

**TURKEY - ARMENIA**  
TRAVEL GRANT & FELLOWSHIP SCHEME



**HDV**  
PUBLICATIONS

## **HRANT DINK FOUNDATION**

*Hrant Dink Foundation was established after the assassination of Hrant Dink in front of his newspaper Agos on January 19, 2007, in order to avoid similar pains and to continue Hrant Dink's legacy, his language and heart and his dream of a world that is more free and just. Democracy and human rights for everyone regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural origin or gender is the Foundation's main principle.*

*The Foundation works for a Turkey and a world where freedom of expression is limitless and all differences are allowed, lived, appreciated, multiplied and conscience outweighs the way we look at today and the past. As the Hrant Dink Foundation 'our cause worth living' is a future where a culture of dialogue, peace and empathy prevails.*

**BEYOND BORDERS**  
**TURKEY-ARMENIA TRAVEL GRANT & FELLOWSHIP SCHEME**

2014-2015

[www.armtr-beyondborders.org](http://www.armtr-beyondborders.org)

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## INTRODUCTION

There are no diplomatic relations between the two neighbouring countries Armenia and Turkey, and their land border remains sealed since 1993. Even though the two neighbouring countries signed protocols on the establishment of diplomatic relations and opening up of the border in 2009, they were suspended before their parliamentary ratification and thus the normalisation process got stalled. The absence of diplomatic relations continue to have its implications in all domains including the civil society efforts. As of 2016, there are not formal mechanisms of cooperation between the public and private institutions of the two countries, there are not systematic exchange programmes in academia.

In such a backdrop, since its establishment in 2007, the Hrant Dink Foundation has been making efforts to encourage and foster relations between Turkey and Armenia in all fields, as one of its priority missions. Throughout these years, having observed the decades long lack of dialogue fed by physical and mental borders, we felt the need for support mechanisms that would help peoples of all ages, professions and backgrounds from both countries to cross the border, to visit their neighbouring country, to meet one another, and to build institutional partnerships. To this end, in 2014, with a view to encourage and facilitate direct contact and cooperation between the peoples of the two neighbouring countries, we established the *Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant and Fellowship Scheme*.

With this publication, we would like to present the outcomes of both programmes implemented between March 2014-June 2015 thanks to the financial assistance of the European Union. Our aim is to particularly introduce the people and organisations who acted as catalysts between Turkey and Armenia, to share the transformation they went through in their own words, to present collaborations that took place in various fields, and to share the Foundation's experience and lessons learned throughout this process while addressing bureaucratic produces between the two neighbouring countries without diplomatic relations.

The first chapter of this publication compiles the stories and accounts of 210 individuals from different regions and cities of Turkey and Armenia who visited their neighbouring country upon their own initiative. The Foundation supported 154 individuals from Turkey and 56 from Armenia including high school and university students, civil society workers, academics,

researchers, journalists, writers, publishers, artists and filmmakers in their visits to the neighbouring country by covering their round trip travel costs and assisting them find partners and contact persons in their fields. The *Travel Grant* beneficiaries met their peers and colleagues in the neighbouring country, they got engaged in collaboration and joint production. Their experiences and impressions about the neighbouring country, accompanied by the photos they took, have been shared through the Beyond Borders website [www.armtr-beyondborders.org](http://www.armtr-beyondborders.org).

The second chapter is dedicated to the accounts of the 18 professionals, who spend four to eight months in the neighbouring country with the support of the *Fellowship Scheme* and carried out joint activities with their host organisations corresponding to their field of expertise, as well as the accounts of their host organisations. Having aimed at supporting activities in areas where exchange of expertise and lasting cooperation is most needed, the *Fellowship Scheme* could engage 63 organisations from Turkey and 25 from Armenia including public and private universities, research centres, civil society organisations, media outlets, culture-arts centres and museums, who opened their doors to professionals from the neighbouring country and proposed specific programmes for cooperation. Between September 2014 to May 2015, 12 professionals from Armenia moved to Istanbul and 6 professionals from Turkey moved to Yerevan and Gyumri, carrying out joint work with their host organisations. During the time they lived in the neighbouring country, they took Armenian/Turkish language classes, and by the end of their fellowship, they have prepared reports, publications, performances and exhibitions in their respective fields with the support of their host organisations.

All these things happened at a time when the land border between the two neighbouring countries remained sealed, when there were no diplomatic missions that could provide consular services including issuing visas and residence permits, and when there were only charter status flights between Istanbul and Yerevan twice a week. The third chapter of this publication is intended as an experience report by the Hrant Dink Foundation, featuring the obstacles we have faced while implementing both programmes in the absence of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia as well as some solutions we could find with the assistance of ministries of foreign affairs and EU Delegations of both countries. We do hope that our experience will help facilitate the activities of the civil society organisations working in this field, and will encourage the policy-makers towards eliminating more obstacles between the two neighbouring countries.

All the people and organisations who shared their perspective and experience in this publication have shuttled between Turkey and Armenia throughout 2014 and 2015, striving to bring these two neighbouring countries closer. By crossing both physical and mental borders, they have built many bridges and formed irreversible bonds.

This growing demand in the civil society of both countries for the normalisation of Turkey-Armenia relations - in all spheres - have also brought along new and inspiring developments. In October 2015, the Istanbul-Yerevan charter status flights were replaced with regular scheduled flights. It is now possible to directly fly to the neighbouring country almost every day. Meanwhile, the European Union decided to continue its support in 2016-2017 with a new cycle of the programme *Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process*.

All the individuals and organisations that took part in both programmes will be our main pillars as we continue to implement the new cycle of the *Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant and Fellowship Scheme*. All the results produced thanks to their efforts and cooperation will serve as a source of inspiration for us and will encourage us to work harder to reach out to more people.

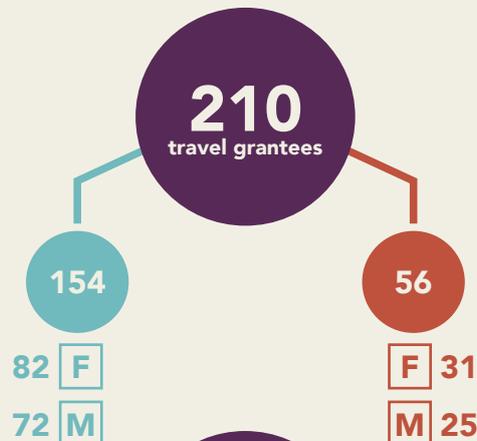
We have so much work to do in order to bridge this decades-long gap and to go beyond borders.

TRAVEL GRANT

MARCH 2014 ----- JUNE 2015

Turkey

Armenia



131 to Armenia

21 to Turkey

**152**  
first time visitors

**36** outreach meetings in Turkey & Armenia reaching out to **700** individuals

**544,854** Km in total



# FELLOWSHIP

MARCH 2014 ----- JUNE 2015

Turkey

Armenia

18  
fellows

6

6 fellows  
learned Armenian

12

12 fellows  
learned Turkish

12 fellows  
received  
residency permit  
in Turkey

36

91  
applicants

55

90  
host  
organisations  
candidates

65

25

8 universities

12 research centres

9 art centres

24 civil society organisations

8 media outlets

2 municipalities

1 law office

1 PR agency

2 universities

3 research centres

4 art centres

10 civil society organizations

5 media outlets

1 translation agency

Izmir

Diyarbakır

Çanakkale

Yerevan

Ankara

Van

Istanbul

Gyumri

Vanadzor

Kars



BEYOND BO

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**ORDERS**



TRAVEL GRANT

**ARI ASIYORUZ**

**ۋەتەنە ۋەق**

## TURKEY-ARMENIA TRAVEL GRANT

Hrant Dink Foundation launched the *Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant* with a view to increase direct contacts and to promote cooperation between the peoples of the two neighbouring countries in March 2014. *Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant* was designed as a pool to encourage non-profit civic initiatives and individuals from Turkey and Armenia to travel to the neighbouring country for specific goals. Thanks to the financial assistance of the European Union within the framework of the programme *Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process*, the Travel Grant aimed to support the travels of at least 200 individuals from March 2014 to May 2015 in cooperation with the Civilitas Foundation in Armenia and with the support of Community Volunteers' Foundation (TOG) based in Turkey as well as the Youth Initiative Centre (YIC) based in Gyumri, Armenia.

The Foundation launched the first call for the Travel Grant on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Between March 2014 to June 2015, the Foundation announced five rounds of the Travel Grant, receiving 863 applications - 684 from Turkey and 179 from Armenia. All applications were evaluated by the independent and competent Selection Committee members in accordance with selection criterion and priorities stated in the *Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant Regulation*. During the assessment process, the Selection Committee members considered diversity and balance of gender, age, regional diversity, study field and activity types of grantees by giving priority to first time goers, youth activities and local activities.

As a result of the selection process, 210 individuals - 154 from Turkey and 56 from Armenia - were awarded the Travel Grant and realised their visits to the neighbouring country. Between April 2014 and June 2015, young people, university students, high school students, civil society organisations, academics, researchers, journalists, publishers, writers, artists, film producers, human right activists from both countries visited their neighbouring country and met their peers and colleagues. 152 out of 210 grantees visited the neighbouring country for the very first time.

The grantees from Afyon, Ankara, Antakya, Antalya, Çanakkale, Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Istanbul, Izmir, Mardin, Mersin, Van, Yalova and Zonguldak from Turkey and Ararat, Ashtarak, Gyumri, Masis, Sevan, Vanadzor and Yerevan from Armenia travelled to about 16 different

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### PARTNERS

Civilitas Foundation  
Community Volunteers Foundation  
Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre NGO

### WEBSITE

[www.armtr-beyondborders.org](http://www.armtr-beyondborders.org)

cities and towns for the travel purposes they identified themselves in line with their disciplines and projects. The age of grantees ranged from 17 to 64 years. 113 out of 210 grantees were female while 97 were male, and 156 grantees were under the age of 40.

The Travel Grant supported a multitude of activities organised by grantees such as visits for partnership building, feasibility study, academic cooperation, education, joint productions in culture and arts, seminars, workshops, exhibitions, performances and concerts.

In 2014 and 2015, Travel Grant has reached over 700 individuals through 36 outreach meetings which were held in Adana, Ankara, Dilijan, Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, Gyumri, Goris, Istanbul, Izmir, Van, Vanadzor, Yeghegnadzor and Yerevan. The outreach meetings aimed at facilitating access to the Travel Grant for civil society organisations, university students, academics, professional organisations, journalists and artists and also to share the experience of former grantees. Many participants who attended these meetings, later on applied to the Travel Grant.

Throughout this process, the Hrant Dink Foundation project team members in Istanbul and Yerevan assisted over 80 individuals to find partners in the neighbouring country and they connected people across the border.

During and after their visits, the experiences and accounts of mental transformation of individuals, groups and organisations that visited the neighbouring country with the support of the Travel Grant, have been shared along with the photos they took themselves through the 'People Beyond Borders' page of the website [www.armtr-beyondborders.org](http://www.armtr-beyondborders.org).

Overall, the *Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant* has been instrumental in connecting people at grassroots level, enabling them to travel to the neighbouring country behind closed borders and to know the culture, thoughts and expectations of their neighbours, finding them partners and counterparts in their fields, offering them the opportunity to do feasibility of their cooperation ideas.

In 2016-2017, the *Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant* will continue to support individuals, initiatives and organisations from both countries with the aim to increase the number of beneficiaries as well as the thematic and geographical diversity.



▲ Sevan Monastery, 2015 (photograph: Yusuf B. Dolu)

▼ Diyarbakır, 2015 (photograph: Anna Davtyan)

*During this trip, I have once again witnessed that children who grow up with art and create works of art do not limit their thinking to physical boundaries or any given limitations. Their mind is always free and not bound by any condition, country and politics.*

- **ARMINE HOVHANNISYAN**

*Century-old issues have caused a certain gap, a certain distance. Therefore, making best and efficient use of the open channels that we have for the moment would help bridge the gap and contribute to the normalisation of relations. These prejudices are also valid in the domain of literature. We can see two literary traditions that do not know one another very well. Yet, there is no need to mention how resourceful would be a comparative research on literature. The idea of learning Armenian language to study and reveal these works is very exciting. Joint social, cultural and literary works to be accomplished by means of mutual visits will certainly be precious.* - **ENGİN KILIÇ**

## TURKEY-ARMENIA TRAVEL GRANT BENEFICIARIES

**Armine Hovhannisyan** from **Yerevan**, from the National Centre of Aesthetics, held creativity workshops with the children in Çanakkale, as part of the collaboration project 'Art for My Neighbour'.

**Hasan Erbay** from **Afyon** explored opportunities for academic cooperation on medical ethics education and conducted a survey on the perspectives of Armenian students on bioethical issues in Yerevan.

**Engin Kılıç** from **Istanbul** conducted a comparative analysis of the image of non-Muslims, particularly Armenians, in the Ottoman, Turkish and Armenian utopian literature in Yerevan.

**Daniel Ohanian** from **Istanbul** studied materials at Matenadaran Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan for his research on the life in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth-century and for building academic connections.

**Hüseyin Uysal** from **Gaziantep** took part in the Annual Student Research Conference in Yerevan organised by the American University of Armenia and delivered a presentation on 'Idiomatic Expressions in Turkish Child Language'.

**Derya Durmaz** from **Istanbul** took part in the Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Yerevan for the premiere of her short film *Ziazan*.

**Emine Yıldırım** from **Istanbul** took part in the Regional Feature Film Competition of the Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Yerevan for the screening of her feature film *The Impeccables* and for networking with filmmakers and cultural actors in Armenia.

**Kamo Davtyan, Mamikon Hovsepyan and Romik Danial** from **Yerevan**, visited various organisations in Istanbul working in the field of human rights protection and civic activism for strengthening cooperation among the organisations in Turkey and Armenia working in the same field.

**Anna Davtyan** from **Yerevan** visited Istanbul and Diyarbakır to work on her play dedicated to the Armenian Genocide in its centenary that will be performed in Germany in 2016.



Kadıköy, 2015 (photograph: Hayarpi Hovhannisyan)

**Ömer Delikgöz** from **Istanbul** met academics in Yerevan and made research for his thesis on the concept of nation building in Armenian literature in the Ottoman period.

**Tatevik Danielyan** and **Vergine Andrikyan** from **Yerevan**, members of the International Centre for Intercultural Research, Learning and Dialogue, visited Istanbul to meet various youth organisations in Turkey in order to discuss ideas of organising an experience-based trainings and volunteering programmes.

**Lusine Sahakyan** from **Yerevan** conducted a three-week field visit to Rize for her research about the Hamshenians of Turkey.

**Ayçanur Yıldırım** from **Ankara**, member of the Association of Renaissance Institute, studied Armenian music and Gomidas Vartaped during her one-week field visit to Yerevan and Vanadzor.

**Sonya Ovsepyan** from **Yerevan**, member of 'Bridge of Hope' NGO [Huysi Kamurj], worked on digital mapping of the Armenian cultural heritage in Istanbul.

**Anna Muradyan** from **Yerevan** organised a field visit to Sivas in order to gather information for her oral history project about Sivas Armenians.

*The moment I stepped in to Armenia, I experienced a truly unique and novel feeling, something I had not experienced in any other country before. I did not feel like a stranger. I could see Mount Ararat (Ağrı) in the horizon. To me, the mountain symbolizes the problems accumulated between the two countries. And I asked myself how the peoples of these two countries became so distant to one another while they had once been so close. - **ÖMER DELİKGÖZ***

*This trip was a unique experience for self-discovery. It led to a big change not only in our minds but also in our steps. While thinking beyond borders, we also managed to act beyond borders. - **TATEVIK DANIELYAN***

*The change should start from us - the young generation which is full of new ideas, initiatives. This is the generation which sets aside the reality of closed borders and thinks beyond borders. - **VERGINE ANDRIKYAN***

*The travel to Turkey firstly contributed to my own way of thinking about the matter. While visiting Diyarbakır, I saw things from a completely different perspective and experienced a whole range of emotions and thoughts. I penned an essay about this visit. I am now working on a series of poems about Istanbul. The real change starts with literature, with the art. This visit has contributed to my writing style and hopefully my essays will contribute to the relations between the two countries. - **ANNA DAVTYAN***

*I am sure we can find new opportunities to build dialogue and cooperation in order to achieve full understanding and peace between the two neighbouring countries. As for me, I would like to focus on the 'Next 100 Years'. - **SONYA HOVSEPYAN***

During my stay in Armenia, I have clearly observed that the indications of a co-existence and common culture shared by Armenians, Kurds, and Turks are still very much alive, despite the linguistic and religious differences. The similarities between the emotions, traditions, and ways of living, although expressed in different languages, felt like a reunion with an old friend.

- FEYZAN TUZKAYA

My journey to Armenia took me beyond a mere recognition of commonalities between the two cultures; I have come to realize that we are one and the same. I have found my sisters and brothers, and, through them, I have found myself. It has been an experience of the past, present, and the future. I now know that shared feelings know no linguistic or geographical boundaries.

- EZGİ MEHMETOĞLU

My hope for a better future was renewed and strengthened as I directly witnessed how the borders that exist in the minds of people are shattered when they interact in a non-hierarchical manner. - MEHMET KARASU

Direct contact between individuals and groups has significant positive impact on reducing prejudice and building peace. Personally, I felt that people of Armenia were very welcoming. We had the chance to talk about our history face-to-face. We expressed our feelings and understood each other deeply. - PELİN KARAKUŞ

It was an important experience for me to be in Armenia and to conduct my research there. I felt very comfortable at any moment. The people working in the libraries and the archives were extremely helpful. The thing that I could say is that, researchers shall visit this country by setting aside their prejudices and hesitations, if any. - MEHMET POLATEL



Çıplak Ayaklar Kumpanyası, Yerevan, 2014 (photograph: Mihran Tomasyan)

**Feyzan Tuzkaya, Mehmet Karasu and Ezgi Mehmetoğlu** from **Izmir**, from Ege University Department of Psychology, did their preliminary research for a future social psychological studies on the perceptions and attitudes of the peoples of the two neighbouring countries towards one another during their 11-day stay in Yerevan and Gyumri.

**Ani Sargsyan** from **Yerevan** visited Istanbul to study the literature at the Library of Istanbul University for her Ottoman text book project and had meetings to discuss opportunities of academic cooperation.

**Pelin Karakuş** from **Izmir** conducted preliminary research for her field study on Armenian migrant women who moved to Turkey for labour during her 11-day stay in Yerevan.

**Berkant Kılıçkap, Serhat Utku İnan, Duygu Güngör, Mihran Tomasyan, Ömer Öztüyen** from **Istanbul**, members of the Çıplak Ayaklar Kumpanyası, took part in the HIGH FEST International Performing Arts Festival in Yerevan with their dance-theatre piece titled Family Trees/Aile Ağaçları.

**Mehmet Polatel** from **Istanbul** conducted research in Yerevan for two weeks as part of his PhD project analysing the role of economic and ideological motivations of different groups in their decisions to take part in mass violence against Ottoman Armenians before 1915.



Sevan Monastery, 2015 (photograph: Yusuf B. Dolu)

**Yıldız Gümüştekin** and **Osman Yanık** from **Yalova**, students at Yalova University Department of Social Work conducted a research on social service practices and models, discussed possibilities of joint projects with social work organisations in Yerevan.

**Hasmik Hovhannisyan** from **Yerevan** worked on a series of graphic novels based on the works of Western Armenian writers Krikor Zohrab and Zabel Yesayan for her 'NolaLand' transmedia project in Istanbul.

**Hrachya Khanaghyan**, **Tatevik Aghajanyan** ve **Levon Avagyan** from **Vanadzor**, **Ararat** and **Yerevan**, members of the 'We For Democracy' Humanitarian NGO, opened a photo exhibition in Istanbul, and organised a workshop titled 'Taste of Peace - Intercultural Learning'.

**Yusuf Burak Dolu** from **Istanbul** visited research centres and met academics for his research on the common cultural heritage of Gümüşhane region during his 11-day stay in Yerevan.

**Gamze Karadağ Koç** from **Istanbul**, member of the Mavi Kalem Association took part in the 7th International Conference of the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) titled 'Armenian Women in Action: Building Communities across the Globe' in Yerevan and made contacts in Armenia to further improve relations between the civil society organisations of both countries.

*While in Yerevan, we have realized that borders are the only things that keep us away from one another. Cultures, the traces that are left from shared life experiences, friendliness, hospitality, brotherhood and friendship have always been the same in both countries. It is meaningless to be so far from each other and not to know one another even though we are so close. We wish the peoples of both countries will understand that the borders are meaningless and we wish neighbourly relations and friendship will be strengthened by the meeting of many hearts.*  
- **YILDIZ GÜMÜŞTEKİN & OSMAN YANIK**

*I should say that we had some very promising meetings, which in the future can turn into large-scale cultural collaborations. For example, our graphic novels based on Western Armenian authors' works can be translated into Turkish and be published in Turkey. In this way, not only the Turkey's Armenians, but also the entire Turkish-speaking population, will have the chance to discover the literature of Armenian authors through graphic novels and comics. I believe that learning one another's literature and culture is a big step to knowing each other and normalising relations.*  
- **HASMİK HOVHANNISYAN**

*Nothing can replace peace in our countries and all around the world. In order to lay the foundation of global peace, we should start the culture of peace within ourselves and redesign our personal lives and families accordingly.* - **HRACHYA KHANAGHYAN**

*Any discussion about cultural diversity is a guarantee of peace.* - **LEVON AVAGYAN**

*Only mutual understanding can lead to harmony. There is nothing impossible if you are ready to accept and respect your neighbour.* - **TATEVIK AGHAJANYAN**

*In Yerevan, people helped us with many things and they were generally friendly. Our favourite place - the place we call as the heart of the city, has been the ice skating ring in the centre very close to the Opera building. It's really impressive to see that all people of all ages from 7 to 70 had the courage to do this sport. It was fun to watch them too...* - **ECEM BAYKUŞ & MİRAY ÖZTURAN**

*The first thing that struck me in the city of Yerevan, a city with a great architectural heritage, was stillness. Coupled with this stillness, one could also feel the sorrow in people. Our visit aimed at not only meeting new people but also establishing new ties, presenting our new book *The Lament of a Century - Diyarbekir 1915*, exploring possibilities for our new research project, getting in touch with new institutions and people for future collaboration. I could say that our travel was successful and we could get the results on every topic I mentioned.* - **NAMIK KEMAL DİNÇ**

*The separation and the limitations imposed by the artificial national boundaries, the inability of the people of the countries to fairly face their past, and especially, Turkey's non-recognition of the 1915 Genocide - and even not allowing discussions on the topic - show us that the real problem is not of physical borders but of a very serious emotional/ideological boundaries. The continuation of these travels and even increasing the frequency of flights, is especially important because they precisely help us cross these deeper emotional boundaries.* - **AYHAN IŞIK**

*I walked through the streets of Yerevan as if I was at home without feeling like a stranger. I met many wonderful people, chat with them and made promises with many of them about having a reunion in Diyarbakır someday.* - **LEZGİN KANI**



Workshop with children in the Mayistan village, 2015 (photograph: Sibel Tartut)

**Çağdaş Bilir** from **Ankara**, member of METU LGBT Solidarity Society met human rights activities on organisations working on LGBT issues in Yerevan, Vanadzor and Gyumri.

**Hüseyin Öztürk** from **Istanbul**, a brewer at the Bosphorus Brewing Company visited brewing companies in Yerevan to share his know-how, learn about brewery industry in Armenia, and explore possibilities of future cooperation.

**Namık Kemal Dinç, Ayhan Işık and Pakrat Estukyan** from **Istanbul**, members of the Zan Institute for Social, Political and Economic Studies held discussions with academics at the Yerevan State University Institute for Armenian Studies about their research on Kurdish-Armenian Relations after the Armenian Genocide.

**Lezgin Kani** from **Diyarbakır**, member of the Nar Photos, met Dersim Armenians in Yerevan as part of his photography project 'The Witnesses of Dersim 38 Massacre'.

**Ecem Baykuş** from **Ankara** and **Miray Özturan** from **Istanbul** visited Yerevan to take photographs for their exhibition project about daily life of about LGBTI people in Yerevan and Istanbul.

**Sibel Tartut** and **Özgür Avşar** from **Istanbul** visited Yerevan to complete their book project about a young girl who follows the foot steps of her Armenian grandmother and to organise workshops with children at Child Protection Centres.

**Erdoğan Alniak** from **Çanakkale**, member of the Troya Culture Association, held creativity workshops with the children in Armenia as part of the collaboration project 'Art for My Neighbour' in Yerevan.

**Suren Deheryan** from **Yerevan**, member of the Journalists for the Future NGO, visited Van and Diyarbakır, and prepared multimedia stories about people whose parents were witnesses of the atrocities against humanity in the beginning of the 20th century for their multimedia project 'Neighbours by Destiny: Third Generation'.

**Hamza Algül** from **Ankara** and **Meryem Betül Taşdemir** from **Istanbul**, members of the Federation of Democratic Student Societies (DÖDEF) held meetings in Yerevan to exchange ideas on the issues of youth in Turkey and Armenia, and participated in the commemoration events in the centenary of the Armenian Genocide.

*Before my visit to Armenia, I thought I might feel like a stranger or would experience communication problems; however I had three full nice days where I experienced the opposite of my presumptions. We, as people who are so much alike, should not distance ourselves from each other. There is plenty of work to be done to compensate for the time passed. I will never forget the conversations I had in Turkish while walking, shopping and at the butcher's. - HÜSEYİN ÖZTÜRK*

*The activities we conducted with children in Mayistan village of Armenia helped us realize the power of friendship in us. As opposed to the views of politicians and grown-ups, children are the owner of future and makers of peace. I saw the longing for peace and friendship in the eyes of both the children from Armenia and Turkey. - SİBEL TARTUT & ÖZGÜR AVŞAR*

*I have shared my real-life experiences rather than my personal opinion, feelings or political ideas, with the people I talked to in Armenia. The unique notion that can summarize my experiences is 'touching'. The prejudices that preclude the communication in the initial phases, slowly fades away as long as you are together, you bring out something with collaboration and speak to one another. This process is much faster with children. Therefore, I recommend to everyone from Armenia and Turkey to get in touch with one another without any hesitation, to come together and to produce together. - ERDİNÇ ALNIAK*

*Visiting the neighbouring country that is so close but at the same time so distant and unknown, is a very important step for Armenians, Turks and Kurds. However these visits should not be merely touristic visits. One needs to communicate with the local people, to exchange the information inherited from the forefathers, and to use this information to build further contacts. - SUREN DEHERYAN*

While we do enjoy performing our traditional songs in Istanbul and explaining their stories to our non-Armenian speaking audience there, it was yet another pleasure to sing these songs all together with the audience in Armenia. We were excited to take our compositions carrying the smell of the city we lived in 'beyond closed borders'. Witnessing that people are singing along the same melody in different dialects and sometimes in different languages, discovering that we could be 'a crowd' and we could 'unite' instead of being 'one' and 'single', and introducing both countries the unknown language of the neighbour through songs... - **LARA NARİN**

Honestly, I did not expect such an audience and great interest in our music. I am pretty sure that the people in Armenia were also not expecting such a band from Istanbul. This concert series somehow broke the prejudice in both minds. They even asked if it would be possible to invite other bands from Istanbul. I definitely would like to keep in touch with people I met there, I might even consider to go there again and make workshops with local musicians. - **RUPEN MELKİSETOĞLU**

We have to free ourselves from prejudices and get closer to each other in order to understand the fact that borders are nothing but lines. - **SARO USTA**

Drawing borders is the easiest way to divide people. Media and the ones in power mostly contribute to the strengthening of these borders. Seeing the reality will only be possible by going beyond borders, setting aside our prejudices and making efforts to meet with the ones on other side of the border. - **İBRAHİM ODAK**

Next time, we must stay longer in Armenia. We are also considering to collaborate with music bands. I believe, this is the most important thing to do. - **İLKEM BALSEÇEN**



Vomank, Yerevan, 2014

**Sedat Yılmaz** from **Istanbul**, reporter for *Özgür Gündem Daily*, took part in the Armenian Genocide commemoration events in its centenary with special focus on the perceptions of Armenians about Turks and Kurds.

**Armine Abrahamian**, member of **Hoshkee Film**, and **Hovhannes Tekgyozyan** from **Yerevan**, took part in Istanbul Tanpinar Literature Festival - ITEF to promote Abrahamian's book *Ankimyuri Bnakichnery* [Ankimyur Residents] that was being translated from Armenian into Turkish for its publication in Turkey.

**Lara Narin**, **Saro Usta**, **Rupen Melkisetoglu**, **İbrahim Odak**, **Ferhat Karabut**, **İlkem Balseçen**, members of the music band **Vomank** based in **Istanbul** performed Armenian songs in Yerevan in their solo concerts.

**Ashot Grigoryan** from **Yerevan**, met the members of HAYCAR Organisation of Armenian Architects and Engineers in Istanbul and discussed the steps for implementation of their joint project idea.

**Anzhela Hovakimyan**, **Serge Melik Hovsepiyan**, **Arthur Nazaryan**, **Mariam Minasyan** and **Mariana Yeghiazaryan** from **Yerevan**, members of the Forum Theater Armenia participated in a workshop on theater methods in Istanbul.



Yerevan, 2014 (photograph: Elif Akgül)

**Miran Pirgıç Gültekin** from **Istanbul**, former president of the Dersim Armenians' Association visited Yerevan to plan the organisation of a documentary film festival about Dersim Armenians in collaboration with Modus Vivendi Cultural Centre.

**Alper Ecevit** from **Istanbul**, from Bahçeşehir University Department of European Union Relations, met experts and academics during his 8-day stay in Yerevan for his research on the Armenia-Turkey border.

**Ekrem Özden** from **Istanbul**, journalist from Yeni Asya Newspaper, made interviews and news stories in Yerevan to contribute to friendship and peace between the two neighbouring countries.

**Mahmut Ömer Orhun** from **Istanbul** visited Yerevan and other cities of Armenia, and photographed the culture, history, spaces, and daily life in Armenia for his project 'Yerevan Impressions'.

**Knar Babayan** from **Yerevan** visited Istanbul and Izmir and photographed three Armenian-Turkish couples living in Turkey for her photography project on mixed marriages.

**Elif Akgül** from **Istanbul** covered news stories from Yerevan during a week before and after April 24th, the Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, for the online news portal Bianet.

*I have seen that the daily life in Armenia is no different than that of Turkey, apart from the language. In Yerevan I could confidently say that I was Turkish, I did not feel any tension. In this respect, I can say that I have overcome my psychological threshold. When I visited the Khor Virab Monastery, for the first time in my life I saw the border of Turkey from an eastern front. The fact that this border is sealed and that I cannot cross the border made me feel quite uncomfortable as a citizen of the Republic of Turkey as well. I believe there exists a psychological barrier for those who are living in Armenia to see their national symbol Mount Ararat from Yerevan but not being able to reach it physically. This barrier can be overcome by opening of the border. The absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries is getting more and more nonsense for me, especially when we take into consideration the high level of interaction between the two societies throughout history. During my one-week stay in Yerevan, I have felt that the problems between the two countries are likely to be resolved with the increase of people-to-people contacts. I can definitely say that Yerevan will be a stop that I will pass by in the future few more times. - ALPER ECEVİT*

*Yerevan is like an open-air museum. If I have the means and opportunity, I would like to visit Yerevan and other cities in Armenia again. I would like to invite my brothers and sisters I met there to Turkey, to Istanbul.*

**- EKREM ÖZDEN**

*The sealed border harms both societies. This is what the politicians should understand in the first place. During my visit to Armenia, I had the chance to look at Ararat/Ağrı through the eyes of Armenians. It is very crucial to tell the Turkey's society how Armenians think and feel. I believe I was successful in achieving this and I believe this could be a first step in the normalisation process.*

**- ELİF AKGÜL**

*I hope that the relations I have built with the scientists in Turkey can make a humble contribution to the normalisation process. My recommendation to the peoples of both countries is to make more research and get the true knowledge about themselves and others. This is my wish for a better present and better future.*

- **VARUZHAN GEGHAMYAN**

*My visit to Armenia was also my first ever travel abroad. Travelling to Armenia felt like a journey to somewhere very close and somewhere very familiar. It was just like travelling to Kars.- ÇETİN EROL*

*The team that welcomed us in Yerevan organised a great programme for us. We had meetings with the National Association of Publishers of Armenia as well as the major publishing houses. We exchanged information about the publishing sectors in both countries. We also discussed possible ways of cooperation. In particular, we came to an agreement that collaboration on children's books and children's literature would positively contribute to the normalisation process. - SİBEL TALAY*

*Thanks to this trip, together with our publisher friends, we had the chance to get closely acquainted with the details of a very important matter, which for us has been a 'closed book' and also somehow a 'taboo' that we have always 'avoided'. - FAHRİ ARAL*

*Our visit was the first step. In the future, we are willing to collaborate with the publishing sector and increase the number of translated works translation across the two languages. If we can make this happen, then this will mean we have achieved an important progress in the 'normalisation process'. For books are the carriers of culture.*

- **METİN CELAL ZEYİNİOĞLU**

**Rafayel Manukyan** from **Sevan** conducted research for his thesis 'The influence of Turkish army on the political processes in Turkey' during his two-week field study in Istanbul.

**Varuzhan Geghamyan** from **Yerevan** conducted 8-day field work in Istanbul for his research on the participation of national minorities in socio-political life of Turkey.

**Çetin Erol** from **Istanbul** conducted preliminary research about the history of the Kurdish Theatre and its relation to the Armenian Theatre during his 9-day stay in Yerevan.

**Sibel Talay, Fahri Aral and Metin Celal Zeynioğlu** from **Istanbul**, members of the Publishers' Union of Turkey, visited Yerevan to build contacts between the publishers of the two countries, to discuss strategies for introducing the Armenian publishers to their counterparts in Turkey.

**Meri Aghakhanyan** from **Yerevan** visited Van to follow the trace of the Armenians displaced a hundred years ago and to photograph ruins for her multimedia project 'Hundred Years of Solitude'.

**Mesut Dinler and Mehmet Çalhan** from **Istanbul** visited UrbanLab architecture office in Yerevan and studied the Soviet era architectural heritage and urban fabric in the city.

**Hasmik Martiryan** from Masis worked in **Antakya** for ten days for the documentary film *Sleep of the Oranges* about the story of Vakıflı/Musa Dagh.

**Andrey Araksyants, Arman Khojayan and Naira Mkrtychyan** from **Yerevan**, representing the Centre for Agribusiness and Rural Development CARD, met producers and visited businesses in the field of agriculture in Muğla and discussed feasibility of expanding economic ties between the two neighbouring countries.

**Levon Lachikyan** from **Yerevan** organised a 8-day feasibility visit to Istanbul to make graphic drawings for his book project about Istanbul and to have meetings for logistical arrangements of exhibiting his work in the city.

**Aylin Samancı** from **Istanbul Bilgi University**, editor of Can Publishers conducted research in Yerevan for her master thesis on the pre- and post-1915 communal life in Armenian literature.



Armenian Alphabet Monument, Artashavan, 2015 (photograph: Hèvi Gago)

*I went to Armenia with lots of questions in my head, I came back with even more questions. “Can we really build a common future?” was the main question I returned with. I believe the answer is obviously positive; however in order for us to find the tools of a better future, we have to get to know each other better, and talk to each other much more.* - **MESUT DİNLER**

*Despite coming from a neighbouring country and having travelled a lot in the region, Armenia was rather an unknown place to us. It is always hard to guess what to expect from a country, especially if it is a country that we have so many issues related to our common past... The subject of Armenia is shrouded in misinformation and is rather taboo in Turkey. During our visit, our prejudices were gone and we felt sorry for the lost century during which we had been apart. It was a reassuring opportunity to see like-minded people making efforts to build a future based on dialogue and collaboration while looking into our shared past.* - **MEHMET ÇALHAN**

*At the level of person-to-person interaction, there are no problems between the people of Turkey and Armenia. The only problem that hinders the two nations to communicate freely is the stereotypes and biased mind-sets.* - **HASMIK MARTIRYAN**

*During our visit to Turkey, we discussed new prospects for business. We briefly touched upon the political issues too. We had a consensus to look ahead, and to contribute to friendly relationship between Turkey and Armenia by creating commercial links. We had very productive meetings in Turkey with businesses, individuals and civil society organisations. There is vast room for efficient cooperation between Armenia and Turkey, thus we should take steps in that direction which will be beneficial for both sides.*

- **CARD FOUNDATION**

Our visit to Armenia for our documentary project on Musa Dagh was much more than a mere visit surpassing the eastern borders of Turkey. As it is the case for anyone living in Turkey, also for us, Armenia was very far away from us. So, in fact we covered a much longer way than the actual travel distance. Upon arrival, we felt like we landed right next to our relatives whom we have not seen for many years. These were the people who had similar words, attitudes, music, folklore, gestures, mimics, games, jokes with us, despite the different language. We spoke with them about the past as well as the present. We felt that we got much closer to the past and present of a people and a country who shouldered their decades-old burden.- **ÇAĞDAŞ YAZICI**

Musa Dagh Armenians in Turkey and Armenia are like the branches of the same tree, which fell apart from each other. Their social relations, their communication with the nature and their surroundings, their take on life and education, the bonds they formed with their history, especially the Musa Dagh resistance, do all connect them wherever they are all around the world. It is so sad to see that the people of the two communities fell so apart from each other, while the Turkish mobile companies start operating just a small distance from Yerevan, while the wines taste the same both in Vakıflı and Yerevan, and while people share the same concerns and happiness. If all of us hold on to this, there is no border that we cannot cross - both material and spiritual.- **FERZAN ÖZYAŞAR**

During my stay in Yerevan, all my experiences from paving stones to architecture, bazaars, foods and chats with people made me feel complete. It was like reuniting with our relatives we had been longing for. We need to go beyond the crimes committed in the past, and to seek more opportunities that will help build and strengthen relations between the two peoples. We hope our documentary will contribute in this direction.- **EYLEM ŞEN**



Yerevan, 2015 (photograph: Jeniffer Hattam)

**Alexan Ter-Minasyan** from **Gyumri**, founder of Gallery 25, contacted art galleries and artist studios, met professors from arts academy and discussed possible exchange programmes between the art circles of the two neighbouring countries.

**Ferzan Özyaşar** from **Antakya**, **Çağdaş Yazıcı** and **Eylem Şen** from **Izmir** met various individuals and organisations in Yerevan for the preparation of their documentary film *Sleep of the Oranges* about Musa Dagh Armenians.

**Ari Şekeryan** from **Istanbul**, a PhD student at the University of Oxford Faculty Of Oriental Studies conducted archival research about the Armenian press during the post-Genocide period as part of his PhD thesis during his 17-day visit to Yerevan.

**Üzeyir Kaplan** from **Istanbul**, journalist at Bitlis News Agency covered stories about Bitlis Armenians for the bitlisajans.com and LÎLOZA Fanzine during his 8-day stay in Yerevan.

**Jennifer Hattam** from **Istanbul** organised a 10-day field visit to Yerevan and Gyumri and met environmental organisations in order to write a report on environmental issues around the Turkey-Armenia border, and talked to farmers from Shirak Region about the possibility of creating economic links with their counterparts from Kars.



Sargis Hovhannisyan, Sapanca, 2014  
(Orange Blossom International Plastic Arts Colony archive)

**Özlem Galip** from **Istanbul**, faculty associate in Kurdish and Armenian Studies of the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, studied the Kurdish novelists exiled to USSR as part of her research project 'The Kurdish Novel in Armenia from 1920 till today: Literature, Politics, and Identity'.

**Sargis Hovhannisyan** from **Gyumri** took part in the 5th Orange Blossom International Plastic Arts Colony in Sapanca.

**Karine Mkrtchyan** from **Gyumri**, director of the organisation Women's Spaces, visited Istanbul and met with the representatives of various women's organisations that provide assistance to irregular migrant Armenian women in Turkey so that they can return to their home country.

**Gayane Chobanyan** from **Yerevan**, member of Youth Club of Turcologists and Land and Culture stayed in Istanbul for two weeks to carry out research for her PhD thesis on the Islamic movements in Turkey and Azerbaijan.

**Sona Baghdasaryan** from **Yerevan** worked on her art project that focuses on Armenian and Kurdish community in Istanbul and Diyarbakir.

**Lülüfer Körükmez** from **Izmir** Ege University, interviewed academics and civil society organisations in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor for her research about migration flows from Armenia to Turkey.

*When I first read Hrant Dink's book Two Close Peoples Two Distant Neighbours in 2011, the words were very powerful but they became meaningful to me only after my visit to Istanbul. Because the real communication for me started in Turkey, between the artists from both countries. - **SARGIS HOVHANNISYAN***

*During my interviews with migrant women from Armenia as well as the organisations, I discovered that the issue of migrants from Armenia as such is not considered at all in Turkey. There are organisations which offer legal assistance, social support and even skills building activities, however there did not exist not any bond between the Armenian migrant community and those organisations. My interviews can lead to creation of such links and relations, which are of great importance for the women especially because since there is no diplomatic mission to represent them or help them in Turkey. At the same time, I have noticed that there is a potential for working together for a common cause even though the borders are closed. I had a chance to see the realities of irregular migrant women from Armenia, to live with them and hear their stories. These are women who manage to cope with hard work, learn a new language within weeks, endure all kinds of hardships and dangers to be able to earn for their families. I have discovered that they are the most, courageous and hard working women with a great sense of humour and positive thinking... - **KARINE MKRTCHYAN***

*Citizens of Armenia and Turkey have a lot to learn from each other. The things one can learn through direct, face-to-face interaction is totally different from learning by reading, or following the literature, and making desktop reviews and analyses. - **LÜLÜFER KÖRÜKMEZ***

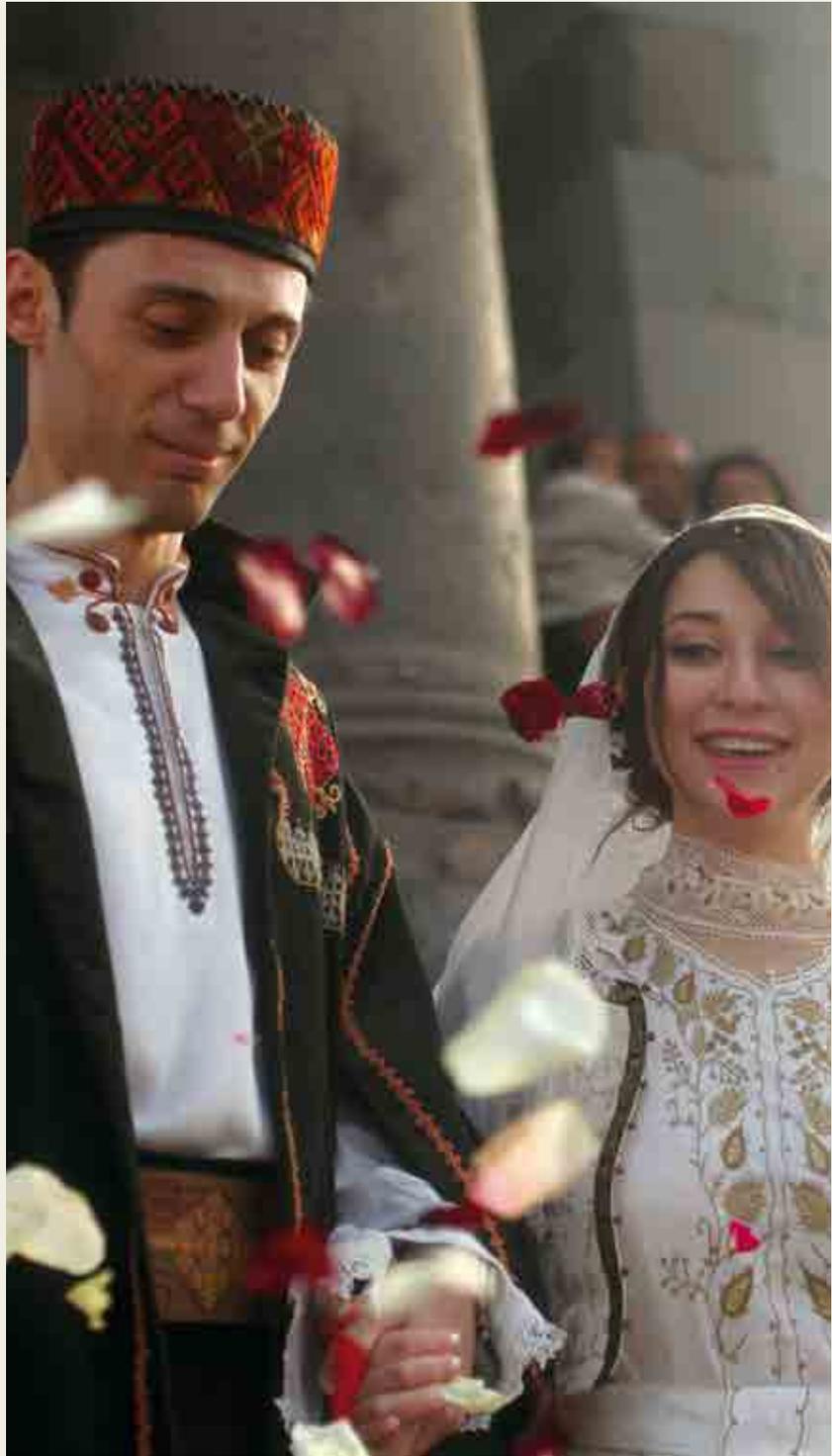
*Borders might be strong enough to keep people apart, but they are not strong enough to keep apart our hearts and love for one another...- DEVRİM AKKAYA*

*It is important to understand Armenia and Armenians; therefore, traveling to Armenia is meaningful.- İSMAİL BEŞİKÇİ*

*The people and the government of Turkey must assume a greater role in the normalisation process. No one can carry the sin and burden of the 1915 trauma for another century. As a legacy to our grandchildren, we should leave friendship instead of enmity. - RUŞEN ARSLAN*

*The poor relations between Armenia and Turkey is a huge loss for both countries. Because being from Armenia means, being from Van, Diyarbakır, Dersim, Istanbul, Yozgat, Tokat... The family that I stayed with in Armenia was hosting someone from Turkey for the first time. They loved me and trusted me, and shared the story of their family with me, with a sister who is not Armenian. We have shared love and friendship during my 10 days of stay with this family who has its roots in Van. The daughter of the family became one of my closest friends. The day we were travelling to Geghard Monastery, she played for me an Armenian folk song. It was an instrumental piece, no lyrics, performed by duduk only. At one point, I was accompanying the song with Turkish lyrics while she was singing the Armenian lyrics. She was on the driver's seat, and I was right next to her. Our eyes were filled with tears, we glanced at each other. And we just realized with the song that everything was so similar, the only weird thing was the imposed distance between these sisters. I keep my fingers crossed for the opening of borders, forgiveness of memories and meeting of brothers and sisters...-*

**BELGİN CENGİZ**



A wedding in Armenia, 2014 (photograph: Belgin Cengiz)

**Devrim Akkaya** from **Istanbul** took part in the Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Yerevan for the screening her documentary film *Diyar* and for meeting film directors and producers in Armenia.

**Ruşen Arslan, Kadir Süleyman Kaçan, İsmail Beşikçi** and **Hrant Kasparyan** from **Istanbul**, representatives of the İsmail Beşikçi Foundation organised a panel in Yerevan and shared experience about their oral history project '1915 Diyarbakır, Kurds'.

**Belgin Cengiz** from **Istanbul** visited Yerevan to work on her documentary film about the Orphans and Orphanages of 1915.

**Selda Tuncer** from **Van**, research assistant at Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, visited women's organisations in Yerevan and exchanged experience about the strategies for ending violence against women and gender inequality.

**Şahhanım Kanat, Şeyda Bilken, İkram Doğan, Nalan Özçete** and **Behice Boran** from **Istanbul**, members of the Başak Culture and Art Foundation, met with representatives of social work organisations in Yerevan and learned about the social service practices and models in Armenia.

**Alp Aslan** from **Ankara**, editor of the Gezenti Magazine, organised a 9-day visit to Yerevan and wrote articles about neighbouring country and explored ideas for developing cooperation projects between the two countries.

**Hasmik Stepanyan** from **Yerevan** gave a presentation about Turkish Literature in Armenian Letters at Fatih University and conducted research for her upcoming book about Kevork Pamukciyan during her 15-day stay in Istanbul.

**Enis Köstepen** from **Istanbul**, representing the Truth Justice Memory Centre, met civil society organisations in Yerevan and invited them to join the Reconciliation and Historical Dialogue Network.

**Areg Khalatyan** from **Yerevan**, from the Armenian National Center of Aesthetics [Geghagitutyun Azgayin Kentron] took part in the International Children Biental in Çanakkale with their project 'Art for My Neighbour'.

**Araks Kasyan** from **Yerevan** took part in the Armenian Genocide centennial commemorations in Istanbul and prepared reports covering the commemoration events as well as the Armenian community in Turkey for Armenpress News Agency.

*We have realized Armenians, Kurds and Turks are in fact very close to each other, even though they are always portrayed as people that are very distant from each other.*

- **ŞAHHANIM KANAT**

*In Armenia we have observed that even though there is no written law in some fields of social service, e.g. a separate law on child protection or violence against women, there are not many problems in these areas as compared to Turkey. The cultural and moral values in Armenia prevent some possible problems. Children do not have criminal responsibility until 14. Cases of adolescent marriages, women killings and arrested children almost don't exist in Armenia. Yerevan's city plan and architecture are amazing. The city is like an open-air museum, and at the same time very calm and peaceful. In Gyumri and some districts of Yerevan, I immediately recalled Kars where I spent my childhood. I felt very comfortable and no tension while walking in the streets, though I did not know a single word in Armenian. Every face I met seemed so familiar to me. Finding a decent food for my taste abroad can be very challenging for me, however I did not have any difficulties in Armenia. Our cuisines are very similar and the food is cheaper. Overall, I can say that before the trip I was very frightened to be disappointed, but I saw more than I imagined.*- **İKRAM DOĞAN**

*Experiencing a close and a familiar neighbouring culture was like revisiting an old friend that you met years later, after becoming an adult. Maybe it was finding traces from the past.*- **BEHİCE BORAN**

*We need to speak to one another much more frequently and we should not limit our conversations to the boundaries set by the states. Culturally and politically, there are numerous opportunities for us to collaborate and exchange.*- **ENİS KÖSTEPEN**

During our visit as 5 experts working on rural development, we had the opportunity to study the rural agrarian activities in Armenia right on the spot. We have observed that even though the agriculture is poorly developed and the resources are limited, Armenian people are hardworking and productive. We have also discovered how similar are the words, foods, and traditions that these two people have. Turkey and Armenia, who shared a common culture and geography, should build their future together by drawing lessons from what they lived in the past. I can say that their problems might be solved through a dialogue on the issues other than politics, such as rural development, that the bilateral relations can be normalised once the relations between two peoples gets normalised and that the existence of civil society organisations working in this field will be a guarantee for the common future of these two countries.

- **CUMALİ EMRE ÇELİK**

I do believe that if the Turkey-Armenia border opens, the dialogue between the two countries will gain strength thanks to cross-border business. What I have experienced in Armenia was very tragic. It was shocking to see the people who are so similar have become so alienated to one another.

- **ERDAL ÇELİK**

International Istanbul Youth Forum was a great opportunity! It gave us the chance to discuss important political issues with students from all over Europe, share opinions, ideas and perspectives. It was so amazing to be in such a diverse environment and make new friends. Communicating with young, motivated, enthusiastic people, learning about their cultures and telling them about the Armenian culture was really exciting! It was also very interesting to meet Armenians living in Turkey and discover many similarities between the two cultures.

- **LUSINE YEGHIAZARYAN**



Yerevan, 2015 (photograph: İrfan Güneş)

**Bilal Bilgiç, Nursel Buğday, Erdal Çelik, Nalan Ünüş and Cumali Emre Çelik** from **Mardin**, members of the Support Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development ARDSI visited Yerevan to discuss possibilities of cooperation with the Green Lane NGO [Kanach Arahet].

**İrfan Güneş** and **Emin Demirpolat** from **Zonguldak**, members of the Cyclists' Association, met cyclists in Yerevan to encourage more frequent bicycle trips between the two countries.

**Seda Mohul, Nelly Sokolova, Ali Haydar Yıldız and Züleyha Kandöker** from **Ankara** Başkent University studied cultural and social life of Yazidis of Armenia in Yerevan and its villages.

**Lusine Yeghiazaryan** from **Yerevan** represented the European Youth Parliament - Armenia during the 9th Istanbul Youth Forum.

**Selin Altıparmak** from **Bursa** completed her experimental oral history and art research project '19H15 - How does the Art Remember?' in Yerevan.

**Heghine Manasyan** and **Hrachia Khazhoyan** from **Yerevan**, representatives of the Caucasus Research Resource Center - Armenia, presented the findings of the public opinion survey on the Normalisation of Armenia-Turkey Relations to researchers, civil society organisations and policy makers in Istanbul.



Armenians of Sivas Society members in Yerevan, 2014 (photograph: Arman Koçak)

**Karin Bal** from **Istanbul**, member of the Armenians of Sivas Society, held meetings with meeting the Sivas/Sebastia Society in Yerevan and other cities in Armenia as part of their oral history study tour.

**Hovik Keshishean** from **Yerevan** met musicians from Turkey in Istanbul and discussed possibilities of having joint production of songs in Turkish and Armenian.

**Gizem Tongo** from **Ankara** studied Armenian painting and painters during 1914-1918 during her one-week stay in Yerevan.

**Mariam Sargsyan** and **Suren Gharibyan** from **Yerevan** visited Istanbul for the collective photography project 'The Woman' which aims to photograph women at work from Turkey and Armenia to raise the issue of existing stereotypes in both societies about feminine and non-feminine jobs, and they photographed working women in Istanbul for six days.

**Cevahir Coşkun**, **Ülkü Özdoğan**, and **Yasemin Çamur** from **Istanbul**, members of NEYYA Nühket Eren Creative Writing Atélier studied the works of Armenian writers and poets before 1915 and built contacts with the First Armenian Literary and Film Agency [Arajin Haykakan Grakan ev Kino Gortsakalutyun] in Yerevan.

*My visit to Armenia, was organised by the Armenians of Sivas Society. During this journey, I have met with Armenians of Sivas whose great grandfathers and grandfathers had migrated to Armenia. With the support of Mr. Avedisyan, I have met with Romen Kozmoyan, Krikor Canikyan and Prof. Dr. Levon Çukazyan who are the grandchildren of people from Sivas currently living in Yerevan. Krikor Canikyan knew very well Turkish. And the others could recall some Turkish idioms, songs and few words used mostly for making jokes or cursing, things that they mostly heard from their grandfathers. The fact that Romen Kozmoyan's grandfather was also a graduate of Getronagan high school just like me, formed a unique bond between me and Romen. In Yerevan, I also met Ani Fishenkjian, a teacher from Aleppo whose grandfathers were from Sivas. For many years, she has been looking for information about Sivas and her family roots in an effort to find other members of her family. She asked my help. When I shared this with the elderly in our Association, I learned that Fishenkjian family has been living in Istanbul. We will soon bring together Ms. Fishenkjian with her relatives. - **KARIN BAL***

*During my research trip to Armenia, the fact that I am from Turkey smoothly opened the doors for me and gave me an easier access. Those who study Ottoman painting art and art history in general must definitely pay a visit to Armenia. At the museums and galleries in Armenia, one can find many works of art that are not exhibited here and thus we are not aware of. As the physical border between the two countries is sealed, there are also abstract boundaries being formed. It is like there is place you cannot access, you cannot travel, as if it does not exist. These boundaries should be eliminated. Once the physical border is open, peoples of the two countries will easily visit one another, which will also start the dialogue. For a future where a culture of dialogue, peace, and empathy prevails, we go beyond borders!*

**- GİZEM TONGO**

During my visit to Turkey, I became more convinced that we need to know each other more, and to work together in order to replace the stereotypes with more substantial knowledge. - **ARTUR SAKUNTS**

I think that ongoing tension between the two countries gives only harm to both of them. We have to show, as the representatives of civil society, that closed borders are not an obstacle to continue relations with one another, and that we can work together and contribute to the normalisation of relations. - **ARMINE SADIKYAN**

In Istanbul, I screened my film 'Bavakan' (Enough) two times and I had a workshop with university students and filmmakers from Turkey about my film Back to Gürün. This trip was very precious for me. I am not sure if words can capture how I feel after the most incredible week I have had in Istanbul. I am so proud of what my friends from Turkey and I have accomplished together. I now know that I have many friends and partners in Istanbul. It all begins with collaborating with each other. I believe the normalisation process will only work if we establish connections, and have the willingness for sustaining ongoing collaborations and initiating new ones The Travel Grant makes it possible to strengthen bridges between people regardless of the political and mental borders. - **ADRINEH GREGORIAN**

The Travel Grant has made significant contribution to my dissertation on the fate of property owned by Aintab Armenians between 1915-1921. Thanks to my research in Armenia, I will be able to shed light on what happened to those properties in Aintab. I hope the historical facts are going to be unearthed. I can easily say that in Yerevan I feel at home, I feel I am with my own people. - **ÜMİT KURT**



Yerevan, 2015 (photograph: Kurtuluş Karaşın)

**Artur Sakunts** and **Armine Sadikyan** from **Vanadzor**, members of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor, studied the human right issues in the armed forces in Turkey, met with organisations in Istanbul carrying out similar activities and discussed possibilities for countering militarisation in both countries.

**Adrineh Gregorian** from **Yerevan** held meetings with organisations and artists in Istanbul to discuss projects, deliver workshops and expand her network in the field of cinematography.

**Ümit Kurt** from **Istanbul** conducted research in Yerevan for ten days and collected primary archival documents and sources for his PhD dissertation on Aintab Armenians between 1915 and 1922.

**Nilay Cevher** and **Ali Fuat Kartal** from **Ankara**, **Aydın İleri** and **Mustafa Özyürek** from **Istanbul**, representatives of Turkish Librarians' Association visited Yerevan to build relations with librarians in Armenia and meet their colleagues at the National Library of Armenia.

**Çiğdem Sarısaltık** from **Istanbul** and **Kurtuluş Karaşın** from **Ankara**, members of the Development Atélier, met beekeeper organisations in Yerevan and villages for their research on beekeeping and discussed for opportunities for building partnerships between beekeepers of both countries.



Medz Bazaar, Dilijan, 2014 (photograph: Artur Ghazaryan)

**Fatma Özkaya, Öykü Gürpınar, Öndercan Muti and Derya Fırat Şannan** from **Istanbul**, a research group from Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts Department of Sociology and members of the Association for the Study of Sociology of Memory and Culture visited Yerevan for their research on the memory of the Armenian Genocide among young people.

**Mehmet Salih Tatlı** from **Ankara**, student at Ankara University Faculty of Political Science, conducted an oral history and documentary film project in Yerevan focusing on Yazidi community living in Armenia.

**Ela Nuroğlu and Ezgi Sevgi Can** from **Ankara**, members of the Medz Bazaar music collective, organised music workshops in Yerevan, and recorded traditional songs in Armenian villages.

**Monika Manişak** from **Izmir** took part in the four-week Armenian Language and Culture Summer School in Yerevan organised by the Armenian Association for Academic Partnership and Support (ARMACAD) and studied Armenian literature, history and arts.

**Nurcan Türkay, Semiha Demir, Nimetullah Yürek, Seda Seven and Zelal Erdemci** from **Diyarbakır**, graduates of the Armenian language course offered by Sur District Municipality and the Surp Giragos Church in Diyarbakır held meetings with various historic and cultural organisations in Yerevan.

*As the Medz Bazaar Collective, we sang Armenian songs in Turkey and Kurdistan, and sang in Turkish and Azeri in Armenia. Wherever we played our songs, our repertoire remained the same without any changes. We played with all our hearts and people believed in our sincerity. Through our music, we have build dialogue across peoples and introduced cultures to one another. I believe such an interaction is a prerequisite for the future and must also take place in other domains. - ELA NUROĞLU*

*The distance between us equals only to the length of a song, until we sing and play together. As long as we listen to one another, our struggle will shared by many. Music in its simplest form is the most sincere transmitter and witness of common experiences of people. During my travel being part of such a transmission made me very happy and proud.- EZGİ SEVGİ CAN*

*This visit enabled me to explore the wealth of my Turkish-Armenian identity during a summer school, an academic and cultural platform. This summer school gave me the chance to explore the traditions of the Armenian culture as well as the motives that feed its language and culture. It helped me to understand the relationship between these two countries from a comparative perspective. Even though stereotyping and overgeneralizing are problems of every society, face-to-face interaction, mutual exchange and such programmes will serve a basis to overcome such issues.- MONİKA MANİŞAK*

*I will do my best to continue these visits to Armenia in the future and to further our relations with our neighbour. - NURCAN TÜRKAY*

*After my visit, I have decided to study Armenian language and literature in Armenia.- SEDA SEVEN*

*When I first told to the people I met on the streets of Armenia that I was a Turk, the first reaction was surprise. Nobody would expect a Turk to come to Armenia and engage in dialogue with them. Nevertheless, it is impossible to separate these two peoples, who used to live together and now are living apart divided by sealed border. The concrete outcome of this visit is the idea of a youth camp which engage young people of both countries and bring them together in a restoration work in an Armenian town nearby the Turkey border, damaged by the earthquake. During my visit I realised that such a camp would be even more beneficial for Armenian and Azerbaijani youth because young people of these two countries are in a greater need of dialogue.* - **BURAK KÖŞKER**

*Both Armenians and Turks have a big problem about knowing/recognizing, especially about knowing oneself/self-recognition; because both countries have gaps and unwritten pages in their history. If we can overcome this problem, then we can get engaged in dialogue and get to know the other. Up until now, dialogue between the two countries could be possible thanks to the civil society organisations and individuals. Democratisation process in both countries should also further enhance this dialogue.* - **MKRTICH MATEVOSYAN**

*I was sick for five days during the 15-day camp. As the pills did not help, they took me to the hospital in Dilijan. I gave my ‘Turkish Citizen’ ID and was wondering what would happen next. Then came the head doctor for my medical examination. I was very surprised. After all, I only had caught a cold. The nurses remained alert all the time and kept checking me. If I pass the United World Colleges exam next year, I want to complete the last two years of my high school education in Armenia. I do know that I have so many homes there.* - **DİLA KUŞ**

**Burak Köşker** from **Istanbul** visited Yerevan and Gyumri and contacted civil society organisations to develop training and exchange programmes.

**Mkrtich Matevosyan** from **Gyumri** visited Istanbul to strengthen links with partners from Turkey with whom he had worked during the 24 Hour Social Comics Marathon in Gyumri in 2013 and took part in the 2014 Marathon in Istanbul.

**Dila Kuş** from **Istanbul** attended the summer school for high school students organised by United World College Dilijan and Dilijan International School of Armenia.

**Fikret Levent Şensever, Gonca Şahin, Deniz Polat** and **İlhan Akgün** from **Istanbul**, members of the Platform ‘Say Stop to Racism and Nationalism’, took part in the Armenian Genocide centennial commemoration events in Yerevan with the support of AGBU Armenia and strengthened the dialogue channels and contributed to better understanding between the two societies.

**Umut Azak** from **Istanbul** Okan University conducted an impact assessment of the Turkey-Armenia Winter School in Yerevan by interviewing the participants from Armenia.

**Zinnure Türe** from **Istanbul** took part in the workshop and public performance in Yerevan organised by Forum Theatre Armenia as part of the project ‘Cross-Cultural Bridge Between the Youth of Armenia and Turkey’.

**Nilay Yılmaz, Songül Bozacı** and **Çiğdem Odabaşı** from **Istanbul**, members of Ibb Turkey - International Board on Books for Young People, met Ibb Armenia members in Yerevan and visited the National Children’s Library Khnko Aper to learn about children’s literature in Armenia.

**Roberto Frifrini** from **Ankara**, member of the Human Rights Agenda Association, visited Yerevan to find partners for their project studying the impact of the closed border policy on human rights and democracy in both countries.

**Raffi Niziblian** from **Yerevan** visited in Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Istanbul for shooting his documentary film about an Armenian coming to terms with his past and his identity as a descendent of Anatolian Armenians living in exile.



Camp Armen, Istanbul, 2014 (photograph: Ani Asribabayan)

**Ayşe Devrim Başterzi** and **Aslıhan Doğan Topçu** from **Mersin** held meetings in Yerevan to find partners, films and directors for their book project on films.

**Anush Khachatryan** from **Ashtarak** visited Istanbul for the preparations and opening ceremony of the photography exhibition ‘Women for Conflict Reconciliation and Peace’ in Istanbul.

**Artur Sukiasyan** from **Yerevan** visited Camp Armen (Tuzla Armenian Children’s Camp) in Istanbul for his documentary film about the story of the seized property as well as the children who grew up there.

**Yuri Manvelyan** from **Yerevan** visited Human Rights Agenda Association in Ankara to work on their joint project about the impact of the closed border policy on human rights and democracy in both countries.

**Duygu Dalyanoğlu, Nihal Albayrak, İlksen Gürsoy, Ayşe Damla Pinçe, Elif Karaman, Maral Çankaya, Büşra Karpuz, Beril Sarılaltun, Gülşah Gülebakan,** and **Deniz Saldıran** from **Istanbul**, members of Boğaziçi Performing Arts Ensemble BGST performed their play *Zabel* in Yerevan with the support of MIHR Theatre.

**Perouz Taslakian** from **Yerevan** visited Istanbul to work on creating an online map of the Armenian cultural heritage in the city.

Yerevan is very green, clean; full of sculptures and monuments. When I ask young people ‘Where are you from?’, they tell me ‘My family is from Urfa, from Muş’, as if they never belonged there. I felt much closer and acquainted with it than any other country, I ever visited due to Anatolian people with beautiful eyes and warm manners. I also felt more distant, guiltier every time I saw the sorrow, the pain, the longing in their eyes; every time I noticed them wince when they heard Turkish words, because of the cruelties inflicted on the people by the governments. I will not and cannot forget the restaurant in Yerevan with live music. Throughout the night, one after another, laments carrying the names of Anatolian towns were played. In which country do you go out to cry together, to listen to laments instead of having fun? Even if I don’t understand the words, I feel the pain seeping through them... and at the end of the night, they played ‘Kiskanırım Seni Ben’ for us, for their guests from Turkey. And Vartkes, who accompanied us for two days, said: ‘There you live on the land we left behind, how can we be not jealous of you?’ I felt an overwhelming shame, an overwhelming guilt before the longing of these people who were torn apart from their lands, their roots, their ancestral home of thousand years, from the graves of their ancestors... - **AYŞE DEVRİM BAŞTERZİ**

I call upon the people of Armenia and Turkey to end the long-lasting era of hatred and pain, to make new memories and experiences that would lead to a new reality - full of peace, love, respect and cooperation.  
- **ANUSH KHACHATRYAN**

Throughout the shootings of my documentary film, I had a unique journey back and forth across the past, the present and the future of the Camp Armen. Thanks to this experience, I had the chance to reveal the ex-campers’ struggle for their memories and for the restoration of justice one day.

- **ARTUR SUKIASYAN**

Before the visit, our expectations about the experience were very mixed. Because this was our very first travel to Armenia, to the Caucasus. We were in all sorts of emotions. During the visit, we had the chance to get to know a country which is close to us; different culture, people and society. On the way back to Turkey, we were very happy, as we immediately shared our excitement with our friends in Eskişehir. Now, there are many young people in Eskişehir who wants to apply to the Travel Grant. - **CANSU ATILGAN**

It is impossible to solve problems between the two countries if the peoples do not know each other. Travel Grant helped us get to know Armenia closely. We met people, cultures and traditions. We drew a new picture of Armenia in our minds. - **MERVE TEMİZ**

We are so illiterate about Armenia, to the extent that we are not even aware we know nothing about the country. Yet the peoples of Turkey and Armenia are like two siblings that fell apart when they were babies, who are so alike that they could easily socialize once they come together. - **İLGİ KARAASLAN**

Journalists are among the mediators in the Turkey-Armenia normalisation process. In both countries, newsmakers are under a lot of pressure though in different ways, when it comes to reporting from or about across the border. Highlighting the differences as well as similarities between the journalists of Armenia and Turkey will help create a common ground at least among the media practitioners. It was relieving to get to know many journalists in Armenia who consider news making as a field of democratic struggle and a platform for peace across the border. It took me a visit to Yerevan to find out that there are journalists striving to create a ground for dialogue between Armenia and Turkey, and those journalists in both countries are not alone. - **SUNCEM KOÇER ÇAMURDAN**



Yerevan, 2014 (photograph: Salih T. Benzeyen)

**Hatice Aydoğdu** and **Ali Karabayram** from **Ankara** visited Yerevan for the 8-day fieldwork of their research on verbal heritage including songs, plays, riddles, conundrums to analyse the cultural interaction between the two societies.

**Cansu Atılğan**, **Merve Temiz** and **Salih Tora Benzeyen** from **Eskişehir** visited Yerevan to establish academic cooperation networks and to discuss possible exchange programmes between the two neighbouring countries.

**İlgi Karaaslan** and **Mert Ayaroğlu** from **Istanbul** took part in the Yerevan Architectural Biennale, to promote the biennale in Turkey and to build partnerships for cross-border cooperation projects.

**Suncem Koçer Çamurdan** from **Istanbul** interviewed film producers, festival organisers, art critics and journalists during her 8-day stay in Yerevan for her research about the media culture and production in Armenia.

**Burçak Aydoğan** from **Ankara** carried out research for her thesis on Armenian painting arts and visited art galleries and art faculties in during her 8-day visit to Yerevan.

**Cafer Sarıkaya** from **Istanbul** organised an 11-day field visit to Yerevan for his research 'Armenian Pontus: Local and Oral History in a Black Sea Town - Ünye'.

**Mehmet Fatih Uslu** from **Istanbul** lived in Yerevan for two and half months and carried out research for his book project - a literary biography of Zabel Yesayan, a prominent writer in Western Armenian literature.

**Burcu Çuvaş, Ramazan Oğuz Tosun** and **Turgut Tosun** from **Ankara**, members of AEGEE-Ankara (European Students' Forum), met civil society organisations and discussed possible cooperation projects in Yerevan and Gyumri.

*My time in Armenia was one of the best periods of my life. Being in Armenia allowed me to think deeply and in detail in my research and also gave me the opportunity to understand more, both academically and culturally. The fact that people were friendly and helpful and that the institutions and the resources there were easily accessible made me happy and motivated me to embrace my research more. Even though I had the chance to have Armenian friends in Istanbul and elsewhere around the world, when I went to Armenia, I realized that I had some uneasiness, perhaps not in my mind but in my soul. However, over time, I noticed that these were not significant after all and that the experience of being in Armenia made me deeper. In this sense, it was an excellent experience for my own soul-searching journey. - **MEHMET FATİH USLU***

*At AEGEE, we are working on the project 'Two Sides of A Mountain'. In fact, we already had something to say about the relations. After this study visit, we can still say the same words. We went to a country which shared a similar culture; the difference is as much as the two sides of a mountain. - **RAMAZAN OĞUZ TOSUN***



Yerevan, 2014  
(photograph: Armine Hovhannisyān)

### 100 FLOWERS FROM THE CHILDREN OF ARMENIA

The artwork produced during the creativity workshops for children, organised in Yerevan by Erdiñ Alniak, a member of the **Troya Culture Association from Çanakkale**; and in Çanakkale by Armine Hovhannisyān, an artist from the **National Centre of Aesthetics of Armenia**, were exhibited during the **2<sup>nd</sup> International Çanakkale Children's Biennial** held between May 9<sup>th</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 with the participation of 46 countries. The artwork consisted of paintings drawn in parallel by the children of both countries on a single sheet of paper, as well as the 'revolving flower' macquettes specially designed by the children from Armenia for the biennial, and received great attention. 100 revolving flowers were first installed at the İskele Square during the opening ceremony, and were later picked one by one by the visitors, brought to the main venue of the biennial and re-installed there.



'Zabel', Yerevan, 2015 (photograph: Duygu Dalyanođlu)



Çanakkale, 2014 (photograph: Armine Hovhannisyān)

### ZABEL ONCE AGAIN IN YEREVAN

Duygu Dalyanođlu, Nihal Albayrak, İlksen Gürsoy, Elif Karaman, Maral Çankaya, Büşra Karpuz, Beril Sarıaltun, Gülşah Gülebakan, Ayşe Damla Pinçe and Deniz Saldıran of the **Boğaziçi Performing Arts Ensemble (BGST)** from Istanbul staged their play *Zabel* at the Small Theatre in Yerevan on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 thanks to the support of Women's Resource Centre. The play was performed in Turkish with Armenian subtitles and the two performances that were made were fully sold-out, reaching out to hundreds of spectators. The play is about the novelist **Zabel Yesayan** who was born in Üsküdar; her childhood and her youth and it tells the stories of women who passed through in her life. The BGST team had the opportunity to perform the play in the two cities where Zabel lived, namely Istanbul and Yerevan, and they had the chance to talk to their audience in Yerevan. They now aim at staging the play in different cities of Armenia and organising workshops on in Turkey on women's theatre in collaboration with Armenian actors/actresses.



Istanbul, 2014  
(Orange Blossom International Plastic Arts Colony archive)



Istanbul, 2014  
(Orange Blossom International Plastic Arts Colony archive)

#### AN ARTS COLONY IN SAPANCA

Orange Blossom Plastic Arts Colony, founded in 2009 by Ahmet Şahin, aims at bringing together art-lovers and serving a museum of contemporary art. 120 artists from Turkey and many countries around the world came together at Sapanca Doğapark, during the 5<sup>th</sup> Orange Blossom International Plastic Arts Colony gathering organised between June 1-30, 2014. The artworks prepared in Sapanca by Sargis Hovhannisyán, an artist from Gyumri who took part in the colony with the support of the Travel Grant, were exhibited in Ankara and Istanbul in September 2014.

#### STEPS TOWARDS COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE

Andrey Araksyants, Arman Khojayan and Naira Mkrtychyan from the **Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD)**, established in 2005 in Yerevan to create sustainable livelihoods by assisting farmers and agribusinesses in the production and marketing of food, visited Muğla in August 2014, to look for opportunities for cooperation with Turkey. The experts came together with the representatives of the **Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Fethiye** as well as with producers in Muğla to explore the opportunities in the greenhouse sector, milk and dairy products, and dried fruit production; and thanks to the connections made, they developed new projects to enhance exports-imports and cooperation in agribusiness between the two neighbouring countries. After this study visit, with the support of USAID, CARD put into life the very first concrete example of cooperation with producers in Turkey, and organised a study visit to Turkey for dairy producers from various regions of Armenia in 2015.



Muğla, 2014 (photograph: Naira Mkrtychyan)



Istanbul, 2014 (photograph: Müge Yamanyılmaz)

## PEACE AND RECONCILIATION THROUGH THE LENSES OF WOMEN

The exhibition 'Women for Conflict Reconciliation and Peace' was inaugurated simultaneously in Istanbul and Yerevan on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, bringing together women from Turkey and Armenia through photographs. The project, organised by the **Society Without Violence** from Armenia, advocates for active participation of women in peace building efforts as equal individuals. **Anush Khachatryan** from the Society Without Violence travelled to Istanbul with the support of the Travel Grant and delivered a presentation on the women's movement in Armenia during the opening of the exhibition at Cezayir Hall.

## FILMS FROM TURKEY AT THE GOLDEN APRICOT

Two films from Turkey made their premiere in Armenia during the 9<sup>th</sup> **International Golden Apricot Film Festival** organised in Yerevan between July 12-19, 2014. **Diyar**, directed by Devrim Akkaya, depicts the story of a yoga instructor living in Istanbul. While questioning the reasons behind her loneliness and feeling of belonging nowhere, she remembers her grandfather Yusuf who was an Armenian adopted in 1915 and learns that her grandfather's grave is in an unidentified spot, in the tomb of unknowns. The film received attention in Armenia. **Ziazan**, a film by Derya Durmaz, tells the story of a four-year old girl who, in order to get her favorite chocolate cream, tries to sneak in from Armenia to Turkey hiding inside her uncle's luggage. Bringing up the issue of the closed border between the two countries with a critical approach, the film contributed to the discussions on this issue.



Moskva Cinema, Yerevan, 2014 (photograph: Devim Akkaya)



Istanbul, 2015 (photograph: Zeynep Sungur)

## PERCEPTION OF TURKEY IN ARMENIA

As one of the recipients of the Grant Scheme for Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process financed by the EU, the **Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia (CRRC-Armenia)** conducted a study exploring the current status of Turkey-Armenia relations, expectations for the future of relations and the perception of the people of Armenia on the Genocide as well as the Turkey-Armenia normalisation process. The findings of the study, which include guiding data for policy-makers, journalists, academics and civil society workers, were presented in Istanbul with the support of the Travel Grant. During a panel held on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Havak Hall of the Anarad Hiğutyun Building, following the opening speech delivered by Béla Szombati, Chargé d'Affaires at the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey; Heggine Manasyan, Hrachia Kazhoyan and Monika Shahmenendyan from CRRC-Armenia presented their research. The research report is available on the website of the center ([www.crrc.am](http://www.crrc.am)).



Medz Bazar, Dilijan, 2014 (photograph: Artur Ghazaryan)



Vomank, Yerevan, 2014

#### A TREE IN HIGH FEST

Celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the **HIGH FEST International Performing Arts Festival**, organised in Yerevan by the Armenian Actors Union since 2003, hosted **Çıplak Ayaklar Company** from Istanbul, with the support of the Travel Grant. The 'Family Trees', co-produced by Çıplak Ayaklar Company and Freiburg State Theatre, was presented to the Armenian audience at the State Puppet Theatre in Yerevan on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 thanks to the performances by with the performance by Berkant Kılıçkap, Serhat Utku İnan, Duygu Güngör, Mihran Tomasyan and Ömer Öztüyen.

#### TOURS BEYOND BORDERS

Created in Paris by musicians from Armenia, Turkey, France and the US; the **Medz Bazar** musical collective, which performs songs in many different languages, went on a tour during the summer of 2014, travelling from Turkey to Armenia. Members of the collective from Turkey received support from the Travel Grant for the Armenia part of the tour, which started on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. With their repertoire that brings together the music of the Balkans, Anatolia, the Middle East and the Caucasus, following their performances in Istanbul, Elazığ, Dersim, Diyarbakır and Mardin, the Medz Bazar met with the audience in Yerevan on August 10<sup>th</sup> and in Dilijan during the River Fest on August 16<sup>th</sup>. The band **Vomank** from Istanbul, who interprets traditional Armenian songs with modern arrangements, went on its first tour in Armenia during the autumn of the same year. The band, composing of Lara Narin, Saro Usta, Mardin Ari Hergel, İlکم Balseçen, İbrahim Odak, Rupen Melkisetöğlü and Özcan Gül, performed at various venues in Yerevan on October 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>, and brought to the audience in Armenia their repertoire in Western Armenian, a language that has become a minority tongue in Turkey.



Çıplak Ayaklar Kumpanyası, Yerevan, 2014 (photograph: Berkant Kılıçkap)



Yerevan, 2015 (photograph: Nükhet Eren)

#### A GLANCE AT THE PAST AND PRESENT

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Namık Kemal Dinç and Ayhan Işık from the **ZAN Institute for Social, Political and Economic Studies** delivered a presentation on Turkey-Armenia relations, the Armenian community in Turkey and Armenian-Kurdish relations at a panel hosted by the **Noravank Foundation** in Yerevan. During the panel, they discussed possible joint studies with historians and Armenian Studies experts from Armenia.

#### A UNION OF WRITERS

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, the members of **NEYYA (Nükhet Eren Creative Writing Workshop)**, Cevahir Coşkun, Nükhet Eren, Ülkü Özdoğan and Yasemin Çamur, organised an event at the Women's Resource Center Armenia, and delivered a presentation on three Armenian writers: Zabel Yesayan, Krikor Zohrab ve Hagop Baronyan. Tracing the Armenian literature before 1915, the members of NEYYA also came together with writers, poets, translators, critics and publishers from Yerevan, during an event hosted by **Arajin Haykakan Grakan ev Kino Gortsakalutyun [First Armenian Literary and Film Agency]**, whereby they discussed the importance of translating more works of literature into Turkish and Armenian in both countries, thus enabling the creation of a bridge of words between the two societies.



Yerevan, 2015 (photograph: ZAN Institute archive)



Istanbul, 2015 (Forum Theatre archive)

#### THEATRE FOR FREEDOM IN TWO NEIGHBOURS

In 2014, **Forum Theatre from Armenia** and **Ad Dar Community Centre from Turkey** started working together in an effort to prepare a theatre play. During the first phase of the project, which was supported by the EU-funded Grant Scheme for Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process, young actors from the two countries participated in 5-day workshops on interactive theatre and conflict resolution in Yerevan and Istanbul under the direction of Jonathan Chadwick, the artistic director of the London based AZ Theater. The play entitled *Voices, Bodies and Minds Unbound*, a product of a 6-month creation process prepared with the participation of actors from Syria as well, was performed for the first time on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in Istanbul at KÖŞE and later on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in Yerevan at the auditorium of the American University of Armenia. The audience shaped up the story by actively participating in the play that was performed in the 'forum theatre' format in three languages (Armenian, Turkish and Arabic).



Dilijan, 2014 (United World College archive)



Yerevan, 2014 (photograph: Monika Manişak, Armacad archive)

#### SIDE BY SIDE FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE GENOCIDE

Among the recipients of the *Travel Grant*, there were also those who, upon their own initiative, realised their travel dates in the week of **April 24<sup>th</sup>**, in an effort to participate in the commemoration events in Istanbul and Yerevan together with the peoples of the neighbouring country. Journalist Elif Akgül was in Yerevan on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014. On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015, journalist Araks Kasyan, photographer Knar Khudoyan, Artur Sakunts and Armine Sadikyan from the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor were in Istanbul; while journalist Üzeyir Kaplan, Nelly Sokolova, Ali Haydar Yıldız, Züleyha Kandöker and Seda Mohul from Ankara Başkent University, Feyzan Tuzkaya, Ezgi Mehmetoğlu and Mehmet Karasu from Ege University, photographer Lezgin Kani, members of the 'Say Stop to Racism and Nationalism (DurDe) Platform' and researcher Pelin Karakuş were in Yerevan. People from the two neighbouring countries commemorating those who were lost in the past, side by side and touching each other, does not only give us hope for unlocking and overcoming a locked history, but also makes us optimistic about a future that will be build together.

#### ARMENIAN CULTURE AT SUMMER SCHOOLS

The 2014 summer school for high-school students organised by the **United World College in Dilijan**, a prestigious educational institution in Armenia, hosted two high-school students from Turkey. With the support of the Travel Grant, **Dila Kuş** participated in the summer school along with 28 students from various countries and 20 students from Dilijan. During the 15-day training, she took part in different art workshops, worked in local projects developed for the residents of Dilijan and got to know the Armenian culture. Established in 2007, the **Armenian Association for Academic Partnership and Support (ARMACAD)** has been organising summer schools every year since 2013, with a view to encourage the Diaspora youth to learn their own language and culture in Armenia. **Monika Manişak** from Izmir was among the first participants of this educational project designed for students who want to enhance their knowledge of the Eastern Armenian language, as well as to get to know Armenia and focus on Armenian Studies. With the support of the Travel Grant, Manişak participated in the ARMACAD 2014 Summer School and for three weeks, she discovered the Armenian language, culture and history, in Armenia, through the seminars and cultural trips prepared by academics.



Yerevan, 2014 (photograph: Elif Akgül)

## Homecoming: Diyarbakir Armenian Language Students Arrive in Armenia

By Raffi Bedoyan on August 6, 2014 in Featured, Headline News

One sunny August morning a bus left Diyarbakir, Turkey, with 50 passengers, and traveled to Yerevan, Armenia via Georgia. At the same time, a man flew from Canada to Yerevan to meet this busload of passengers and lead them on a two-week tour of Armenia.

Organizations such as the Gulbenkian Foundation, Hrant Dink Foundation, AGBU, and a few individual Armenians from the U.S. and Canada helped finance the tour. The Armenian minister of diaspora and several senior government officials are scheduled to greet the group.

But what is so special about this group? Why all this attention? They are residents of Diyarbakir, range in age from 18-83, chat in Kurdish or Turkish... Wait, no, they all speak Armenian. But there are no Armenians left in Diyarbakir, except for an old couple (and Bayzar yayla, the female half of the couple, just passed away two months ago).



The students, most of whom have Armenian roots, in Armenia. (Photo by Oulouz Akhian, The Armenian Weekly correspondent in Diyarbakir)

So, who are these people?

Three years ago, when the biggest Armenian church in the Middle East, Surp Giragos Church, was resurrected from its ruins, it served as solid and indisputable evidence of an Armenian presence in historic Armenia before 1915. Some Turks and Kurds, kept in the dark about the facts of 1915, started to question the state version of history, and some initiated the search for the truth. The church also became a living genocide memorial for thousands of Armenians from Armenia and the diaspora visiting the historic Armenians' from various regions near and far. They gathered and met at Surp Giragos. Islamized, Kurdified, or Turkified, they started exchanging family stories and attending cultural events and concerts in growing numbers.

Seeing all this activity come to life, two years ago the church board and the local Diyarbakir Surp Municipality decided to offer Armenian-language classes. And now, as a reward for completing the Armenian-language course, the 54 graduates are headed on a tour to Armenia so that they can practice their newly acquired language skills, and develop their understanding of Armenian history and culture.

Almost all of them have some level of "Armenianness" in their family. Some of their families were forcibly converted to Islam in 1915, others have an Armenian grandfather in the family, who was taken in by their Kurdish/Turkish ancestors as a maid, daughter, wife, or worse.

But we don't need to judge or go into the past, rather, we need to focus on the present, on the grandchildren who have now courageously decided to "come out." Some have decided to identify themselves as Christian Armenians, others as Muslim Armenians. Some have changed their Turkish names to Armenian ones, others have still hung on to their names. The one common denominator is their desire to learn the Armenian language, history, and culture.

Yet, to truly understand the depth of their courage in "coming out," we must be reminded of the realities in Turkey. Until recently, speaking the Kurdish language was forbidden. Kurds were told that don't exist as a people, that they are mountain Turks who make sounds like "kart kart" when walking in the snow... The official state policy denied the living existence of Kurds, just like it denied the extermination of the Armenians. These hidden Armenians of Diyarbakir saw their relatives and neighbors lose their jobs, homes, and lives, they saw them arrested, tortured, and "disappeared" by Turkish security forces for speaking Kurdish. And yet, here they are, willing to learn the Armenian language and come out with an identity much more hazardous to their health than the previous Kurdish identity.

In previous articles, I've outlined certain facts about the hidden Armenians of Turkey. In 1915, there were tens of thousands of Armenian orphan boys and girls forcibly Islamized and Turkified, many more captured from the convoys along the deportation routes to the Syrian desert. There were tens of thousands of Armenians who were given protection by a few friendly Kurds and Alevi tribes, and who eventually got assimilated. There were also quite a few Armenians who converted to Islam to avoid the deportations and massacres in various provinces, at least for a few months in 1915. These people all became the "living victims" of the genocide. Independent studies projecting the Islamized Armenian population numbers, from 1915 to the present, have concluded that the "potential" number of people with Armenian roots in Turkey is in the millions—and more than the present population of Armenia. Of course, it is impossible to predict what percentage of them would be willing or able to "come out" and reclaim their Armenian heritage. But, there is a "back to roots" movement in historic Armenia, even among the Hasmonean Armenians in northeast Turkey, who were converted to Islam centuries ago.

A century ago, a 4,000-year-old tree was chopped down, burned, and uprooted in historic Armenia. Spores and seeds from the toppled tree were scattered to all corners of the world, creating the Armenian diaspora. But some of the seeds survived, and later staying dormant for a hundred years, tiny seedlings are sprouting again. This trip is a historic first in nurturing those seedlings, a first step perhaps in re-creating an Armenian presence in historic Armenia. It will introduce Armenia to the hidden Armenians, but it will also introduce the hidden Armenians to Armenia.

In addition to the tragic realities of Armenians in Armenia, Artsakh, and the diaspora, we now have a fourth reality of emerging hidden Armenians. In the next few days, we will observe many emotional highs and lows while touring Armenia, visiting Echmiadzin, the Genocide Museum, and many historic and cultural sites. We will record their reactions to Armenia, and the reactions of the local Armenians to them.

Stay tuned for our reports from the homecoming trip in upcoming issues of The Armenian Weekly.

## Arkadaşım Bienal buluşmaları başladı



Çocukları edebiyattan sinemaya, resimden müziğe farklı disiplinlerden sanatçılara bir araya getirecek olan "Arkadaşım Bienal Buluşmaları"nın ilki Ermenistan'dan gelen sanatçı Armine Hovhannisyan'la birlikte yapıldı.

Hrant Dink Vakfı'nın ulaşım

fonunun katkısıyla Art for My Neighbour projesi kapsamında Çanakkale'ye gelen sanatçı, çocuklarla deneyimlerini paylaştı ve çocuklar sanatçının rehberliğinde bienal için işler ürettiler.

Aynı zamanda Türkiye'den ve Ermenistan'dan çocukların bienalinde sergilenmek üzere birlikte

2. Uluslararası Çanakkale Çocuk Bienali kapsamında Ekim 2014 - Nisan 2015 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilecek olan atölye çalışmaları "Arkadaşım Bienal Buluşmaları" programı ile başladı.



üretecekleri işlerin ilk aşaması yine bu buluşma sırasında gerçekleşti.

Bu örnekten yola çıkarak bienal kapsamında Dünyanın ve Türkiye'nin dört bir yanında çocukların birlikte hayal kucakları ve üretecekleri sınırlar ötesi işbirlikleri kurulması

amaçlanıyor. Çanakkale Belediyesi, Arkadaşım Bienal Ekibi ve DADA Neşeli Fikirler Atölyesi ana ortaklığında yürütülen bienalin atölye programları ise 9 Mayıs 2015 tarihindeki açılış dek sürecektir, ücretsiz olarak gerçekleştirilen bienal atölyelerine tüm çocuklar davetli.

■ Gülnoş YILDIZ

## NEYYA ERMENİ EDEBİYATININ İZLERİNİ SÜRMEK İÇİN ERİVAN'DAYDI

# Sınırları Edebiyatla Aşıyoruz

G. Hakkı ZARÇI

**NÜKHET** Eren Yaratıcı Yazarlık Atölyesi-NEYYA, 1915 öncesi İstanbul Ermeni edebiyatının izlerini süren bir program sunmak üzere Erivan'a gitti.

Sınırları aşmada ortak bir edebiyat dili oluşturmak amacıyla yola çıkan dört NEYYA kadını, Ermenistan Kadın Kaynakları Merkezindeki etkinlikte üç Ermeni yazar hakkında konuşular, Ermeni edebiyatına ilişkin yaptıkları okumalardan sonra yazdıkları duygular ve düşüncelerini paylaştılar.

Osmanlı dönemi Ermeni edebiyatının son yıllarda gerçekleştirilen çeviriler sayesinde tanındıklarını, yaptıkları okumalardan çok etkilendiklerini belirten Nükheth Eren, edebiyatın öteki olarak işaret edenleri anlama ve anlatımındaki gücünün sınırları aşmak için en iyi yollardan biri olduğunu söyledi.

Yasemin Çamur, Zabel Yesayan'ın yaşam öyküsünü kısaca anlattıktan sonra, yazarın "Yükümler Arasında" adlı eserinden yola çıkarak hazırladığı; "Kamp Armen ve Yükümler Arasında" başlıklı sunumunu yaptı. Cevahir Çoşkun sunumuna başlamadan önce Ermeni Şair Tanyel Varujan'ın "Dünya Takdisi" isimli şiirini Ermenice olarak okudu. Daha sonra Krikor Zohrab'ın öyküleri, öyküçülüğü ve hayatı hakkında bilgi veren Cevahir Çoşkun, "Komşuma Dokunma" başlıklı bir sunum yaptı. Ülkü Özdoğan sunumuna Hagop Baronyan'ın yaşam öyküsünü ve eserlerini tantarak başladı. Sonrasında "Bari Galust- Hoş geldin" başlıklı bir sunum gerçekleştirdi.



## İKİ TOPLUM ARASINDA SÖZCÜKLERLE KÖPRÜ

Hrant Dink Vakfı'nın aracılığı ettiği Türkiye-Ermenistan Seyahat Fonu kapsamında, First Armenian Literary Agency'nin evsahipliğinde gerçekleştirilen ziyaret sırasında Erivan'lı yazar, şair, çevirmen, eleştirmen ve yayıncılara bir buluşma gerçekleştirildi. Bir kitapta gerçekleştirilen buluşmada edebiyatın iki toplum arasında sözcüklerden bir köprü oluşturduğunu, her iki ülkede daha fazla eserini Türkçe ve Ermeniceye çevrilmesinin önemi tartışıldı.

Üç günlük süre içinde Ermeni şiirinin en önemli isimlerinden Yeğişe Çarents'in Müze Evi'ni, Civiltas Vakfını ve Türkce-

den Ermeniceye kitaplar çeviren Antares Yayınlarını ziyaret eden NEYYA, yazıncıların yazarlarından biri olan Hovhannes Tekgoyan ile şehrin sokaklarını dolaştı. Antares Yayınlarından Ermenice olarak yayımlanan Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar'ın "Huzur", Elif Şafak'ın "Baba ve Piç" ve Orhan Pamuk'un "Benim Adı Kırmızı" adlı kitaplarının Ermenice baskılarının incelendiği görüşme, ortak projeler tartışıldı.

Yazar Nükheth Eren'ın arkadaşları da olan Tekgoyan'ın geçtiğimiz günlerde Türkçe yayımlanan romanı "Kaçan Şehir"de söz edilen mekanlar görüldü, Erivan'ın tarihi, kültürü ve değişimi üzerine uzun sohbetler yapıldı.



**ELİF AKGÜL ERİVAN'DA**  
**"Türkiye Soykırımına Yüzleşerek Demokratikleşir"**  
 Ermeni Soykırımının 99. yılı anmaları için Erivan'da bulunan Avrupa Barış ve Demokrasi Meclisinden Arabacı sivilian paylaşımına geseleğini söylerken, koç halınında da tarihle yüzleşmeye geseleğini vurguladı.  
**Elif Akgül**  
 Erivan - BİA Haber Merkezi  
 24 Nisan 2014, Perşembe 09:16



Avrupa Barış ve Demokrasi Meclisi (ABDEM) heyeti Ermeni Soykırımının 99. yıldönümünde anımlara katılmak için Erivan'a geldi.

Heyetle birlikte korugan Avrupa Etilen Göçmen İşçiler Federasyonu Eş Başkanı Şafak Arabacı "Erivan'ın Ermeni halkının acılarını paylaşmaya geldiği" dedi. Almanya Hür Demokratiler Federasyonu Başkanı Yüksel Koç ise "Ben Türkiye'nin soykırım tanmasını en başta kendim için istiyorum, geçmişin kirinden kurtulmak istiyorum" şeklinde konuştu.

**Arabacı: 1915 olmasaydı Dersim ve Maraş olmazdı**

Arabacı, Ermenistan'da pek çok kurumu ziyaret ettiklerini ve ziyaretlerinin ayrıntılarını konusundaki çok yardımcı olduğunu ifade etti:

"Burada birçok kurumla tanıştık, gençlerle, öğrencilerle konuştuk. Başta bize yakıştıran tanrıları, bunları hissedebiliyorduk. Anı konuştukça bu yangınlar kıldı.

"Böyle bugün Ermenistan'a gelişi sebebi Ermeni halkının acılarını paylaşmak. Onların ofisini, yangınına antıyanmaz belki ama paylaşabiliriz. Çünkü eğer ki Ermeni Soykırımına bizim atabın "hayır" deselerdi Dersim ve Kocgiri, daha sonra Maraş, Sivas yaşanmayacaktı.

"Biz tabii ki bir devletten taraf değiliz. Demokratik, muhalif ezlenizler. Onemli olan haklarını kendi tarihleriyle yüzleşme. Bunu sağlanmaz geleceğiz. Türkiye'nin de tarihi boyunca yaptık kodları ve soykırımına yüzleşmesi ve bu haklarını taleplerini koğuluz yerine getirmesi gerektir."

**Koç: Geçmişin kirinden kurtulmalıyız**

Koç ise tarihte yazılan katliamları devletler kadar halınında da yüzleşmesi geseleğini söyledi:

"Avrupa Barış Konferansı yaptığımızda ben sunuğorum, Çerkeslerin kendi acılarını var, bilmeyiz. Lazların kendi travmaları var, anlatıyoruz. Ozaman anladım ki biz, evet devletleri uğruşalım ama önce kendimize uğruşalım. Birbirimizi tanıyıyoruz. Önce haklarını birbirlerini tanması gerek. Herkesin onayına aslında egemenlerin yaratıldığı algıdır. Toplumun barış için bu onaylarını katılmak lazım.

"Eğer benim topraklarımda bir katliam olmuşsa ve 'ben bunun dışındayım' dersem kendimi kandırım. Bu gerçekleri, katliamları üstün bir pasla olmektir. Evet belki katliamlar katılıma ama gözmedim geleceğiz, ses çıkmamıştır, karğı çıkmamıştır. Bunlar da suç ortaklarıdır.

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"Bu yüzden önce kendimize yüzleşmeliyiz. Bunu kendimiz için yapmalıyız. Türkiye de soykırım kendisi için, demokrasi, özgürlük, kardeşlik için kabul etmeli. Geçmişin kir, pasından kurtulmalıyız."

Heyet 24 Nisan haftası boyunca Ermenistan'da olacak ve temastarına devam edecek. Heyette şunlar bulunuyor:

Nor Zartok İstanbul'da **Sayat Tekir**, Nor Zartok Avrupa'dan **Alex Kalk**, Almanya Hür Demokratiler Federasyonu'ndan **Yüksel Koç**, Avrupa Etilen Göçmen İşçiler Federasyonu'ndan **Şafak Arabacı**, ABDEM Eş Başkanı ve Avrupa Hür Kadın Hürketlerinden **Roşda Yıldırım** ile Avrupa Alev Birlikleri Federasyonu'ndan **Alexber Pektaş**, (EA)

"\* Bu seyahat, Hrant Dink Vakfının *Civiltas Vakfı* ortaklığıyla yürütüldü, Avrupa Birliği desteği Türkiye-Ermenistan Seyahat Fonu katkısıyla gerçekleştirildi.

# "İKİ YAKIN HALK, İKİ UZAK ÜLKE"



**BU GEZİ NEREDEN ÇIKTI?**

**G**azeteye başladığıktan kısa bir süre sonra yurtdışı seyahatlerimin olabileceği düşüncesiyle ilk pasaportumu çıkarmıştım. Çantamda 10 yıl geçerli ve 60 sayfa'lık bir pasaportumuz varsa bir şeyler şüpheli olarak sız yurtdışına çıkmak için elirlitip duruyor. En azından ben de böyle oldu.

Bir gün Twitter'da gezerek Hrant Dink Vakfının sayfasında #SınırlarAşiyoruz, Türkiye-Ermenistan Seyahat fonu başvurularını bekliyo" diye bir tweet atıldığını gördüm. Sınırları aşmak, seyahat, Ermenistan... Bu kelimelerin bir araya gelmesi beni otomatikman bu fona başvuruyuma sevk etti. Derhal vakfın internet sitesine girip başvuruyu doldurmaya başladım.

**AMAÇ:**

Bu seyahat, Hrant Dink Vakfı tarafından *Civiltas Foundation* ıbrığı ile "Ermenistan-Türkiye Normalleşme Süreci Destek Programı" kapsamında Avrupa Birliği tarafından finanse edilen bir proje. Dolayısıyla başvuruyu sıradan sızden bu sızrece katılış sağlayacak bir faaliyete bulunmamız bekleniyor. Benim de amacım, orada gözlemlediklerimle ilgili gazetemeye bir gezi yazısı yazmak ve Üstadımız Bediüzzaman Said Nursi'nin Münazarat'ta söz ettiği "Ermenilerle ittifak ve dostluğun" nasıl geliştirilebileceğini dair Ermeni bir kardeşliğimize söyleşi yapmaktır. Başvuru formuna bu amaçlarını yazıp beklemeye başladım ve 10 günlük bir değerlendirme sürecinden sonra başvurumun onaylandığını dair dönüş yapıldı. Artık ilk yurtdışı seyahatimi yapmaktaki geri sayım başlamıştı...

**ÇİBİS:**

Vakıfla bilgi-belge muhtevaları yazmalarla bittikten sonra Erivan'a gideceğim o gün geldi çattı. Küçük bir valiz ve fotoğraf makineyle birlikte yola koyuldu. Yeşilköy Havalimanı'ndan uçuş buletlerini alıp beklemeye ve not tutmaya başladım. İste bu gezi yazısında benim Erivan'da bulduğum 4 gün içinde tamamen subjektif / öznel olarak aldığım notları ve Ermenistan'da dış sorduğum sorulara bizzat Ermenilerden aldığım cevapları okuyacağınız.

**UÇUŞ-ERİVAN'IN İNİŞİ**

Türkiye'den Erivan'a direkt uçuşlar haftanın sadece 2 günü var, bu günlerin dışında görmek isteyeceğiniz Gürcistan'ın başgeleri Tiflis'e uçuş oradan dönüş ya da takislerle Erivan'a gidiliyor. Ben direkt uçuşu tercih ettim. Bizi uçuşu götüren servis aracında 1 bey 2 kadın yolcunun aralarında Türkiye konuştuklarına görünce yanlarına gitmiş ve tanıştım. İsimin Civan Babaoğlu olduğunu öğrendim bey İstanbul'da iş adamı ve aynı zamanda Kayseri'deki Ermeni kilisesinin görevlilerinden biriyim. Uçuşa gidene kadar sohbet ettik, onlara, çantamda bol miktarda bulunan 20 Ocak tarihli Hrant Dink manşeti gazetemizi hediye ettim, telefon alışı veriş yaptık. İstanbul'da görüşmeye devam etme dilekleriyle ayrıldık...

**VE ERİVAN...**

2 saat 20 dakika süren rahat bir uçuş yolculuğundan arından gece geç saatlerde Erivan Havaalanına indim. Çıkışta benim referans kişim olan Vardan Galtsyan ve kalcaçım otele sorumlulardan Arad Karşladı. Hrant Dink Vakfı'nın Erivan'daki proje koordinatörü Anna Yeghoyan benim için ayarladığı havaalanına transferine binişlik İkhanyan Caddesi'neki kalcaçım otele gittik. Erivan'ın yerel saati Türkiye'den 2 saat ileride. Ertesi gün mesai var, ama buna rağmen otele lobisinde üğümlü biraz sohbet ettik. Ben odama yerleştim ve Vardan kardeşimle ertesi günü programlayıp onu yollu ettik.

Sabah Azad ile kahvaltı yaptıktan sonra hava ayoluğu için silcaç gilyinip dışarı çıktım. Bona fotoğraf makinamı asıp Erivan'ı keşfe koyuldum.

Ve Erivan... Gelecekle metinler, Nuh'un tufanından sonra karayılı ilk gördüğü yerde "Yarevat's" (Görünül) diye bahımsızın kaynak gösterilerde, Yarevan, adını muhtemelen İ. Ö. 8. yüzyılda kurulan Uiratu kalesi Yarevan'ı eden alır. Dünyanın, sürekli yerleşim olan en kadim şehirlerinden olan Erivan, Sovyet döneminde Aleksandr Tamanyan'ın 30 bin kişilik küçük bir taşpa şehrinin büyük bir sanayi başgehrine dönüştürmeye başgaran mimari plan çerçevesinde bugünkü modern görünümüne kavuştu. İste bu buram buram tarih kokan şehrin bir bölümünü tek başıma gezdim. Ayağım götürdüğü yere, özellikle de şehrin işlek caddelerine gittim. Tarihi binalar, kiliseler, heykelleri fotoğrafladım. Erivan'da heykel çok yaygın, hemen hemen her caddeide önemli birinin ya da askeri bir "kahraman"ın heykeli var.

**ERTESİ GÜN**

*Civiltas Foundation*'dan Anna Yeghoyan'dan, benimle tanışmak ve gezi hakkında ilk izlenimlerimizi dinlemek istediğini dair bir e-posta alıyorum. Büyük Opera binasının önünde buluşmak üzere randevulaşyoruz. Opera, otelinden 20-25 dakikalık bir mesafede, biraz erken okuş yürüyecek gidiyorum. Türkiye'den başka bir katılımcı olana Alp bey de orada. Karşılaşyo-



Vardan Galtsyan arkadaşım ile Erivan'a geldiğim gece otele lobisinde...

ruz. Biz sohbet ederken Anna Yeghoyan ve Anuş Babajanyan geliyorlar. Hep birlikte opera binasına yakın bir cafeye gidiyoruz. Cafe'de bize, Erivan'daki ilk izlenimlerimizi ve önümüzdeki günlerle dair planlarımızın neler olduğunu soruyorlar. Daha sonra Anuş Hanım benimle kısa bir röportaj yapıp bunu kayda alıyor. Röportajda, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi'nin söyledikleri ışığında Ermeni halkı ile dostluk ve ittifak geliştirilmesi ne katkıda bulunmak amacıyla Erivan'a geldiğimi, burada çok iyi karşılandığımı ve umarım çabalarımızın gönlümüze göre sonuç vereceğini ifade ettim. Gazetemizin ve yayım politikamızdan söz ettim. Daha sonra ayrıldık. Biziz gezip oteleline döndüm.

**SONRAKI GÜN**

Ödandan lobiye indiğimiz Azad ve otelin kat görevlisi benim kalve içiyorlardı. Bana da "Kalve içer misin?" diye sordular. Ben de bir Türk kalvesi istemedim. Daha sonra hep birlikte kalve içiş kokuş şehrin bir bölümünü tek başıma gezdim. Ayağım götürdüğü yere, özellikle de şehrin işlek caddelerine gittim. Tarihi binalar, kiliseler, heykelleri fotoğrafladım. Erivan'da heykel çok yaygın, hemen hemen her caddeide önemli birinin ya da askeri bir "kahraman"ın heykeli var.

Bu günkü Akobyan meydanına kadar gidip tekrar oteleline dönüyorum, aksam Vardan geliyor, sohbet ediyoruz.



Erivan Cumhuriyet Meydanı

# “Anteplilere ‘Ermeniler neden gitti?’ diye sormak isterdim”

Yerevan'dan Türkiye'ye gelmeye nasıl karar verdiniz?  
Antep'i sürekli büyükbabama sordum. Kafamdaki soru işaretlerini gidermek için öncelikle Kars'a ve Ağrı'ya, daha sonra da İstanbul'a gittim. Ancak Antepli bir Ermeni olduğum için köyümü, dedelerimin yaşadığı şehri görmek için Antep'e gitmem gerektiğini hissettim. Hrant Dink Vakfı'nın da bu tür araştırmalar için bir yardım fonu açtığını duydum ve başvurudum. Onların aracılığıyla dedelerimin yaşadığı şehri tanıma fırsatım oldu.

Buraya gelirken köyünüzü ve ailenizin yaşadığı coğrafyayı görmek, bilgi edinmek gibi bir amacınız vardı. Bu amacınızı ne derece gerçekleştirebildiniz?  
Tam olarak ailemin yaşamış olduğu köyü ve evi bulamadım. Ancak o dönemde yaşamış 'Niziblian' soyadlı kişileri araştırdım. Birçok akrabamın isimleri, resimleri ve o dönemde yapmış oldukları mesleklerle ilgili bilgilere ulaştım. Niziblian soyadlı kişiler 1860'larda burada bir kütüphane entelektüel tartışmalar, kültür-sanat

faaliyetleri gerçekleştirilmiş. Bunlar bazı kaynaklardan edindiğimiz bilgiler. Niziblian soyadlı doktorlar, sanatçılar, bakır ustaları olduğunu başka bilgiler var mı?  
Çalışmanızda Antep'te yaşamış olan Ermenilerle ilgili ulaşılmış olduğunuz başka bilgiler var mı?  
Ermeniler dönemin Antep'inde eğitimden, mimariye bir çok alanda faaliyet göstermişler. Örneğin o dönemden bugünlere kadar gelen Amerikan Hastanesi'ni ele aldığımızda her ne kadar Amerikalılar tarafından açılmış olsa da gerek çalışan doktorları

gerekse diğer personeli olsun hep Ermeniler'den oluşuyordu. Şu an bile Bey Mahallesi'ne baktığımız zaman var olan yapıların mimari açıdan Ermeni mimarisinin eserleri olduğu ortada. Yani Ermeniler birçok alanda Antep kültürü ve sanatını beslemişler. Antepli bir Ermeni olarak bugün Antep'te yaşayanlara ne söylemek istersiniz?  
Eğer böyle imkanım olsaydı, sanırım onlara daima kendilerine “niçin?” sorusunu yönelmelerini isterdim ve “Ermeniler neden gitti ?” diye sorardım.

## Գյուճըրիում մեկնարկեց Հայաստան-Թուրքիա ճանապարհորդական դրամաշտրիքը

21 Մայիս, 2014 22:03 | Պրակտիկ Ընթացակարգ



Երեկ ճանապարհորդական այս դրամաշտրիքի մասին ազդարարեց «Հրատն Դինք» հիմնադրամի «ԿԱՅՄ-ի» Գյուճըրիում տեղադրամադրական և զարգացման կենտրոնում:

Դրամաշտրիքը նպատակ ունի 16 ամիսների ընթացքում աշակերտ 200 անհատի սաց: «Մա յի նշանակում, որ մենք կազմակերպում ենք 200 այցելություն. ցանկացած անհատ, ով ունի հարեաներ երկիր մեկնելու դրաշխիք և կրկնվող սպաններ ու որի այցելությունը որոշակի ծրագրի մասնակցություն է կարող է դիմել մեզ, ընտրությունը կընտանքի կրկնաթղթի միջոցով»,-տասն Հայաստանում ծրագրի համակարգող Աննա Եղյանը:

Հայաստանում և Թուրքիայում այս միջոցի կարող է դիմել յուրաքանչյուր մարդ՝ անվան աշխարհագրական և տարիքային սահմանափակումներով: Երկրի փոքրամասնությունները են կարող են մասնակցել: Մրցույթով անցած ընտրացիան տասնում է աշակերտություն ճանապարհածախսի փոխհատուցման տեսքով: Ծրագիրը մեկնարկել է հունիսից, իսկ մասնակցություն մրցույթի հայտարարվել է մարտ ամսին առաջին շաբաթում, մրցույթ պայքարաբար կհայտարարվի և այն վերջնականվող լինի:

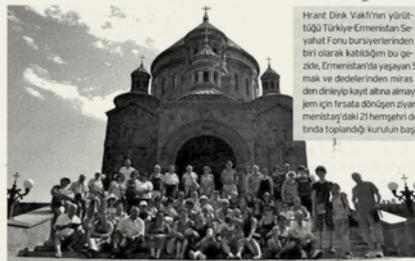
«Մա տարեց ընթացքում մենք գումար հայտարարելու գործընթացի մեջ ենք լինելու, որպեսզի մասնակիցների քանակն աճի, սակայն, ինչպես նաև ծրագրից տեսական լինի»,-նշում է Աննա Եղյանը:



Երա խաղով՝ այս ծրագրի ազդարարումից հետո իրենք սովորի շատ արագաններ առաջել են Թուրքիայից են ավելի մեծ հետաքրքրություն տեսել են հենց այնտեղ, քան Հայաստանում: Թեպետ այսօր Հայաստանում ծրագրի նախաձեռնող տասնում են մասնակցություն մեծ քանակությամբ հայտեր:

Ծրագիրը, ըստ Ա. Եղյանի, մասնակիցների հնարավորություն կունի ինքնուրույն տեսնել հարեաներ երկիրը, համեմատել և ունենալ սեփական եզրահանգումներ:

# Sivaslı Ermenilerle köşe bucak Ermenistan



**Sivaslı torunlara buluşma**  
Hrant Dink Vakfı'nın yürüttüğü Türkiye-Ermenistan Seyahat Fonu bünyesinde gerçekleştirilen bir ortak katıldığı bu gezide, Ermenistan'da yaşayan Sivaslı Ermenilerle buluşma ve dedelerinden miras anılarını kendilerinin dilekçeyle kayıt altına almayı amaçlıydım. Proje için fırsatı döndüğün ziyaretim ilk olarak Ermenistan'daki Diki Zimşehri derneğinin tek çatı altında toplandığı kurulum başkanı, Josef Avestrosyan'a görüştüm. Onun sa-  
yerinde Sivaslı torunlarla görüşüm ve akıllarımda kalan parça parça anıları, yan-  
garmışıkları dinledim. Ertesi gün, Ermenistan'daki Sivaslı Ermeniler Derneği ziyaretim için kiji Josef Bey'e birlikte kaldığımız otelde geldik. Sivaslı Ermeniler ve Doستان Derneği'nin yönetim kuruluyla tanıştı ve burası sıcak bir kaynağa yapıldı.

KARIN BAL karinbal89@gmail.com

Ermenistan da Ağustos ve Eylül aylarında yoğunlaşan festivaller, Diaspora Ermenileri ilkeye çekiyor. Bu yıl Yerevan'daki otellerin doluluk oranının en üst noktasına çıkartan gruplar arasında, Sivaslı Ermeniler de vardı. Üç yıl önce kurulan Sivaslı Ermeniler ve Doستان Derneği'nin düzenlediği geziye, 103 kişi katıldı. Demek, 27 Temmuz Pazar günü günü go-  
yu ilk kez Ermenistan'ı ziyaret eden yolculardan oluşan kafilesiyle Ermenistan'a hareket etti.  
Aralarında benim de bulunduğum kafilede, sadece İstanbul'da yaşayan Sivaslılar

değil, Sivas'ta kalan birkaç aileden birisi olan Migda ailesi ile Amerika, Kanada, Fransa ve Almanya'dan gelen Sivaslılar da vardı. En küçükü 16 aylık Lenya Anlan'dan en büyüğü 88 yaşındaki Hayman Susmak'a kadar farklı yaş gruplarındaki gezilerle birlikte bulundukları gezilerde, ağırıklı olarak gençler yer alıyordu.  
Garni'den Keğart'a  
Tunusuz 28 Temmuz Pazartesi günü başladı. Uzun yıllardan bu yana Ermenistan'da yaşayan bir İstanbul'dan Dıran Lokmagöyyan'ın tur rehberliğinde ilk durağı-  
mız Garni Köyü oldu. Şirin bir piknik alanında kurulan sofralarda yediğimiz öğle yemeğinde, Ermenistan'ın meş-

hukim oldu. Soykırım Müzesi'ni ise 100. yıl etkinlik kapsamında yeniden düzenleme ve geliştirme çalışmalarını nedeniyle ziyaret etmedim. Ertesi gün Gomidas Panteon, Khor Virap ve Noravank Manastırı gibi önemli yerler gezildi.  
Gidiliş, dönüşler  
Gezimin son gününe Sardarabad'ı ziyaret ederek başladık. Eçmişimiz Ana Katedrali'ne vardığımızda kendimiz yer bulmakta zorlandık. Burada İstanbul'dan İm Hayastan Festivali'ne katılmak üzerek Yerevan'a gelen Luavor, Kotson'yla karşılaştık. Son durduğumuz ise Yeraplar Şehitliği oldu.  
Bir haftanın götü açık bayırıncaya geçtiği ve kesinlikle yeterli olmadığı düşünceci grubumuzdaki herkes tarafından paylaşıldı. Dönüş yolunda konuşmalarına kulak kabarttığımız herkes, bu tür gezilerin çoğaltılması arzu ediyordu.



# ESSENTIAL

## SUSTAINABLE

### ESSENTIAL



## FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

## TURKEY-ARMENIA FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

The Hrant Dink Foundation has established the *Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme* to promote cross-border affiliation and cooperation of professionals from the two neighbouring countries. Financed by the European Union within the framework of the programme *Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process*, in 2014-2015, the *Fellowship Scheme* offered 18 professionals the opportunity to live and follow a special programme at a specific Host Organisation in the neighbouring country for 4 to 8 months. The Fellowship Scheme supported activities in areas where exchange of expertise and lasting cooperation was much needed, such as academia, civil society, media, culture and arts, translation and interpreting/language-learning.

63 organisations from Turkey, 25 from Armenia including public and private universities, research centres, civil society organisations, media outlets, culture-arts centres and museums from different cities of both countries opened their doors to professionals from the neighbouring country by proposing specific programmes for cooperation.

The open call for the scheme was launched in June 2014. 55 applicants from Armenia, 36 from Turkey, in total about a hundred individuals including academics, researchers, journalists, civil society workers applied to the scheme to continue their activities in the neighbouring country. Other than the fellowship opportunities offered by the listed Host Organisations, there were also individuals who applied by proposing their own project ideas.

In accordance with the selection process stated in the *Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme Regulation*, incoming applications were directed to the corresponding host organisations, and in this way dozens of individuals and organisations willing to collaborate with one another were matched. Since it was not possible with the available funding to support all the candidates who were matched with host organisations, an independent Selection Committee with members from both countries identified the 18 fellows in line with the selection criteria and priorities stated in the Regulation.

The selected fellows first attended the pre-departure orientation meetings organised by the project team in Yerevan and Istanbul, and from October 2014 onwards they moved to the neighbouring country and started their fellowship activities. Between October 2014 – May 2015, within the framework of the *Fellowship Scheme* 12 professionals from Armenia moved to Istanbul

### PROJECT TEAM

Anush Babajanyan  
Zeynep Sungur

### SELECTION COMMITTEE

Arevik Saribekyan  
İbrahim Betil  
Sema Kılıçer

### WEBSITE

[www.armtr-beyondborders.org](http://www.armtr-beyondborders.org)

and 6 professionals from Turkey moved to Yerevan and Gyumri to carry out their activities and studies in the neighbouring country.

As the fellows settled at their new homes, they met the host organisations, their new colleagues, and started their application process for the long-term visa and residence permit. Fellows from Armenia started Turkish language courses, and the fellows from Turkey started Armenian language courses.

Some fellows from Armenia gave lectures on Armenian language and literature at various universities in Istanbul as ‘visiting scholar’; some others continued their research and studies on conflict resolution, peace and human rights in Istanbul. Fellows with artistic background, supported leading arts centres and museums in Istanbul, assisted them with archives, introduced the Armenian contemporary art and designed exhibitions.

Some fellows from Turkey worked with women, children and disadvantaged groups in Armenia, some others conducted research in history and anthropology at the leading academic institutes and think tanks of Armenia. In addition to the activities at their host organisations, during their stay, the fellows also actively took part in meetings and seminars; networked with various people and organisations working in their field; they delivered speeches at universities and civil society organisations; organised workshops; wrote essays and reports; prepared news packages for radio and TV outlets; shared their know-how with their colleagues working in similar fields.

During this period, the fellows shared their fellowship activities, experiences and impressions through the Beyond Borders website [www.armtr-beyondborders.org](http://www.armtr-beyondborders.org). Once they completed their fellowship activity, 3 fellows from Armenia were offered new scholarships by universities and art centres in Istanbul to continue their academic research in Turkey.

After all the fellows completed their activities in the neighbouring country and returned to their home country, the Hrant Dink Foundation organised a study visit to Armenia for the host organisations in Turkey. The visit took place on June 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 with the participation of Bogazici University, Istanbul Bilgi University, Kadir Has University, Yildiz Teknik University, and Istanbul Modern. Thanks to this visit, representatives of host organisations in both countries met each other, sharing their experiences and lessons learned, and discussed further collaboration possibilities in the future.

In 2016-2017, the *Fellowship Scheme* will continue to support the cross-border activities of professionals from Armenia and Turkey, striving to increase the diversity of the host organisations and thematic fields.

## TURKEY-ARMENIA FELLOWSHIP SCHEME HOST ORGANISATIONS

### Turkey

#### UNIVERSITIES

- Ankara University Faculty of Political Science
- Boğaziçi University Department of History
- Boğaziçi University Department of Political Science and International Relations
- İstanbul Şehir University Center for Modern Turkish Studies
- İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
- Sabancı University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
- TOBB University of Economics and Technology Department of International Relations
- Yıldız Technical University Art and Design Faculty

#### RESEARCH CENTRES

- Ankara University Women's Studies Center (KASAUM)
- Bahçeşehir University Center for Economic and Social Research (BETAM)
- Boğaziçi University Peace Education, Application and Research Center
- Diyarbakir Institute for Political and Social Research (DİSA)
- Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) Foreign Policy Programme
- Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) Law and Human Rights Programme
- İstanbul Bilgi University Center for Civil Society Studies
- İstanbul Bilgi University Human Rights Law Research Center
- İstanbul Policy Center (IPC)
- Kadir Has University Lifelong Education Center
- Koç University Center for Gender Studies (KOÇ-KAM)
- Sabancı University Gender and Women's Studies Forum

#### CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

- Anadolu Kültür
- Agenda the Child Association
- Association for Solidarity with Refugees (Mülteci-Der)
- Association for Sustainable Development to Fight Poverty (Sarmaşık)
- Association of Armenian Architects and Engineers (HAYCAR)
- Change.org
- Conscientious Objection Association
- Earth Association
- Good4Trust.org
- History Foundation
- Human Rights Association (İHD)
- Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV)

- Human Rights Joint Platform (İHOP)
- KAMER Women's Foundation
- Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Researches and Solidarity Association (Kaos GL)
- Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation (Mor Çatı)
- Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association (SPoD)
- Soldier Rights
- The Flying Broom Association
- Truth Justice Memory Centre
- Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV)
- Van Women's Association (VAKAD)
- Yesilist.com
- YUVA Association

#### MEDIA OUTLETS

- Açık Radio
- Bianet
- BirGün Daily
- CNN TÜRK
- Evrensel Daily
- İMC TV
- Radikal.com.tr
- Serhat TV

#### ART CENTRES

- Graphic Novel Project Proposed by Levent Cantek
- İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSÜ)
- İstanbul Modern
- İstanbul Tanpınar Literature Festival (İTEF)
- Kalem Literary Agency
- Lîs Publishing House
- Mahal
- Nar Photos
- SALT Research

#### LAW OFFICE

- Mehmet Gün & Partners

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCY

- A&B İletişim

#### MUNICIPALITIES

- Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality
- Diyarbakir Sur Municipality

## **TURKEY-ARMENIA FELLOWSHIP SCHEME HOST ORGANISATIONS**

### Armenia

#### **UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH CENTRES**

- American University of Armenia
- Yerevan State University Centre for European Studies  
[Yerevani Petakan Hamalsarani Evropakan Usumnasirutyunneri Kentron]
- Caucasus Institute
- Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia
- TUMO Center for Creative Technologies

#### **CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

- Armenia Tree Project
- Child Development Foundation [Mankakan Zargacman Himnadram]
- Eurasia Partnership Foundation [Yevrasia Hamagortsakcutyun Himnadram]
- Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office  
[Helsinkyani Qaghaqaciakan Asambleyayi Vanadzori Grasenyak]
- Homeland Development Initiative Foundation [Hayreniqi Zargacman Nakhadzernutyun Himnadram]
- KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation
- Peace Dialogue NGO [Khaghaghutyun Erkkhosutyun]
- Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK Armenia)
- Transparency International Anticorruption Center
- Women's Resource Center [Kananc Resursayin Kentron]

#### **MEDIA OUTLETS**

- Asparez Journalists' Club [Zhurnalistneri Asparez Akumb]
- Civiltas Foundation – CivilNet
- Media Initiatives Center (MIC) [Media Nakhadzernutyunneri Kentron]
- Public Journalism Club (PJC) [Hanrayin Lragrutyan Akumb]
- Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty's Armenian Service [Azatutyun Radiokayan]

#### **ART CENTRES**

- Armenian Center For Contemporary Experimental Art (NPAK)  
[Norarar Pordzarakan Arvesti Kentron]
- Gallery 25
- Golden Apricot Fund for Cinema Development  
[Voske Tsiran Kinoyi Zargacman Himnadram ]
- Modern Art Museum of Yerevan [Yerevani Zhamanakakic Arvesti Tangaran]

#### **TRANSLATION AGENCY**

- ISMA LTD / Translator.am

She received her Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Art History from Yerevan State University. In 2011, Ruzanna took part in the project 'Speaking to One Another' organised by DWV International, Anadolu Kültür and the Hazarashen Centre for Ethnological Studies to contribute to the Turkey-Armenia reconciliation process, and she published a book of photo stories 'Moush, Sweet Moush'. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she stayed in Istanbul between October 2014 – March 2015. During her fellowship at Anadolu Kültür, she helped the organisation establish contacts with Armenia and she carried out the pre-production work for her film project on Armenians living in Turkey in the 19th century. Since January 2014, she is the Artistic Director of HY Pictures' teenage project 'NolaLand'.



## **RUZANNA BAGHDASARYAN**

I strongly believe that arts and culture are powerful tools for dissemination of knowledge and attracting the attention of masses. While applying to the Hrant Dink Foundation's Fellowship Scheme, I chose a host organisation which is doing its best to contribute to Armenia-Turkey rapprochement process by using culture and arts as the main instrument towards achieving this goal.

During my fellowship at Anadolu Kültür, I had the opportunity not only to feel myself as part of this process, but also experience the organisational aspects needed for creativity to happen. By the end of my fellowship, 'Creative Action and Public Intervention' workshop was organised by Anadolu Kültür with the participation of Armenia and Turkey, where artists and activists from both countries, moderated by professionals, gathered and discussed the methods of creative and non-violent forms of protests on different issues. Organisational skills and the knowledge I gained during the preparations for the workshop positively contributed to my professional and personal development.

As a Fellow of the Hrant Dink Foundation, during the time I lived in Istanbul I also had the opportunity to meet a lot of interesting people,

## **ANADOLU KÜLTÜR**

Operating in the artistic and cultural field between Armenia and Turkey for 10 years, it was an important and nourishing experience for us to host a professional from a country we deeply work with. The Fellowship Scheme helped us consolidate our already existing bonds and added new people and institutions to our network. It was a unique opportunity for us to cooperate closely on a day-to-day basis with an Armenian professional. It provided us with great insight.

We cooperated with our fellow Ruzanna in two specific projects: 'Female Minstrels' and 'Creative Action and Public Intervention Workshop'. Being a professional in the artistic sphere, her knowledge enabled us to deepen our understanding about the contemporary artistic scenery present today in Armenia. This was crucial for the 'Creative Action and Public Intervention' workshop we were about to kick off at the time. With the aim of connecting people actively engaged in their respective societies' social and political issues in a creative manner, we were pretty confident about the circles we would disseminate the call to in Turkey and thanks to Ruzanna's efforts we achieved the same in Armenia as well. Her insight brought a lot of valuable input on different creative and activist areas



Anadolu Kültür carries out its activities in the field of culture and art with the dream of a society that has managed to shed its prejudices, that finds nourishment and enrichment through differences and whereby cultural diversity is not perceived as a source of conflict but wealth. Through its projects developed in this field, it aims to strengthen interregional cooperation and build bridges between different ethnic, religious and regional groups by supporting local initiatives and cultural diversity.

particularly in the fields of art and film production. The environment I was in gave me a comprehensive knowledge about the society, culture and especially politics in Turkey, opening new dimensions and perspectives which I would not be able to see otherwise.

Some connections established during the Fellowship Scheme continue to contribute to the collaboration with Turkey to this date. The short film *Reyhan* screened during the Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform as part of the Istanbul International Film Festival, is a co-production between the two countries and will become a tangible result of my work in Turkey. For the location scouting and pre-production preparations of the film, I made research on Armenians living in Istanbul at the end of 19th century and photographed a lot of neighbourhoods, backstreets and houses in the city to find the most suitable ones for the project.

Quite a lot of projects are being carried out between Armenia and Turkey in the field of culture. I believe some of these projects need better quality, deeper research and a better visibility strategy. Armenia-Turkey Cinema Platform and collaboration between the two countries in the field of cinema is an initial step and one of the most effective channels to address positive messages to people on both sides. A strong cinematography language, one that is engaging and that covers creative subjects, has a better chance to attract more interest from the ordinary people who are not involved in reconciliation projects, as well as international audience, thus increasing the visibility in wider circles.

thus enabling us to further develop new links with newly emerging organisations. After undergoing a successful dissemination period, we developed the content of the workshop together, determining the sessions and speakers responsible for them. She was present during the implementation of the project as well.

She graduated with a degree in Middle Eastern studies at the Yerevan State University and participated in study and research programmes at Missouri State University (US), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel) and the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). As part of the Fellowship Scheme, she stayed in Istanbul between October 2014 – May 2015 and carried out research on women's role in post-war reconciliation process at the Peace Education Application and Research Centre of Boğaziçi University. She is currently continuing her studies as a Master's student at Sabancı University Cultural Studies programme with full-scholarship she was granted after her fellowship.



## SONA DILANYAN

In the recent years, I had been very much exposed to Turkey through traveling and different cross-border programmes; however when the Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme was launched I realized that it could become a milestone for a qualitatively new period for the civil society efforts, an opportunity to transition from short-term exposures to building sustainable, longer term personal and institutional relationships. Working in the field of conflict resolution, my main motivation for becoming part of this programme was to foster professional capacity on both sides that the border divides.

During my nine month long fellowship at Boğaziçi University, I had the opportunity to work with the various divisions of the university - from research centres to student clubs, thus establishing close links at multiple levels. Through conducting interactive classes and workshops I shared with students some of the theoretical and practical dimensions of conflict resolution work, while also working on research projects at the Peace Education Application and Research Centre. During my stay in Turkey, through participation in conferences and scholarly gatherings, I strived to be an active part of the academic discourse on history, memory and conflict that

## BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY PEACE EDUCATION APPLICATION AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Boğaziçi University Peace Education Application and Research Centre (BU-PEARC) works towards creating a culture of peace and non-violent transformation of conflicts in formal and non-formal educational settings. Collaborating with an Armenian researcher working in the field of conflict transformation through the Fellowship Scheme gave our centre a chance to explore ways about how to deal with established narratives in the Turkish and Armenian educational systems. The immersion aspect of the Fellowship Scheme allowed us to get to know Sona Dilanyan and her inspiring work at the Imagine Centre for Conflict Transformation better. Having the chance to know other fellows and hosts was also an enriching experience.

Considering the fact that there has been no diplomatic relations between the two countries as well as the dominant discourse of otherification in media and text books, hosting a fellow from Armenia was a humble but powerful step towards transforming established paradigms. We believe that the education system and media play an important role in establishing these paradigms and this is where the seeds for transformation should be planted.



Boğaziçi University Peace Education Application and Research Centre carries out various projects and research activities and organises workshops, conferences and trainings in cooperation with instructors, students, volunteers, civil society and media organisations for peaceful resolution of conflicts and dissemination of a culture of peace in educational settings.

were being articulated both at Boğaziçi and other universities in Turkey. Given the university's importance in the public life of Turkey, the programme was also an opportunity to be exposed to many civil society organisations and activist circles.

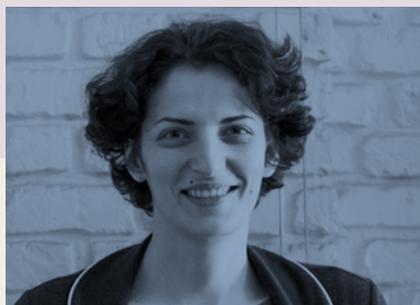
In terms of advancing cross-border cooperation, I found it is quite easy to establish links between civil society actors in Armenia and Turkey, particularly since the contexts and environments are quite similar. However when it comes to formal educational exchanges between universities, numerous barriers persist mostly because of the lack of diplomatic relations. As a result, the scholarly and student communities of the two countries are largely working in isolation. Cooperation in higher education is one of the areas where I am planning to explore possible pathways after my fellowship in cooperation with my host organisation and institutions in Armenia.

Along with my personal and professional development, one of my biggest takeaways from the Fellowship Scheme was understanding the diversity within Turkey in terms of ethnicity, religion, class, ideology and social and political life in general. Gaining deeper understanding of the complexities of this social landscape and the various social issues helped me better contextualize the Turkish-Armenian conflict.

As part of our work at the BUPEARC, we collaborate with Boğaziçi University students from the Social Services Club. Sona Dilanyan gave a lecture to them sharing her experiences with Armenian and Azerbaijani youth and conducted a workshop. Sona also introduced Imagine Centre's work on teaching history to some members of the Faculty of Education and suggested holding a panel with academics, history teachers and students about teaching history in both countries. Sona also delivered a presentation at the International Peace Journalism Summit hosted by a BUPEARC member Nilüfer Pembecioğlu from Istanbul University. We also appreciated Sona's support throughout the year in planning panels and workshops, where she had a chance to meet academics working in the field.

We believe that lack of communication is the biggest gap in relations between the two countries. Foundation's 'Beyond Borders' initiative certainly created a space for better communication. Increasing language and culture courses in both countries may enhance this communication. To have more solid outcomes from the project, it would also help to know more about the work of all Host Organisations to be able to develop strategies for addressing conflicting issues efficiently. As BUPEARC, we believe planning for sustainable workshop programmes in areas where both countries feel challenged, such as conflict transformation, gender equality, environmental awareness, human rights and peace journalism will be most valuable.

She received professional and independent curatorial training at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Armenia and at the l'École du Magasin, which is a contemporary art school in France. She worked as a curator for many exhibitions and projects. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she stayed in Istanbul between October 2014 – April 2015, where she worked on the archives of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions as well as the archives of SALT Research for her research on urban life in the 19th century and beginning of 20th century in Anatolian cities with dense Armenian population. She continued her work in Istanbul with the fellowship she received from SALT Research and based on the findings of her research she curated the exhibition 'Empty Fields' held at SALT Galata in Istanbul in April 2016.



## SALT RESEARCH

SALT Research brings together and presents to the use of public comprehensive information and document sources on contemporary art, architecture, design, urbanisation, social and economic history by going beyond linear historiography, material-dependant studies and traditional educational branches. It develops programmes aimed at experimental thinking and research by assessing social change and transformation from a critical and multi-dimensional perspective.

## MARIANNA HOVHANNISYAN

My professional interests are in a research-based, curatorial practice, which I attempt as a way to coax out necessary vantage points onto contemporary conditions, specifically the ways in which gaps in history seem to structure our culture and very society. The motivation for me to apply for the EU-funded Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme came out from the need to encounter the consequences of the 1915 Armenian Genocide and the proposed fellowship opportunity was a great match with my interests. I aimed to experience the idea of fragmentation in-situ, in Turkey, but through the frameworks that archive-contemporary art relationship might offer. I was also interested in working with SALT, a contemporary art centre that regularly explores new subjects and 'yet-unknown' histories in its exhibitions.

During my fellowship, I researched in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), an archive of Protestant community formed around 1820s-30s in the Ottoman Empire and developed until 1990s. The caretaker of the archive is the American Research Institute in Istanbul, and SALT provides a platform for possible research. The core idea was to investigate social, cultural and political traces of formerly dominant

## SALT RESEARCH

SALT is a not-for-profit cultural institution in public service, engaging in research projects, exhibitions, conferences and public programmes across two venues in Istanbul and one in Ankara. SALT Research assembles extensive resources to contribute to local and regional memory. The archives focus on artistic production post 1960s; the built environment, design, urbanism; and the economic and social history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Resources that stem from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards give emphasis to individuals and local communities to recognize different ethnicities, and a diversity of voices and perspectives.

Marianna Hovhannisyan's fellowship thanks to the Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme that took place in 2014-2015 has been a very effective example of SALT's collaborations with a range of researchers and institutions on collaborative archival projects. Hovhannisyan was invited to study the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) Archive in which the Armenian Protestant Community of the Ottoman Empire is exhaustive. Her research focused on the documents written in Armenian and the photography collection. The catalogued materials will be available online via [saltresearch.org](http://saltresearch.org) as part of the American Board archives.

Armenian community in Anatolia, especially those Armenians who were Protestants and field-work partners with missionaries. This research has been transformed into an exhibition idea-proposal by me, which will have its culmination in 2016 in SALT. Apart from the context-content sensitive essence of the fellowship, the offer by SALT to continue my work with them in Istanbul after the end of the Fellowship Scheme and to curate a position in the exhibition about this archive is one of the desired professional outcomes.

The structure and goals of the fellowship have been very supportive to have a multifarious experience in Istanbul. It provided the necessary time and opportunity for any long-term and research-oriented work and experiences to emerge. Due to the nature of my work, I had some occasions to be embarrassed by the degrees how history, memory and common knowledge about Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were inaccessible, underrepresented or simply missing. This 'unknownability' evident in both communities, Armenian and Turkish, neither allows the Turkish society to question their past, nor Armenians to find a civic discourse in the context of Genocide.

I would like to see more creative people involved in these kinds of institutional collaborations, especially artists from the field of contemporary art. Art offers points shared between creative discourses by which to develop frameworks for the normalisation process and its deconstruction, as well. More importantly, it deals with different creative ways to approach the very present.

The encounter with the archive and her experience on archival thinking enabled Marianna to develop an exhibition proposal which "provides a critical set-up to which to render community perspectives through these archives".

In Turkey, there is certainly a need of experts specialized in Armeno-Turkish (Turkish written in Armenian Script) and even in Armenian handwriting, to transcribe the manuscripts and assess them properly. This is a critical hurdle that could only be overcome by closer cooperation between institutions in Turkey and Armenia, in expert and researcher collaborations, as well as language courses. This fellowship gives the chance to the Armenian researchers to come to Turkey and to discover legacies of the Armenian community within different archives and across local narratives. Also, it creates the means and the framework for providing experts with language courses at the universities or other institutions in Turkey. Ultimately, all these options offer different ways to approach the past as well as the present and to develop creative discourses of cooperation between both countries.

She received her Bachelor's Degree from the Turkology Department of Yerevan State University. She is the coordinator of the Armenian edition of the news website ermenihaber.am. As a journalist she covered subjects like Turkey-Armenia relations, the Armenians living in Turkey and the Armenian Genocide and made numerous interviews on these topics. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she stayed in Istanbul between October 2014 – February 2015 and worked at CNN Türk. She covered many stories and made interviews on cultural, social and political developments in Turkey as well as the Armenian community in Istanbul, which were broadcast by CNN Türk.



CNN Türk news channel covers local and international news, working with prominent news agencies both in Turkey and around the world. With its communication network composed of a website, mobile platforms and a radio channel, it helps large masses access news.

## ASTGHİK IGITYAN

I had a lot of reasons to apply to this programme, but perhaps the most important one was to work at one of the leading mainstream televisions in Turkey, interact with my colleagues from Turkey and get to know Turkey from inside. As a Turkologist-journalist, I have been covering issues about Turkey and Armenian-Turkish relations for years, and at a certain point it became almost necessary to acknowledge that Turkey is living out there and just at that point Hrant Dink Foundation's Fellowship Scheme open call was announced. Lucky me.

At CNN Türk, during the entire programme, I learned and experienced a lot of things. Every new day brought new experiences, new skills, and made me more professional. It was a period of learning and working at the same time.

Perhaps the most striking experience in Turkey was to get to know the Turkish society, to see a lot of new people who are quite open minded and ready to share our pain, to accept the historical truth and at the same time to look for the peaceful ways for normalisation.

During my fellowship, I improved myself both professionally and personally. As a journalist I learned a lot from the experience on news-making

## CNN TÜRK

When CNN Türk was asked to participate in the fellowship scheme, we were very excited as the programme would help strengthen the interaction between the journalists in two countries. Astghik Igityan, our colleague from ermenihaber.am, worked at the news desk for four months as if she were a natural member of the team. She almost became integrated with her desk. Her presence here helped the staff at the news desk to be more open to the political, economic, cultural and sociological events about Armenia. It also helped especially the foreign news department to expand its contacts in Armenia. The media has always played and will always play an important role in the Turkey-Armenia normalisation process. For that reason, opportunities for journalists of both countries to socialize with each other are very valuable for the normalisation process.

As Astghik Igityan knew Turkish, she had an advantage while covering news both for CNN Türk News Desk as well as her own media organisation. Her knowledge of the language helped her act faster. In terms of being able to communicate with the rest of the people at the news desk, it was very important for us that the fellow spoke Turkish. Being able to communicate only in English reduces the number of people you

process in Turkey. As a Turkologist, I learned a lot about today's Turkey and Turkish society, and of course improved my Turkish. Personally, the full-time engagement at CNN Türk and, living all alone in a huge city like Istanbul, made me stronger and much more motivated for future opportunities.

In my field, the biggest problem between the two countries is the hate speech that is present in the media and the absence of cross-border cooperation between journalists and media. In my personal opinion, it's almost impossible to find a solution to the problem, when there is no connection between us. We need to talk, work together and be ready to listen to each other so that we could move on some day, some soonest day...

can work together or get information from at the news desk. For that reason, knowing Turkish is always an advantage.

During the time she stayed in Istanbul, our fellow talked to Etyen Mahçupyan, former chief advisor of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. She also made news on Armenians living in Turkey. We also kept in touch with her after she left Turkey. CNN Türk closely followed the centenary of the 1915 events and the process that came after. Having a colleague and a friend who has previously worked with us in Armenia made great contribution to our work in terms of accessing news sources there. The Fellowship Scheme also helped us establish contacts with sources in Armenia, while covering the demonstrations against the increase in electricity prices in June 2015.

Generally speaking, the two sides have a challenge in the field of journalism. As it is relatively difficult to get interviews from the political sources in Armenia, we sometimes have difficulty in conveying the perspective of Armenian politicians. Even though the journalists of the two countries are very open towards each other, the same level of openness is still un-established between politicians. Sometimes, the contacts can be established only at the level of think-tanks or civil society organisations. It goes without saying that one of the most important challenges is the logistics problems preventing journalists from doing their job comfortably. For instance, as the border is closed, there are not frequent flights and our colleagues holding a grey-coloured passport (service passport) cannot enter Armenia without obtaining a special permit. Of course the reason for all these problems is political and the solution lies in the normalisation of the relations between the two countries.

He received his Bachelor's and Master's Degree in International Relations from the Yerevan State University. He took courses on International Politics and Scandinavian Government and Politics from the University of Oslo and Public Diplomacy and International Relations from Tufts University Fletcher School of Law. He worked for public and non-governmental organisations in various countries. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, between October 2014 – February 2015, he carried out research on foreign policy, peace-building and conflict resolution at the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV). His article titled 'The EU's Niche in the New South Caucasus: Old Partners, New Challenges' was published by TESEV.



#### DANIEL KHACHATRYAN

I was a fellow at TESEV, a Turkish think-tank based in Istanbul. I was involved in the foreign policy programme of the organisation. My focus was mainly on the Ukraine crisis, as well as the EU-South Caucasus relations, EU-Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia relations. In my research paper I analysed the recent developments in the region, by giving some predictions for possible developments as far as the EU and South Caucasus are concerned.

It was very important for me to be in Turkey because of several reasons. First of all, I am an Armenian and I am a professional in international relations, so it was very interesting for me to physically be present in Turkey especially in 2015, which is an important year for me and for all Armenians all over the world. Secondly, I could have my contribution to the Armenia-Turkey normalisation process, modest yet an important contribution. On the other hand, it was very important to see how a Turkey-based think-tank worked. As far as I am concerned, it is not so different from the Armenian research institutions.

At the moment, Armenia and Turkey do not have any official cooperation or dialogue, and in that regard, my personal relations and contacts



Within the framework of the Foreign Policy Programme, TESEV carries out activities with a view to ensuring that a pluralist participation understanding, dialogue, access to information and transparency become dominant in Turkey's foreign policy. In line with this goal, it contributes to solving the problems in Turkey and in the neighbouring region, through research and meetings.

#### TESEV FOREIGN POLICY PROGRAMME

Being part of the Fellowship Scheme has been an invaluable experience for our organisation TESEV as it was a significant step taken towards a better established societal collaboration between Turkey and Armenia. As civil society efforts towards normalisation play a pivotal role in achieving sustained normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia by enhancing societal dialogue, expanding professional links as well as promoting cultural and educational activities, we believe that this Fellowship Scheme could have an impact in shaping the future of Turkey-Armenia relations.

As an organisation which has been on working the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia for a considerable amount of time, TESEV was delighted to have participated in the Fellowship Scheme as a host organisation. Hosting a fellow from Armenia not only strengthened our professional links with Armenia, but also provided us with a unique opportunity to enhance our knowledge and get better insight about the current political dynamics of Armenia and the South Caucasus. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that we established solid personal relations with our fellow, which we will always cherish.

in Turkey are very important for me. TESEV staff was amazingly friendly and helpful for me, both personally and professionally - this is really an important gift.

So, for peoples of Armenia and Turkey who are interested in the normalisation of this process, such a fellowship opportunity is very important. Thus I would like to invite people to be more engaged and proactive in this process because it is our responsibility to try to overcome our issues, to solve them and move forward.

Our fellow has been of great significance for our institution during the time he collaborated with us. He assisted us with our on-going projects about the dialogue with the Armenian Diaspora as well as the European Union and foreign policy. Within the framework of one of our projects, he wrote an article, 'The EU's Niche in the South Caucasus: Old Partners, New Challenges', in which he dwelled upon the possible steps to be taken by the EU towards the South Caucasus in order to define its role in the region by focusing on the recent developments in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia.

He received his Bachelor's Degree in Political Sciences from the Yerevan State University and his Master's Degree in Digital Anthropology from the University College London, UK. He carried out the fieldwork for his thesis titled 'The impact of digital journalism in the context of the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul' in Istanbul, at Agos newspaper. He worked as a journalist and social media editor for the Yerevan-based civilnet.am online news channel. As part of the Fellowship Scheme, he stayed in Istanbul between October 2014 - May 2015, where he joined the change.org team and worked on the campaigns of the organisation in Eastern Europe and Western Asia.



## change.org

Change.org enables people all around the world to start petitions on various social and political issues and draw global attention to different rights violations, demands and aid campaigns. It aims at encouraging people to personally create the change they wish to see.

### SARGIS KHANDANYAN

In the last few years, I was actively involved in Armenia-Turkey normalisation process as a journalist and an active citizen participating in different events and activities organised by civil society organisations of both countries. During this time I understood that to better understand the reality of the neighbouring country and to make bigger impact, I needed to spend some time of my work and life in Turkey in order to contribute to the normalisation process in a more intensive way.

Having done research on online political and social activism in Armenia, it was quite productive to spend 8 months at change.org's Istanbul hub to research the parallel reality in Turkey, to draw comparative lines between experiences of online activism in both countries and to see how it impacts peace and normalisation processes.

The most transforming experience that I had during my fellowship was in fact my physical presence in Turkey. It was important to develop the ways of integration into the society, to talk to the people about the past and the future of two nations, to establish your presence as an Armenian in the multicultural and politically diverse society of Turkey. On the other hand, it was quite striking for me to learn about the other face of society,

### CHANGE.ORG

At Change.org, we were very excited about the possibility to host a fellow through the Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme as we believed it would allow us to understand the issues and potential of Armenia in the field of online campaigning for social change. We had Sargis Khandanyan as our fellow and it was a perfect match since, as a journalist, Sargis was very much involved in the social change discourse in Armenia.

He was also new media and digital media savvy and understood the issues of the country quite well. By hosting Sargis, we had a window opened into the Armenian social sphere right in our office through his eyes as well as the campaigns he was supporting through change.org. In a similar fashion, Sargis got to understand the social issues and struggles within Turkey and could draw on parallels or differences. We designed campaign support together with Sargis and throughout his fellowship which lasted 8 months, he got to learn all about online campaigning. Sargis more than doubled the active users in Armenia and got them socially active and showed the power of audience in online campaigning.

We were sad when the Fellowship Scheme ended, because that meant that the capacity built over this time would have no more resources, no

which is not very much interested in the normalisation process of the two countries and has very limited information about the common past and history.

This fellowship was an important period of time for establishing contacts with individuals and institutions in Turkey, which is promising for further cooperation and development of dialogue. As a researcher in the field, it was quite useful to experience myself as a practitioner of digital communications and activism. One of the most important achievements for me was that I got involved with the activities of the Hrant Dink Foundation and became a part of the community who carries Hrant Dink's legacy.

I believe that what has been done on Turkey-Armenia normalisation process is just the preamble of the way. We need to remove the obstacles, invite more people, spread the information on the things done so far and diversify the areas of cooperation. We lack proper information about each other and we need to push our societies and governments to work better and faster in order to build the bridge between Armenia and Turkey.

more people as brilliant as Sargis would be leading it. After the end of the EU-funded Fellowship Scheme, we made efforts to raise funds for the continuation of Sargis' fellowship, but unfortunately none of the grant-making foundations related to social movements showed any interest. We hope that Sargis in the future will make use of this experience back in Armenia and now that online campaigning has reached a new height in Armenia, Armenians will take on the work that was started. The Fellowship Scheme opened a whole new window to both countries.

She is an art critic, curator and cultural journalist. She received her Master's Degree in Art History from the Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts. From 2010 to 2012, she was the director of the Fine Arts Department at the Armenian Centre for Contemporary Experimental Art. She worked as the curator of many exhibitions and projects in various countries. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she researched the collection, current exhibitions, library and archive of the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art between October 2014 - March 2015. She also organised a public video screening for her video entitled 'Motifs vs. Themes vs. Attitudes: Video Art from Armenia and Turkey'.



## SEDA SHEKOYAN

I used films and videos from Armenia and Turkey while presenting the project 'Motifs vs. Themes vs. Attitudes' at the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art in March 2015. This exhibition was organised within the scope of the Artists' Film International project carried out by the Whitechapel Gallery, with the participation of Istanbul Modern. Many artists from various countries participated in the project. Apart from this project, I used my fellowship to get familiarized with the permanent collection of Istanbul Modern.

When we talk about art, we are in fact contemplating on Turkey-Armenia relations and different approaches. 'Motif' on the other hand, is important not only for art but also for bringing together art and people. It has two different meanings in various languages: one meaning expresses the type/form of the relationship between people and the other one expresses an element of painting.

Artists and curators from Armenia and Turkey need to understand their respective motifs and try to find spaces to bring them together. Another reason for me to come to Istanbul was my wish to discover the art environment here. People at the Istanbul Modern have greatly helped me in achieving this, I really appreciate their assistance.

## ISTANBUL MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Participating in the Fellowship Scheme as a host organisation was of critical importance for the vision of Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, an institution that has international collaboration in many areas through temporary and permanent exhibitions, art events, its library collection and cinema programme. Fellows working together and producing joint projects with the team of curators of Istanbul Modern play an important role for the continuation of art creation in both countries. Sharing the art work from Armenia with museum visitors through art events and opening new areas of creative production between the two countries are among the priorities of cultural institutions. For that reason, some of the international exhibitions organised at the Istanbul Modern focus especially on the cultural structure of Turkey's neighbouring region with a view to generating new information, opening new discussion topics, and we try to make this interaction last through our archive and publications.

As a curator and art historian, Seda Shekoyan worked with our team at the Istanbul Modern between October 2014 and 2015, making research primarily on the works of art in the museum collection; content of past, future and present exhibitions; and the artists participating in exhibitions as well



Istanbul Museum of Modern Art hosts interdisciplinary events in order to bring the artistic creativity of Turkey to large cohorts and to share the cultural identity of the country with the international art scene. The Museum collects and preserves modern and contemporary art productions and opens them to the access of art lovers with an international vision.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Fellowship Scheme was Istanbul Modern, SALT Research and Anadolu Kültür opening their doors to artists from Armenia. Such an interaction was extremely important for a young artist like me working in Armenia, interested in international relations and following Turkey-Armenia relations.

New life experiences, different lifestyles and events are indispensable for curatorship. The curator creates new processes and events for the artists to create their work; and these generate new experiences and relations. This is exactly the same thing as politics. In a way, what the curator really does is politics.

Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme provided new platforms to participants, artists, curators and professionals from different disciplines to meet and collaborate with each other. These platforms can be transformed into real and long-lasting processes that could be sustained and provide us with a political horizon as well.

as their work. In tandem with this, in an effort to get to know the art production scene in Turkey, she followed the events organised by various institutions. She prepared a selection of artists whose work was exhibited at Istanbul Modern's collection exhibition 'Past and Future' and organised an exhibition tour from her own curatorial perspective. She helped publications, especially on the art of Armenia, to be added to the library collection. On March 19, 2015, within the framework of Artists' Film International 2014-2015 programme, she made a presentation and screened a video focusing on contemporary video art, entitled 'Motifs vs. Themes vs. Attitudes: Video Art from Armenia and Turkey'. During the event, through the videos produced after 2000 featuring the work of artists from different generations from Turkey and Armenia such as Tigran Khachatryan, Ovsanna Shekoyan, Diana Hakobyan, Sefer Memişoğlu, Gülsün Kara-mustafa and Ali Kazma, she pointed out to the common issues of the two neighbouring countries in the field of art, the common history of Armenia and Turkey, their present situation and possible intertwined future, as well as their common history, culture and way of living.

Considering all this work and cultural interactions, we believe more information needs to be generated for neighbouring countries to create spaces to share artistic productions, and to make visible and strengthen the historic, cultural and artistic ties between Turkey and Armenia. Creating archives and art work in the languages of both countries, and open it to public access, plays a crucial role in implementing new joint projects. We would also like to underline that increasing research and fellowship programmes as well as guest artist/curator and academic exchange programmes between the two countries would be extremely effective in opening new fields.

He received his Bachelor's Degree from the Department of Armenian Language and Literature of Yerevan State University and his Master's Degree with his thesis on the Literature of the Armenian Diaspora. He worked as a researcher at the Manuk Abeghyan Literature Institute at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. He was a lecturer of Western Armenian classes at the Armenian Virtual University. With the *Fellowship Scheme*, he continued his research on Diaspora literature at Istanbul Şehir University Centre for Modern Turkish Studies and gave Western Armenian courses as a visiting lecturer between November 2014 - May 2015. He continues his studies at the Sabanci University Cultural Studies Programme, where he received a scholarship after he completed the Fellowship Scheme.



#### HAROUT MARASHLIAN

There were many reasons for me to participate in the Fellowship Scheme. I was interested in the opportunities that the programme could offer. First of all, I was fascinated by Constantinople. The Western Armenian Literature saw its most glorious days in this city and in the last 200 years, the tree of literature grew further, gave fruits and these fruits got scattered all around the world. My second reason was to be able to take a closer look into the Turkey-Armenia relations, if not to contribute to them, and be able to see the problem better, as this issue came to the agenda quite often recently. All this was because the stance of Hrant Dink was very thrilling and appealing to me, even from far away.

During my stay in Istanbul, as part of my fellowship, I met people working in the field of literature, academics teaching literature and literature lovers. I observed an interest in many of them towards Armenian literature, which was good news. However, for various reasons, this interest did not go beyond a professional one. Yet, both now and in the future, I would like to see a more scientific connection or interest in this field. Science accommodates no limitations, it develops and effects other fields as well. Science should be free in the strictest sense of the word, it should not be enslaved.

#### ISTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR MODERN TURKISH STUDIES

Istanbul Şehir University hosted Harout Marashlian as a visiting lecturer within the framework of the Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme. During his stay in Istanbul, Harout not only conducted his own academic work but also taught Western Armenian classes. About ten students attended this class which was opened in our University for the first time. The class was successful and afterwards, two of the students who were willing to learn Armenian at a more advanced level applied for two courses organised abroad and were admitted with scholarship. We hope that Armenian classes will become permanent as a result of this collaboration that started with Harout.

Throughout his stay, Harout actively participated in many academic and social events at the university, benefited from the facilities of the school in a productive manner and established strong relations with many Turkish academics and students. Both Istanbul Şehir University and Harout experienced a very productive process, developing friendship and ties.

We believe it is a big gain for our institution that an academic from Armenia came to teach in our school and was received here with love and



Istanbul Şehir University Centre for Modern Turkish Studies carries out research on literature, cinema, history, anthropology, sociology, and political sciences. Research topics include history and culture of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey, Armenian literature and language, comparative literature, cinema and documentary work.

I found out that none of the universities in Istanbul had a specially-designated department for Armenian Language and Literature or Armenian Studies. There is not even a centre working in this field. Such lack of interest in the language of a neighbouring country is surprising. Even though it does not guarantee good relationships, the existence of centres or departments of this type is always important in terms of getting to know the other party.

So there are so many things to be done from this perspective. I believe that translation work could also make important contributions to further developing and deepening of the relations. Translation of books from Armenian into Turkish mainly focus on pieces belonging to the Ottoman period; and the Eastern Armenian literature of the recent period is often neglected. Such problems can in fact be solved easily.

The Fellowship Scheme was also valuable because it was able to bring together young people facing same difficulties, broaden our horizons and change our perspectives and encourage each one of us to do useful things in our societies and to enrich our culture. The fellows had more or less the same goal: share experience with those who are interested and gain knowledge on issues of interest we did not know...I believe we all were able to achieve this goal.

Even though my stay in Istanbul was very good, the most memorable part of my fellowship was the day I spent in Kars. I had been dreaming of this trip for a long time. During the trip that lasted a couple of days, I was able to see Kars and Erzurum, two cities whose present day is as anguishing as their past.

appreciation. Harout's presence here, as well as the Armenian class he taught, is an achievement in Armenian cultural studies and an important step in diminishing prejudices.

We believe the most important element in bringing Turkey-Armenia relations to a desirable level is mutual recognition. Learning the language and getting to know the culture of the other party could be a way of discussing the problems of a shared history together and through dialogue, and it could help in finding solutions to the existing problems of the two countries in the medium-term. For that reason we believe that initiatives aiming at increasing and intensifying the cultural interaction between the peoples of two countries and especially between young people should be supported.

She received her Bachelor's Degree in Linguistics and Intercultural Communication and her Master's Degree in European Studies from the Yerevan State Linguistic University. She also has a Master's Degree in Theory and Practice in Human Rights from the University of Essex. She worked at Business and Human Rights Departments of the University of Essex and the Danish Institute for Human Rights. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she carried out a comparative study on human right practices at Istanbul Bilgi University Human Rights Law Research Centre between October 2014 - April 2015 and wrote the paper 'Human Rights Costs of Development : Case of Two Neighbours - Armenia and Turkey'.



## SOFIA MANUKYAN

My background is in human rights. I am particularly interested in how the private sector affects the human rights, i.e. the communities they operate and/or invest in. Since I have been interested in environmental protection and movements in Armenia, I was thus interested in companies that do mining business in Armenia as well as in the region. Eventually I decided to research on state policies in the sphere of energy and natural resources in Turkey and Armenia, which companies invest in these countries and how they affect the human rights of the communities in both countries.

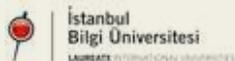
I carried out this research at my host organisation, Istanbul Bilgi University, which kindly offered me the space and its library facilities. There was little interaction with the academics of the host organisation, as well as with projects that were possibly taking place at the university.

Living in Istanbul was revealing. For example, as I learned Turkish, it turned out that there are many words in Turkish that we are using at home, and although I often wondered about their origin, I had little knowledge that these words were also used in Turkish. Another revelation was understanding that the Armenian Genocide and generally the Armenians are not the biggest issue for Turks. I also realised that the big

## BILGI UNIVERSITY HUMAN RIGHTS LAW RESEARCH CENTRE

We hosted Sofia Manukyan at Istanbul Bilgi University Human Rights Law Research Centre as part of the Fellowship Scheme. Bilgi has always been among the academic institutions that are sensitive to Turkish-Armenian relations. We have been involved in numerous academic activities on this topic in the past. From that perspective, we consider the Fellowship Scheme as a prominent step forward and we are delighted to have been able to contribute to this valuable initiative.

During her stay, our fellow Sofia conducted a comprehensive comparative research entitled 'Human Rights Costs of Development: Case of Two Neighbours - Armenia and Turkey'. We also had the opportunity to involve her in some of our on-going projects such as the Scholars at Risk Network's 'Academic Freedom Violations Monitoring' project. Development issues and academic freedom violations are common concerns of both countries. Therefore, Sofia's research proved to be rather fruitful and empathetic. We have only encountered minor difficulties with regard to the language, as some of her research work required her to go through the Turkish Court Cases, in particular the Council of State rulings. We could provide her the references and a short summary of the content of



Bilgi University Human Rights Law Research Centre provides education and carries out research in the fields of human rights law and humanitarian law. The Centre contributes to the development and dissemination of human rights law in Turkey, through trainings provided to the members of various civil society organisations, professional organisations, bar associations and the high judiciary.

portion of the society has 'fears' towards the others - Armenians, Kurds, Alevis, LGBTs, even women. The best narrative of this revelation was the film *Nefret (Hate)* by Hakan Alp.

My research allowed me to see some common traits between Turkish and Armenian style of governing, which has mainly proven to be corrupt and not transparent. This has come to be an alternative common feature between Turkey and Armenia as usually people concentrated on cultural similarities in their comparative analysis.

Overall, my stay in Turkey made it more or less clear for me that in the current state of politics in Turkey, dominated by a conservative Islamic party, with gradually minimising possibilities for the 'others' to demand equality, as well as with the Armenian issue, along with the Kurdish issue being a matter of a trend for many academics, rather than an issue for sincere advancing of own democracy, there can hardly be any reconciliation, unless foreign circumstances push for such.

the rulings. However, sometimes it turned out to be difficult to find up-to-date materials in English that covered such controversial and evolving issues in a comprehensive fashion. We look forward to receiving our next fellow from Armenia. We believe that providing language courses, as a part of the orientation programme, prior to the fellow's arrival to the host country will enhance the efficiency of the joint work.

She received her Bachelor's Degree from the Department of Armenian Language and Literature and her Master's Degree from the Department of Modern Armenian Literature of Yerevan State University and she gave lectures on the literature of the Armenian Diaspora. In 2012, she conducted a research in the field of Diaspora Studies at Fribourg University in Switzerland. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she gave Eastern Armenian language courses at Kadir Has University Lifelong Education Centre as a visiting lecturer between October 2014 - May 2015. She is currently preparing her PhD thesis on poetry movements of Armenians in Istanbul for the Department of Modern Armenian Literature of Yerevan State University.



Kadir Has University's Language Programmes for Peace and Cooperation were launched to assist the new generation in learning different languages, taking into consideration the potential of the country to establish cooperation with different countries in line with Turkey's foreign policy. Under the programme, Russian, Armenian, Persian, Arabic and Greek language courses are organised in order to develop economic cooperation with neighbouring countries and to sustain regional peace.

### **SONA MNATSAKANYAN**

I applied to the Fellowship Scheme for two reasons. First of all, getting to know the life in Istanbul and seeing it more specifically would be a great opportunity for my research entitled 'Armenians of Istanbul in the Republican Era and Poetry'. Furthermore, the proposal of Kadir Has University Lifelong Education Centre to teach Eastern Armenian language would enhance my experience as a lecturer. It would not be wrong to say that my first aim was overshadowed by the second, because I spent most of my time teaching; something I really enjoyed a lot. I also attended Turkish language courses. I continued to learn Turkish even after I went back to Armenia and I started to develop an interest in the similarities and differences between Armenian and Turkish languages. During the time I was teaching Armenian, I came up with an idea to start a blog to teach Armenian to foreigners through songs. This blog that I am still preparing will be a new medium in teaching languages based on group work.

Seeing Armenian as a foreign language and trying to teach it also broadened my horizon professionally. I even received a proposal to teach Armenian to foreigners during a summer school.

### **KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY LIFELONG EDUCATION CENTRE**

As the only institution teaching Eastern Armenian in Turkey, we believe that language is very important for peace. For that reason, within the framework of our 'Languages for Peace' project, as the Lifelong Education Centre, we think we have to first speak the language of our neighbours. For four years, by overcoming various challenges to bring teachers from Armenia, we could have a very successful educational process.

The Fellowship Scheme gave the opportunity to institutions from the two neighbouring countries that were willing to carry out joint initiatives and come closer, but were not able to succeed because of various reasons, namely financial difficulties. It is a known fact that such collaboration is needed in the process of normalisation of relations between the two countries.

Our fellow gave beginner and intermediate level Eastern Armenian lessons at the Lifelong Education Centre, as part of the courses we opened three times in one academic year. Feedback we received from the participants reveals that this course was extensive both professionally and emotionally.

Even though it is a new area for me, I can see the shortcomings in this field. For instance, lack of auxiliary material and online guides for learning Armenian and lack of sources that could teach the difference between Western Armenian and Eastern Armenian to foreigners (especially to those who speak Turkish) are among the major drawbacks. This problem will not be solved unless the experts from both countries carry out joint work in this field.

The problem is that there is no academic interest in Turkey for the Armenian language. This is of course directly related to Turkey's policy of denial. This being the case, in the best case scenario, people learn Armenian as an 'exotic' language and it is portrayed to the society as such. If scientific circles want to change certain things about the Armenians at the level of society, they need to take steps that would go beyond teaching Armenian symbolically. And it goes without saying that this requires courage.

Just like the Armenian language seen as an 'exotic fruit', as an Armenian from Armenia, I also felt as if people saw me as an 'exotic person' when I was outside the intellectual circles. For instance, I cannot forget how a shopkeeper was surprised when he learned that I and my friend with me were Armenians. Most probably it was because he did not know any Armenians, and perhaps he thought Armenians looked like Russians. When we asked him why he thought so, he could not answer. But when we thought about it, we understood that it was because of stereotypes.

This eight month programme helped me overcome some of the prejudices and stereotypes in my mind. In fact, Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme is not over for me. It carried me to such a place that I still have so much to do.

From time to time, initiatives are made for the normalisation process between Turkey and Armenia; but as the public opinion in both countries is still not ready for this, they don't succeed. For the public opinion to become ready, meetings bringing together important stakeholders such as the civil society, academic world, media and business world should be organised parallel to the normalisation process initiatives. In this respect, the programme carried out by the Hrant Dink Foundation, once again, becomes prominent.

After studying journalism at the Caucasus Institute, she received her Master's Degree in Physics from the Yerevan State University. In 2009 she started working as a journalist and since then, she won first prizes in many journalism competitions. She carried out a project to develop citizen journalism in different regions of Armenia. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she stayed in Istanbul between November 2014 - May 2015 and carried out research at the Yuva Association on Armenian migrants living in Turkey. She is currently working as a free-lance journalist for various local and international media organisations.



## ANNA MURADYAN

When I participated in the Turkey-Armenia Journalists' Dialogue Programme of the Hrant Dink Foundation in fall 2013, it did not know that this would be the first step of a long-term relationship with Turkey.

During that one week period, I attended the conference on 'Islamized Armenians' organised by the Foundation and met an Islamized Armenian from Sivas. After the programme, I applied to the Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant to visit him and his family and to get to know them better. My aim was to listen to what they had to say and to tell this story to the readers in Armenia.

Then I came to Turkey several times. During one of my visits, I passed by Kumkapı and I saw that in this neighbourhood there were many women coming from Armenia who made their living by cleaning houses and by looking after children, sick or the elderly. I decided to apply for the Fellowship Scheme in order to make research in this field and to improve my Turkish.

During my stay in Istanbul as a fellow of the Hrant Dink Foundation, I was able to realise most of my plans. I attended various seminars and conferences and met many intellectuals and academics. I also had

## YUVA ASSOCIATION

As the Yuva Association, we previously had the chance to work with civil society organisations from Armenia, under a project for the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Armenia. For that reason, we wanted to do something regarding the situation of Armenian nationals residing in Turkey as migrants. The Fellowship Scheme came right at that time and gave us exactly what we were looking for: the opportunity to work with a researcher who could easily establish contact with Armenian migrants. Of course, hosting Anna Muradyan also gave us the opportunity to establish cross-cultural communication.

Together with Anna, we made research on the needs of Armenian migrants in Istanbul, especially considering their possible training needs such as the trainings we provided to Syrian migrants. We planned the process together and tried to guide her when she had difficulties. She had meetings with many migrants and institutions, especially in the Kumkapı neighbourhood. She compiled the findings of her research in a report, under the supervision of Ayşe Parla and our association. Based on this report, we planned activities to support migrants. In the coming period, if we can get the necessary financial support, we are planning to implement these activities.



YUVA Association carries out activities to support the social development of adults and young people in different countries and mainly in Turkey. Within this framework, it organises training programmes for adults and young people through non-formal education and carries out activities to support lifelong learning.

contact with people from different segments of the Turkish society, who had negative thoughts on Armenians.

There are many things I am taking back to Armenia with me: the results of my research on migrant Armenian women in Istanbul, new project ideas, a well-thought plan for the establishment of a migrants resource centre in Istanbul, more than twenty articles on Turkey-Armenia relations, many friends and very intense feelings...

In fact, Turkey and Armenia both have a similar attitude towards Armenian migrants living in Istanbul: Indifference. This issue is only used as a trump card by Turkey, whenever the tensions rise between the two countries. However, neither of the two parties cares about how and under which conditions these people carry out their lives. On the other hand, we also observed that the civil society in Turkey is not active in this field. Whereas, these people can assume an important role in building the peace, as they know both cultures and both countries very well. We need to support them so that they can live in dignity and give them opportunities to raise their voices and act as intermediaries for peace.

She received her Bachelor's Degree from Moscow State University of Printing Arts. As part of her graduation project, she prepared an interactive book which included manuscripts of Matenadaran Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she was as a visiting lecturer at Yıldız Technical University Faculty of Art and Design between October 2014 - May 2015 and she taught courses on 'Adobe After Effects', a software for creating motion graphics and visual effects through photography.



Yıldız Technical University Faculty of Art and Design, Department of Communication Design aims to provide education to researchers and experts in the field of interactive media design. For that purpose, it provides training to equip the students with the skill of merging the power of sound, visuals and script in a smart way in order to create experiences that develop solution-focused methods for effective communication.

#### **HAYARPI HOVHANNISYAN**

As part of the Fellowship Scheme, I was a visiting lecturer at Yıldız Technical University Faculty of Art and Design, Department of Communication Design for eight months and assisted them in the graphic design and drawing courses.

I worked with the students in order to help them expand their knowledge on 'motion graphics design' and prepare their own animation videos. For the second semester, I prepared an 'experimental design' course whereby we tried experimental printing and hand-made prints.

It was an unforgettable experience for me to work with the students. But there were also some fundamental challenges. None of the students knew English at an advanced or intermediate level, and my Turkish was poor. So the language was a divide between us. We tried to come up with some solutions. For instance, we tried to communicate with one of the students using 'Google Translate'. I highly recommend people who will come to Turkey and who will especially work with students, to learn Turkish first.

Thanks to this programme, I made many friends. I established professional contacts, which I believe will be very useful. My recommendation for future fellows from Armenia who will come to Turkey: Be as active as possible. The more people you meet, the easier it is to break the prejudices.

#### **YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF ART AND DESIGN DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DESIGN**

We are extremely pleased to see the positive influence of our guest lecturer from Armenia, whom we hosted at our university as part of the Fellowship Scheme, on our institution, faculty members and students. The Fellowship Scheme means much more to our institution than just 'one person'. This 'one person' was a huge step for our students and lecturers in going beyond the borders we have with a country we are so close geographically and culturally.

Our students were interested in the workshops of our guest lecturer organised at the Department of Communication Design. She contributed to the content of the Visual Effects Design course and she also took part as an assistant lecturer. With her sincere and refined approach in her personal relations, she increased both the visibility of her contributions as well as the visibility of the programme. Our faculty members were extremely satisfied with her performance in the courses she took.

We believe it will be very beneficial to have some activities as part of the programme that will introduce us the cultural landscape and artistic productions in Armenia.

She graduated from the United World College of the Adriatic in Trieste, Italy. She earned the Shelby Davis Award and was admitted to the University of Chicago, where she received education on comparative human development and organised seminars on issues such as racism, LGBTI rights, immigration and xenophobia under the Emerging Minds Project. As part of the Fellowship Scheme, she stayed in Yerevan between November 2014 - January 2015 and collaborated with PINK Armenia; carrying out a comparative research on the nature of the cooperation between LGBTI activist groups in Armenia and Turkey.



Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK Armenia) aims to create a safe space for LGBT people by promoting legal, psychological, social protection and well-being in Armenia. Organisation's main spheres of work include human rights protection and advocacy, sexual health and gender issues.

## MELTEM NAZ KAŞO

I envisioned crossing the border between Armenia and Turkey, not only physically but also emotionally and intellectually. Therefore, I applied to the Fellowship Scheme, in order to take advantage of the opportunity to live in Yerevan. I had no expectations whatsoever because I wished to set myself ready for surprises.

I found out that friendship knows no nationality, race or history. That the pain from the past can bond us. And we can transform it into love for today and for future generations.

Among my peers, I am known to be an enthusiastic and impatient person who wants to make things happen immediately. But what I found out in Armenia, especially when dealing with long lasting conflicts, was that patience and compassion towards those who think and feel in different ways was vital. I learned that opening of the borders, and everything else we wished to achieve through the Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme, needed long-term thinking and maturity. This is something I understood deeply through my experience in Yerevan and I believe that this will be helpful for my other projects, both personally and professionally.

## PINK ARMENIA

Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme of the Hrant Dink Foundation offers a good opportunity for exchange of expertise between the two countries. It enables creative ideas of creative people to come true, which is a beneficial factor for host organisations as well.

PINK Armenia has in fact benefited from the Fellowship Scheme by hosting a fellow who prepared a comparative study on the situation of LGBT people in Turkey and Armenia, at the same time giving the fellow the opportunity to engage more with activists, people and organisations who are experts in their respective fields. Besides, the Fellowship Scheme offered a possibility to make friends with the fellow, share ideas for future cooperation and explore both cultures.

The political agenda and pressure from ultranationalist groups have a negative impact even in the cooperation and communication of organisations in this sphere. If we did not have all these factors, communication between the LGBT human rights organisations could have been much stronger and easier.

He received his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Boğaziçi University, Master's Degree in Russian and East European Studies from the University of Birmingham and his PhD in History from Sabancı University. His published books are: *Bibliography of the Turkish-Armenian Issue* (2007), *The Ottoman Crimean War* (2010), *Kars Province under Russian Rule* (2010), *History of the Construction of Tbilisi-Gyumri-Kars Railway (1895-1899)* (with Sonya Mirzoyan, 2013). Between January - May 2015, he studied Ottoman-Russian wars in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ottoman-Russian borderlands and South Caucasus at the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies of Armenia under the guidance of Prof. Ruben Safrastyan. He is an associate professor at the Department of History of Tunceli University.



## CANDAN BADEM

I have visited Armenia several times since 2002. In July 2009, while working on a book on the history of Kars under Russian rule, I visited the Armenian National Archive and I worked there for ten days. I was allowed to read documents and order copies from them. Since the archival documents were in Russian and since practically everyone in Armenia spoke Russian, I did not need Armenian at that time.

In applying to the Hrant Dink Foundation's Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme, my idea was to spend the spring 2015 semester in Yerevan so that I could gain a better understanding of the country, gather materials for my studies and attain at least an intermediate level in Armenian language. Now after completing my fellowship, I can proudly say that I have achieved all my goals.

During my time in Yerevan I worked at the Armenian National Archive, the National Library and the Fundamental Library of the Academy of Sciences. I also visited several universities' history and Turkology departments. I gathered many copies of documents, newspaper and journal articles and books in Armenian. I discovered Armenian sources on Der-sim as well. I talked to many colleagues and academics. My knowledge

## NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

Hosting our colleague Dr. Candan Badem at our institute and exchanging views and ideas with him has been a very valuable experience, especially for the Turkology researchers. Even though our views on what happened in history were not exactly the same, it was a great pleasure for us to have met this experienced and well-equipped academic.

Candan Badem has very good knowledge of the scientific environment and the archives in Armenia. His visit as part of the Fellowship Scheme was a continuation of his previous research visits. During the time he stayed here, he conducted research in our archives for his projects. He mainly worked in our history archive and helped our experts. His knowledge of the Ottoman language was very useful for us. He also had the chance to improve his Armenian.

If the aim is to bring together historians from the two countries to dig into the depths of history and carry out research together, then this programme should definitely continue. But if the aim is just to meet each other, then this will not be of any use. History is a branch of science that



National Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies is an organisation carrying out research on the history and philology of the Near and Middle East. The Institute's main fields of research include the political and socio-economic history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic, ideological streams, and policy of Genocide; history and folklore of Kurds; and Armenian-Kurdish relations.

of Russian also helped me a lot in communicating with people from all walks of life. I also visited historical places in Armenia.

The most striking experience for me was when an old woman in the archive building asked me if I could help her find her ancestors/relatives from Erzurum who were orphaned during the Armenian Genocide. I could see the pain and hopelessness in her eyes. I also felt my helplessness.

The greatest obstacle between historians of both countries, as anybody would agree, is the question of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. While most historians in the world recognize this historical fact, most historians in Turkey are still denying the Genocide. This creates an atmosphere of hostility. While the question of Genocide is too large to be left to historians, the history of Turkey-Armenia relations is not just about the Genocide. There are other topics and there are still areas of cooperation. Armenians and Turks lived together for centuries.

I think we need more contacts between historians from Turkey and Armenia, such as symposiums and conferences, as well as learning each other's language. For example archaeologists from both countries can work in excavations both in Turkey and Armenia on the Urartu civilization. There are really very few historians in Turkey who know Armenian language. PhD students from both countries can spend one semester in the neighbouring country and learn their language. They can have academic advisors from the other side of the border.

aims at revealing historic facts. Historians should devote themselves to this purpose and strive to reveal the truth. Unfortunately, with the influence of the official narrative of history, a great majority of our Turkish colleagues are trying to deny the Armenian Genocide, rather than trying to understand it. This attitude causes not only the experts in Armenia, but all around the world, lose their respect to studies on history and historiography in Turkey. Frankly speaking, we do not care much about getting together with such 'historians'.

After studying Turkish and Hausa in France, she received her Master's Degree in Cultural Management from Istanbul Bilgi University. She worked in various cultural centres in different African countries. She worked at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Turkey, focusing on tools and media that could help cultural and artistic expressions of migrant groups in Istanbul. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she stayed in Yerevan between November 2014 - May 2015 and gave capoeira courses to women at the Women's Resource Centre, upon her initiative to use movements and music to help disadvantaged groups.t



Women's Resource Centre Armenia was founded during the post-Soviet era in Armenia with the aim to empower women to become active citizens of the community, through education and support. Women's Resource Centre Armenia is working in the field of human rights, reproductive and sexual health rights, sexual violence and women's role in the conflict resolution and peace building.

## NİL DELAHAYE

I discovered the amazing power of sports and body movements when I was working with refugee children in Istanbul, and then in Urfa. After this experience, I decided to reorient my career towards this specific activity and become a trainer for groups who would need to reclaim the autonomy of their body. When I heard about the Hrant Dink Foundation's Fellowship Scheme and the Women's Resource Centre of Armenia's work with women victims of sexual assault, I thought this could be a good opportunity for me to develop a programme especially for women. I had never been to Armenia and knew very little about this country.

Before we left for Armenia with the other fellows, Rakel Dink, the President of Hrant Dink Foundation, told us that we were going to a new place and that we should "open our hearts and our minds to receive from what is foreign to us, but also to share what we already had". I also deeply believe that one person is only as much as they can give to others, and they grow from how much they are able to receive.

I started physical activities for women in Yerevan, using the medium of 'capoeira', to propose women to re-discover their relationship to their own body. Capoeira was created by the African enslaved people in Brazil who

## WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE ARMENIA

Nil spent six months at our centre, contributing to our activities on a full-time basis. One of her tasks was to teach 'Capoeira'. Most of us had never heard about this martial art and dance, and it was thanks to her that we learnt about it. While practicing capoeira, she was also putting an emphasis on physical activity and how women could use their bodies in their everyday lives. As she incorporated a lot of Armenian traditional songs in trainings, people got more attached to capoeira. Nil trained them to be able to practice without her, so they are still continuing to practice capoeira and Nil continues to communicate with them online.

Working with Nil has been an amazing experience for women here. They appreciated her as a person because she was teaching them something new. When she told them she was Turkish, at first it was surprising for the most, as she did not fit in the image of a Turk that we had in Armenia: she was friendly. Having Nil here broke a lot of stereotypes towards our neighbours. Through her work at our centre, she became a part of our collective. Putting a special emphasis on women, women's rights, feminism and dialogue, she brought new ideas, new initiatives that could be helpful for this region, for Armenia, and also contribute to the Turkey-Armenia relations.

would flee from plantations and create communities. With capoeira, people whose bodies were dehumanized would regain the 'humanity of their body' through the use and exaltation of dance, fight, and music. When used for women in the context of Armenia, the aim became to reclaim rights over the body of self. I mean, with the women participating in the physical activities, we tried to establish a relation of existence, to be defined within space, to take pleasure for ourselves and to take pride in our appearance by becoming free from societal requirements. As such, we built a little 'community of women capoeiristas' who engage in body dialogue and dance beyond all forms of oppression.

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, as part of the International Women's Day celebrations, the group of capoeirista women trusted themselves enough to take to the streets and make a public performance in Yerevan. This courageous action means that people know naturally what is good for them and they do not need ideologies to listen to their common sense.

I hope dance and sports can bring us together more often so that we can learn to use another language to have a dialogue with each other in this age of communication breakdown between the peoples of Armenia and Turkey.

It was also interesting to travel with her. We went to Nagorno-Karabakh, maybe something that was not in her mind at all. She gave capoeira lessons to young girls and children. Karabakh is an isolated conflict zone, not frequently visited by foreigners and especially by Turkish people. Children have always been taught that Turkish people were enemies, perpetrators of massacres. But now they had in front of them a person smiling, teaching capoeira. This destroyed a lot of stereotypes in people's minds.

Our relationship didn't end after the fellowship. We want to expand our joint activities to the region and reach out to many more women. We are working on a project that could bring together feminists and activists working on women's rights and violence against women from Armenia and the Diaspora.

We believe that when a person spends some time here, works and interacts with the people on the streets, she will understand better the reality beyond politics and stereotypes. Such civil society processes should be strengthened in both societies. Such experiences change both the people living here and the perceptions of person coming here. We think this is the basis for the establishment of sustainable peace in the region, and it is also a way of dealing with the past, dealing with history and dealing with atrocities through peaceful ways and dialogue. So from that perspective, our experience with Nil was very successful. It affected more people than we imagined. Because she was not only present at our centre from nine to six, but she was constantly interacting with the fruit seller, with the people passing, with the taxi driver. She was telling us about how people were seeing her perspective, which helped us also to reflect on our mentality. Working with Nil has been an enriching experience for us. We hope that the Fellowship Scheme continues in the future, as it is quite beneficial for both sides.

She received her Bachelor's Degree from the Department of Architecture of the Middle East Technical University and her Master's Degree and PhD in Anthropology from the University of Florida. She taught anthropology and design in various universities in US, UK and Turkey. She worked as an academic at the Department of Urban Design and Landscape Architecture at Bilkent University for 12 years. Since 2012, she has been teaching anthropology and cultural change at the Department of Sociology in Istanbul Maltepe University. As part of the Fellowship Scheme, she stayed in Yerevan between February-May 2015 where she analysed the database of Caucasus Research Resource Centre and conducted research on the role of culture in re-establishing Turkey-Armenia relations.



## EMİNE ONARAN

I am originally from Ankara. But I lived in Istanbul for the last three years, teaching anthropology at a private university. I resigned before I came to Yerevan because I wanted to be in the field rather than teaching. Anthropological fieldwork involves a participatory observation of different peoples, different cultures; and that's what I wanted to do. So I am very pleased to be a real anthropologist now. The interesting thing is that when I went to Armenia, I did not find a different culture. One difference, from what I have experienced, may be that there is more diversity in Turkey.

I am very fortunate to be one of the six fellows chosen from Turkey by the Hrant Dink Foundation. Honestly I was thinking that the Foundation would prefer younger professionals or younger people who would have a lot more impact. However I am really glad that it was not the case.

In fact, it was important for me to experience Armenia, to be able to see the diversity there, and to assess the differences and commonalities with Turkey. During my fellowship, I assisted the activities of the Armenian branch of the Caucasus Research Resource Centre, which also has two other branches in Azerbaijan and Georgia. Apart from observing the

## CAUCASUS RESEARCH RESOURCE CENTRE

We are extremely happy to have met Emine Onaran, to have worked with her and especially to have seen her research methods. She carries out her research activities without being effected by borders, obstacles and diplomatic deadlocks and without compromising on her independence and scientific thinking. She was open to any sort of partnership. For that reason, it was very important for her to meet with the Armenian researchers working in the same field as her. As for us, we had the opportunity to talk with Emine about our activities on domestic economy and to exchange opinions with her before our study findings were shared with the public in Turkey.

The research activities carried out under the EU-funded programme Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process have been very useful. The Fellowship Scheme supports scientific efforts. Such projects are extremely important in terms of highlighting the absurdity of borders still remaining closed in 21<sup>st</sup> century and in terms of putting pressure on the government representatives of both sides for the opening of borders. It is obvious that political will plays a central role for the solution of the problem. However, for people to gain their freedom to



Caucasus Research Resource Centre-Armenia aims to strengthen social science research and public policy analysis in the South Caucasus through its activities carried out in Yerevan, Baku and Tbilisi. Since 2003, by sharing the data relating to its research on the internet, it has been providing open access to such data for researchers. Furthermore, it provides professional training for social science researchers.

daily life in Armenia, it was also interesting for me to observe how a research centre in Armenia conducted its day-to-day operations.

The language courses offered during my stay in Yerevan have been a perfect component of the Fellowship Scheme. As an anthropologist who has interest in linguistics, the Armenian language courses helped me get more insight about the culture. One might think that Armenian and Turkish cultures and thus languages do not have many things common, since Turkish is an Ural- Altaic language whereas Armenian is Indo-European. Yet, in spite of structural differences, there are many similarities when it comes to semantics, the ways words are used, and the overall linguistic logic. In both languages, by adding suffixes one can make longer words that are meaningful. There are also similarities in the cultural register. I lived almost 20 years in the US and there were times I had great difficulty in expressing myself in daily conversations and interpersonal relations. For instance, when you get good news, you want to say “*gözün aydın*” in Turkish, but you cannot really say it in English. Whereas, in Armenian you can say “*achked luy*” which means the exact same thing. We find the exact translations in Kurdish and Zaza. This phrase and many other similar ones are indicative of cultural similarities in the wider geographic region. At the end of the day, we are talking about a shared history and geography of 1000 years, and not only the last 100 years.

I believe that having such a Fellowship Scheme is a very relevant idea. Since there are no diplomatic relations between the two countries, grassroots level communication is the only chance for people to connect with one another.

travel, we need to increase the number of such programmes and reach out to wider portions of the society through them.

Within this scope, it might be considered to include conferences on various topics under the Fellowship Scheme. For instance, we could have courses open for everyone, carried out through questions and answers at universities. This way, it would be possible to increase not only the number of people benefiting from the experiences of the researchers but also those who get to know Turkey and the Turkish culture. Furthermore, student exchange programmes between universities could be organised as well. This exchange does not necessarily have to be a physical one, it could take place on the electronic platform as well. As the scope of the projects expands, the number of people involved in the issues we work on will also increase.

Of course, the shadow of the past is still cast on us. But what matters is our struggle against this shadow and the things we do for this struggle. The past is important, as well as the present, still, all the efforts of mankind are made for the future. From that perspective, the people of the two countries need to meet each other in order to build the future. We can fight against closed borders only by creating platforms that bring people together. Allocation of more funds to such projects is profoundly important for further extending and sustaining our activities.

She received her Bachelor's Degree in History and Political Sciences, and International Relations from Boğaziçi University, and her Master's Degree in Modern History from University of Cambridge. As a historian, artist and film producer, she works on the discourse of genocide and holocaust in Turkey. As part of the Fellowship Scheme, she worked at Gallery 25 in Gyumri between November 2014 - February 2015, creating connections between artists of both countries. She also made research for her art projects entitled 'Voices in the Dark' and 'Consumption Patterns'. As part of her work, she published the art project 'Silent Book [armenian genocide]'. She is currently continuing her research work as a PhD candidate at the Department of History and Civilisations of the European University in Florence.



## SUZAN MERYEM ROSİTA

I applied to the Fellowship Scheme to get to know Armenia at a deeper level.

Though I had my thoughts and ideas about Armenia, I wanted to take my time to speak to people and experience the country. In the beginning, I thought everything was different – from the alphabet to the way people expressed themselves.

During my fellowship, I resided in Gyumri, in the Shirak region, which is just across Kars. During and after WWI, Gyumri was the site of one of the biggest orphanages for the Genocide orphans and this small town is still buried in the ruins and memories of the major 1988 earthquake in which more than 40,000 people died and countless women and men lost their limbs and ability to work. On one of the municipality buildings, there is a clock that stopped working at 23:40 on the day of the earthquake in 1988 and it still stands still at that time.

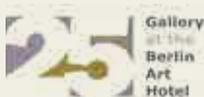
I spent many cold evenings in the warmth of families from Gyumri talking about and trying to answer questions from the past. Many times we have cried, often because the memories of the Genocide are just too painful to bear, often because we realize that now we are – literally – together again. I have often heard “I cannot believe that you are here Suzan

## GALLERY 25

With the Fellowship Scheme, we hosted Suzan Meryem Rosita at Gallery 25 for four months.

Suzan is a very active person with a unique way of thinking. Working with her has been a very different experience for us.

Gallery 25 is located inside a hotel and all the rooms of the hotel are used as exhibition areas. Bringing a whole new dimension to this concept, Suzan suggested us to exhibit in the rooms not only the works of the artists but also sections of their everyday life. She met artists working with the gallery and contributed to most of the exhibitions we organised during her fellowship. Furthermore, we pondered upon the possibility of creating programmes for visiting artists that would be held simultaneously in Turkey and Armenia. We learned from Suzan that there were people in Istanbul willing to develop and sustain visiting artists' programmes. This was good news. We need to enhance the opportunities to come together on both sides, because this is the only way of establishing dialogue. We are confident that such artistic activities will succeed and yield its fruits. Art will definitely have an impact on other fields and other areas. Because art goes beyond the most complicated relations, beyond politics, and it requires an understanding that transcends words.



Gallery 25 is a modern art gallery and a hotel hosting the exhibitions of local and international artists. It also hosts the Gyumri Biennial of Contemporary Art and apart from the gallery section, all the 15 rooms of the hotel, as well as the halls, feature the works of various artists.

(well actually, Meryem – this is what they call me here). That you recognize the Genocide and that you are ready to talk about it.” From the older generations, the *tatiks* and *babiks*, the grandmothers and grandfathers from Gyumri, I often heard “I never thought that I would see the day! That I would be able to connect with and talk to someone from Aintab, Turkey!”

Days were spent writing or discussing art with my fellow artists at Gallery 25. My writing and my art has changed completely. I believe they now have gained a more poetic character. One of my artist friends told me how he wanted to represent ‘the book of blind men’ in his paintings. He told me that he always starts his paintings with an assumption of darkness; followed up by another assumption that he will move from darkness to light. My time in Gyumri bears such a transformation or movement - from darkness to light - for me. The many encounters with artists and their families from Gyumri have helped shape my thoughts and reflections on the memory of the victim nation and reminded me of the words of a colleague of mine, Rubina Peroomian - author of various books on Armenian Genocide poetry: “I grew up with the consciousness of belonging to a victim nation. The violence committed against me and my family was not only personal but also collective, a punishment for daring to wish for a free Armenia and rise against a powerful Soviet Union. That was not long after my people had been punished for their national and human rights aspirations and annihilated by the million in the Ottoman Empire.”

This double-victimization that is reflected in Peroomian’s account is something that is felt and seen everywhere in Armenia. On a train trip from Gyumri to Yerevan, I was overwhelmed not only by the beautiful Armenian landscape – the beautiful yellowish- brown soil of the Armenian countryside is complemented by beautiful rolling hills and is surrounded by majestic mountains like Ararat -, but also by countless deserted Soviet factories that lie there like relics from a very distant past. The softness of the landscape, however, not only contrasted with the ruins of these out-dated factories but also with the hard lives of the country people who dwell around them and who have no sustainable means of making a living. Many men of the younger generation, therefore, find themselves in self-inflicted economic exile. Women stay behind. Memories and tales of the past, then, are glorious and often refer to the Ottoman Empire as a golden age. In an oral interview, one elderly man said, “That was just yesterday; and a future that never comes.”

The younger generation of artists, writers and intellectuals - those who were born at the end of the Soviet era, are searching for their identity and heritage in Armenian mythology and old pre-Christian symbols. One artist collective, called Wishapaqar which translates as ‘Dragon Stone’, is looking for the ‘Return of the Dragon Carpet’ and calls the dragon symbol “one of the oldest symbols of the Armenian heritage”. The older generations of artists, writers and intellectuals in Gyumri came to me with many questions from the past, and often I had the feeling that the Genocide stood between us with its frozen presence often hindering us to speak of our feelings and thoughts openly. But after a few meetings and many conversations about our respective thoughts on art, history and literature these initial colder feelings gave way to mutually warm feelings.

I will carry all these experiences in my heart until the rest of my life. But the most striking experience for me was meeting my Gyumri-based artist friend Hrachya Vardanyan. I am sure, that he will remain a life-long friend and constant source of inspiration to me and I am sure that our histories will remain interwoven for many years. I am blessed to have met a true friend in Gyumri, Armenia.

## GAYE COŞAR

She started her university education at the Department of History of the Middle East Technical University. She then studied English Literature and Psychology at the University of West Sydney, Australia. She worked for many trade unions, women's organisations and civil society organisations. She worked at NTV news channel as a foreign news editor and simultaneous interpreter. Within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme, she participated in 'Understanding Turkey' media project of the Civilitas Foundation in Yerevan between November-December 2014 and contributed to the online news channel [civilnet.am](http://civilnet.am) as a journalist and editor.

## CIVILITAS FOUNDATION

The Civilitas Foundation's memories of the Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme are unfortunately dreadful. But not due to any fault of the programme. On the contrary...

Gaye Coşar's selection at Civilitas was unequivocal; she had competitive professional and motivational advantages to work at the largest Civilitas project, CivilNet Online TV. As a translator and free-lance journalist, Gaye started off her fellowship supporting CivilNet's media projects on Armenia-Turkey relations and the normalisation process. She helped CivilNet's team working on news and reports on and from Turkey during the first month of her stay. Gaye had a good understanding of the bilateral relations between the two states and her approach towards normalisation reflected a broader political and civic mind-set than normally seen amongst the civil society actors in Armenia and in Turkey.

Having years of experience of working with partners in Turkey towards normalisation of relations, Civilitas was privileged to host somebody who was not only an asset to its on-going efforts, but also a potential beneficiary of the learning platform Civilitas was providing. Gaye was interested in exploring the deeper social issues in Armenia, the life of ordinary people and how people across the border overcome the hardships of life.

By the end of her first month at Civilitas, Gaye and CivilNet's thematic editors drafted a work plan for the coming 6 months. Unfortunately, this plan could never be implemented due to a catastrophic fatal car accident that took Gaye's life. We at Civilitas were in a state of shock, and for the three weeks during which she fought for life, and the doctors supported her effort to overcome the incredible damage and trauma to her body, we sat by her side and willed her to life. We were not successful. We are still shocked and deeply grieved. We learned a lot from each other and stood to learn much more.

Our most cherished wish to the future rounds of the Hrant Dink Foundation's Fellowship Scheme is that nothing of this sort will ever happen to its participants.



Civilitas Foundation carries out activities in order to contribute to the promotion of educational, cultural and political dialogue, as well as peace-building and stability in the Caucasus and beyond. For this purpose, it generates innovative ideas and strives to bring these ideas to fruition through its programmes such as democracy and development, media, towards a neighbourhood, policy inquiry.



*We lost our beloved friend Gaye Coşar, journalist and translator, and a fellow of the Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme, in a traffic accident in Yerevan.*

*Gaye went to Yerevan to contribute to the work of the Civiltas Foundation as a journalist within the framework of the Fellowship Scheme in November 2014. After the traffic accident she had on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014, she stayed in the hospital for 12 days. She left us on January 7<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday, early in the morning.*

*We will always remember our friend with her beautiful smile.*



On October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014, **Sargis Khandanyan** delivered a presentation as part of the 'Young Talks' series of seminars organised by Koç University Social Impact Forum, which brings together young researchers, academics and civil society volunteers from Armenia and Turkey in order to discuss their role in developing Armenia-Turkey relations. During the talk, Sargis shared information about the projects he and his colleagues carried out at the online news channel of Civilitas Foundation.



Istanbul, 2014  
(photograph: Sofya Manukyan)



Istanbul, 2014 (photograph: Burcu Becermen)

**Suzan Meryem Rosita** hosted children from Gusana village at Gallery 25 in Gyumri and gave them painting and art classes together with the gallery artist Hakob Hovhannisyan.

Gyumri, 2014

(photograph: Anna Rafaelyan)

Fellows from Turkey and Armenia had the chance to meet each other as well as the representatives of the host organisations from Turkey, during the welcome reception held on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014. This enjoyable occasion was a first step for the establishment of relations and exchange of ideas between the fellows from the two countries.



Gyumri, 2014

(photograph: Anna Rafaelyan)



Istanbul, 2015

(photograph: Menekşe Kızıldere)

On March 7th, 2015, **Sofia Manukyan** made a presentation at the Chamber of Environmental Engineers on shale gas extraction and human rights violations caused by the use of this gas. She also talked about the practices in the US and exploration activities in Turkey.

Sofia also met the students of Pangaltı Armenian School to discuss the environmental issues in Armenia.



Istanbul, 2015 (Pangaltı Armenian School archive)



Yerevan, 2015 (photograph: Thierry Bussy)

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 International Women's Day, **Nil Delahaye** gave a street performance in Yerevan together with the women who received capoeira lessons from Nil during her four month stay in Armenia.

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015 **Seda Shekoyan** made a presentation and organised a video screening about her research on video art in Armenia and Turkey at the Istanbul Modern. During the event organised under the Artists' Film International 2014-2015, common issues of the two countries in the field of art were discussed through videos produced since 2000 by 6 artists of different generations from Turkey and Armenia.



Istanbul, 2015 (photograph: Zeynep Sungur)



Istanbul, 2015 (photograph: Zeynep Sungur)

On January 15-16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 **Sona Dilanyan** delivered a presentation at the international workshop 'Truth Telling and Encounters: Dynamics in Sites of Dialogue' in Istanbul. The workshop attended by the member organisations of the Regional Network for Historical Dialogue and Dealing with the Past focused on issues such as peace-building, conflict resolution, transitional justice and reconciliation. In her presentation, Sona talked about the dialogue initiatives in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the challenges of working with groups where perceived ethnic identity divides are present.



Istanbul, 2015  
(photograph: Zeynep Sungur)

During their radio programme 'Armenia in 1 hour' aired on Nor Radyo, **Astghik Igityan** and **Sargis Khandanyan** presented news from Armenia every Saturday. They hosted special guests from Armenia and compared the realities of the two countries in the fields of politics, culture, social justice and education.



Istanbul, 2014 (photograph: Arno Kalaycı)

Fellows from Armenia visited the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and were given a tour of the Patriarchate's museum. They also discussed the issues faced by the Armenian community in Turkey, the situation of Islamized Armenians and Syrian-Armenians, the political atmosphere in Turkey and its implications on the Patriarchate with the Acting Patriarch Aram Atesyan.

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, **Candan Badem** gave a lecture on 'Kars Province under Russian Rule (1878-1918)' in Yerevan at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences. Candan became the first Turkish historian to make a speech at this institute.



On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, **Emine Onaran** gave a speech at the Caucasus Research Resource Centre in Yerevan on the similarities between Armenian and Turkish cultures and the role of culture in reinstituting Armenian-Turkish relations. Onaran also talked about the diversity within the two countries during her presentation which was based on her observations in Turkey and Armenia as well as the (social) media coverage in both 'sides'.



On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, the German Academic Exchange Service organised an event at the Cafesjian Centre for Performing Arts in Yerevan on the occasion of the World Reading Day. During the event, a text from Varujan Vosganian's novel *Şişugneri Madyan* [Book of Whispers] depicting the deportation of Gomidas from Istanbul on 24 April 1915 was read out loud by 11 people in 11 different languages. The reading started in Armenian language and ended in Turkish with Nil Delahaye's performance.



**Suzan Meryem Rosita's** art project *Silent Book* was published by Antares Publishing House in Armenia in 100 copies and was distributed to various libraries around the world. The idea of the project was very simple: when people search the catalogues of the libraries that have the *Silent Book* in their collections with the keywords 'Armenian' and/or 'Genocide', they will be presented, amongst other books on the topic, with an empty book with marked pages. This empty book will invite the readers to mark down their own notes on history and to put forward their personal thoughts and demands on the Armenian Genocide. *Silent Book* will then be republished with the collection of these notes written by people all around the world.



Istanbul, 2015

(photograph: Zeynep Sungur)

Created by Sabancı University Gender and Women's Studies Forum and the Karakutu Association in September 2014, 'Gender and Memory Tour of Beyoğlu' is organised in different parts of Istanbul since January 2015. These tours aim to bring together youth groups willing to search for, revive, and decontextualize memories of historical events and individuals by designing and conducting city tours to locations that are significant for reasons related to gender and cultural diversity. With the initiative of and in collaboration with these organisations, on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Armenian fellows organised a 'Memory Tour' dedicated to the Armenian heritage of Istanbul. Throughout the tour, the fellows guided their audience and presented them the 'Armenian stops' in Galatasaray, Galata and Karaköy, remembering Armenian writers and artists such as Maryam Şahinyan, Zabel Yesayan, Levon Shant, and Mari Gerekezyan, and exploring the rich history and present lives of sites such as Hıdıryal Palace, Mısır Apartment, the former Ottoman Bank, and Getronagan Armenian High School.



Yerevan, 2015 (photograph: Aylin Vartanyan)



Istanbul, 2015

(photograph: Burcu Becermen)



Istanbul, 2015 (photograph: Burcu Becermen)

Fellows from Armenia met the Board of Directors of Hrant Dink Foundation and their Host Organisations in Turkey during a round-table discussion held at Cezayir Meeting Hall on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. Experiences gained through the Fellowship Scheme were shared and a mid-term review was made during the meeting.

As the fellows completed their activities and returned to their countries, Hrant Dink Foundation organised a visit to Armenia for the host organisations from Turkey. During the visit on June 10-14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 with the participation of Boğaziçi University, Istanbul Bilgi University, Kadir Has University, Yıldız Technical University and Istanbul Modern; the representatives of host organisations from the two countries had the chance to meet each other and share their experiences on the Fellowship Scheme. They also talked about the future of the programme and possibilities for further collaboration.









# WELCOME TO SUNAL SCHOOL



# THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA SOUTH SUDAN AND SOMALIA

LESSONS LEARNED

## LESSONS LEARNED

### Hrant Dink Foundation Experience Report

All the visits and cross-border collaborations featured in this publication took place at a time when there was no diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia, no embassies or diplomatic representations, and when the land border was closed. For the citizens of Armenia and Turkey, it is possible to travel between the two countries, and obtain visa upon arrival; however due to the absence of diplomatic relations, sometimes there may be some special procedures to be followed concerning visa applications, residence permits, banking, insurance, and other affairs. As the Hrant Dink Foundation, throughout the implementation of the *Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant and Fellowship Scheme*, we have encountered various obstacles in bureaucratic procedures, some of which we could overcome thanks to the assistance of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and EU Delegations in both countries.

In this section, we would like to share our experience about the obstacles we faced, lessons learned as well as the solutions we could find while running both programmes in 2014 and 2015. We do hope that our experience will help facilitate the activities of the civil society organisations working in this field, and will encourage the policy-makers towards eliminating further obstacles between the two neighbouring countries.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Land Transport

Since the Turkey-Armenia border remains sealed as of 2016, there is no direct land transportation between the two neighbouring countries. The Alican/Magara border gate connecting Igdir and Yerevan, which is the only land connection with a proper infrastructure, has been sealed since 1993. Before the border was closed, this was a protocol gate that could only be used by formally designated officials.

There are a few bus companies operating between Istanbul and Yerevan/Gyumri. The trips only take place on the pre-arranged dates, last about 36 hours, and the buses transit through Georgia. The buses depart from Aksaray in Istanbul. It is possible to buy bus tickets in Aksaray at the offices of the bus companies.

### Railway Transport

Since the land border between Turkey and Armenia is sealed, it is not possible to use the existing railway transportation route between the two countries. The border gate on the railroad, the Dogu Kapi/Akhuryan Gate connecting the cities of Kars and Gyumri, remains closed and out of operation since 1993.

### Air Transport

Despite the sealed land border between Turkey and Armenia, the air corridor was opened in 1995 for flights operated by private airlines in Armenia and in 2003 for flights operated by private Turkish companies. From 1995 till the end of 2015, there were 'charter' flights operating two days a week directly between Istanbul Ataturk Airport and Yerevan Zvartnots Airport. These flights were jointly operated by Tower Aviation & Travel in Istanbul and Bagra Tour in Yerevan, who rented private aircrafts to realize the flights. The tickets could be purchased from these two agencies. Since these were not scheduled flights, it was not possible to make online booking or online check-in. The direct charter flights would stop operating during the Christmas/New Year period, from mid-December to mid-January. Occasionally, in the summer time, some direct charter flights did also operate between Antalya Airport and Yerevan Zvartnots Airport. In October 2015, along with growing demand for and interest in cross-border activities, these charter flights were replaced with regular scheduled flights by Atlas Global for the first time. Since January 2016, there have been direct and scheduled flights between Istanbul and Yerevan almost every day; it is now possible to make

online booking and purchase tickets online as well as through travel agencies. We do hope that this progress, which greatly contributes to the development of the relationship between the two neighbouring countries at all levels, can continue with new routes and operators.

### **HDF Experience about Transportation**

While we were implementing the *Travel Grant and Fellowship Scheme* in 2014-2015, there were only 'charter' flights operating between Istanbul and Yerevan twice a week. During the same period, there were direct flights between Istanbul and Tbilisi five times a day operated by different airlines. As the Istanbul-Yerevan flights were not frequent, some of our beneficiaries travelled between the two countries via Georgia, by combining a 6-hour taxi/minibus ride between Yerevan-Tbilisi/Tbilisi Yerevan and a Tbilisi-Istanbul/Istanbul-Tbilisi flight.

As the Hrant Dink Foundation, while making the travel arrangements for our beneficiaries, we experienced some difficulties due to the infrequency of the flights between Istanbul and Yerevan, late departure-arrival times of these two-hour flights, limited access to charter flights, the impossibility of online booking and check-in, and the absence of flights from cities other than Istanbul to Yerevan. As a result, in some cases, we had to arrange our grantees' travels through Georgia. Also, some of our grantees from cities such as Diyarbakır and Van, who lived in much closer proximity to Armenia compared to Istanbul, preferred to travel to Armenia by their own cars through the Sarp or Kars-Potsop border gates instead of transiting for 2-3 times.

### **VISA PROCEDURES**

#### **For Citizens of Armenia Travelling to Turkey**

Citizens of Republic of Armenia can obtain visa for Turkey upon their arrival/entry with their passports valid for at least three months. Citizens of Republic of Armenia can apply for visa at the entry points of Turkey or through the e-visa portal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey by filling in the online application form. Once the online application form is submitted and the online payment is done, e-visas are issued and delivered to the submitted e-mail address immediately. In both cases, there is no need for an invitation letter from Turkey or a pre-application procedure.

Citizens of Republic of Armenia are issued a Turkish visa that covers a maximum duration of 30-day legal stay within 180 days. The visas are multiple entry visas. As of 2016, the visa fee is USD 15. The updated information regarding the visa procedure is available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey. In case of stays longer than 30 days, citizens of Republic of Armenia need to apply for residence permit.

### For Citizens of Turkey Travelling to Armenia

Citizens of Republic of Turkey holding ordinary passports can enter Armenia with their passports valid for at least three months, and can apply for the visa upon their arrival/entry at the check-points of Armenia without any letter of invitation, additional document or pre-application process.

For the citizens of Republic of Turkey, the visa for Armenia can be issued for a maximum duration of legal stay for 21 days or 120 days. The visas are single entry visas. As of 2016, the fee for 21-day visa is AMD 3000 AMD, and for 120-day visa it is AMD 15000. The updated information regarding visa procedure and fees is available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia. Once the visa expires, it can be extended for 60 days (2 months) for one time only. Therefore, in case of stays longer than 21/120 days, citizens of Republic of Turkey need to apply for the residence permit in Armenia.

Due to the lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries, citizens of Republic of Turkey who are holding special/green passports and service/grey passports can only obtain Armenian visa upon invitation along with a letter issued at least two weeks before the travel dates by an organisation with a legal entity in Armenia and upon the special permit/approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia. Once their application is approved, they can enter into Armenia with a special permit letter issued for their name by the Ministry. An sample of the invitation letter and information on the special permission process is available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia ([http://mfa.am/u\\_files/file/invitation\\_form.pdf](http://mfa.am/u_files/file/invitation_form.pdf)).

Once the special permit is issued, citizens of Turkey can travel to Armenia with a copy of the Ministry's permit letter. In case of arrival/entry into Armenia through Yerevan Zvartnots airport, citizens of Republic of Turkey must visit the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yerevan in person within 3 days of their entry in the country and obtain their visa.

In case of arrival/entry into Armenia via Georgia by land route through Bagratashen or Sadakhlo check-points, citizens of Turkey must visit the Embassy of Republic of Armenia in Tbilisi and obtain their visa from the Embassy by submitting the special permit letter issued for their names by the Ministry. In case the Embassy is given prior notice about the situation, they can also issue the visas on the same day. The Embassy in Tbilisi can only be visited during the weekdays and during the working hours. Therefore, it is important to plan the travel dates accordingly.

## HDF Experience about Visa Procedures

For our 12 fellows coming from Armenia to Turkey within the framework of the *Fellowship Scheme*, we applied for Turkey visas by filling in the online application form on the e-visa application portal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey with fellows' passport information. Right after the applications, visas for 30-day stay in-country for each fellow were sent by e-mail to the Foundation. Citizens of Republic of Armenia who wish to visit Turkey can have their e-visa by using the online portal.

During this period, the beneficiaries of the *Travel Grant* who were travelling from Turkey to Armenia with their ordinary passports could receive their visas and enter into the country without facing any difficulty. However, we had different experiences with the beneficiaries who were travelling from Turkey to Armenia with their special or service passports due to the special permission procedures required for these passport types.

Since 2009, as the Hrant Dink Foundation, we have been assisting the participants of our various programmes including journalists, academics and students from Turkey who were holding special or service passports. As the Foundation is not registered in Armenia as a legal entity, we cannot issue invitation letters, or apply to special permits directly. Therefore, in case our programme participants/beneficiaries need letters of invitation, we receive assistance from our partners in Armenia. From 2009 till the end of 2014, including the *Travel Grant* beneficiaries and fellows who paid their visits to Armenia in 2014, we have successfully received permit letters from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia within two weeks following the submission of the applications.

Within the period of January 2015 – May 2015, due to a special condition regarding the permission procedures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia did not process the applications for special permit. During this period, the applications submitted for one of our fellows and 4 *Travel Grant* beneficiaries from Turkey who were holding special/green passports could not be finalized. As a result, our Fellow had to derogate from his special passport, obtained an ordinary passport in Turkey, and could travel to Armenia after a one-month delay; whereas the *Travel Grant* beneficiaries had to cancel their visits to Armenia.

In May 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia started to process applications for special permits again. After this date, citizens of Turkey holding special and service passports could realize their visits to Armenia by filing their applications and receiving their special permits.

## DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR SERVICES

As of 2016, Turkey and Armenia still do not have diplomatic relations; therefore, Armenia does not have any diplomatic mission/embassy/consulate in capital Ankara and Turkey does not have a diplomatic mission/embassy/consulate in capital Yerevan. This being the case, citizens of both countries

do not have direct access to diplomatic and consular services during their stay in the neighbouring country.

Due to the absence of reciprocal diplomatic representation, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries assigned their embassies in Tbilisi, Georgia for diplomatic and consular services. Therefore, citizens of Turkey and Armenia can follow their bureaucratic procedures related to the neighbouring country indirectly, through the Embassies of Armenia and Turkey in Tbilisi.

In practice, citizens of Armenia who need to carry out or follow bureaucratic procedures in/with Turkey have to do so via the Embassy of Republic of Turkey in Tbilisi, and citizens of Turkey who need to carry out or follow bureaucratic procedures in Armenia have to do so via the Embassy of Republic of Armenia in Tbilisi.

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Tbilisi has the mandate to provide services both for the citizens of Turkey living in Armenia as well as the citizens of Armenia travelling to Turkey. For instance, if citizens of Turkey visiting Armenia or living there, have their passports lost or stolen during their stay in Armenia, they have to notify the Embassy of Turkey in Tbilisi for passport issuance/renewal. Since they cannot leave Armenia without their passports, they have to get assistance from another person from Armenia who will need to travel to Tbilisi with the documents, visit the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Tbilisi, and then get the passport/travel documents from the Embassy and deliver it back to Armenia.

In Istanbul, there is a Permanent Representation of Republic of Armenia to Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) since 2001, as Armenia and Turkey are both members of BSEC which has its headquarters in Istanbul. The Permanent Representation is headed by an Ambassador appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia, who acts in the capacity of a Permanent Representative. The mandate of the Representation is limited to Armenia's representation vis-à-vis this regional organisation. Since there is no diplomatic relations with the Republic of Turkey, the Representation does not have bilateral and diplomatic mandate vis-à-vis Turkey.

In case of diplomatic and consular inquiries of citizens of Armenia who are travelling to/living in Turkey, the Permanent Representation do only play the role of a facilitator and refer Armenian citizens to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia. For instance, if citizens of Armenia have their passports lost or stolen during their stay in Turkey, they cannot apply to the

Permanent Representation of Republic of Armenia to BSEC for the renewal of their passports. In such cases, the Representation can only refer their citizens to contact directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia and/or its embassy in Tbilisi.

### **HDF Experience about Diplomatic and Consular Services**

Within the framework of our *Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme*, prior to the arrival of our 18 fellows in Turkey/Armenia, we notified the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey and Armenia as well as the European Union Delegations in both countries. Upon our notification and request, we were assigned with contact persons and support letters from both ministries who have been available for us and assisted us in case of our questions and in case of emergency. Because of the absence of diplomatic relations, we also provided our fellows with orientation and info packages about possible support and identified their contact persons in case of emergency.

### **RESIDENCE PERMITS**

#### **For Citizens of Armenia Travelling to Turkey**

Citizens of Republic of Armenia, in case of their stay in Turkey longer than 1 month, are required to apply for residence permit within a month after their arrival date; otherwise, they will be considered as irregular migrants by Turkish law and they may be deported.

As of 2016, residence permits for Turkey are issued by the Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management. After entering to Turkey, applications for residence permits can be made by filling in the appointment form on the website of the Directorate General of Migration Management. Citizens of Armenia can find the updated and detailed information regarding the application procedure for residence permits on <https://e-ikamet.goc.gov.tr>.

### **HDF Experience about Residence Permits for Armenian Citizens in Turkey**

As the Hrant Dink Foundation, we had our first experience with the procedures of residence permit application thanks to the *Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme*.

In October 2014, 12 Fellows from Armenia travelled to Turkey to stay for 4 to 8 months. Upon their arrival/entry to Turkey with their visas valid for 30 days, our project team collected necessary information from them and filled in the online residence permit appointment application form via the website of Istanbul Police Department Foreigners Office.

After filling in and submitting application forms for appointment, in the second phase of the process the online system gave us appointment dates for physical application. However, due to the system overload, the appointment slots were fully booked for the coming months. This is quite critical for applicants who are citizens of Armenia since their visas are only valid for one month stay in Turkey, and after that time they automatically become irregular migrants.

In order to overcome this difficulty, we notified our contact person at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey. The Ministry issued a support letter to facilitate the process, and contacted relevant authorities. Thereby, without waiting for an appointment date/slot, our fellows could go to the Istanbul Police Headquarter Foreigners Office and apply for their residence permits - within their legal in-country stay period - along with support letters and references issued by the Ministry.

One of the technical difficulty we experienced during the application process in Turkey was due to the similarity of common Armenian names and surnames. One of our fellows from Armenia had a similar name and surname with another person from Armenia awaiting residence permit. Therefore, the police asked for her birth certificate to prove that they were two different persons. That is why we suggest the citizens of Armenia who are considering to apply for short or long-term residence permits or engage with any kind of bureaucratic process to obtain a copy of their birth certificates before their visits to Turkey, and to keep these certificates with them.

At the end of this process, all our 12 fellows from Armenia could obtain their residence permits in couple of months. Until the time fellows received their official residence permits in writing, they could travel in and outside of Turkey with a document issued by the Foreigners Office stating that they had already applied for residence permits in Turkey and their applications were being processed.

### For Citizens of Turkey Travelling to Armenia

Citizens of Republic of Turkey, in case of their stay in Armenia longer than 120 days (4 months), are required to apply for the residence permit after their arrival; otherwise, they will be considered as irregular migrants by Armenian law, and they may be deported.

As of 2016, residence permits for Armenia are issued by Armenian Police Department. According to the laws of the Republic of Armenia, residence permits are issued under three categories; short-term, long-term, and special residence permits. Short-term residence permits are issued for the foreigners who come to Armenia for the purposes of education, work, marriage, kinship, or trade. For all categories of residence permits, applicants have to add their health reports issued by a hospital or a health centre to their applications. For citizens of Turkey, the updated and detailed information regarding residence permits and application procedures is available on [http://www.smsmta.am/?menu\\_id=42](http://www.smsmta.am/?menu_id=42) and <http://www.police.am/en/letterheads/passport-and-visa-department-letterheads>.

## HDF Experience about Residence Permits for Turkish citizens in Armenia

None of our fellows from Turkey needed to obtain a residence permit for their stay in Armenia. According to the laws and regulations of Republic of Armenia, citizens of Turkey can stay in Armenia up to 120 days (four months) without a residence permit. At the same time, some of the fellows from Turkey had dual citizenships; thus, they entered to Armenia with their European or US passports. Three of our fellows entered to Armenia with their Turkish passports, stayed four months, and left the country within the duration of their legal stay without problems upon the completion of their fellowship.

### TRAVEL AND HEALTH INSURANCE

#### For Citizens of Armenia Travelling to Turkey

Citizens of Republic of Armenia can travel to Turkey with a travel/health insurance policy issued by insurance companies in Armenia. In case of emergency, private insurance policies issued in Armenia do cover the health expenses in Turkey.

On the other hand, in case of citizens of Republic of Armenia who are willing to stay in Turkey longer than 1 one month – in other words in case of those who will need to apply for the residence permit in Turkey for a longer duration of stay, the insurance policies issued in Armenia are not accepted by the authorities in Turkey. In this case, they will need to purchase a new/additional insurance policy issued by the insurance companies in Turkey according to the laws, regulations, and circulars with respect to residence permits for Turkey.

## HDF Experience about the Travel and Health Insurance

As the Hrant Dink Foundation, we had our first experience with the health/travel insurance for foreigners thanks to the *Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme*. In October 2014, we purchased health/travel insurance policy from an insurance company in Armenia that covered the entire duration of stay of 12 fellows coming from Armenia to Turkey to stay for 4 to 8 months.

Once our Armenian fellows arrived in Turkey, in the process of applying to the residence permit in Turkey, we learned that the insurance policies issued in Armenia were not accepted by the authorities in Turkey due to the reasons mentioned above. Therefore, we purchased new/additional insurance policies issued by the insurance companies in Turkey as specified by the relevant legislation.

### For Citizens of Turkey Travelling to Armenia

Citizens of Republic of Turkey can travel to Armenia with a travel/health insurance policy issued by insurance companies in Turkey that will cover the entire duration of their stay in Armenia. In case of emergency, private insurance policies issued by the insurance companies in Turkey do cover health expenses in Armenia.

#### HDF Experience about the Travel and Health Insurance

As the Hrant Dink Foundation, we had our first experience with the health/travel insurance for foreigners thanks to the *Turkey-Armenia Fellowship Scheme*. In November 2014 - January 2015, we purchased health/travel insurance policy that covered the entire duration of stay of 6 fellows travelling from Turkey to Armenia to stay for 4 to 8 months.

### HEALTHCARE SERVICES

#### For Citizens of Armenia Travelling to Turkey

Citizens of Republic of Armenia who have a health insurance policy issued in Armenia can receive healthcare services in Turkey during their documented duration of stay. In these cases, if the citizens notify the hospital or healthcare centres of their health insurance policy numbers, hospitals and healthcare centres will automatically charge their health insurance companies, and the amount is covered by their insurance policies. Likewise, prescribed medication expenses are covered by the insurance companies in Armenia if those prescriptions fall within the scope of their insurance policies.

#### For Citizens of Turkey Travelling to Armenia

Citizens of Republic of Turkey who have a health insurance policy issued in Turkey can receive healthcare services in Armenia during their documented duration of stay. In case citizens use services of hospitals and healthcare services, they need to pay the charged amount first and ask the hospitals/healthcare centres to provide them with a signed and sealed insurance form. Once they are back to their home country Turkey, they can submit their insurance form and get reimbursement from the insurance company in Turkey.

#### HDF Experience about Healthcare Services

As part of the *Fellowship Scheme*, our fellows travelling from Armenia to Turkey and from Turkey to Armenia within the period of October 2014 – May 2015 could benefit from the health services in the neighbouring country by going through the standard procedure explained above.

## BANK TRANSACTIONS

Despite the fact that both Turkey and Armenia are subject to the rules and regulations of the international banking system, from time to time there can be some difficulties in money transactions due to lack of diplomatic relations between the countries.

Money transactions from Armenia to Turkey can be implemented without any difficulty through international intermediary banks. There is no technical difference between money transactions from Armenia to Turkey as compared to transactions from Armenia to other countries.

Due to Turkey's *de facto* trade embargo towards Armenia, it is not possible to do bank transactions from Turkey to Armenia. Although there is no formal circular regarding this restriction, in practice money transfer from Turkey to Armenia is not possible as the banks in Turkey do not confirm the transactions. This situation poses a significant obstacle for civil society organisations and entrepreneurs who are actively working between the two countries, and prevents them from conducting their transactions through legal, formal and transparent channels.

### HDF Experience about Bank Transactions

Throughout the *Fellowship Scheme*, we needed to transfer monthly allowances to our fellows in Armenia through our bank. However this could not be possible. The branch which had our programme's bank account informed us that the money transfers to Armenia were subject to special permission by the Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade and that they could not receive approval from their bank's headquarters to proceed with the transaction.

In our search for an alternative to the formal ways of money transactions, we have found out that it is also not possible to transfer money from Turkey to Armenia by Western Union. During the *Fellowship Scheme*, we could transfer money from Turkey to Armenia by MoneyGram with an amount paid for the transaction service. Although the services provided by MoneyGram gives the opportunity to transfer money from Turkey to Armenia, this process may cause legal or administrative problems for civil society organisations in particular. For instance, MoneyGram only allows transactions carried out by an individual; it is not possible to transfer money to legal entities. Additionally, this service is very limited because only a few banks in Turkey can provide it. As the Foundation, the most important problem we have faced was the troubles and delays in money transactions since the system of MoneyGram was not always active. During the programme, although all the money transfers from Turkey to Armenia were carried out in this way, we have to note the fact that this method is neither sustainable nor an alternative to money transactions through banks.

## EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Due to the absence of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia, citizens of both countries travelling to/living in the neighbouring country cannot receive any direct support, guidance or diplomatic service in case of emergencies. The Embassies of Republic of Armenia and Turkey in Tbilisi have the indirect mandate in case of emergencies. The Permanent Representation of the Republic of Armenia to BSEC in Istanbul does not have any bilateral mandate; therefore, it can only serve as a facilitator by referring Armenian citizens to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia.

### HDF Experience about Emergency Situations

Due to the absence of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia, as the Hrant Dink Foundation, we have provided our project participants, fellows, and travel grantees with info packages that include emergency contact details in neighbouring country, as well as the contact details of emergency persons from the Foundation both in Turkey and Armenia.

For our fellows who stayed in Armenia/Turkey for a longer period of time, we also organised pre-departure and on-arrival orientation meetings, and briefed them about emergency situations. We signed agreements with the beneficiaries and fellows drawing the line between their responsibilities as well as the responsibilities of the Foundation during this process. We also requested our beneficiaries to provide us with an emergency contact person and his/her contact details. Prior to the launch of our programmes and the actual travels, we requested emergency contact persons from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the European Union Delegations in both countries.

## A SEQUEL TO GAYE COŞAR

In this section, we want to share as a case our painful experience of losing our dearest fellow and friend Gaye Coşar, upon the permission of her family.

Gaye applied to the Fellowship Scheme as she wanted to continue her journalism activities in Armenia. After her selection to the programme, she moved to Yerevan in November 2014 for a 6-month stay. Unfortunately she had a fatal traffic accident in Yerevan and was hospitalized at Saint Gregory the Illuminator Medical Centre.

The moment we were informed about the accident by our project coordinator in Armenia, we contacted the hospital to receive information about Gaye's condition. Right afterwards, we contacted Gaye's family member who was named as the emergency contact person in our fellowship agreement and we assisted her travel to Armenia. As the traffic accident was covered by the health insurance policy we arranged for our fellows prior to the programme, we contacted the insurance company in Turkey to engage them in the process, and informed the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries, the donor of the programme European Union Delegations, our fellows and programme partners in Turkey and Armenia. As Turkey does not have any diplomatic mission or representation in Armenia, we remained in contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara as well as the Turkish Embassy in Tbilisi.

In addition to her Turkish citizenship, Gaye also held Australian citizenship and she entered to Armenia with her Australian passport. As Australia does not have a diplomatic mission in Armenia either, the British Embassy in Yerevan got engaged in the process as the diplomatic mission representing the Commonwealth in Armenia.

We shared the test results and our consultations with the doctors and head doctor in Yerevan with Gaye's family, doctors in Turkey and the insurance company. Throughout this process, thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, the Ministry of Health of Turkey remained on alert to send an ambulance helicopter to Yerevan to transfer Gaye. However, considering Gaye's critical condition, the doctors in Armenia and Turkey assessed such a transfer as a risky operation and they decided to continue her treatment in Yerevan.

After a 12-day struggle, Gaye departed on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at Saint Gregory the Illuminator Medical Centre.

Sadly, the only thing we could do from that moment on was to transfer Gaye's funeral to Turkey, to her family.

For that we had to obtain an epicrisis and death report from the hospital and submit it to the authorities in Armenia and Turkey as well as the insurance company. As required by the laws and regulations of Armenia, such a transfer was only possible after an autopsy procedure in Armenia. Following the autopsy procedure, we received the autopsy report and the funeral transfer notice from the Forensic Medicine Institute of Armenia, translated them from Armenian to Turkish and had them notary attested, and submitted them to the insurance company and the Turkish Embassy in Tbilisi.

The accident coincided with a one-month period during which there were no direct flights operating between Istanbul and Yerevan for a month. As the land border was closed, it was not possible for us to use the Yerevan-Igdir land route which would only take 20 minutes. The flight options provided by the insurance company for the funeral's transfer to Turkey were all lengthy indirect routes. In order to speed up the process, as the Foundation we proposed our own option of transit flight via Moscow, which was the fastest route. After we completed the necessary documents for exiting Armenia and decided on the mode of transfer, we had to obtain a death certificate to be issued by Turkish authorities to be able to enter Turkey. Once the Turkish Embassy in Tbilisi issued the death certificate and provided it to the Foundation, the transfer of the funeral took place on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

As the traffic accident is considered as a criminal case under the criminal code of Armenia, throughout this process, we received assistance from an expert lawyer to be able to follow up the procedures as well as the criminal case with the Armenian police, prosecutors' office and court.

Regretably, we are well aware that this very painful experience we had, will not be able to prevent any similar accidents in the future. Nevertheless, we want to remind everyone, starting from ourselves, that we may be faced with emergency situations affecting human life any time anywhere; and that we have the responsibility to do emergency planning and be ready for emergency measures at all times – especially while operating in complicated settings such as Armenia and Turkey, two neighbouring countries with no diplomatic relations.



Turkey-Armenia Travel Grant and Fellowship Scheme continues in 2016-2017  
thanks to the financial assistance of the European Union.

For further information and questions about the Travel Grant application  
process, you can contact us at [travelgrant@hrantdink.org](mailto:travelgrant@hrantdink.org)

For further information and questions about the Fellowship Scheme, you can  
contact us at [fellowship@hrantdink.org](mailto:fellowship@hrantdink.org)

For your donations to the Travel Grant and Fellowship Scheme,  
you can use the following bank accounts.

EUR - TR43 0001 5001 5804 8012 4169 31  
Osmanbey Branch - S00006  
Account Number - 00158048012416931  
Swift - TVBATR2A

USD - TR87 0001 5001 5804 8000 6969 87  
Osmanbey Branch - S00006  
Account Number - 00158048000696987  
Swift - TVBATR2A

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