

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION

60
YEARS

**50 Years
of the Delegation
in France**

Armenian Communities Department

The mission of the Armenian Communities Department is to create a viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued.

The activities are divided in four priority areas: the preservation and advancement of the Armenian language and culture, emphasising education and the strengthening of the Diaspora; investing in the youth of Armenia, and their commitment to civil society; improving Armenian-Turkish relations by sponsoring projects that encourage a common understanding of their shared history; preserving and making available the Armenian literary heritage.

Դաստիարակչական
Նորարարութիւններ՝

21րդ դարուն Արեւմտահայերէնի
Դասաւանդման Մարտահրաւերները

21-22

Սեպտեմբեր | Septembre | September
2015

Innovation en Education

Les défis de l'enseignement de l'arménien
occidental au 21^{ème} siècle

Innovation in Education

Challenges in Teaching Western Armenian
in the 21st Century

EFL

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FUNDAÇÃO
CALOUSTE
GULBENKIAN

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Poster for the international conference
*Innovation in Education: Challenges
in Teaching the Western Armenian
Language in the 21st Century.*

€2,437,222

SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS

25

Number of countries where funding was sent (including scholarships)

In 2015, the Armenian Communities Department (ACD) deepened its work on the revitalisation of the Western Armenian language through a series of significant and interrelated initiatives. Assistance to Armenian schools in the Diaspora was systematised further, starting in Lebanon, where a Task Force was set up to assist the self-evaluation of the schools. In September, ACD funded and co-organised a major international conference in Paris, with INALCO (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales), on educational reform, bringing together educators from 13 countries to discuss the challenges of teaching Armenian in the 21st Century, and searching for innovative solutions. The Department continued its university scholarship programme, processing some 750 applications, a twofold increase from the previous year. The funding of projects in Armenia that target the youth and civil society continued as well, in parallel with efforts to bring the Armenian and western academic worlds closer together through targeted initiatives such as summer school programmes, publication support and conference travel grants. Outside of Armenia, ACD sponsored the publication of various books, be they in Armenian or in foreign languages about Armenian subjects. 2015 was a significant memorial year for Armenians. The Department sponsored various commemorative cultural events in cities connected to our Founder: London, Paris and Istanbul.



TUMOS Conference in Armenia.



Activities

784
New scholarship applications received

259
University scholarships granted

443
University scholarships granted to Syrian-Armenian students studying in Armenia and Europe outside of the usual scholarship programme

55
Number of schools supported in the Diaspora



App for teaching the Armenian Language

Scholarships

The Armenian Communities Department is particularly devoted to grant-giving, allocating almost all of its funds to educational, cultural, academic and humanitarian initiatives throughout the Armenian world, putting particular emphasis on the Diaspora.

The largest segment of the Department's budget is allocated to university scholarships. Armenian and Armenian Studies students benefit from a series of graduate and undergraduate scholarships. The total amount granted in 2015 was €965,600, benefitting 259 students. The scholarship amounts - divided in seven categories - ranged from several hundred euros in travel grants to €22,000 euros per year for PhD studies. The Department publishes an exhaustive report on scholarships on its website.

Support to Armenian schools

Support to Armenian schools in the Diaspora is the second largest segment of the Department's budget, most of it allocated to schools in Lebanon and Syria, followed by some schools in Europe. In 2015, ACD sent some €170,000 to schools in Syria, still operating despite the civil war, and €370,000 to Lebanon. The latter is in addition to a major grant to the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation for children with special education needs in Lebanon.

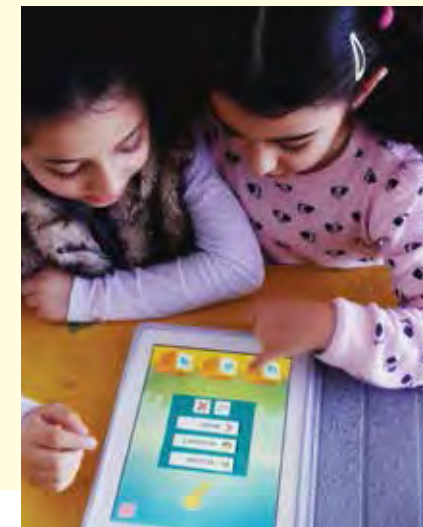
Revitalisation of the Western Armenian language

The promotion and revitalisation of the Western Armenian language - at the core of the Department's activities - entails a number of other initiatives outside of the formal classroom setting of schools. For example, ACD supported the adult language classes provided by the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia in Lebanon, which targets professionals who need to work in Armenian, as well as the London-based Programme of Armenian Studies which focuses on adults learning Armenian for academic purposes. Through the Department's efforts and funding, and in partnership with Wikimedia in Armenia, as well as local community organisations and schools, a very successful Wiki "camp" was organised in Lebanon during the summer. Over 40 teenagers wrote hundreds of Wikipedia articles in Western Armenian. This initiative received much resonance and will be replicated in Europe in 2016.

Eight specific projects on electronic learning for children were funded - from alphabet games to graphic novels - from our call for proposals on IT and language. Working with experts at Paris-based INALCO, we supported the creation of the web-based lexicon PARASTAN.FR.

Support for cultural initiatives

Our support for cultural initiatives included the Péniche Anako in Paris, to enable it to create a Europe-wide network of Armenian artists, and expand its activities as a centre of contemporary Armenian culture. We also co-sponsored Oxford University's exhibition: *Armenia: Masterpieces of an Enduring Culture* at the Bodleian Library.



Funding was provided for a multilingual travel app developed by Sources d'Arménie, aimed at places associated with Armenia in Venice. In Portugal, we worked with the Gulbenkian Empowering New Generations Programme to organise a conference on issues related to tolerance and intolerance, in which renowned American educator Joan Rivitz was invited to deliver the keynote speech.

In Armenia

In Armenia, the scholarship programme to enable young academics to attend conferences abroad continued. 88 grants were awarded. ACD supported two summer school programmes, one organised by the Armenian Higher Education Initiative on "Socio-political Development in Post-Colonial Societies," with particular emphasis on Armenia, and the other organised by the Extension Programme of the American University of Armenia on "Executive Leadership in the Public Sector." Together, these courses drew in some 45 students. Through the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights we helped our partner, EcoLab, become an independent entity that works with young people on civic initiatives. ACD continued its support to the Jinishian Memorial Foundation for its work on youth and civic dialogue, as well as our collaboration with the Ministry of the Diaspora, funding its "Diaspora" summer programme and its youth conference entitled "The Future."



Concert in Istanbul commemorating the anniversary of the 1915 Genocide.



Armenian-Turkish relations

2015 was a significant year in Armenian-Turkish relations, being the 100th Anniversary of the 1915 Genocide. Many commemorative events were held throughout the world, including in Turkey. The Armenian Communities Department supported three major concerts, in cities close to our Founder: in Istanbul (in partnership with Anadolu Kultur), in London (in partnership with the Armenian Institute), and in Paris (in partnership with the AGBU and the participation of the Gulbenkian Choir). It was quite a moving experience to see over a thousand people – Armenians, Turks, Kurds and foreign guests – together attend a commemorative concert in Istanbul, remembering the past but also celebrating Armenian culture. The Armenian Communities Department also sponsored a series of exhibitions at the Depot Gallery in Istanbul, the travel of Armenian university students to Turkey, and a "people-to-people" civil society project at the border between Turkey and Armenia called "Cook for Peace."

Publications

Support for publications remained dual track: electronic and in print. In Armenia, for example, working with DIGILIB.AM (housed within the American University), we sponsored the e-publication of 60 books in Western Armenian, written in the early 20th Century (10 of them never published before) – that is over 30,000 pages of keyword searchable material never made available electronically before. Further publication support touched projects in some 10 countries, adding up to 30 initiatives. The titles ranged from a celebrative book dedicated to Librairie Orientale Samuelian and a bilingual edition (Western Armenian and French) of the famous French children's story *Le Petit Nicolas*, to philosophical texts in Western Armenian on Georges Bataille and Maurice Blanchot. ACD also sponsored a major academic conference organised by Haigazian University in Beirut on the subject of Armenians in Syria. Its proceedings will be published in 2016.

Partnerships

Almost all of the work of the Armenian Communities Department is carried out with partners from around the world. These range from small civil society organisations and local NGOs, to large philanthropic organisations, as well as the Ministry of the Diaspora of the Government of Armenia. ACD works with universities as well as community schools. Our mandate, to preserve and advance Armenian culture and learning, necessitates a wide range of partnerships and networks. Maintaining strict neutrality in terms of community politics, we select our partners based on their ability to deliver results and have impact.

Assessment

The Department augmented its expertise on evaluations by adding staff whose job includes conducting project and programme evaluations. We evaluated one major project in 2015, and started the process to undertake the mid-term evaluation of our five-year strategic plan in 2016.

PROMOTION OF THE WESTERN ARMENIAN LANGUAGE

FOUR SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES, all related to Western Armenian language, were launched in 2015.

First, ACD launched the Educational Task Force in Lebanon and continued working with it closely. The Task Force was essential in the systematic self-evaluation of the schools, the first step in determining pedagogical needs. This enabled schools to set priorities, based on which projects are being developed. Similar task forces were also set up in Turkey and France. Each committee is comprised of 7-10 education experts. The long term objective of these task forces is to enable schools to develop the necessary tools, particularly the human resources, to enhance the teaching of Western Armenian.

Second, in line with the emphasis on modern technology in the acquisition of language, the Department organised with the Tumo Centre for Creative Technologies an important conference in Armenia that brought together IT, language and pedagogy experts to determine together major needs in the advancement of Western Armenian through electronic means. Concrete suggestions emerged out of the meeting in June, attended by some 40 individuals. As an outcome, a call for proposals was prepared by the Department, soliciting projects that would lead to a universal Western Armenian spellchecker, interactive resources for teaching purposes, and generating online content to encourage literary production in Armenian. The projects will be selected by a jury in 2016.

Third, in September, ACD funded and co-organised a major international conference in Paris, with INALCO, entitled "Innovation in Education in the 21st century". Experts and progressive educators from around the world came together for the first time to plan the implementation of necessary changes in Armenian language acquisition (teaching) in the Diaspora. Follow up working meetings are scheduled for 2016.

Finally, the Department launched the "Calouste Gulbenkian Translation Series" which aims to make seminal texts in the humanities and the social sciences available in Armenian. The Series will focus mostly on European texts from the late 19th Century to the contemporary period. A committee of eight experts met in June, and subsequently selected the first 12 books to be translated into Armenian. Eventually, some significant Armenian-language texts will be translated into other languages as well.

These four flagship projects are, in many ways, "foundational" initiatives for the subsequent activities of the Department to be carried out during the next several years. Improving schools, preparing human resources, providing technological means and making knowledge accessible in Armenian are pillars based on which a language can flourish, even in a diasporan setting.