

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### for the external evaluation of the project

### “Emili Aregak Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities”

#### 1. Background and description of the project:

Emili Aregak Center (EAC) is a Gyumri-based support and resource center for children and young people with disabilities (PWD), as well as with their families based in Gyumri. The Center was founded by Armenian Caritas and Caritas Austria in 2008, based on Caritas Armenia's experience of working in this field since the early 2000s. In 2020, Caritas Aregak Foundation (CAF) was established to more efficiently run EAC as well as Aregak Bakery & Café, the social enterprise of CAF which employs young adults with disabilities and mothers of special needs kids.

EAC responds to a situation of constructed exclusion; PWD and their families face stigmatization, social isolation, and physical inaccessibility. They often have limited access to services, educational and employment opportunities, and are at disproportionate risk of living in poverty, particularly due to the increased financial and caring burdens of everyday life with a disability. Furthermore, they often have limited awareness of their rights.

EAC is financed by Medicor Foundation and Caritas Vorarlberg/ Diocese of Feldkirch and was implemented by Armenian Caritas (in 2020) and CAF (in 2021). The center's aim is to promote social inclusion of children with disabilities and their families living in Gyumri so that they are treated equally. EAC addresses this through numerous programs. The center provides a warm, positive environment where disability is accepted and celebrated; interventions include therapeutic and developmental support for people with disabilities, pathways to employment for people with disabilities, employment at an inclusive café run as a social enterprise, and support for family members.

<b>What:</b>	<p><b>Overall Objective:</b> The overall objective of EAC is to promote the social inclusion of children with disabilities and their families living in Gyumri so that they are treated equally.</p> <p>This objective is tied to numerous global objectives of international organizations and charters. In particular, the project is related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Disability is referenced in various parts of the SDGs and specifically in parts related to education, growth and employment, inequality, and accessibility of human settlements. Closely linked is Goal 10, which strives to reduce inequality within and among countries by empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, including persons with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Specific Objective 1:</b> To improve the capabilities of children and youth with disabilities to lead self-determined lives.</p> <p><b>Specific Objective 2:</b> To foster the psychological and social well-being of families with children with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Specific Objective 3:</b> To promote systemic change by increasing public awareness of the needs, rights, and potential of people with disabilities.</p>
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	<b>Specific Objective 4:</b> To expand partnerships with organizations able to train and employ young adults with disabilities.
<b>Whom:</b>	<b>The main target group of the project are:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children with disabilities,</li> <li>- Parents of children with disabilities</li> <li>- Youth with disabilities</li> <li>- Parents' representatives</li> <li>- Staff of the Emili Aregak Center</li> </ul>
<b>How:</b>	<p><b>Output 1.1.: Individual therapy sessions</b> Individual therapy is focused on developing children's mobility, communication, and emotional skills.</p> <p><b>Output 1.2.: Group therapy sessions</b> In addition to individual therapy, children are encouraged, when appropriate, to participate in group therapy which encourages the development of life skills, socialization, and independence.</p> <p><b>Output 2.1.: Home visits</b> The EAC social worker always makes an initial visit to the home of a new beneficiary to assess the situation. Follow-up visits may occur in special or difficult family situations.</p> <p><b>Output 2.2.: Counselling for family members</b> Family members of people with disabilities are often in a vulnerable state because of the difficulties that disability adds to their family dynamic. Consultation and psychological counseling are provided.</p> <p><b>Output 3.1.: Social media communication</b> Social media is the primary channel through which messages about inclusion are communicated to the public.</p> <p><b>Output 3.2.: Awareness raising events</b> Awareness-raising events provide a less frequent but more impactful means of communicating messages about inclusion to the public.</p> <p><b>Output 4.1.: Labour market training and coaching</b> Teens and young adults have the opportunity to expand their skill-sets and abilities through participation in in-house as well external coaching and training.</p>
<b>Who:</b>	<b>Organizations implementing the project:</b> Armenian Caritas / Caritas-Aregak Foundation
<b>Where:</b>	Gyumri, Shirak region
<b>When:</b>	01 January 2020 – 31 December 2021

## 2. Purpose and objectives of the external evaluation

The purpose of the external evaluation is to inform future programming of EAC, based on an analysis of the progress made and achievements so far as well as challenges and lessons learned. The main objectives of the evaluation are to:

- (1) Evaluate and analyze to what extent the project objectives and activities results have been achieved and what impact the project has had on the main target groups of the project by the end of 2021;

- (2) Evaluate and analyze project successes and problem areas, analyze the reasons for achieving or not achieving the planned results and draw key lessons learned
- (3) Receive recommendations for future project planning.

### **Evaluation Questions:**

#### **Relevance:**

1. What is the added value of the project compared to existing offers and initiatives?
2. Did the project appropriately identify and respond to the needs of the target group?
3. To what extent does the project contribute to a more inclusive environment in the region?

#### **Effectiveness:**

1. To what extent have the project objectives and planned results been achieved?
2. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? (Also consider any which were possibly beyond the control of the project)

#### **Efficiency:**

1. Was the project implemented in the most efficient way (time, personnel, available resources)? Have any issues emerged, if so which ones and why?
2. Is the project implementation considered to have been cost-efficient, while not compromising quality?

#### **Impact:**

1. What are the positive and negative changes of the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?
2. What has changed for the target group so far in terms of self-determined lives, participation, and social inclusion?
3. What has improved in terms of quality of life for PwD related to psychological well-being; physical well-being; interpersonal relationships; personal development and right (to be specified according to your objectives).
4. In what ways has the project contributed to increasing public awareness of the needs, rights, and potential of people with disabilities?

#### **Sustainability:**

1. How can you indicate the project sustainability? What are the basic indicators to measure this?
2. What steps need to be taken to ensure and/or improve project sustainability?

#### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

1. What were some of the most significant achievements and challenges of the project? What was learned from these, and how should these learnings be considered in future programming??
2. Are there any gaps in EAC programming, operations and management, and how could they be addressed?
3. How could the positive impact of EAC for its beneficiaries be maximised?

## 2. Timetable

The estimated period of the interim evaluation is six weeks, from March until mid-April 2022. The following is a table of the anticipated works and a timetable for the evaluation team:

Thematic coverage: Activities with children with disabilities in the center; Activities with youth disabilities; Activities with parents' self-support groups; Activities on awareness-raising events, Activities on labour market training and coaching.

Time period: Two years of the project (2020-2021)

Target group: Children with disabilities, Parents of children with disabilities, Youth with Disabilities, Parents' representatives, Staff of the Emili Aregak Center

### b) Timetable

Time Table	Type of activity
Last two weeks (March 2022)	Desk study: a review of the project documentation: project proposal, project logical framework, project budget; Code of Ethics and Safeguarding; latest narrative and financial report of the project for the period 2020-2021; partners' social media activities.
First week (April 2022)	Fieldwork/Collecting data from Centers' beneficiaries/partners/organizations
Mid of April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation and presentation of the preliminary evaluation findings and preliminary version of the report in English, to managers of Caritas-Aregak Foundation, Armenian Caritas and Caritas Austria, Medicor Foundation</li> <li>• Comments from managers Caritas-Aregak Foundation, Armenian Caritas and Caritas Austria, Medicor Foundation</li> </ul>
By the 29 <sup>th</sup> of April 2022	The final version of the report is sent to managers of Caritas-Aregak Foundation, Armenian Caritas and Caritas Austria, Medicor Foundation.

## 3. Methodology

The evaluation team should follow a qualitative approach, using methods which could include Focus Groups, Key Informant Interviews, structured interviews with individual beneficiaries, Most Significant Change Stories, document review etc. The list of those to be interviewed during the evaluation should include project staff, key stakeholders of the project, and representatives of the target groups. The methods to be used during the evaluation should be described in detail in the application form for the evaluation of the project. Project staff involved in interviews should include both the EAC manager and other key project staff working directly with representatives of the target.

The evaluation team may suggest other methods to collect information from project stakeholders and beneficiaries to implement Terms of Reference.

#### **4. Expected results (outputs) and timetable for delivery:**

- Detailed methodology for the Terms of Reference with indicative questionnaires for interviews/surveys and evaluation work plan – by 11th March, 2022;
- Preliminary version of the report (about 25-30 pages without annexes), including a draft executive summary (max. 4 pages) in English – by the beginning of April 2022
- The final version of the report (about 25-30 pages without annexes), including a draft executive summary (max. 4 pages) in English is due by 29 April 2022.

The evaluation report should be structured as follows:

Cover Sheet

Table of contents

List of abbreviations

Executive Summary

Introduction

Evaluation Methodology

- Data Collection Methods
- Data analysis
- Limitations, risks, and mitigation measures

Findings

Conclusions

Recommendations

Annexes

#### **5. Qualification requirements for consultants (experts) carrying out the external evaluation:**

May only apply to this call registered independent consultant or consulting firm that complies with the following cumulative criteria:

- With a university degree, master's degree (at least) in the social sciences: sociology, law, political science or other related sciences);
- Proven experience (at least 5 years) in conducting project/programme evaluations and skills in conducting impact evaluations on the target group, using an interactive methodology, conducting interviews, developing questionnaires, etc;
- Relevant experience in the inclusive education context is highly preferable;
- Fluent Armenian language is a must to carry out interviews
- Proven analytical and reporting skills in English;

## **6. Guiding Principles & Donor concepts**

The consultant is to conduct the evaluation in accordance with the principles outlined in the “Caritas Internationalis management standards” document, the “Caritas Code of conduct”.

The evaluator must take all required steps to ensure that the evaluation is designed and conducted to respect and protect the rights and welfare of the people and the communities of which they are members, as well as to ensure that the evaluation is technically accurate, reliable, and legitimate, and conducted in a transparent and impartial manner. Moreover, the evaluation should ideally contribute to organizational learning and accountability.

## **7. Budget and financial plan for the evaluation:**

The applicants may use a free format for the elaboration of the budget. The financial offer should include proposed budget of all-inclusive fee in AMD, including separate lines for the Consultancy fee and travel costs (e.g travel, data collection assistance, printing, etc.), as deemed necessary for the assignment.

All expenditure necessary and justified for the evaluation and indicated in the budget will be reimbursed at a later stage, once the relevant financial documents supporting the expenditure have been submitted. When working on the budget, applicants should take into account the fact that fieldwork is required.

The payment will be made as follows:

- 1st installment – 40% (after signing the agreement); and
- Final installment – 60% (after approval of final deliverables)

## **12. Terms of application:**

Candidates planning to apply for the evaluation of the project may submit an application form in free format, but with a mandatory indication that these candidates meet the eligibility requirements, attaching a CV and reports on similar missions, a detailed description of the methodology, an updated work plan, and a budget for the evaluation.

If the evaluation will be carried out by a team of experts, their role in the Terms of Reference and their knowledge and experience in carrying out the project and/or program evaluations, and added value should be described.

Applications for the evaluation must be submitted by the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 2022 at the latest to [t.akopyan@caritas.am](mailto:t.akopyan@caritas.am).