage the WB and the EU around the above issues. This is possible due the WB stepping up its support to USD 30-million credit for education reform for 2014-2017 and the systemic corruption and arbitrariness of decisions make the credit vulnerable for abuse in terms of both monetary and reform agenda. Simultaneously, the European integration aspirations and Armenia's charring Bologna Secretariat until 2015, and the EU's 15 million direct budget support makes the EU more open to collaboration around these issues.

⁶ 2013 Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer demonstrates that 59% of population perceive education as most corrupt area. To compare, in 2010 the Barometer listed education in Armenia as the most corrupt of all sectors. Accessed from: www.transparency.org/gcb2013/country?country=armenia ; <http://gcb.transparency.org/gcb201011/infographic/>.

⁷ "The State of higher education reforms" conducted by the CEU Center for Higher Education. The executive summary is attached in Annex 2.

Within this concept we aim to mobilize the policy community, decision makers, educators and donors to carry rigorous revision of governance issues at legislative, practice, and reform agenda levels to find and implement alternative solutions eliminating conflict of interests and excessive control over the system. This will be achieved through building conclusive monitoring and research-based evidence of how the existing control over education system undermines accountability and how high corruption risks compromise the integrity of donor assistance. Simultaneously, education practitioners, civil society, and student initiatives will be supported to carry on a broad-agenda discourse on academic integrity and education governance issues.

Foundation's experience and expertise in working with policy, academic and civil society communities will be used as a basis for formulation of such a course of the reform.

Goal: Set the four-year higher education and high school reform agenda so that it addresses control and corruption problems of the system and provides for participatory process to address excessive executive control at legal, policy and practice levels

Outcomes:

- Research and monitoring evidence is produced demonstrating (1) systemic absence of accountability - arbitrariness of decision making, in governance and funding processes and procedures COI and corruption risks - of both university and school systems as well as at the level of central and local governments; (2) lack of academic and professional freedom at all levels within the universities;
- Alternative policy solutions are formulated and debated; policy community empowered professionally and in terms of advocacy skills
- Legislative and policy changes eliminating executive control and corruption in education, accountability mechanisms and academic integrity issues are part of decisions makers' and donors (WB and EU) agenda;
- Participatory alternative structures are established and function to extend to all segments of the academic community and civil society and to encourage discourse around education reform agenda

Assessment: University and school boards composition is not dominated by executive as per regulation and practice; COI in governance of the higher education regulatory body (Armenian National Quality Assurance Agency) is resolved both in regulation and practice (heads of executive office are not members of the board), policies and procedures for faculty hiring and promoting are academic merit-based and competitive; financing mechanisms of high schools are transparent and accountable at the levels of central and local governments; national education council is established and carried out monitoring of the reform.

CONCEPT 6: Directing Armenia's societal and political direction towards the European integration

For more than a decade a "complementarity" approach, i.e. a claim to building deep relations with the West and yet remaining a strategic partner with Russia, was the cornerstone of Armenia's foreign policy. In practice, however, long years of illusory box-ticking reforms led to an alarming situation when the country is trying to accommodate two mutually exclusive and binding documents (the Association Agreement and the Eurasian Customs Union) by denying their incompatibility.

Fundamentally, choosing one or the other direction for Armenia is imminent. At the same time this bandwagoning strategy can no longer serve as an acceptable excuse for the lack of reforms. The European integration process is both the biggest foreign policy challenge for the Armenian government and an opportunity for civil society to pursue deep structural reforms towards democratic accountable governance and competitive economy.

This concept will seize this unique opportunity to support a policy community in their efforts to develop a value-based reformation process; to monitor direct budget support and integrity of reform; to facilitate wide-ranging public discourse on EU integration; and shaping government's communication agenda on the strategic choices the country is facing. Advancing these objectives, OSF-Armenia will use the following tools: policy research, public discussions, local and international advocacy, as well as direct advice to the government on shaping its public communication strategy.

Goal: Secure integrity of the reform through civil society's engagement in shaping EU's integration tools on the ground and ensuring inclusion of open society agenda into the EU integration processes

Outcomes:

- European integration (which is the foreign policy direction most compatible with open society) remains a top priority for Armenia
 - Policy community that adheres to democracy and human rights/accountability values is formed and capable to support value-based integration processes through credible policy research and development
 - The consolidated policy community is increasingly more engaged with European and local policy makers through local direct advocacy and utilizing the capacity of the OSEPI. Government designs a strategy on communicating the benefits of the EU integration processes to the general public based on policy recommendations put forward by the policy community.
 - EU's policies and procedures on the ground are adjusted along the policy community's recommendations
- Assessment: Policy community becomes institutional through establishment of a think tank; shadow monitoring reports produced on EaP roadmap, AA, European Social Charter and other integration agreements; number of budget analysis studies voicing concerns about mismanagement accelerates; the European structures put more political weight behind human rights conditions in their grant giving and assistance programs.*

SHARED FRAMEWORKS

The Foundation will engage in the Criminal Justice, and Elections shared frameworks once they are initiated. Our work in monitoring the rights of children in special residential care institutions can be of common interest. Participating in the Criminal Justice shared framework, we hope to draw on the professional capacity of OSJI and HRI for the legislative work we plan in our work in closed institutions. We will contribute with monitoring and policy capacity. In the framework of Elections we will participate around the objectives set in the First Concept.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATION

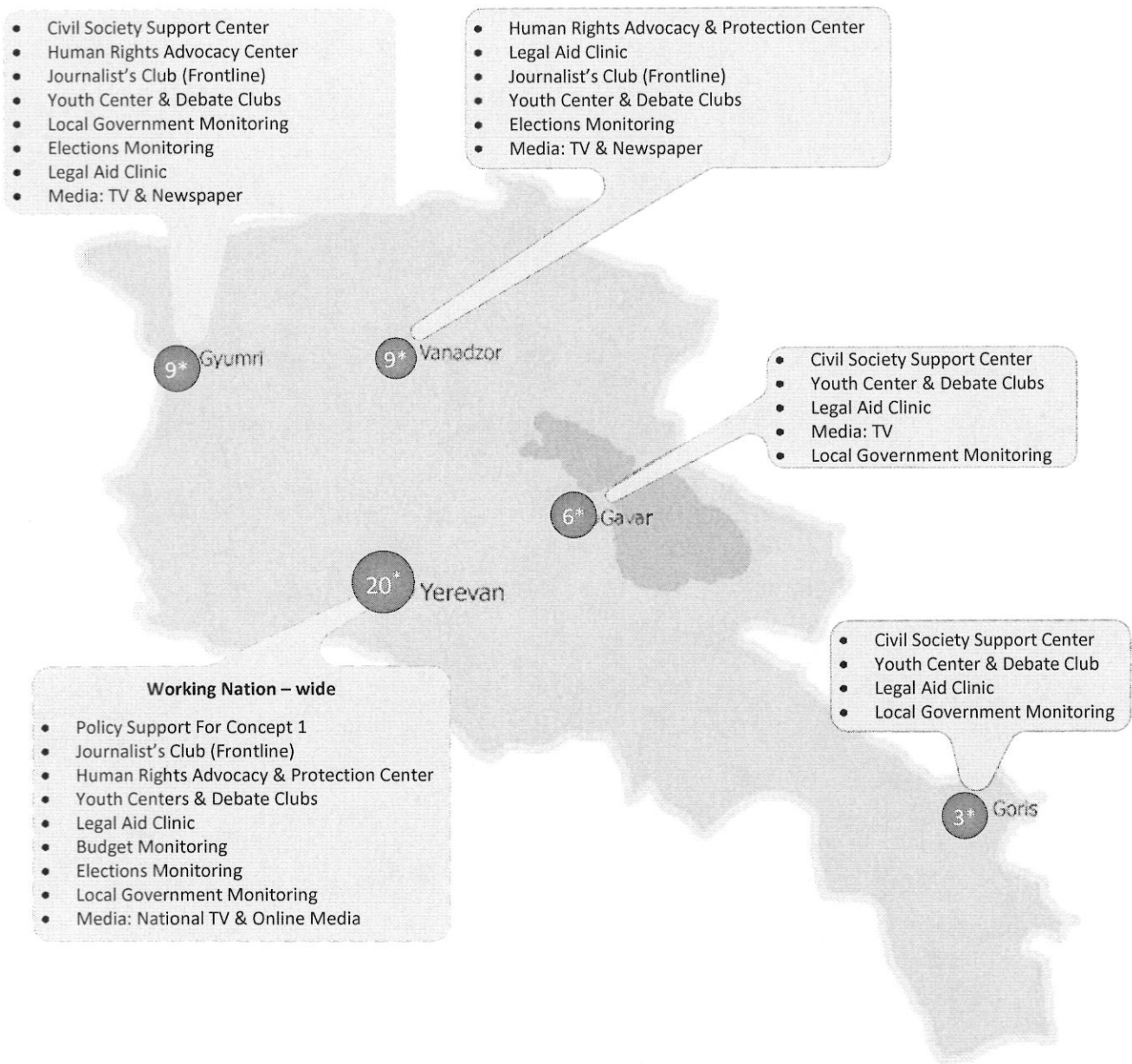
Collaboration with OSF thematic programs and Advocacy Offices has been extremely beneficial for the Foundation's and the partners' maturing. Implementation of current strategy requires strengthened cooperation with OSF Network. Namely, the priorities of rights of vulnerable population and of rights in closed and semi-closed institutions are to be addressed in cooperation with the HRI and OSJI. The concepts dealing with rights to health as well as with closed institutions rely heavily on expert assistance from the PH; and the first concept requires engagement with Media, and HRI. Strategic litigation will be further developed with the help of OSJI and the HRI. Cooperation with OSEPI and DC Office will be required to implement concepts 2, 3, 5 and 6.

Outside OSF, the Foundation has built active and mutually beneficial cooperation and received co-funding from the USAID, the British, the Netherlands and German Embassies, and UNICEF. The OSCE and EU Delegation are among main partners in joint advocacy on rights and freedoms. Since the Foundation engaged in the work on Emergency Fund, strong cooperation with major Diaspora foundations has been established and continues beyond the Emergency Fund work.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The administrative part of the Foundation that includes finance, HR, IT and grants management, and technical support will remain the same with regard to both staff and function. In the meantime the program implementation will be re-structured to address the new concept and field approach as opposite to previous work through separate programs.

Annex 1 Existing Initiatives to be Engaged in Concept 1



* The figure represents the number of partners in respective areas

The state of higher education reforms in today's Armenia

Preliminary report for the Open Society Foundation Armenia (OSFA)

**CEU Center for Higher Education
May 2013**

Note: This is a preliminary report prepared exclusively for internal use by the Open Society Foundation Armenia. No part of the report in its present form can be quoted publicly without the authors' permission or used in any other way outside OSFA and the larger Open Society Foundations framework.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This preliminary report presents the findings and conclusions of an independent review of the higher education in Armenia, commissioned by the Open Society Foundation Armenia (hereinafter “OSFA”, or the “Foundation”) and conducted between December 2012 and May 2013. The review looked at the course of reforms in the country since it has joined the Bologna process in 2005 and in particular at the main elements of the current situation in higher education - analyzed from the perspective of their relationship with, and potential impact on, the development of an open society. Based on the results of this review, recommendations are put forward for OSFA’s consideration in the context of the revision of their strategy and activities in the area of higher education.

Context of the review

For about two decades the OSFA has invested significant financial resources and trust to support reforming higher education in the country. In turn, it has expected that these reforms would contribute to promoting an overall democratic course of development in post-Soviet Armenia, in accordance with the values of the open society, which are at the core of OSFA’s mission.

In 2012 the Foundation decided to conduct a review of its own activities in higher education, completed by a focused review of the entire higher education system in the country, based on which to develop a new internal strategy for this sector. This decision was informed primarily by a sense, shared by the executive leadership and the Board of the Foundation, that the direction of the developments in higher education was a negative one, over a too long period of time, and with a negative impact on the Armenian society as a whole. There were also a sense of frustration regarding the impact of the Foundation’s own efforts, and questions regarding how best to calibrate these efforts in the near future. The Foundation had quite clear, and also strong, views regarding the current situation in higher education, as well as a few open questions about it, which, in the understanding of the authors of this report, could be summarized as follows:

- developments in Armenian higher education over a long period were following a “regressive” path, with severe negative effects on the main components of the higher education system itself (from professional standards to the quality of graduates, from governance to equity, and from academic freedom to the very nature of the educational model and its outcomes);
- these developments in higher education were accompanying, if not directly responsible for, a general depreciation of the civic climate in the country, and connected to larger political and social evolutions that were moving away from, rather than in the direction of, an open society; evolutions in higher education were not supportive for the development of an open society in Armenia;
- the Bologna reforms in Armenia, which OSFA supported from the very beginning, have failed to deliver their stated objectives; these reforms have basically failed to contribute significant positive changes to the higher education system and, beyond it, to the society as a whole; a question was asked regarding whether or not these reforms have a positive potential at all, or which part of the Bologna reform package has more potential;
- no realistic report or presentation of the real situation in Armenia was available, be it produced by domestic or international actors; the dominant view of the authorities, supported by major international organizations (like the World Bank, or the European Union), wrongly asserted that higher education in Armenia was on a genuine,

- positive, and successful reform path; this view was not shared by the Foundation and, at least privately, by many domestic actors in Armenia, other than the authorities;
- the Foundation had questions about its main current focus in the area of higher education; like most other actors active in Armenian higher education, domestic or international, the Foundation made a bet on the quality assurance system designed as part of the Bologna reform package, that was perceived as the single, or at least the main key that could unlock a genuine reform path and turn around the entire system; it appeared that this approach, the development quality assurance as the main priority, had not worked and the Foundation was asking how to make it work, or whether to replace it with another focus.

OSFA has extended and excellent knowledge about higher education Armenia and was able to provide its own views and answers to address this situation. Rather than taking for granted its own views and answers, however, it invited the CEU Center for Higher Education to conduct an independent external review. *The review has confirmed many of the OSFA's own positions, helped to refine a few others and, in some cases, provided different insights and interpretations.*

Main findings and conclusions

The main findings and conclusions of the review could be summarized as follows:

1. We concur with the view of the Foundation that Armenian higher education is not on a genuine reform path. Instead, the higher education system is locked in a situation marred by: corruption (pervasive and more complex than it can appear at a superficial analysis); continuously decreasing quality standards on all dimensions; an unforgiving, quasi-complete, although sophisticated political control by the regime (leaving only very little and largely only nominal space for any kind of freedoms); lack of a genuine program of reforms; lack of public support for the very idea of reform along Bologna lines (a majority now appears to be emerging in the country that supports the idea of a return to the Soviet model in higher education).
2. There is little to no public support for the idea of radical and genuine democratic reforms in higher education, despite significant efforts by a small minority of individuals and organizations. In fact, one could talk of a kind of “*monstrous coalition of the unwilling*” with regard to the reform of higher education in Armenia. This *coalition of the unwilling* includes diverse and unlikely allies, such as the political regime (not only the government *per se*), a majority of the university leadership, of the academic staff, students, parents, and, surprisingly, of the international organizations active here, as well as a large part of the Armenian Diaspora that is active in the country. While the motivations and intentions of these various actors are different from case to case, they converge in perpetuating the current situation, the undisputed control by the political regime, and the absence of any genuine reform horizon.
3. We also concur with the view of the Foundation that the present configuration, dynamics, and performance of the higher education system can only have devastating effects on the Armenian society: politically, economically, and socially, taking into account both short-term and long-term perspectives. At present, Armenian higher education is an undemocratic, closed, and controlled system, serving as an experimental ground at the hand of the political regime to promote the reproduction of the current political order and its interests. The Armenian higher education system also serves as a model for the larger Armenian society, with a major negative impact, including from the perspective of open society values.

4. We observe that there are important developments and resources in the system that could be mobilized to promote positive change. Such developments and resources often tend to pass unnoticed, or are misrepresented, when not simply suppressed. In fact, significant expertise and pressure for change has accumulated within the system, although manifested usually in isolated initiatives, by isolated individuals and organizations. Some of these individuals are highly qualified and also genuinely committed to professional involvement and also to public action in favor of the reform.
5. The Foundation alone does not have the technical resources or otherwise the capacity to single-handedly transform or change the higher education system. It remains however uniquely placed to promote steps that may breed crucial elements of a change process. **OSFA may well be one of the very few organizations - if not the only one - which at present could make a difference in helping to reform higher education in Armenia, in a direction consistent with the values of an open society.**
6. Except for a transformation of the political regime, which appears unlikely, there is no one single action, aspect, lever, or key that the Foundation could “switch”, or generally focus on, to successfully change the direction of the evolutions in Armenian higher education. This observation applies to the idea of focusing on the development of quality assurance processes, which are currently being put in place at institutional and system level. The quality assurance process, currently the core component of the Bologna reforms in Armenia, has so far bore only false promises and has been hijacked by the political regime, generating only façade, fake or insignificant changes, largely like the rest of the Bologna reforms as well.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the review we propose that OSFA adjust its strategy for the area of higher education by moving more energetically from trying to address existing issues directly to mobilizing and helping other actors to address such issues. We recommend that the Foundation could focus on (i) **creating and helping to protect the space for reform** and (ii) on attempting to **induce and sustain a genuine reform direction**. More specifically, this could be realized through:

1. **“Social brokerage”**. Rather than attempting to “do” the reform itself, OSFA could promote it by helping to create and enlarge the existing (fragmented, but not insignificant) space for reform in higher education, by supporting existing initiatives or ideas for new initiatives, by helping individuals and organizations dedicated to democratic and professionally serious reforms to get in contact, to connect with each other, and to work together. Building on exiting developments, it may be possible in this way to ensure progress in the direction of a reaching a critical mass or a breakthrough point. Given the limits of its own financial and staffing resources, OSFA could focus on mobilizing external (international) support for such initiatives, of a professional, financial, and political kind. A list of detailed recommendations under this heading is presented in the report.
2. **Advocacy**. A major problem in Armenia has to do with the deafening silence around the real situation in higher education, with the absence of credible voices that would provide critical information about what is going on and also disseminate good practices. “What is going on” concerns not only the actions of government, but also of the universities, as well as of other actors, in particular of the international organizations or of the Armenian Diaspora. OSFA could stimulate and support such

voices, through applied studies and research, exercises of advocacy at national and international level, information sharing, in order to break the silence, isolation, and also the information monopoly of the political regime and its capacity to control the domestic and the international discourse on the reform of higher education, as well as related resources and decisional processes. In this case as well, OSFA would not need to rely exclusively on its own financial resources, but could help to mobilize funds and other types of support from other sources. OSFA could also help to protect those who speak up and are usually repressed under the force of the “monstrous coalition of the unwilling”.

3. **A new rhetoric.** We propose that OSFA adopt and promote a new, more positive and at the same time more assertive rhetoric as part of its higher education strategy and activities. The basic message here could be that change in higher education is not only necessary, but also inevitable and that only faking the reforms will not perdure; with some effort, it could be stated, change will now happen, given everything that has accumulated in the system in the last several years (mainly empty forms for the time being, but which are starting to generate content), and also given the expertise and commitment of so many individuals in universities, state agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

OPTIONAL 2014 WORK PLAN TEMPLATE
2014 WORK PLAN FOR OSF-ARMENIA

Fidelity to Field or Place

Fields or Places	Primary Beneficiary	Amount	Supporting Staff	Significant deviations in case of High or Low budget approval
Field #1: Access to Justice/Legal Empowerment of the Poor & Marginalized	Armenian Helsinki Committee; Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor; Real World, Real People, Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK)	3 Grants (\$75,000; Q3-4), 1 advocacy skill-building workshop for fields 1-3 (\$10,000; Q2)	Maria Aghajanyan, Ashot Grigoryan, Anahit Papikyan, Mariam Vardanyan	High budget: added documentation skills building training and increased scope of grants in the amount of \$10,000 to increase outreach to conscripts. Low budget: We will not support the workshop and will reduce the grant amount by \$3,000 cutting down on grassroots outreach to LGBT community
Field #2: Gender Equality and Women's Leadership	Coalition of Women's organizations including but not limited to Women's Resource Center Armenia, Tufenkian Foundation, Women's Rights Center	1 grant (\$35,000; Q2-3) for the coalition's agenda development and advocacy needs	David Amiryany, Suzanne Sarkissian	High budget: same as medium. Low Budget: the grant amount will be reduced by \$5,000 to omit outreach to grassroots
Field #3: Combating Government Corruption	Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center, Asparez Journalists' Club, Community Finance Officers Association and Hetq Investigative Journalists NGO	4 grants (239,000; Q3-4), IBP training (\$30,000)	Maria Aghajanyan, Gayane Mamikonyan, Ashot Grigoryan, David Amiryany	High budget: Increase scope of grants in the amount of \$17,000 with more focus on procurement, FOI use and investigative journalism. Low budget: Decrease in the scope of grants in the amount of \$4,000, cutting down on FOI work.
Field #4: Reform of the Regulatory Environment for Media	Journalists; Lawyers; ICT specialists; Policy researchers	2 policy fellowships (\$10,000; Q2); 2 policy discussions (\$5,000; Q2, Q4); 2 capacity building trainings in telecommunication and digitalization for 3 specialists (15,000; Q3-4)	Gayane Mamikonyan, Larisa Minasyan, David Amiryany	High budget: 3 policy fellowships. Low budget: capacity building training for 2 specialists

Fidelity to Field or Place

Concept 1: Leading the Transformation towards Issue-based Society

Goals	2014 Milestones	Activities	Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators	Sig. deviations in case of H or L budget approval
<p>Goal #1: Civil Society prioritizes socio-economic issues and transforms the dominant narrative in the areas of labor rights, local government accountability, social rights</p>	<p>FOR THE ENTIRE CONCEPT 1: Ten strategically selected communities where local elections are scheduled in 2014, have competitive elections with competition stemming from open participatory discourse around the major community-related issue(s); 2. The communities have also committed to have clean and free elections through conducting local monitoring; 3. Major socio-economic problems that are driving current activism are researched and key electoral asks formulated in preparation of debates in 2015-2017; 4. Key civil society organizations and activists expanded (regionally, thematically, and in the means of outreach) and linked with the communities for 2014 and 2015 elections, based on concrete locally driven initiatives; 5. Main advocacy organizations have engaged with MPs, decision makers, and policy researchers in debating the most urgent social and economic issues through public debate; 5. Political debate extends to issues of accountability, integrity, social protection and justice and includes alternative policy solutions; local election issues and the electoral process are covered in media</p>	<p>Support 5 policy research/survey projects to focus on main socio-economic issues reflecting labor rights violations, social injustice and unfair and corrupt market regulation; Produce policy briefs and conduct consultations and discussions of the research findings with civil society and experts, resulting in concrete recommendations for possible alternative solutions on respective issues (including labor contracts, salaries, minimum wage; SME taxation, import/export; predatory lending policies); Give a grant to Europe in Law Association to develop tool-kits and conduct training for local youth in 10 selected communities on monitoring and pursuing electoral fraud, so that they are mobilized for election integrity monitoring in communities with upcoming elections. Training is conducted with engagement of other partners with relevant expertise in election monitoring (TI, Asparez, HCAV, HCA).</p>	<p>FOR THE ENTIRE CONCEPT: POS, NGOs: HCA, TI, HCAV, Mandat, CDCy, Sakharov Center, Goris Press Club, Mission Armenia, Women's Resource Center, PJC, and Law in Europe (not exhaustive list); Policy fellows; Media outlets: Asparez, Lagir and Aravot online newspapers, YerKir Media TV, youth clubs; Staff: David Aminyan, Maria Aghajanyan, Babken DerGrigorian; Karine Ghazaryan, Ashot Grigoryan, Laura Gevorgyan, Gayane Mamikonyan, Mariam Vardanyan and Larisa Minasyan</p>	<p>High budget: Same as Medium; Low budget: one less policy research project</p>
<p>Goal #2: Civil society builds its audience in the regions by reaching out to wider constituencies and advancing new public spaces on the ground</p>	<p>3 regional Human Rights hubs are supported in the Shirak, Syunik and Armavir regions and networked with local HR organizations and active CS groups; 3 mobile teams (lawyer, journalist and accountability expert) are formed to tend to 5 community needs; 1 frontline media center is established on the basis of the Media Center, expanding its current activities to include more content production and distribution, and used for engagement with political elites; 1 regional newspaper, Asparez, and one on-line publication is supported for a larger scope of topics, and as a media outreach resource for this Concept activities; TV programs are supported for coverage and debate (10 programs)</p>	<p>Support local youth groups to carry out 2 local government monitoring projects under the mentorship of CFOA and Asparez in communities where elections are scheduled in 2014 and 2015; Use monitoring reports and policy briefs to engage with labor, SME and rural communities; With key partners, organize 5 town hall meetings and local seminars about community issues and the role of elections in addressing these issues; Raise community specific issues through hubs and at town hall meetings along with media coverage; In partnership with key HR organizations, new and emerging local organizations work together through the HR hubs, and mobile teams; Support the conduct of elections observation in 10 communities; Select 1 community and a topic with the highest potential for a successful local referendum.</p>	<p>High budget: 1 additional on-line newspaper; Low budget: Same as medium</p>	<p>High budget: Community Youth action projects in 5 communities; Low budget: no local referendum</p>
<p>Goal #3: Civil society organizations and groups of active citizens in Yerevan and the regions work together to articulate a human rights and social justice agenda</p>				

<p>Goal #4: Alternative policy discussions effectively challenge the mainstream political discourse and the current elite interests-driven model of policy making</p>	<p>Expand scope of parliament monitoring to cover and report on legislative developments on social issues, major transparency and accountability problems, and legislation; Conduct series of discussions regarding identified major policy/legal problems in communities with upcoming elections through POS and regional hubs; Use civil society access to the parliament through the currently existing foundation's format for CS and MP consultations (LAAD) to bring the researched issues and solutions to parliamentary committee agendas; Support TV programs and online media for national coverage of the election processes and outcomes in selected communities.</p>	<p>High budget: 2 additional POS discussions; 3 additional TV debates and larger-scope parliament monitoring; Low budget: 2 less POS discussions and 2 less TV debates</p>	
<p>Concept 2. Fighting the existing hierarchal and discriminatory narratives and institutional practices</p>			
<p>Goals</p> <p>Goal 1: Achieve establishment of legal instruments and enforcement mechanisms in the form of provisions guaranteeing protection to marginalized and disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Goal #2: Create precedents to reinforce the legal implementation practice of newly adopted anti-discrimination policies, and empower marginalized groups to claim their rights</p> <p>Goal #3: Promote the rights of marginalized groups by advancing human rights-based principles of social inclusion and transforming the attitudes towards marginalized groups in media and public discourse.</p>	<p>2014 Milestones</p> <p>Domestic violence standalone legislation and revised draft of the Law on Religious organizations are on the parliament agenda; Anti-discrimination draft law is adopted in compliance with EU guiding standards; Conclusive evidence is collected and summarized in policy briefs on practices and legal norms reinforcing intolerance within the health and education systems; anti-discrimination coalition established</p> <p>7 strategic litigation cases are identified and launched within the priority areas</p> <p>Voices of marginalized groups are represented in broadcast and online media in the form of discussions, debates, articles.</p>	<p>Activities</p> <p>Contract 2 legal specialists to revise draft laws (DV legislation, Law on Religious organizations, Anti-discrimination legislation); Provide for an international internship for 2 fellows and policy paper production; Grant an NGO coalition to carry out a campaign; Employ LAAD to bring the recommendations to parliament; Support parliament monitoring project to analyze how the debate is progressing and what adjustments are needed; Organize 3 POS discussions to debate the recommendations with experts, government bodies, and larger CS groups; Support public health policy fellows to produce policy solutions for mental health deinstitutionalization; Support CDC to produce analysis of violation of freedom of conscience and respective amendments;</p> <p>Organize strategic litigation training for the selected group of partners and embedded lawyers; Grant 3 organizations to formulate and carry strategic cases in the areas of mental disability, violence against women and religious rights.</p> <p>Support content development and broadcast of 9 TV programs; organize debates through frontline media center and regional hubs; media coverage ensured through regional newspaper and online media</p>	<p>Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators</p> <p>FOR THE ENTIRE CONCEPT: NGOs: Collaboration for Democracy Center (CDC), Sakharov Center, Goris Press Club, Women's Resource Center, Unison, HCA, Real World Real People, PINK, New Generation; POS, policy fellows and lawyers; Staff - Anahit Papikyan, Gayane Mamikonyan, Mariam Matevosyan, Mariam Vardanyan, David Amiryany, Suzanne Sarkissian, Larisa Minasyan</p> <p>Sig. deviations in case of H or L budget approval</p> <p>High budget: Expanded scope for Coalition; 3 more fellows produce policy analysis and recommendations for respective fields and to support the work of the Coalition Low budget: same as medium</p> <p>High budget: international mentor from one of the two organizations - Interights or EHRAC for the cases, 1 additional case; Low budget: 1 less case</p> <p>High budget: support 1 more online outlet, Low budget: support 5 less TV programs</p>

Concept 3: End inhumane practices in penitentiary, police and penitentiary institutions for juveniles				
Goals	2014 Milestones	Activities	Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators	Sig. deviations in case of H or L budget approval
Goal #1: Legal guarantees are adopted for access to medical and legal services, definition of torture and age limits for juvenile offenders are adequate to human rights norms	Policy and legal recommendations on torture definition and age limits for juvenile offenders are formulated and endorsed by the WG and civil society and included in the Draft Criminal Code.	Commission 1 research on policy gaps for penitentiary and police conducive for torture; Support publication of three legal/policy briefs on torture definition, access to medical and legal services; and age limit of juveniles; Hold 3 public discussions through the POS of the topics; Form a civil society task force to review and provide recommendations for justice reform; Support parliament monitoring project to produce data on Parliament's review of justice legislation	FOR THE ENTIRE CONCEPT: Police Monitoring Group, Penitentiary Monitoring Group, Protection of Rights without Borders, HCA, HCAV, Mandat, Policy Fellows, POS, Staff - David Amiryany, Maria Aghajanyan, Anahit Papikyan, Mariam Vardanyan, Mariam Matevosyan	High budget: expanded scope for parliament monitoring, an additional research and recommendations on COI in penitentiary and police systems. Low budget: 2 less public discussions
Goal #2: Practical rights protection safeguards are ensured for people in custody	Police and Penitentiary Boards have established a comprehensive referral mechanisms to reveal torture cases	Grant Police and Penitentiary monitoring groups to monitor violations and work with policy/legal researchers to classify violations and formulate recommendations; Grant PRWB for selective monitoring of respective cases to justify the recommendations for legal drafting; Identify and commission a local mentor for both monitoring groups to work on methodology and report production; Conduct strategic litigation training for the monitoring groups and support 2 cases		High budget: 1 international mentor for the groups; an additional strategic case, monitoring scope is expanded to include oral stories from detainees; Low budget: no mentorship for monitoring groups
Goal #3: Justice reform is implemented as per standards set by UN and EU mechanisms	Civil society's recommendations are endorsed by international structures and recommendations taken up in EU-Armenia human rights dialogue	Prepare and peer-review shadow reports and submit to UPR and EU Delegation for EU-Armenia HR Dialogue; Disseminate the reports and hold meetings with local embassies; Support travel to UPR pre-session advocacy mission to Geneva for 4 civil society representatives		High budget: same as medium Low budget: 2 less experts go on advocacy visit
Concept 4: Right to health through policy and practice in Palliative care and Mental health				
Goals	2014 Milestones	Activities	Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators	Sig. deviations in case of H or L budget approval
Goal #1: Policies and legislation regulating mental health and palliative care areas are enacted and enforced	Legal acts on circulation of narcotic drugs are developed and definitions of mental health and community-based services are included into Law on Psychiatric Care	Commission experts to develop amendments to the licensing procedures for palliative care services and professionals, develop legal acts on access to pain relief medication, include definition of mental health and community-based services into Law on psychiatric care, make recommendations to the government to develop legal acts for ensuring access to community-based services; Organize working group meetings and discussions to lobby recommendations; Translate documents for international review; Commission international consultancy. Follow the recommendations adoption and approval by the parliament through the LAAD and the parliament monitoring project	FOR THE ENTIRE CONCEPT: Public Health Fellows, WGs on Palliative Care and Mental Health, Mandat, HCAV, Khnamk, Media outlets; experts - Zsolt Bugarszki and Stephen Connor. Staff - Anahit Papikyan, Suzanne Sarkissian, David Amiryany	High Budget: 4 visits by international experts; expanded scope for parliament monitoring; Low budget: 2 visits by experts
Goal #2: Palliative care and mental health community based services are institutionalized	Budget mechanisms for palliative care and alternative mental health services are developed, recommendations prepared and discussed with the government	Give individual grants to local experts for conducting budget research and analysis in the areas of palliative care and mental health; Organize working meetings with stakeholders to discuss budget revision		No deviations

<p>Goal # 3: Academic and professional educational courses on palliative care and mental health are integrated and institutionalized</p> <p>Goal # 4: Public demand for a rights based approach is created to ensure the implementation of rights of patients with mental health problems</p>	<p>Palliative care sub-specialization for medical students and practicing physicians is approved. 3 Courses on palliative care and mental health are developed and piloted at Yerevan State University Social department and Medical University.</p> <p>2 public campaigns for mental health and palliative care fields are designed</p>	<p>Give technical support to the University faculty for developing 3 courses on mental health and palliative care</p> <p>Grant 2 teams to design and implement campaign plans. Support campaign efforts through coverage by Frontline Media Center and online media</p>	<p>High Budget: piloting 3 courses; Low Budget as the Medium</p> <p>Additional additional 2 on-line media grants. Low Budget as the Medium</p>
<p>Concept 5: Promoting democratic governance, integrity and quality of high school and higher education through identifying mechanisms of comprehensive executive control and corrupt practices and developing alternative solutions within the reform agenda</p>			
<p>Goals</p> <p>Goal #1: Support policy community and civil society to produce conclusive evidence of corruption risks, as well as corrupt practices induced by control and COI within the financing and management of the high school and higher education institutions</p> <p>Goal2: Build consensus among key stakeholders (WB, EU, MoES) around the need for changes in legislative norms and practices for eliminating control over educational institutions, corruption in decision making processes.</p> <p>Goal #3: Create a platform for academia and civil society to engage with the discourse on the issues of executive control over the education institutions, government accountability and transparency, and relevance of the reforms</p>	<p>2014 Milestones</p> <p>Conclusive evidence in the form of monitoring results and policy analysis conclusions is produced demonstrating unaccountable decision-making and funding mechanisms and actual breaches of academic independence and integrity.</p> <p>The major donors (WB and EU) and the decision makers are presented with the findings and are engaged in discussion of change; Legislative/policy initiative is in place to materialize the change; Academia and students are part of the debate</p>	<p>Activities</p> <p>Produce 1 policy research on executive control mechanisms over high school and universities; Inefficiency and unaccountability of funding mechanisms; policies limiting freedom in formulating and conducting education process and assessing the outcomes; COI in governance and accreditation policies and mechanisms of universities (two research grants) Support policy/legal fellows to formulate policy alternatives on identified problems; (3 fellowship grants), Provide content support to media outlets.</p> <p>Conduct 1 discussion with WB and EU local offices based on the research outcomes and policy/legal recommendations; Support an advocacy trip to international WB office for two experts, Convene 3 extended meetings through the POS with academia, policy and CS community experts to discuss results and debate the recommendations and endorse a commonly-shared agenda in the result of discussions; Support 12 student discussion clubs in major universities to make students active participants of reform process through debate of issues of integrity and aspects of education relevant to the Concept theme (6 in the capital and 6 in regions).</p>	<p>Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators</p> <p>FOR THE ENTIRE CONCEPT: CEU Center for Policy Analysis, Policy fellows, Asparaz, Aravot, Staff - Anna Gevorgyan, Lilit Nazaryan, Mariam Matevosyan, David Amiryan, Larisa Minasyan</p> <p>Sig. deviations in case of H or L budget approval</p> <p>High Budget: Give a grant to 2 local experts to prepare a shadow report for the Bologna Policy forum in 2015</p> <p>Low Budget: Reduce number of policy fellowship topics to 2 and cover 1 in 2015</p>
<p>Goal #3: Create a platform for academia and civil society to engage with the discourse on the issues of executive control over the education institutions, government accountability and transparency, and relevance of the reforms</p>	<p>Joint WGs of educators and civil society formed and are in process of formalizing a broad-mandate National Education Council to embark on reform oversight and policy debate functions in the next years; agenda for change and concrete outcomes are debated in public domain</p>	<p>Identify civil society experts and members of academia to establish the Education Council; Provide for meetings, outreach, consultations and research/pilot needs of the Council; Support debate through online outlets and regional newspaper</p>	<p>High budget: Support 2 online outlets; Low budget: no deviation</p>

Concept 6: Supporting Armenia's societal and political direction towards the European integration

Goals	2014 Milestones	Activities	Supporting Staff & Main Collaborators	Significant deviations in case of High or Low budget approval
Goal #1: Consolidate and empower policy community with the capacity to support integration processes at policy level through reform progress assessment and provision of alternative policy solutions and recommendations	A European integration policy think tank established and supported	Grant 5 policy fellowships and provide for mentorship support for policy analysis of primary integration issues within the Association Agreement and the ENP Action Plan; Provide support for 2 policy internships, 2 mentorship visits and training by international trainer; Commission peer review of all papers; Produce 5 policy papers and 12 briefs, ENP Action plan shadow report and Eap Index; Cooperate with the Open Society European Policy Institute on review of the reports and their presentation; Support founding meeting to develop mission and agenda for the think tank.	FOR THE ENTIRE CONCEPT: Open Society European Policy Institute, POS core team preparing reports; policy fellows, Media Center, regional hubs, Mandat, Staff - Maria Aghajanyan, Mariam Matevosyan, Karine Ghazaryan, Babken DerGrigorian, David Aminyan, Larisa Minasyan	High budget: a policy research training by an international trainer Low budget: 1 less policy fellowship
Goal#2: Enable the consolidated policy community to engage with decision-makers on key integration reform areas	ENP recommendations discussed and included in the Association Agreement workplan	Conduct 8 local policy discussions with European and EU delegation representatives, government representatives, MPs, think tanks and larger civil society through the POS, regional hubs and Frontline Media Center; Support 4 experts to present shadow reports and briefs in Brussels and hold meetings with respective Commission members on selected areas and issues of concern; Support Parliament monitoring project to provide conclusive information on legislation approximation within EU integration process		High budget: 1 more expert participates in advocacy; Low budget: 2 less POS discussions
Goal #3: Influence EU's local policies to reinforce the human rights approach in EU instruments	Comprehensive research conducted on the impact of EU's direct budget support and recommendations for improving this instrument are put forward	Initiate monitoring of EU's direct budget support (grant to organization with budget training from IBP); Organize 4 working meetings with local EU delegation to discuss preliminary findings		High budget: Same as medium Low budget: 1 less working meeting with EU Delegation

Shared Frameworks