



Program Goal - to increase the participation of youth in the local development processes of Armenia's rural communities.

Over one third of Armenia's young people live in rural communities. In a recent survey conducted by the Ministry of Culture, rural youth identified their main problems as a lack of employment and educational opportunities, and an absence of social and cultural activities in the villages. These social and economic hardships have resulted in a low level of youth participation in local development. In order to provide youth from rural communities with opportunities to develop practical skills and to lead local development processes, Eurasia Partnership Foundation is implementing the YouthBank Program in partnership with the Community Foundation of Northern Ireland. This program uses an innovative approach to developing youth leaders by building their decision-making and critical thinking skills.

Capacity Development

In June 2007, Eurasia Partnership Foundation launched this program by establishing five YouthBank committees in Armenia. Each committee consists of five to seven individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 that reside in a rural community. Youth that demonstrated the ability to work as a team as well as a genuine commitment to volunteer work and the YouthBank approach were selected. After their selection, trainers from the Community Foundation of Northern Ireland facilitated a four-day workshop that simulates the grant making process. After the workshop, each YouthBank committee returned to their community to conduct a needs assessment. Based upon the results of this assessment and with assistance from Eurasia Partnership Foundation, the committees defined criteria for grant making, issue an RFP, and select projects for funding. After projects have been selected, youth committees monitor the implementation of these initiatives and conduct close-out evaluations upon their completion. Through these activities and an additional series of training workshops, YouthBank committee members develop an understanding of transparency and good governance and acquire practical skills that they can apply in the workplace or in the community.

Partnership Development

As part of the program, Eurasia Partnership Foundation will facilitate an informal network of YouthBank committees that will encourage cooperation and the exchange of information and experiences between program participants. EPF will create an online mechanism for communication between YouthBank committees and will use the training workshops to strengthen ties between network members. At the end of the program, Eurasia Partnership Foundation will organize a conference to highlight the achievements of the YouthBank Program. Stakeholders in the field of youth development in Armenia will be invited to participate and to contribute to the development of a plan for program sustainability. In the coming years, Eurasia Partnership Foundation will also support opportunities for YouthBank committees in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan to share experiences and best practices.

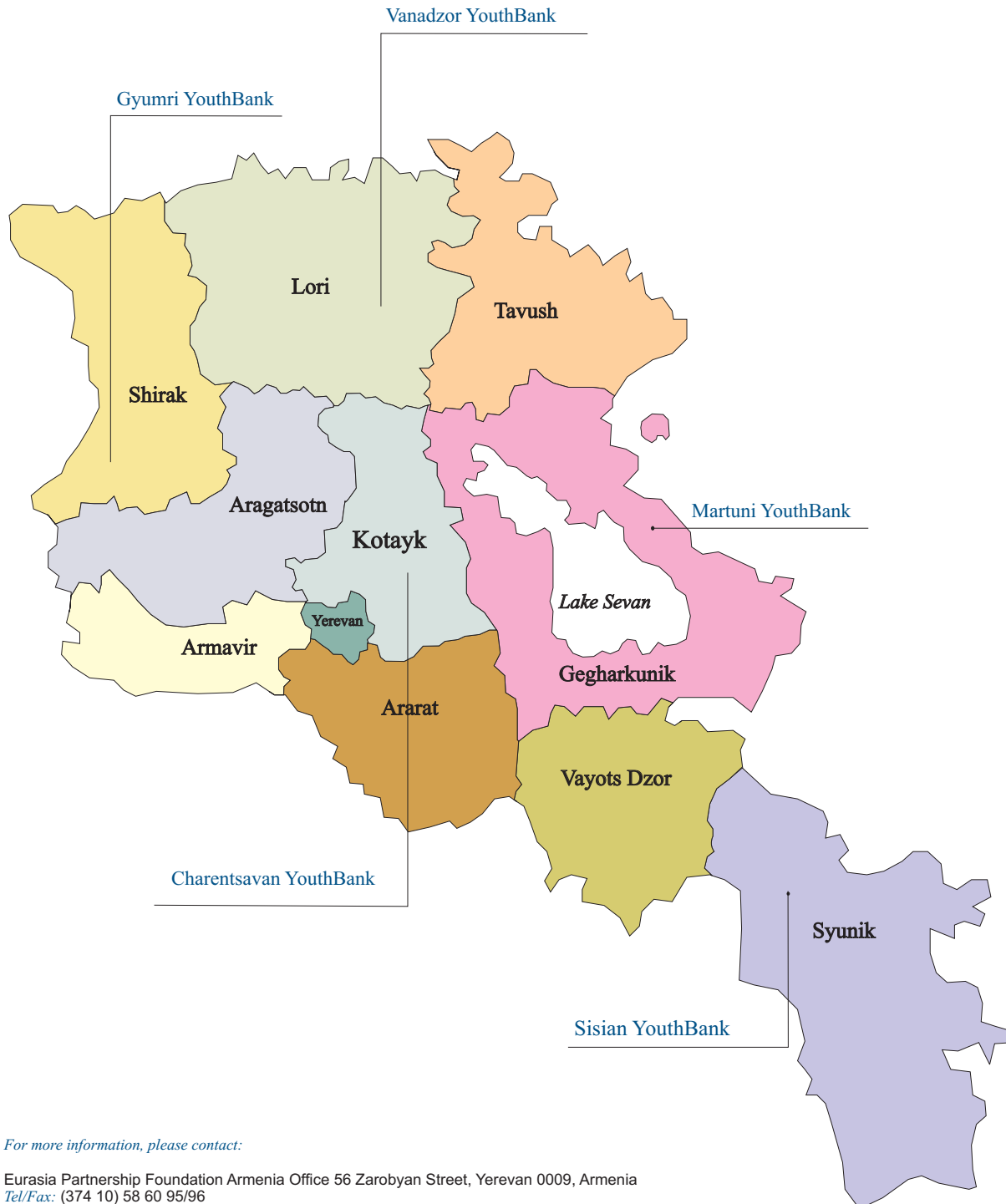
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Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) is the locally-registered, legacy institution of Eurasia Foundation in Armenia.

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YouthBanks by Region



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