**IDENTITY**

Develop Armenia is an Armenian-based non-profit organization established in 2015 as a community group. It was recognized as a public interest NGO in 2018 by Decree 51092123. Develop Armenia aims to vigorously advance national policies in all the sectors in which it is active, especially in social, youth, and humanitarian sectors while keeping a non-confessional and apolitical stance.

**MISSION**

The promotion of sustainable development, the integration of social and environmental consciousness into education, and the enhancement of the Armenian culture are just a few of the actions we believe will improve our society. Within the framework of the above objectives, we are developing actions such as events, campaigns, and partnerships with international and local partners for the implementation of strategic programs.

Adhering to the principles of sustainable development, Develop Armenia encourages the sustainability and conservation of the environment in all aspects of its work. It focuses on educating the future generation about the importance of sustainable development.

Considering all these, in 2018 we started our project called “Caps for Help”. It was implemented in 2019 when we put our first plastic box in a software company. Our formula was quite simple: The journey starts with bottle caps and ends with a wheelchair or supportive device delivered to individuals or rehab centers.

This project, in parallel, solves three key issues: Educational, environmental, and social. At the start, the bottle caps are collected from educational institutions, local and international companies, organizations, and medical institutions. The second stage is giving them to a recycling company. This will help to protect the environment from this toxic product for the sustainability of our environment. The third stage is the purchase of a wheelchair or a supporting device for people in need and delivery of them for free.

**Educational**

Today, more than fifty schools have joined our initiative. This includes schools in the capital and the Marzes. The number of students in those schools varies from 150 to 1,000 students. They include public and private schools. The phenomenal part of this project is the community that is created around our initiative. In addition, the leaders are students. Contrary to other projects, students successfully encourage their family members to be part of this project. This helped the increasing numbers of supporters enlarge the project’s scope. For example, let us do this simple calculation.

In a school of 1,000 students, if eight hundred participate in this project, and these eight hundred students implement their family members the number of supporters of this project will increase by 3,200. In addition to this, to motivate the students and increase their interest in the “Caps for Help” project, we are conducting lectures to share our success stories and implement awareness campaigns that explain the toxicity of the plastic caps; and their disintegration process which takes at least five hundred years. We also organize educational trips to the recycling company to show the students the recycling process.

Here it is important to mention, even the three years old child attending kindergarten is having a significant impact on helping the community. This is helping them to understand and value the concept of donating to humanitarian causes and being environmental protectors at an early age of development.

**Environmental**

To date, we have recycled about twenty-three tons of plastic bottle caps. As studies show, the disintegration of these caps takes at least four hundred years or more. The unknown factor is the impact of this disintegrated plastic on the environment after five hundred years. Today millions of animals and birds are killed by plastic every year. The quantity that we have collected so far has saved the lives of many animals and protected wildlife. In our lectures at schools and in the community, we are promoting the following quote: “Protecting our planet starts with you.”

**Social**

With the revenue from these recycled plastic bottles, we have donated more than a dozen wheelchairs and supporting devices for disabled people with locomotor problems in different age groups: Young, adult, and elderly. These devices helped people improve their lifestyles and integrate into society. Some rehabilitation centers that have donated devices have joined our community. In these centers, the bottle caps before delivering to Develop Armenia, are sorted by color as a therapy method.

At the start, it was difficult to convince people about our project’s sustainability because of one simple reason. For one wheelchair we had to collect one ton or 1,000kgs of bottle caps. For some, this number was unrealistic. But not for us.

This project started and is continuing with self-funding. At first, we had difficulties collecting vast amounts of bottle caps. But we did not give up. In the following years, witnessing our results, trust in the community has increased regarding our project. People started believing in us and what our organization can achieve.

Gradually our reputation started to grow. More companies, medical centers, and educational institutions started joining our project. In the table below, we can show you how the partners and the quantity we delivered increased. This data is till June 2023. As you can see, till June 2023 we have already delivered the same number of wheelchairs as the whole 2021 and 2023. This is due to the increase in the number of bottle caps collected within less time period.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Number of wheelchairs or supporting device |
| 2021 | 3 |
| 2022 | 3 |
| 2023 till July | 5 |

Throughout these 5 years, we have had TV news agencies, and local platforms talk about Develop Armenian NGO or the “Caps for Help” project. Today our project is extended throughout the Republic of Armenia. We receive caps from all over Marzes. There are a lot who want to join our project, but our resources are limited. Today, in three or four months, we can collect between 750 to 1000kg. To be able to move forward and help the environment and community we need more funding and donations to increase our resources and reach more people.

In addition, since we have established trust in our NGO within the community, some donors contributed money to help deprived people after the 2020 war. We paid for these people’s transportation, food, and utilities. We even collaborated with other NGOs to provide a computer device to a surviving soldier whose hands were burned because of a phosphorus bomb. He had attended computer lessons, found a job, and got married. All those donations were documented in case you ask for proof.

**Our Vision for the upcoming year**

* To collect more than fifteen tons of bottle leads.
* Help more than fifteen individuals.
* Collaborate with more than forty educational institutions.
* Increase the number of lectures given.
* To extend more in the Republic of Armenia.
* To implement more urban and rural communities.

**Conclusion**

Since the start of the “Caps for Help” project we always believed and were loyal to our project, its mission, and the impact that it has on society. Guided by our successful stories, with firm steps, we are moving forward with the convenience that it is possible by protecting our environment we can help needy people. Because of the lack of space, we are adding a Google link that gives a wide idea about our project. As they say, pictures speak louder than words.

In the link below you can find articles, TV reports, pictures, and videos made by the educational institutions themselves about our project.

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/3/folders/1GtPk6DSDc1PwzGF0jco1W94IJSMyeTKD