

# Swedish model in Armenia? Yes we can!



**WINNET Armenia Association of Women  
Resource Centers**

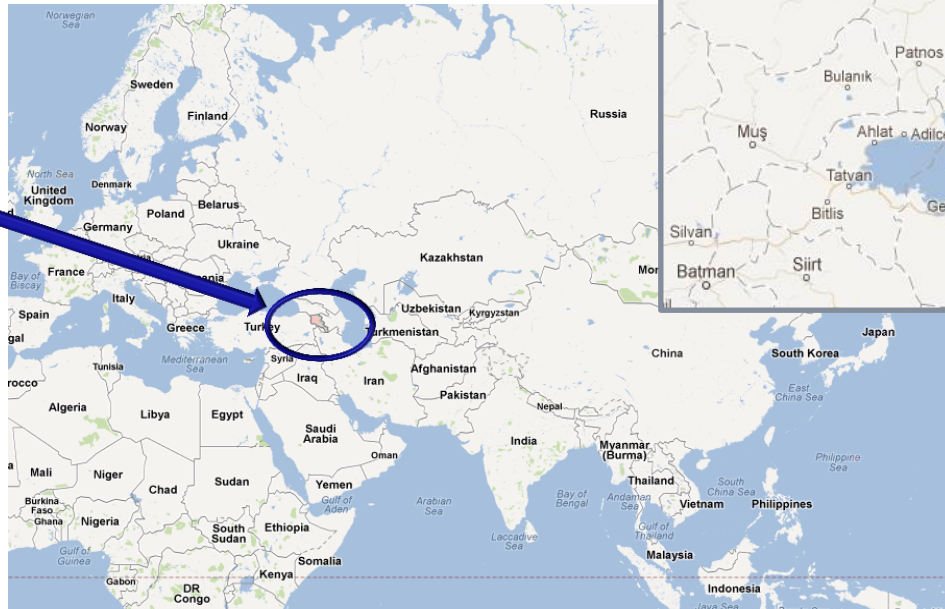
Prepared by Anush Hovakimyan

# Overview

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1. **Armenia: location, general information**
2. **The Economy of Armenia**
3. **Swedish model: Syunik Women's Resource Centers Network**
4. **Political involvement**
5. **Supporting the Empowerment of Women in Local Governments**
6. **Economic development**
7. **Social activism**
8. **Network Development**
9. **Summary**

# Armenia: Location



# Armenia:

## General Information

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**Area:** 29,743 square kilometers (11,484 sq mi)

**Capital:** Yerevan

**Population:** Over 3 million

**Government:** Presidential Republic

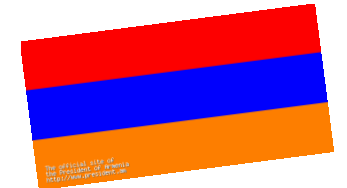
Parliament/National assembly

**Official language:** Armenian

**Currency:** Armenian Dram (AMD)



*Coat of arms*



*Flag*

# The Economy of Armenia: Overview

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1. GDP - per capita (PPP): \$3305, (Sweden \$43,180 )
2. Gross external debt \$6.417 billion
3. Small scale agriculture
4. Food importer
5. Small mineral deposits (gold, bauxite)
6. Conflict with Azerbaijan and Turkey
7. A limited range of products and services for businesses offered by banks

Official Unemployment rate in  
Armenia: 7%

Real unemployment rate in  
Armenia: 45-50 %



**Women: 70%**



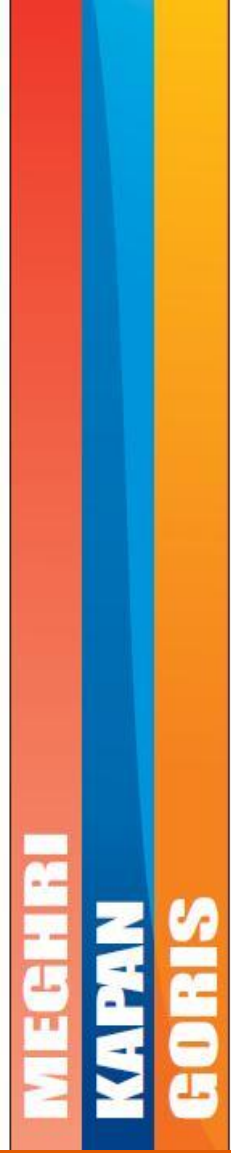
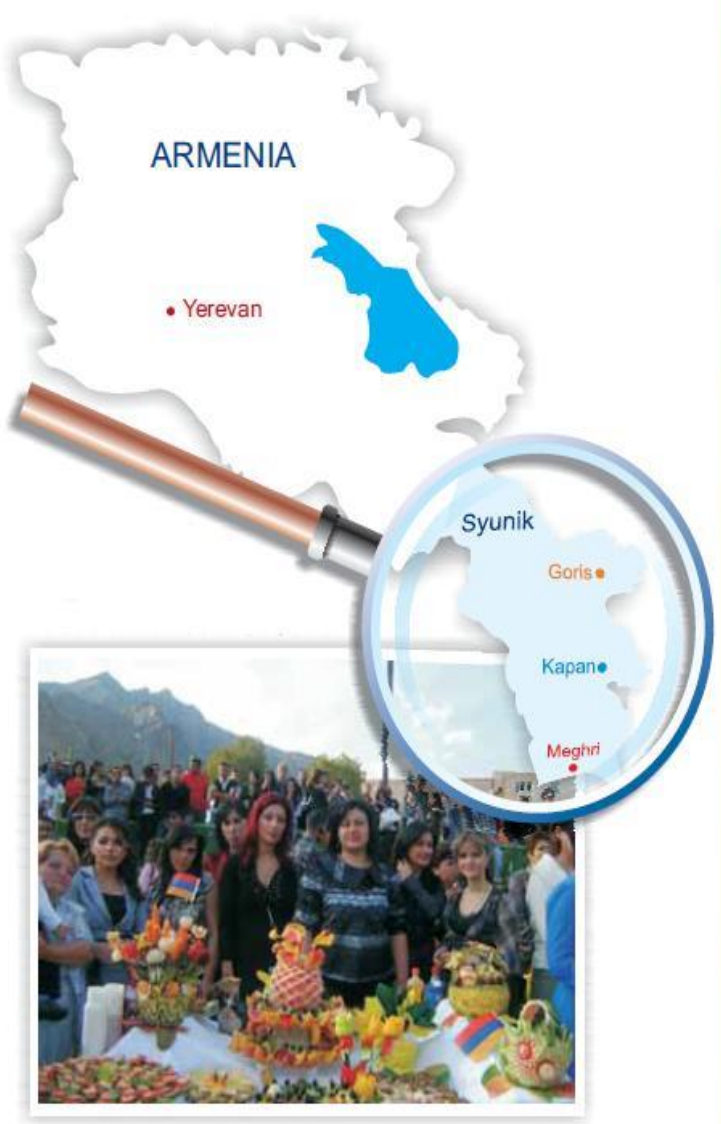
# The Economy of Armenia:

## *Women's involvement in economic field in Armenia*

- Inequalities between men and women
- Only 6% of employers are women and 94 % are men.
- 2/3 of all registered unemployed persons are women.
- Unemployment and insufficient employment have bigger negative influence on women than on men.



# "Women's Empowerment and Cooperation in Armenia with a focus on the Syunik region" Assessment Report conducted by Swedish Expert Birgitta Wistrand



Women in Syunik  
are poorly represented in  
local politics  
and at a disadvantage  
compared to men  
in terms of employment  
and starting small  
businesses.





# Economic Empowerment of Women in the Syunik Region of Armenia" project

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## Recommendations by

To support the establishment of women's resource centers based on local women's initiative groups in the major towns of the Syunik region.



# The Economy of Armenia:

*“Women’s Empowerment and Cooperation in Armenia” project initiated by the OSCE Office in Yerevan*



*Establishment of 3 Women’s Resource Centers in the Syunik region:*



Meghry Women’s Resource Center  
NGO (Dec 2008)



Kapan Women’s Resource Center NGO  
(Jul 2009)



Goris Women’s Development “Resource Center” Foundation  
(Jul 2009)

# Exchange Visit to Sweden in 2010

## Meetings with WINNET Sweden member organizations



# Syunik Women's Resource Center Network

## *Mission*



Promote the increase in the roles and competitiveness of women at the national, regional and local levels through collaboration and civic engagement thus supporting the development of women's resource centers.

# Syunik Women's Resource Center Network

## *Goals and Objectives*

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- **Monitor, research, and analysis** women's issues
- Assist **solving women's issues** at local, regional, and national levels
- Increasing women's **role and competency** through cooperation and civic involvement
- Create **equal opportunities** for women





# Syunik Women's Resource Center Network

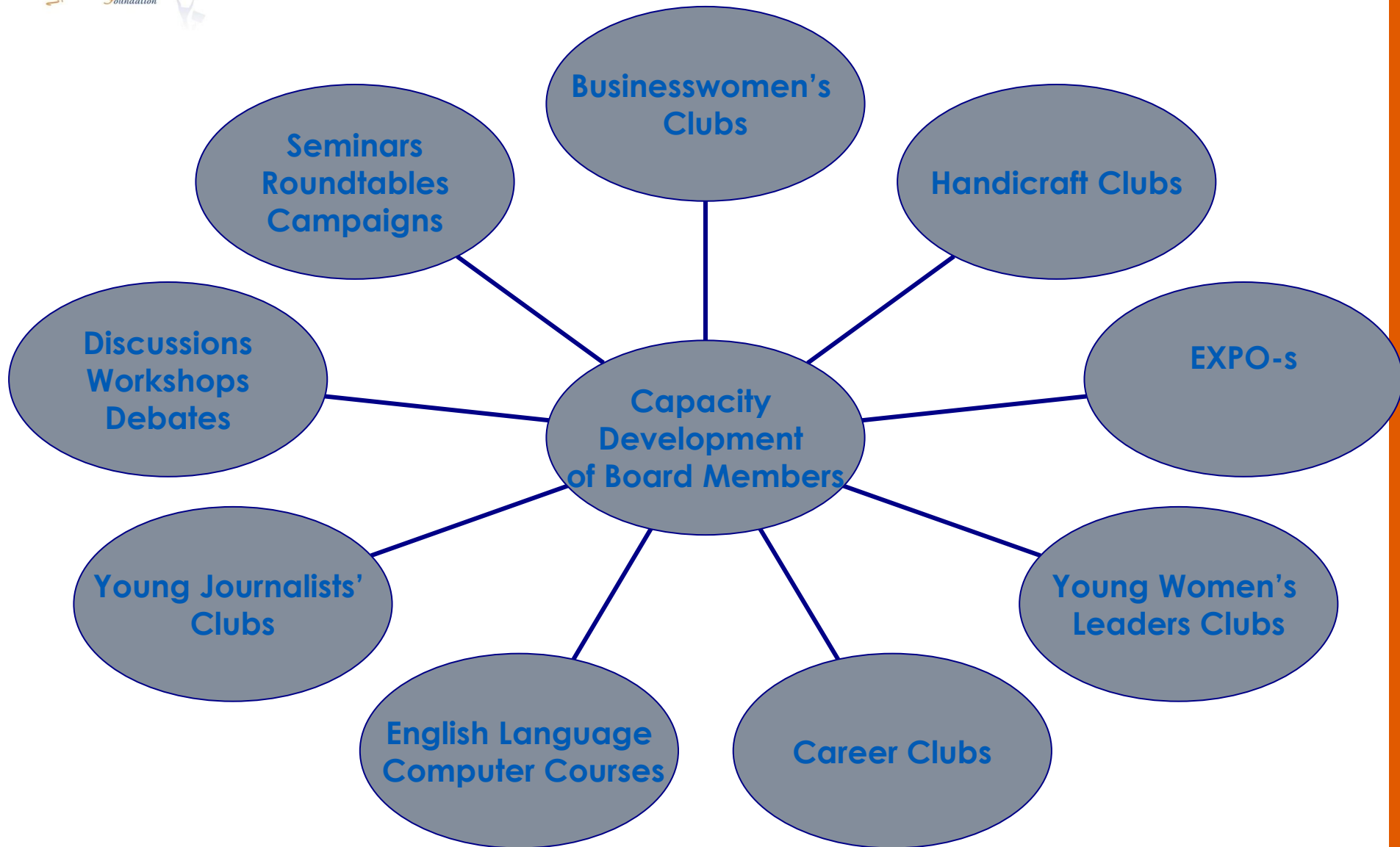
## *Activity Aspects*

- Political involvement
- Economic development
- Social activism and support





# Activities of Women's Resource Centres



## Political involvement:

### *Key numbers/figures*

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- 2 of 18 Ministers are women
- 6 of 66 deputy ministers are women
- 0 of 10 governors are women
- 0 of 21 city mayors are women
- Of 1237 candidates running for community leader posts 43 were women, 10 have been elected;
- Of 6698 local self-government councilors, 580 were women; 396 have been elected (8.3%)

## Political involvement: *Activites*



- Leadership development
- Meeting with Local Government Body candidates
- Election process accountability and transparency
- Participation in city council meetings

## Political involvement: *Young Citizen Journalists in Action*

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- TV shows, talk shows
- Videos/ documentaries
- More than 200 materials addressing local issues and events
- Social platforms for online broadcasting
  - ☐ <http://womennet.am>
  - ☐ <http://sharavigh.blogspot.com>,
  - ☐ <http://meghriavagani.blogspot.com/>
  - ☐ <http://eghegnazoravagani.blogspot.com/>
  - ☐ <http://www.syunikwrc.net>



# Supporting the Empowerment of Women in Local Governments:

## *Goal of the project*

To work with women to increase their knowledge and involvement in the electoral process.

**Target Communities:** 20 communities across two regions.

**Period:** 2012 local elections



# Supporting the Empowerment of Women in Local Governments: *Activates*



- Creation of informative materials
- Survey of 250 active women to find relevant areas of need
- Community meetings to discuss and encourage the involvement of women in the electoral process



# Supporting the Empowerment of Women in Local Governments:

## Supporting women who decided to run for election



- Capacity building seminars
- Campaign support
  - Brochures
  - Advertising through articles/videos produced by journalist clubs
  - Further informative meetings



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# Supporting the Empowerment of Women in Local Governments:

## Results

- 38 women nominated, 26 elected (68.4%)
- 13 women involved with observation activities
- Continued commitment to future elections cycles



# Economic development Sociological Survey

## Aim of this survey:

- study women's entrepreneurship in the Syunik Region;
- provide a description of the woman entrepreneur, her business and business environment;
- identify the factors that promote and hinder business development.



Three main issues found as a result of the survey:

1. Financing issues
  - Finding loans
  - Interest rates
  - Repayment periods
2. Tax regulations
3. Lack of business knowledge and relevant skills

## Economic development: Development of Handicrafts



**The Objective:** To provide unemployed women in Syunik region a chance of lasting employment and a consistent and substantial income



## Economic Development

### Handicraft groups: Activities



- Organizing the groups into economical units
- Trainings, based on specific product groups
  - Crochet, ceramics, carpet weaving, embroidery/sewing
- Meetings with outside consultants/experts
- Idea exchanges between the various groups
- Increase the access to markets



## Economic Development: Handicraft Group Example



- Makes small crocheted animals (currently 65 different animals)
- Works with about 90 women artisans in the region
- Conducts trainings to bring in more women artisans to meet production demands and sustain growth
- Works with HDIF for increased access to markets
- Exports
  - Testing of products for relevant certificates is ongoing, this is to legally export items to the EU and North America



- Over 90 women artisans are now involved in this project, up from 15 in 2009
- Reduction in regional unemployment rate
  - Average monthly income is proportionate to average regional salary
- Increased the working business knowledge of women involved and further developed the souvenir market



# Economic Development

## Going Forward

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- Establish all projects as sustainable income generating projects
- Involve more women in each project
- Increase participation in domestic and international expos
- Increase collaborations with partners/new partners
- Setting up revolving funds for each project
- Other Projects:
  - Carpet making
  - Ceramics
  - Embroidery/Sewing
  - Yarn production

## Environmental projects

- Domestic violence victim support
- Job skills trainings
- Raising awareness about local community issues
- Distribution of donations from International Aid organizations to needy community members





# Network Development

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- A bigger network increases the opportunities for collaboration and idea/experience exchange
- First goal is to grow the network within Armenia
  - Reaching out to other women based organizations
- Second goal is to expand the network outside of our traditional borders, and onto the international stage as part of a larger network



# Exchange Visit to Sweden in 2014

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**Meetings with WINNET Sweden member  
organizations, politicians and governmental  
institutions at local, regional and national level**



# WINNET Armenia Association of Women Resource Centers



Meghri  
Kapan  
Goris  
Sisian  
Eghegnadzor  
Gyumri  
Ijevan  
Dilijan  
Spitak  
Amasia  
Yerevan

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Remember, please!

**If the world were ruled by  
women, then there would be no  
war... just a couple of nations  
not talking to each other 😊**

*Thank you!*

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