



News Bulletin

June 2005

Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) program opens the doors of special institutions



Started: April 2004
Duration: 4 years
Regions: Yerevan, Syunik, Tavush, Shirak, Gegharkunik
Direct beneficiaries: 1080 children and 499 families
Indirect beneficiaries: 6000 children and their families
Funded by: USAID/Global Development Alliance (50%), Development Cooperation Ireland and World Vision offices in the US, UK, Canada and Germany

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Child Protection Day celebrated in a special institution for the first time

On June 1, the Child Protection Day celebration took place at Special School #18, (Nubarashen). For the first time such celebration was held in an institution which for many years remained outside of the public concern and where children's rights were ignored and often violated. The event was part of a longer term strategy to integrate institutionalized children into normal life and to reduce stigma and discrimination.

"It is relatively easy to bring children out of institutions but to bring the outside world to them is much more difficult" CEDC Manager Kristine Mikhailidi commented.

In a move reflecting growing awareness of the importance of Child Rights, the leading role in the preparations was taken by the staff and children of Nubarashen. Support and encouragement was provided by World Vision and the event became an occasion for fun and festivity for 200 children. It was also an opportunity to attract the attention of government officials, civil society, mass media and the general public to the issues of more than 11,500 Armenian children living in institutions.

games and other fun activities for all the participants.

The event also included the presentation of the book by Karen Harutunyan "Research and Prevention of Child Abuse" published with World Vision's support.

A photo exhibition presenting works by young photographers from World Vision's community based children's centre in Gyumri, provided an excellent opportunity for bridge building between children in Nubarashen and their peers in Gyumri, where many of the institutionalized children are from. Through their photographs children communicated their view of the world and what changes they would like to see.

"This was the first charity project from OpenArmenia, The visit was a good opportunity to meet the children, to learn more about their life and their needs."- Natalya Antonyan, OpenArmenia Forum.



Representatives of OpenArmenia Forum visited special school #18

On May 15, the representatives of OpenArmenia Forum, an Internet-based organization that unites Armenians from Armenia, Russia, US, Canada and other countries, visited Special School #18 to learn more about life and needs of children living in institutions and provide some direct assistance. The CEDC program helped to organize the visit, because such events help to change discriminative attitudes towards children living in institutions and create their positive image within our society.



"I couldn't even imagine singing and dancing together with my favorite singer. We never had such a party before."- David, a boy from the special school #18, who performed together with Kristine Pepelyan, a popular singer

A concert featuring children from institutions, who performed alongside popular singers, was followed by