



Trails For Change NGO

2020 Annual Report



We believe that trails can increase tourism, create more jobs and make a difference in Armenia. Trails For Change is still the only professional organization in Armenia that plans, designs and builds hiking, running, biking trails to promote tourism in Armenia partnering with various donors and organizations, individuals and experts, state institutions and private sector. As a professional trail builder, the owner of Los Angeles-based Bellfree Contractors company and Trails For Change NGO INC., I decided to make a contribution to my ancestral homeland by building trails and installing the trail building culture in Armenia.

Hans Keifer, Founder of Trails For Change NGO

BACKGROUND

Trails for Change NGO (TFC) is a non-profit organization funded by grants and donations with the mission to develop the tourism and outdoor recreational infrastructure throughout Armenia, by designing, building, and maintaining a network of trails throughout the country. The TFC team came together when International expert Hans Keifer, a professional trail builder from California with decades of experience, was brought in to provide training and guidance for the Transcaucasian Trail (TCT) project in 2017. During the trail-building process, Hans saw huge gaps in Armenia's sports and recreation infrastructure and decided that the best way to improve these problems was to start the TFC nongovernmental organization (NGO).

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The broader goal of TFC's trail building is to develop opportunities for rural communities to see the economic impacts as a result of an increase in tourism and to promote rural tourism ventures. The organization has the objective to diversify tourism opportunities in Armenia, making the rich nature and diverse landscapes more alluring to foreigners and locals, promoting healthy lifestyles and adventure tourism. Through the sustainable trails that TFC constructs, maintains and restores, tourists and locals alike have an easier and more appealing way to explore the regions, wander in the breathtaking mountains, visit historic cultural sights, connect with the locals, and have unforgettable experiences.



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



2020 PROJECTS AND RESULTS

Trail assessment and scouting projects

“Let’s Do Something!” Scoping Mission for Regional Hiking Trails



The Scoping Mission for Regional Hiking Trails has been developed jointly with USAID, MSI, HA, STC and TFC and aims at marking and maintenance of hiking/biking trails in 10 regions in Armenia, while paying close attention to the community involvement and development around the hiking destinations and the impacts of trails on them.

The current situation of COVID-19 and the changing strategies of the world tourism market make the project more reasonable as after the changes trails will host more individual hikers than groups. The well marked and maintained trails will allow us to have more satisfied tourists and visitors.

Positioning Armenia as a mountain tourism destination for the international tourism market is not an easy task because mountain tourism destinations exist all over the world, and year on year, more and more upcoming mountain tourism destinations are appearing on the market. This is particularly true since developing and emerging countries have discovered mountain tourism and ecotourism as a new economic source of income for rural and remote areas.

Against this backdrop, USAID and STC took the initiative to mark 10 trails in the regions of Armenia, making the hiking destinations more attractive including the cultural, historical and natural monuments, villages and towns.

The complete report is available here: [LINK TO REPORT](#)

Trail building and maintenance projects

Trail Building and Marking in Lori Region



In the frames of service agreement with The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) intended work for this project was building, maintenance and marking of 2 trails in Lori region of Armenia including trails from COAF Smart Center to Debet village and from Debet village to Yeghegnut village, installation of directional signposts in 5 locations and trailhead information boards in 2 locations, coordination and supervision of all related field work.

The main objective of the fieldwork was to maintain, mark and clean the old paths, making the route as an accurate track bringing it to the condition of high quality trail including the safety, accessibility and attractiveness of the routes. The old paths were cleared from the loose stones, rocks and small trees. The trail bench was widened and rebuilt. Marking completed after the maintenance and building works.

The trails have been marked with the new directional signpost standards approved by The State Tourism Committee of RA at key locations along the trail, containing distance and destination information in Armenian and English. Together with these signboards, the new blazing system has been used along the trail.

The complete report is available here: [LINK TO REPORT](#)

Trail Maintenance and Marking in Lori Region



In the frames of funding by The Foundation for the Development and Promotion of Hiking and Ecotourism in Armenia/Hike Armenia, and separate funding by the Transcaucasian Trail Tourism Support NGO intended work for this project was: trail maintenance, signposting and blazing routes around Dsegh, Tsater, Vahagni, Dzoraghyugh, Dzoraget and Kurtan villages in Lori region.

The complete report is available here: [LINK TO REPORT](#)

Trail Maintenance and Marking in Dilijan National Park



This work done by “Trails for Change” Tourism Infrastructure Development NGO under the management of the “Transcaucasian Trail” Tourism Support NGO was in the period from 04.2020-05.2020 in the frames of funding by The Foundation for the Development and Promotion of Hiking and Ecotourism in Armenia/Hike Armenia, and co-funding/in-kind contribution by the Transcaucasian Trail Tourism Support NGO.

The complete report is available here: [LINK TO REPORT](#)

Pilot Accessible Trail in Meghradzor Community



The first accessible trail building project was completed in the Kotayk region with collaboration and support of EU and local NGOs. Construction has been done under the USFS guidelines for accessible trails. The trails have been marked with the new system of trail signage developed by the State Tourism Committee of RA. In forested locations where a higher level of visibility and guidance is required, such as at junctions and trailheads, metal posts with directional sign boards have been installed to support the trail blaze markers, containing distance and destination information in Armenian and English.

The complete report is available here: [LINK TO REPORT](#)

Coordination of Trail Maintenance and Marking Works in Syunik Region on The Legents Trail



Trails For Change NGO, Annual Report, 2020

In the period from July -September 2020 in the frames of service agreement with "People in Need" NGO Representative Office in Armenia intended work for this project were:

- selection of the final trail design in a few not yet finalized segments of the already scouted/ marked/ mapped area on Legends trail in Syunik region
- identification and coordination of a team of field workers and volunteers working on the trail;
- update of the provided schedule of directional signage at all appropriate junctions, including specifications per current Armenian governmental standards;
- installation of the signage at various junctions in Goris area;
- identification of necessary service providers;
- coordination and supervision of all related field work

The complete report is available here: [LINK TO REPORT](#)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and military conflict in the Caucasus region, some of the projects have been paused, but the NGO continues its operations until the end of the year.

THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!