



Annual Report 2018

Armenian Communities

The mission of the Armenian Communities Department is to create a viable future for the Armenian people where their culture and language are preserved and valued. The Department's programming is structured around four priorities: promoting the preservation of the Armenian language and culture by investing in the Armenian diaspora's education and development; investing in the youth and their commitment to civil society in Armenia; improving the Armenian-Turkish relationship by supporting projects that encourage mutual understanding of their long shared history; and preserving and disseminating Armenian literary heritage.

GROSS COSTS, WITHOUT INCOME

€3,065,000



Zarmanazan holiday educational programme 2018. © DR

2018 was the last year of our five-year plan. We proceeded with our university scholarships' programme and with our support to language revitalisation initiatives, including school support in the diaspora. In Armenia, where there was a major change of government due to a popular uprising led by civil society, we remained focused on civil society support and academic exchange. We funded certain projects that facilitated the Armenian-Turkish dialogue. Our assistance to publications continued, both electronic and in print. An important new initiative was launched: The Armenian Diaspora Survey Project that aims to understand the "attitudes and attributes" of Armenians who live in diaspora. Over the year, we also worked on the development of the new five-year plan



AWARD OF
321 SCHOLARSHIPS
IN **26**
DIFFERENT COUNTRIES



AWARD OF
71 GRANTS

Projects and Initiatives

University Scholarships

874,000 Euros in scholarships were distributed to 276 university students or young academics, including renewals. Out of those, 109 were men, and 167 were women, broadly reflecting the gender ratio of applications received. The amounts granted ranged from over 20,000 Euros per year to PhD students, to several hundred Euros for short term travel grants. The latter enabled 85 young researchers in multiple fields from Armenia to present papers in conferences or take part in similar scholarly activities around the world. 649 new scholarship applications were received, from over 40 countries, including Armenia (the most applicants), followed by Lebanon, Turkey and the USA.

Language, Culture and Education in the Diaspora

More Armenians live in the diaspora than in Armenia, with major centres of culture and learning stretching from Lebanon to Los Angeles. The Armenian Communities Department provides grants to schools, cultural programmes, summer camps, online learning tools, publications and other educational initiatives in the diaspora. Two new programmes started in 2018: a translation series of children's books, from various languages (including Portuguese) into Western Armenian, and a pedagogical reform programme for Armenian schools in Argentina. The Department is working directly with the seven Armenian schools in Argentina to enable them to modernise language teaching methods and develop more effective approaches and tools. The innovative language acquisition summer camp *Zarmanazan* continued in France, with an expanded component to include young adults. 50 children and 30 young adults participated. Our direct school support continued as well; we provided

funding to 16 Armenian schools and two institutions devoted to special education in Lebanon, as well as to some other schools in the diaspora.

A significant principals' meeting/workshop, organised in partnership with UCLA, brought together almost all Armenian school principals from the US, Canada and Argentina – 29 in total – to collectively discuss, along with experts, issues related to teaching the Armenian language in diaspora. One of the participating principals wrote the following about the workshop: "This collaboration and forum [has] the potential for a monumental shift in understanding and teaching the Armenian language."

In terms of technology and language, an important milestone was crossed in 2018 due to our efforts, in partnership with Wikimedia Armenia and INALCO, in Paris: Western Armenian was issued its own ISO code: HYW. The code allows this language branch to be uniquely identified in information systems and databases, enabling software engineers to develop elec-

tronic tools that are specific to Western Armenian.

We continued to sponsor academic conferences, lecture series and summer schools to further Armenian Studies and adult language learning, including support to the Society for Armenian Studies and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (both based in the USA), Haigazian University (Lebanon), Croix Bleue (France), Padus-Araxes (Italy) and the Programme of Armenian Studies (UK and Hungary).

In Portugal, in addition to the scholarships we grant to the Armenian students studying in Portuguese universities, we provided support to the University of Lisbon to help establish an Armenian language course offered by the School of Arts and Humanities. We also took part in the *Jardim de Verão* (*Summer Garden*) festivities by organising a concert.



Summer Garden 2018 – Artyom Manukyan Trio Debut in Lisbon.
© FCG / Márcia Lessa

Support to Civil Society and Youth in Armenia

2018 was a momentous year in Armenia. A peaceful revolution changed the political order. The old government, associated with corruption and stagnation, was swept away in the midst of a popular revolt led by young people and civil society activists. While the long-term outcome of the revolution is far from certain, the youth-led change is indicative that civil society support does have an impact: it led to active participation and engagement on social issues based on principles of social justice and inclusion. We continued our support to partners such as the Jinishian Memorial Foundation, the Boon online civic education programme, but also started to think about mechanisms to consolidate the gains of civil society. The international conference *Armenia 2018: Realities and Perspectives*, organised with our support by the Armenian Research Centre in Humanities a few months after the political changes, was an opportunity to start this rethinking. Approximately 100 people participated in 11 panels.

The programme of translations of seminal social science books into Armenian advanced during the year, along with the start of the translations. Our support enabled the foremost Armenian diaspora novelist, Krikor Beledian, to give a master class in creative writing at the American University of Armenia (AUA) in Yerevan. A group of linguists at the Acharian Language Institute of the Academy of Sciences received a grant to conduct research on the Armenian language that will facilitate the development of technology-based programmes. We assisted CivilNet, the online TV programme, to prepare programming in Western Armenian. Our collaboration with the Ministry of Diaspora continued under the leadership of a new Minister, as did our project with the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) aimed at Armenian refugee students studying at universities in Armenia, as well as our initiative with Wikimedia Armenia to enhance Western Armenian.

A small grant to the *ReAnima* animation Festival in Yerevan enabled the participation of three Portuguese entertainers to take part in the Festival, leading workshops and engaging in other festival-related activities.



View of the exhibition *Ani – Poetry of Stones*, in Istanbul © Anadolu Kültür / Erhan Arık

Promotion of the Armenian-Turkish dialogue

We continued to work with Anadolu Kültür to enable them to organise exhibitions and concerts pertaining to Armenian culture, including a digital platform for the ancient Armenian city of Ani. Exhibitions about that city were organised in Turkey and Armenia, with the view of also mounting the exhibition in European cities.

The Armenian language courses offered by the Hrant Dink Foundation continued, as well as a new initiative to prepare a mobile app on “multicultural Istanbul”. A project for publishing Armenian-related graphic novels was started by Aras Publishing. We also funded a sociological research project based at the University of Oxford entitled “Being an Armenian in Contemporary Turkey”, focusing on how Armenians are perceived. Finally, several young Armenians from Turkey actively participated in our *Zarmanazan* summer educational programme.

Electronic and Print Publications

Our support to publications continued, both in print and electronically, for books, journals, newspapers and websites in and about Armenians. Our funding, similar to previous years, targeted electronic publications, websites, digitisation efforts and other means to enhance the digital footprint of Armenian. We gave – or renewed – grants to Terre et Culture (for the digitisation of rare photos), Nor Haratch newspaper (for website and youth outreach), Technolinguistics for electronic books, Houshamadyan ethnographic research project for its website and school outreach (including translation into Turkish), Nayiri dictionaries and spellchecker programme, Yerevan State University Press for books, and Hamazkain’s Setian Publishing (for Armenian language manuals).

The translation series of significant social science books into Armenian proceeded on track, with the administration of the project being entrusted to ARI Literature Foundation in Armenia.

In Portugal, we also supported the publication of a book by Tinta da China about Armenians, *Arménia: Povo e Identidade*, written by António Loja Neves and Margarida Neves Pereira, launched at the Foundation.

Partnerships and Sponsorships

This Department promotes activities around the world in partnership with various civil society organisations, universities, philanthropic organisations, schools, the Church and government ministries. Our mandate to preserve and develop Armenian culture and Armenian studies needs a wide range of networks and partnerships, while maintaining strict neutrality in terms of community policies.

Our vast network of partnerships was further enhanced in 2018 with the signing of a trilateral agreement with Leipzig University’s Eastern European studies centre (GWZO) and the Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Budapest.

The Armenian Communities received a generous grant from the Los Angeles-based Melkonian Global Overture in the form of scholarships so that 11 young people can participate in Zarmanazan’s language immersion summer programme.

Research Project on the Armenian Diaspora

There is very little research on the current “attitudes and attributes” of the Armenians living in the diaspora. A new research project was launched and financed in partnership with the Armenian Institute of London: a survey of the Armenian diaspora. Combining a mixed methodology of quantitative research and qualitative interview, the pilot phase of the project began in 2018 in four cities: Pasadena and Boston, United States of America, Marseille, France, and Cairo, Egypt. These cities were chosen for their specific histories and characteristics, taking note of their differences and positions within the diaspora.

Teams of three researchers conducted the survey (comprised of 100 questions), interviews and gathered visual data. A website has been created where all results will be published, making the research free of charge for academics and community leaders. The aim of the research is twofold: to raise awareness on the diaspora and to encourage the formulation of evidence-based policies by Armenian leaders, both in Armenia and among the diaspora.

The project was led by an international advisory council of experts and will continue in 2019 with another set of cities. In addition to the Armenian Diaspora Survey, another research project, centred on the Armenian diaspora in Russia, was conducted by two anthropologists: Nona Shahnazarian and Natalya Kosmarskaya. The results of these two studies fill a large gap in Armenian studies: research and analysis of the contemporary Armenian diaspora.