

GOOD PRACTICE 1

Mandatory fields are defined by *

| Element | Description |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Title* | Support to Displaced People from Nagorno-Karabakh and Host Communities |
| Name of the VET Provider | <i>French-Armenian Vocational Education Center (CEPFA)</i> |
| Thematic domain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inclusion Entrepreneurial ✓ Career guidance ✓ Lifelong learning Creating partnerships |
| Introduction* | <p><i>The main objective was to provide skills-building and upskilling Confectionary and Tailoring trainings for individuals forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as for residents of the host communities. The practice aimed to address their urgent need for acquiring practical competencies to support their social and economic integration</i></p> <p>Period of implementation: July–December 2025.</p> <p>Number of beneficiaries: 44</p> |
| Stakeholders and Partners | <p><i>The primary beneficiaries of the good practice were individuals forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh and the residents of the host communities who required skills development and support for social and economic integration. The users of the good practice are the trained participants, local community members, and institutions involved in providing services to displaced populations directly benefited from the practice. The project was implemented in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and was funded by the Government of France. UNDP provided technical support, coordination, and oversight throughout the implementation process, while the French Government ensured financial support for the activities.</i></p> |
| Impact* | <p><i>The practice has had a positive impact on the beneficiaries’ social and economic well-being. Several participants secured employment after completing the trainings, while others were able to start working from home using the tools and equipment provided to them upon completion of the project. This contributed to improving their income opportunities and strengthening their financial independence.</i></p> <p><i>The group interactions, supportive learning environment, and close communication with trainers and peers created a positive atmosphere that helped beneficiaries regain confidence, reduce stress, and feel more connected</i></p> |

within their new communities. This strengthened their sense of belonging and social resilience.

Although the practice did not directly target environmental outcomes, it contributed to the financial and economic resilience of the region by enhancing the employability of displaced individuals and supporting local communities with newly developed skills. By increasing the number of skilled workers, the project indirectly supported local businesses and service providers.

Evidence of impact:

- Beneficiaries who found employment or began home-based work with project-provided tools.*
- Feedback from participants highlighting improved confidence, motivation, and social well-being.*
- Increased engagement of host community members in vocational activities.*

Innovation and Success Factors *

The good practice introduced an innovative approach by combining vocational skills training with direct support measures for displaced individuals, such as providing tools for home-based work and ensuring flexible learning formats adapted to their needs. This approach helped beneficiaries quickly translate newly acquired skills into income-generating activities. The strong focus on psychosocial well-being—through a supportive learning environment—also represented an innovative element, as it addressed both economic and social recovery.

Conditions required for successful replication:

To replicate this practice in similar contexts, the following conditions should be in place:

- **Institutional conditions:**
Strong cooperation between VET institutions and international organisations to ensure coordinated implementation, quality training delivery, and logistics.
- **Economic conditions:**
Availability of financial support for training materials, equipment, and post-training tools that enable beneficiaries to start working immediately.
- **Social conditions:**
A safe, inclusive, and motivational learning environment; trainers skilled in working with vulnerable groups; and opportunities for peer interaction that foster trust and confidence.

Constraints*

Several challenges emerged during the implementation of the good practice:

1. **Emotional and psychological stress among displaced participants:**
Many beneficiaries were experiencing uncertainty, stress, and reduced motivation due to displacement.
How it was addressed: *Trainers created a supportive and friendly*
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learning environment, offered individual guidance, and encouraged group interaction to help participants feel safe and engaged.

2. **Limited access to equipment or workspace at home:** Some beneficiaries interested in home-based work lacked the necessary tools.

How it was addressed: *The project provided essential starter toolkits upon completion of the training, enabling participants to begin working immediately.*

3. **Coordination challenges between partners and stakeholders:** Close coordination was needed between the VET institution, UNDP, and local actors.

How it was addressed: *Regular communication, clear task-sharing, and joint monitoring helped ensure smooth implementation.*

Lessons learned *

Key messages and lessons learned:

- **Integrated support is crucial:** *Combining skills training with psychosocial support and provision of tools significantly increases the effectiveness of vocational programmes for displaced populations.*
- **Flexibility enhances participation:** *Adapting schedules, learning methods, and course formats to participants' needs ensures higher engagement and completion rates.*
- **Collaboration strengthens outcomes:** *Close cooperation between VET institutions and international partners ensures quality delivery, efficient coordination, and access to resources.*
- **Social connections matter:** *Creating a positive, inclusive, and interactive learning environment helps beneficiaries regain confidence, build networks, and integrate better into their communities.*
- **Sustainability requires follow-up:** *Providing participants with tools and guidance for applying skills in real work settings supports long-term impact and economic independence.*

Replicability and/or up-scaling

The aim is to go further than the section "Innovations / critical success factors" in specifying the requirements for replication of the practice on a larger scale (national, regional, international).

The good practice can be extended on a larger scale—nationally, regionally, or even internationally—by adapting the approach to different sectors and contexts. The experience gained through similar skills training programmes, such as cooking and confectionery courses implemented in cooperation with AGBU and the Women's Support Center, demonstrates that the model is versatile and can be successfully applied to various vocational fields.

Conditions for successful replication:

1. **Institutional readiness:** *Strong partnerships between VET institutions, local authorities, NGOs, and international organisations to ensure coordination, quality delivery, and access to resources.*

2. **Financial support:** Adequate funding for training materials, tools, and post-training support for beneficiaries to apply their skills in real work settings.
3. **Flexible and inclusive design:** Courses should be adapted to the needs of target groups, including displaced individuals or vulnerable populations, with flexible schedules and learning formats.
4. **Social support:** A positive and supportive learning environment that encourages interaction, confidence-building, and integration within local communities.
5. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Continuous assessment of outcomes and feedback to adjust the project for different contexts and ensure sustainability.

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| Contact details | <i>gestion@fcepfa.am</i> |
| URL of the practice | <p><i>Publications and updates on the above-mentioned good practice can be found on CEPFA's social media pages</i></p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/lycee francoarm</p> <p>https://www.linkedin.com/in/cepfa-fondation-37ab54211?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=ios_app</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/c_e_p_f_a?igsh=MWlqcDlob2w2cngzcw==</p> |
| Related resources that have been developed | <p>https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pOXwj3gPs58&fbclid=IwVERDUAOjh0lleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZAo2NjI4NTY4Mzc5AAEezST9Dbqnda8l_PJIDfaY T5Ph1_rfxtqto2oGScvddwj7Tso5mn0VZ-Rd52k_aem_rfCdnhsNHZCJUHUacChiQ</p> <p>https://sca.am/news/4247?fbclid=IwZnRzaAOjh7dleHRuA2FlbQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZAo2NjI4NTY4Mzc5AAEexVqvsOyMzCVYr09lmsNBWUuUc1zq32RZlai1Cvc07jrCP-BvGb6SrMA9rAoA_aem_H8A6PzAp1WKonAT-cy0SXw</p> <p><u>LLL project.pdf</u></p> |

GOOD PRACTICE 2

Mandatory fields are defined by *

| Element | Description |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Title* | <i>Arahat Armenia</i> |
| Name of the VET Provider | <i>French-Armenian Vocational Education</i> |

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|----------------------------------|--|
| Thematic domain | <p>What is the thematic domain covered by this good practice? More than one domain can be indicated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital ✓ Green ✓ Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurial Career guidance ✓ Lifelong learning ✓ Creating partnerships/skills ecosystems |
| Introduction* | <p><i>To contribute to the economic and social development, as well as to the environmental protection of rural areas in Armenia (regions of Lori, Syunik, Gegharkunik), through the structuring and enhancement of ecotourism and hiking tourism.</i></p> <p><i>Period of implementation: 2024-2027</i></p> |
| Stakeholders and Partners | <p>Beneficiaries / Target Group: <i>The main beneficiaries of the good practice are rural community members, including local residents, young people, small businesses, and local guides involved in ecotourism and hiking tourism. The practice aims to strengthen their capacities, improve economic opportunities, and support sustainable development in rural areas.</i></p> <p>Users of the Good Practice: <i>Local tourism actors, municipalities, community-based organizations, and rural service providers directly benefit from the tools, trainings, and improved structures developed through the project.</i></p> <p>Institutions, Partners, Implementing Agencies, and Donors: <i>The project is implemented in partnership with AFRAT, a French center specializing in mountain tourism and territorial development. AFRAT contributes technical expertise, training modules, and methodological support.</i> <i>The Tourism Committee of Armenia and the Armenian Alpinism Federation also collaborate, contributing sectoral knowledge, logistical coordination, and support in aligning activities with national tourism strategies.</i> <i>The initiative is funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), which ensures financial support and overall project backing. CEPFA contributes to capacity building and supports local actors in acquiring relevant skills for the development of ecotourism and hiking tourism.</i></p> |
| Impact* | <p>Impact on beneficiaries: <i>The good practice has a positive impact on rural communities and tourism actors in the regions of Syunik, Lori, and Gegharkunik. The establishment of six ecotourism hubs (pôles écotouristiques) strengthens local capacities, improves tourism infrastructure, and creates new opportunities for rural residents, young people, and small businesses. Beneficiaries benefit from improved</i></p> |

skills, increased visibility of local tourism services, and stronger access to professional networks.

Social impact:

The initiative supports the creation of a regional network of civil society organisations, encouraging collaboration between local actors, guides, community groups, and institutions. This reinforces community engagement, strengthens social ties, and contributes to the development of a shared identity around sustainable tourism.

Several hiking tours are organized with AFRAT volunteers and young participants from CEPFA and the regions, allowing them to practice guiding techniques in real conditions. These field activities improve teamwork, strengthen practical skills, and foster cultural exchange between French and Armenian participants.

Environmental, financial, and economic impact:

The development of ecotourism hubs and structured hiking routes supports environmentally responsible tourism practices. The focus on nature-based tourism encourages the protection of natural landscapes while generating income for local communities.

Financially and economically, the project will contribute to rural resilience by diversifying income sources, increasing visitor flows, and promoting local services such as guiding, accommodation, crafts, and food production.

Evidence of impact:

- Creation of six ecotourism hubs across Syunik, Lori, and Gegharkunik.
- Recognition and certification of competences for hiking guides.
- Development and implementation of a structured training programme for hiking guides.
- Establishment of a multi-stakeholder civil society network supporting sustainable tourism initiatives
- Creation of educational tools containing information on fauna, flora, biodiversity, and nature conservation have been created. These tools include games, flashcards, and quizzes with images to raise awareness among young people about environmental issues. This experiment can be replicated in other regions of the country.

Innovation and Success Factors *

In what way has the good practice contributed to innovation? What are the conditions (institutional, economic, social, and environmental) that need to be in place for the good practice to be successfully replicated (in a similar context)?

Contribution to innovation:

The good practice has introduced several innovative elements in the development of ecotourism and hiking tourism in rural Armenia.

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- *It has established structured ecotourism hubs in different regions, creating a coordinated model that links communities, guides, businesses, and institutions.*
 - *It has developed a competence-based certification system for hiking guides, which is new in Armenia and ensures professional standards aligned with international practices.*
 - *The creation of a training programme has specifically tailored to mountain and hiking guides introduced modern methodologies, professionalized the sector, and strengthened workforce quality.*

Conditions for successful replication:

To replicate this good practice in other regions or countries, several conditions need to be in place:

1. Institutional conditions:

- *Strong cooperation between ministries, local authorities, tourism committees, and VET institutions.*
- *Clear frameworks for guide certification and safety standards.*
- *Commitment from partners (e.g., tourism federations, local NGOs) to maintain training and certification systems.*

2. Economic conditions:

- *Stable funding to develop hubs, trails, training modules, and certification processes.*

3. Social conditions:

- *Active community engagement and willingness of local residents to participate in ecotourism activities.*
- *Collaboration among civil society organizations to strengthen local governance and shared decision-making.*
- *Training opportunities that develop both technical and soft skills (safety, communication, environmental awareness).*

4. Environmental conditions:

- *Protection and responsible management of natural areas to ensure sustainable use of trails and landscapes.*
- *Environmental guidelines and monitoring systems to avoid overuse of sensitive sites.*
- *Inclusion of conservation principles in training programmes and community initiatives.*

Constraints*

1. Limited local experience in ecotourism and mountain guiding

Many rural communities have little prior experience with structured ecotourism services, professional guiding, or destination management.

How it is addressed:

Capacity-building programmes were implemented through tailored training modules, field practice sessions, and mentorship by AFRAT

experts. This helped local actors acquire technical, environmental, and safety-related skills.

2. **Fragmented coordination among local actors**

Communities, municipalities, guides, NGOs, and businesses often work independently, which reduced the coherence of tourism services.

How it is addressed:

A regional civil society network is created to improve cooperation, share information, and jointly plan activities. Regular coordination meetings strengthened communication between stakeholders.

3. **Insufficient infrastructure for hiking and ecotourism**

Many routes lack proper signage, safety measures, or basic services, making the development of sustainable tourism more difficult.

How it is addressed:

Six ecotourism hubs will be created in the three regions were established across the three regions, providing structure, centralized information and support.

4. **Lack of standardized competencies for guides**

Before the project, there was no unified system for verifying or certifying the skills of hiking guides.

How it is addressed:

A competence-based certification system has been developed and will be implemented in 2026, ensuring professional quality standards and aligning Armenia more closely with international tourism practices.

5. **Environmental sensitivity of the regions**

Rural and mountainous areas risk degradation if tourism is not managed responsibly.

How it is addressed:

Environmental protection principles are integrated into the training curriculum, and communities are involved in responsible trail management and awareness-raising activities.

Lessons learned *

Hands-on learning enhances skills and confidence:

Practical activities, such as hiking tours with AFRAT volunteers and young participants from CEPFA and the regions, allow trainees to apply guiding techniques in real conditions, reinforcing technical skills and safety awareness.

Collaboration strengthens outcomes:

Involving volunteers, local youth, and regional stakeholders fosters teamwork, knowledge exchange, and community engagement, creating stronger social networks around sustainable tourism.

Integration of theory and practice is essential:

Combining classroom training, certification, and field experiences ensures that beneficiaries are fully prepared to work professionally as guides and to contribute to ecotourism development.

Cultural and social exchange adds value:

Interactions between French volunteers and Armenian youth during field activities provide cross-cultural learning opportunities, build confidence, and enhance motivation.

Community involvement is key for sustainability:

Engaging local communities in ecotourism activities ensures that tourism development is grounded in local knowledge, benefits residents economically and socially, and promotes long-term sustainability.

Replicability and/or up-scaling

The good practice can be extended nationally, regionally by adapting its model of structured ecotourism hubs, certified hiking guides, and community-based networks to other rural or mountainous areas. The successful experience in Syunik, Lori, and Gegharkunik demonstrates that this approach can improve tourism services, strengthen local capacities, and foster sustainable rural development in diverse contexts.

Conditions for successful replication:

1. Institutional conditions:

- *Strong partnerships between VET institutions, local authorities, tourism committees, NGOs, and international experts.*
- *Clear regulations for guide certification, safety, and tourism management.*
- *Local institutional commitment to support trainings, hubs, and networking activities.*

2. Social conditions:

- *Active engagement of local communities and youth in tourism activities.*
- *Opportunities for volunteer involvement and cross-cultural exchange to strengthen skills and motivation.*
- *Awareness-building about the benefits of ecotourism and sustainable practices.*

3. Environmental conditions:

- *Protection and responsible management of natural areas to ensure sustainability.*
- *Integration of environmental awareness and conservation practices in training programmes.*

Contact details

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URL of the practice

The good practice can be found on CEPFA's social media pages.
<https://www.facebook.com/lyceefrancoarm>

https://www.linkedin.com/in/cepfa-fondation-37ab54211?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=ios_app

<https://www.instagram.com/cepfa?igsh=MWlqcDlob2w2cngzcw==>

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have been developed**

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<https://www.facebook.com/arahetarmenia>
