

Draft 6/6/95

**PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH CENTER  
(P.P.R.C.)**

**The American University of Armenia**

The Public Policy Research Center (PPRC) has been founded at the American University of Armenia in 1995, to support and enhance multidisciplinary applied research in a broad spectrum of contemporary social, political and legal fields pertaining to Armenia and the surrounding region. By advancing objective and independent research, debate and public service, the Center aims to promote greater knowledge and understanding about Armenia and the region.

### *Guiding Principles*

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In 1993, the American University of Armenia began a graduate program leading to the Masters Degree in political science and public administration. Developing the research skills and knowledge of our students was one of the main goals of the Masters program. With the establishment of PPRC, the University seeks to apply the expertise of the AUA faculty in research work and gain support for training and research activities. The Center seeks to promote in the long run, the development of local resident research fellows applying western research methodologies to local and regional issues. Towards this goal, the Center shall conduct regular training programs on methodology and shall facilitate the interaction between faculty and students as well as between international and local scholars.

The American University of Armenia, has been founded in partnership with the government of Armenia to provide a Western educational resource base to the needs of the country. In conducting its work, the Center seeks to link University resources with the policy needs of various segments of Armenian society including government, academia and public or private life, so as to promote the interaction between policy making and research.

The Center also aims to play a contributing role in the democratic transition process by promoting information about various institutions which are the key constituents of a working democratic system. In conducting research the Center shall also place particular emphasis on advancing the practical and applied bases of its work and shall initially link its research with technical assistance programs and the collection of basic reference information.

The Center specially aims to conduct its work in an environment which promotes comparative knowledge and analysis with equivalent western models, as well as develop a regional approach on issues of wider concern. As part of its work, the Center aims to develop a resource base of information about Armenia, as well as develop access to Western sources of information on topics related to the work of the Center.

By promoting research and fostering exchange with other similar educational institutions, the Center hopes to enhance greater understanding of Armenia and the Region from a local as well as a Western perspective. Economic and market research issues are



notably absent from the work of this Center. Since these are within the scope of separate research centers at AUA, they will be part of the work of the Center for Business Research and Development (CBRD) and the Center for Economic Policy and Research in Armenia (CEPRA).

*Policy Research Areas*

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The program of the Center shall consist of proposed research, development and educational activities focussing in the listed research areas. The Center may also carry out *Sponsored Research* or *Technical Assistance* in furtherance of its mission. The research work of the Center will focus on the following areas:

Education: The Center shall promote public understanding and policy concerning the evaluation and review of the educational process in Armenia. It shall serve as a bridge to provide information about western educational models, textbooks, curriculum, standards and address comparative studies to make policy proposals.

Government Studies: The role of the government in a period of transition from a communist system to a market oriented pluralistic system is one which is subject to redefinition at all levels of society. This area of research shall focus on studies of various sectors of social and political change involving a new interaction between government, the private sector and institutions which may best create the enabling environment to promote change in an informed and consensual context.

Law & Legislation: The Center shall create a setting where social analysis of legal institutions and legal change is encouraged. It shall promote information on the evolving status of legislation in Armenia and address issues concerning the regulatory underpinnings of legislation and the capacity for implementation. The Center aims to contribute to the formulation of a legal and operating environment based on individual and property rights.

Public Administration: The Center shall advance information on local and republican level government structures in light of the constitutional and administrative changes occurring in Armenia. It shall promote studies on administrative reform and its consequences, including analysis on government procedures and interagency relationships, to make proposals for the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness in government.

Public Participation: The transition to a pluralistic society has brought about the emergence of new social and political indicators in Armenia. The Center seeks to promote the advancement of democratic institutions by providing information and studies on opinion making processes, political attitudes and behavior, electoral processes, political parties, mass

media, public interest groups, public opinion polls and public volunteer organizations.

Regional Studies: The break up of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent states in the region of the Caucasus has drawn the attention of the World to this area as a region with a new set of geopolitical dynamics and a dual potential for development and conflict. The Center shall promote information and research on the history, political culture and development of the region, the evolution of state building and the study of intergovernmental relations so as to promote new ways of thinking in terms of bilateral and regional interests and relationships. With its work, the Center aims to play a contributing role in the resolution of regional conflicts and the promotion of greater regional cooperation.

*Dissemination of Information*  
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- The Center shall disseminate its research findings through various publications, Occasional Papers series, monographs, briefings or conference proceedings which will be generally made public.
- The Center shall promote dialogue about topics related to its research areas by organizing or sponsoring seminars, conferences, roundtable discussions and other meetings bringing scholars, professionals and policymakers together to address specific issues.
- In order to encourage interaction between social scientists from Armenia and the Center's researchers and AUA faculty, the Center shall institute a *Visiting Fellowship Program*, whereby social scientists from Armenia will be awarded a six months or one year fellowship to conduct research at the Center. All selections will be conducted on a competitive basis. With due funding, it is intended that this Program similarly encompass in the future visiting fellows from other regional institutions.
- The Center shall provide an informal public lecture forum for the free exchange of ideas between scholars, professionals, distinguished political figures, diplomats, and community leaders on issues related to the research work of the Center.
- In conducting its work the Center shall promote academic exchange with scholars and similar institutions in the region and the Western world, most notably the U.S.



*Outreach and Community Service*

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- The Center shall organize or provide technical training geared to special groups in areas related to its research work, or as an extension of particular research projects. Such training shall be in the form of workshops, interactive programs, or seminars.
  
- In order to promote public participation, the Center shall provide informational and planning support to public and professional, volunteer and non-governmental organizations which seek to play an active role in connecting grass root activities with policy making processes.
  
- The Center aims to provide a forum to enhance interaction between various schools, institutes and universities in Armenia and promote the discussion of issues of common interest in the field of education.

*For More Information*

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To learn more about the Public Policy Research Center or its work, please contact:

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