



**ARMENIA**  
**Country Programme Strategy**  
2018 – 2022



Alliance 2015  
towards the eradication of poverty

# 1. Vision and Priorities

## PIN Global Vision

PIN strives for a world in which people are not restricted by an unfree society, poverty, lack of opportunities or discrimination.

We believe our world can be a better place for people who are suffering from poverty, injustice or inequality. We also believe that people who are in need can play an active role in making global development more inclusive and sustainable. Our mission is to support people in such efforts and nourish an environment that enables these changes to happen, through four pillars of work:



## PIN Armenia Vision

In Armenia, empowering people is at the heart of all we do. PIN's work strives to strengthen people's abilities to improve their lives and the communities they live in.

PIN's goal in Armenia is a strong civil society that takes an active part in poverty reduction and sustainable development. This goal will be realised by a combination of:

- I. Strengthening the capacity of people, organisations and networks to advocate for and realize changes;
- II. Supporting sustainable livelihoods that are not at the expense of future generations, and do not result in further inequalities;
- III. Engaging in policy development dialogue and sharing PIN global expertise;
- IV. Enhancing cooperation between different actors.

In the event of a disaster, PIN also has a role to play to save lives and protect dignity of people affected by the disaster, as outlined in PIN's Emergency and Preparedness Plan.





### PIN Presence

Armenia has a special significance for PIN; the 1988 Spitak Earthquake initiated the first humanitarian assistance delivered by the group of students some of whose members would later become People in Need.

The PIN Armenia mission has been operating since 2003, supporting community and rural tourism development; civic education and youth empowerment; the reintegration of migrants; prevention of trafficking in persons; increasing access to good jobs; and promoting respect for human rights.

At present, Armenia is piloting the first international joint country programme; hosting both PIN's Relief and Development and Human Rights and Democracy departments. This cooperation strengthens PIN's work towards equality, civil society development, democracy, and advocacy of human rights.

### Stakeholders

PIN has established strong working relations with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures, and regional and municipal authorities in target regions. It should be noted that recent political developments have resulted in staff turnover and structural changes in many different departments, so PIN engagement is a dynamic and ongoing process.

PIN is also engaged with policy development, strategic planning, and advocacy with sector associations, and donors, including EU, GIZ, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

PIN currently implements projects with a range of local partners from the public, private, and third sectors. These include Amasia State Vocational School; ARK Ecological NGO; Goris Development Centre; Municipalities of Amasia, Goris, and Kapan; Shirak Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and WINNET Armenia – Network of Women's Resource Centres.

### PIN's Added Value

PIN Armenia is well positioned to deliver effective and evidence-based development assistance due to:

- Long term regional expertise;
- Skilled and motivated local team;
- Unique collaboration between PIN Relief and Development and Human Rights departments;
- Czech experience with democratic transitions;
- PIN experience with transitional projects in similar context (Balkans, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine);
- Cost-effective and positively perceived as a field-oriented NGO.



- Designing for behaviour change approaches are used to identify barriers to action, and affect sustainable changes.



**All PIN Armenia interventions are guided by the following principles:**

- Partner with competent local organizations who have experience in specific fields. PIN envisages to build their capacities and transfer own know-how which will gradually lead to a complete handover of all responsibilities when leaving the sector and/or country.
- Facilitate the gathering of grassroots evidence together with expertise from abroad, to pilot new approaches with a view to scale up and institutionalisation.
- Link PIN's programs to State strategies and support the implementation of adopted action plans.
- Market systems analysis underpins all sustainable livelihood interventions, seeking to widen inclusion and strengthen value chains.



## 2. Programmes

### Problem Analysis and Entry Points

Despite recent progress in economic and social development, 25.7% of the Armenian population live below the poverty line, and this problem is more acute in rural and conflict-affected areas.<sup>1</sup> This has contributed to high levels of rural out-migration, especially of the male labour force. Female-headed households comprise 27.2% of households in rural areas.<sup>2</sup> In general, urban areas have greater access to employment, better services, and higher incomes. Across the country, sections of the population remain socially excluded due to a lack of service provision, social norms, and changing employment opportunities. These include the elderly, persons with disabilities, LGBT+, refugees and internally displaced persons, and those without relevant education or vocational skills.

The agriculture sector is characterised by low productivity, and industrial sectors have declined steeply since independence. The education system has experienced under-investment, and has not kept pace with current pedagogical standards nor the needs of labour market entrants.

There is a small but active civil society; however, for many years people have felt excluded from decision-making processes. Fewer than a quarter of the population trust NGOs<sup>3</sup>, and the lack of media transparency and independence risks exposure to biased reporting and disinformation. The Velvet Revolution has increased public feelings of empowerment, opened discussions on the future direction of the country, and provides a window of opportunity for increased democratic participation and civic engagement.



### Target Groups

PIN Armenia aims to support the following groups:

- Households living in poverty, particularly in rural areas
- Youth
- Elderly people
- Municipalities and regional authorities
- Journalists and media agencies
- Vocational education providers

<sup>1</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Social Development and Poverty Statistics*, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> FAO, *Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Armenia*, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> CRRC, *Caucasus Barometer*, 2017.



## Priority Sectors

### Sustainable Livelihoods and Environment

In Armenia, we work in partnership with communities, civil society organisations, government and businesses to sustainably increase income and employment opportunities for poor and rural families. We also support the reintegration and economic stability of returning migrants by providing them with opportunities to build a profession through requalification courses and family business grant schemes. In addition to supporting returning migrants, PIN also works to increase the employment of youth and adults through education and skills development.

#### *Activities in this Strategic Period*

**Reducing migration push factors:** Improving access to employment for women and men; strengthening entrepreneurship skills.

**Supporting rural development:** Increasing rural productivity; women's economic empowerment; promoting sustainable tourism; SME and market systems development; environmental sustainability; creating new jobs, especially in remote regions.

### Education and Skills

PIN Armenia recognises that quality education is essential for sustainable development. Education and skills enhance job opportunities, helping households to escape poverty. Education can empower women and men to overcome discrimination. It also motivates them to actively participate in public life and promote change. PIN will work directly with providers to build local capacity, and at the national level to ensure systemic change and scale up of successes nationwide. PIN understands that technical skills or academic knowledge is not sufficient, and will include employability skills in all relevant programmes.

#### *Activities in this Strategic Period*

##### **Improving access to quality vocational education and training (VET):**

Designing accredited vocational training programmes that match labour market needs; strengthening students' entrepreneurship skills; addressing financial and social barriers to participation; strengthening careers guidance services and employability skills training.

**Raising the status of VET:** Building the capacity of VET providers to provide high quality services; raising the prestige of VET and work-based learning opportunities; cooperation with the private sector and chambers of commerce to increase employer interest in VET graduates.

### Good Governance

With the aim of supporting Good Governance, PIN focuses on the active engagement of communities in local decision-making processes and emphasises effective cooperation among civil society, governments and communities. We also work with young people and communities to promote critical thinking and active participation in civic life.

#### *Activities in this Strategic Period*

**Strengthening linkages between civil society and local authorities:** community-driven rural development; participatory social services; youth and community environmental and social initiatives.

**Strengthening CSOs:** Building skills to advocate for needs of their communities, including marginalised and vulnerable groups.

**Developing the capacities of local authorities:** to develop and implement participatory local development plans and budgets.

### Human Rights

As freedom of expression and access to information remain fundamental human rights, and as we recognize this unique post-revolution opportunity, we strive to influence the media environment in the country, bringing it to the international democratic standards and ensure objective, professional and fact-based information flow in the society.

### *Activities in this Strategic Period*

**Skills transfer:** building the capacity of Armenian experts, journalists and decision-makers; assist them in formulating the concept of reform of public broadcaster; providing small grants to journalists for preparation of topical materials advocating for improved legislation; supporting audiences' media literacy and critical analysis.



### 3. Crosscutting Issues

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#### Gender Analysis

Gender relations in Armenia are based on patriarchal norms, in which men have control over the majority of resources and decision-making, both in the household and wider society. Women comprise only 25% of lawmakers at the national level, this recent increase can be attributed to introduction of gender quota legislation. Women are even less represented in local authorities, comprising only 9% of councillors.<sup>4</sup>

At home, women are responsible for a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic labour, further reducing their opportunities for engaging in economic activity or to benefit from PIN programming. Men also are negatively affected by “sole breadwinner” stereotypes, when the economic situation makes this hard to achieve.<sup>5</sup>

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*PIN Armenia will analyse obstacles to equal opportunities for men and women in new projects and ensure specific gender-equality related targets are defined and measured. (At least 80% by 2019)*

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#### Social Protection and Inclusion

PIN Armenia aims to support the prevention and elimination of extreme poverty, exclusion and discrimination. People or groups especially in need of social protection include (but are not limited to) those with disabilities or severe illness, elderly, children, single-parent families, vulnerable women, minorities, and extremely poor people. PIN understands that reducing barriers to participation is not sufficient alone; it will also work throughout its projects to counter the underlying discriminatory beliefs and practices that lead to exclusion.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/ourstories/armenian-women-find-the-recipe-for-success-in-local-politics.html>

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*PIN Armenia projects introduce measures for inclusion of disadvantaged groups e.g. women, elderly, minorities, etc. (At least 80% by 2020)*

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#### Partnership

PIN Armenia is committed to a strong civil society, and one way of promoting this is through constructive partnerships with other organisations, with both parties benefiting from the cooperation. Partnership with local NGOs is also a means to develop the capacity of CSOs with shared values and vision.

PIN has developed tools and guiding principles for our partnerships, and these will be used when identifying, assessing, and cooperating with like-minded actors. We believe diversity is a strength, and will continue to work alongside a range of different organisations, agencies, enterprises, and coalitions. In particular, PIN Armenia will continue to engage with private sector actors in agriculture, tourism, and textiles through a market systems development and job creation approach.

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*PIN Armenia will design, implement and evaluate new projects in strong cooperation with local partner organisations e.g. CBOs, NGOs, public sector, etc. (At least 50% by 2019)*

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#### Environment and Sustainability

Armenia benefits from diverse natural resources, important biodiversity, and high eco-tourism potential. These opportunities should be managed sustainably to avoid the associates' risk, for example, mining in Syunik region provides employment, but pollutes soil and water resources, and can have an adverse impact on tourism development.

<sup>5</sup> ADB, *Armenia Country Gender Profile*, 2015.



The agriculture sector is still a key part of the Armenian economy and employs 35% of the population. PIN promotes sustainable and climate sensitive approaches within all agricultural development projects, and will explore opportunities for strengthening the organic sector.

PIN Armenia also considers sustainability with its internal operations, including transportation and logistics, and participates in the PIN “Green Office” campaign.

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*PIN Armenia projects analyse and mitigate possible negative environmental and social impact. (80% by 2020)*

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