**Teachers and students implement project-based learning on environmental issues in six regions of Armenia**

**YEREVAN, June 30, 2023** – UNICEF and Ayb Education Foundation concluded the results of Armenia’s first massive endeavor to use project-based learning in six marzes to tackle climate change and environmental issues. The aim of the initiative, implemented with the support of the Austrian Development Agency and in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, was to equip teachers of 7-11 grades with essential knowledge on project-based learning and on climate change issues to develop solutions to environmental issues faced by communities across Tavush, Syunik, Gegharkunik, Lori, Shirak and Vayots Dzor.

“Becoming more and more aware of the environmental issues and climate change is extremely important. Climate change may still feel like a distant problem, but it is very real and already tangible in many ways. No one is more affected by a changing climate and its implications than children and adolescents, which is why it’s crucial to engage with them to drive climate action. UNICEF commends the important decision of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport to include green education in the State Education Development Programme until 2030 and to include climate change and green skills as a cross-cutting theme in the state education curriculum,” noted Silvia Mestroni, Deputy Representative of UNICEF in Armenia.

Over the course of five months, a total of 376 teachers from 272 settlements across the six regions actively participated in series of online and offline trainings to gain a thorough understanding of the content and structure of project-based learning methods. Under the guidance of experienced mentors, they successfully applied their acquired knowledge, engaging 2015 students to implement 275 environmental projects.

“At the Ayb Educational Foundation, we continuously plan, localize and implement leading learning approaches of the world with a strong faith in our mission of spreading high-quality education in our country. Ayb has exceptional experience in project-based learning. It was effectively applied at Ayb School since 2015 and was one of the key components of the Ayb Hybrid Learning program. I highly believe that the knowledge investment in teachers will help them in forming new ways of thinking, mastering new methodologies, and leading them to systematic changes. Now, I’m more than sure that the skills and experience gained will help them in September with new educational standards,” stated Sona Koshetsyan, the executive director of the Ayb Educational Foundation.

During the closing ceremony, both teachers and students showcased their completed works, sharing insights on the knowledge they have gained throughout the programme. The projects focused on a wide range of environmental issues, including waste collection and recycling, prevention of deforestation, tree planting, as well as raising awareness on the harmful effects of mining emissions, the consequences of deforestation, and other environmental issues.

“The issue of deforestation is a priority for our village, as this year it has reached to an alarming scale, causing tangible negative impact on the environment. We worked with students to establish a park near our school,” shared Tigran Hovsepyan, teacher from Darbas village, Syunik. In Nahapetavan village, Shirak, teachers also worked with students to plant 100 trees near their school.

“Our objective in Yeghegnadzor was to decrease the level of air pollution, usually caused by burning garbage. We brainstormed several approaches to efficient waste collection and recycling. Collaborating with 15 dedicated students, we completed research, raised awareness of the community, offering practical alternatives. We held a number of information sharing sessions, showcasing alternative ways to utilize waste instead of burning it. We repurposed paper waste to craft garbage cans that are now widely utilized in the school. This project not only prompted us to view things through an environmental lens, but also embrace our responsibility for the world we live in,” shared the group of students from Yeghegnadzor school.