

# LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

DEC 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 | NO.22 | LIFE IN ARMENIA

## TOUCHING THE SOUL OF ARMENIA

DISCOVERING THE NATION THROUGH SIGHT, SOUND, TASTE, TOUCH, AND SMELL

## BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE UATE

IN ARMENIA, TECH IS HUMAN, AND IN ARMENIA, TECH CAN DANCE

## STORY OF PIRATES AND THE 30 ARMENIANS

HOW CAN ARMENIA BREATHE LIFE IN ITS HISTORICAL TRADE NETWORKS

## MY EXPERIENCE IN ARMENIA

WHAT BODY LANGUAGE REVEALS ABOUT THE ARMENIAN PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

## THE CODE OF THE ANCESTORS

DID ARMENIANS INVENT CODING BACK IN THE DAYS?

## EVERY WORD COUNTS

HOW TO COMMUNICATE ARMENIA TO GENERATION N IN 2025?

## SIMPLIFYING PAYMENTS IN ARMENIA

EMPOWERING REMOTE WORKERS IN ARMENIA TO MANAGE THEIR FINANCES

## OVERCOMING URBAN CHALLENGES IN YEREVAN - PART 2

THE QUEST FOR BIODIVERSITY IN YEREVAN'S PUBLIC PARKS AND GREEN SPACES



# MATHEW ZEIN

## EDITOR'S LETTER

Another year flies by, and all I can think of is where life has taken me in Armenia and how I found myself in this country and found happiness in this cozy corner of the world called Yerevan. Staying here was one of the best decisions I've ever made with Lana, second only to having our son, Roy.

Life in Armenia is turning two, and we're entering our third year in a few days. What an incredible ride I had through this magazine, from zero to 17,000 international readers, hundreds of published articles, and tens of local and international writers.

I'm excited to see what the future holds for Life in Armenia. I'm committed to taking it to the next level, building a team, and improving our work. With more readers and more digital nomads calling Armenia home, the future is full of exciting possibilities.

*Mathew Zein*

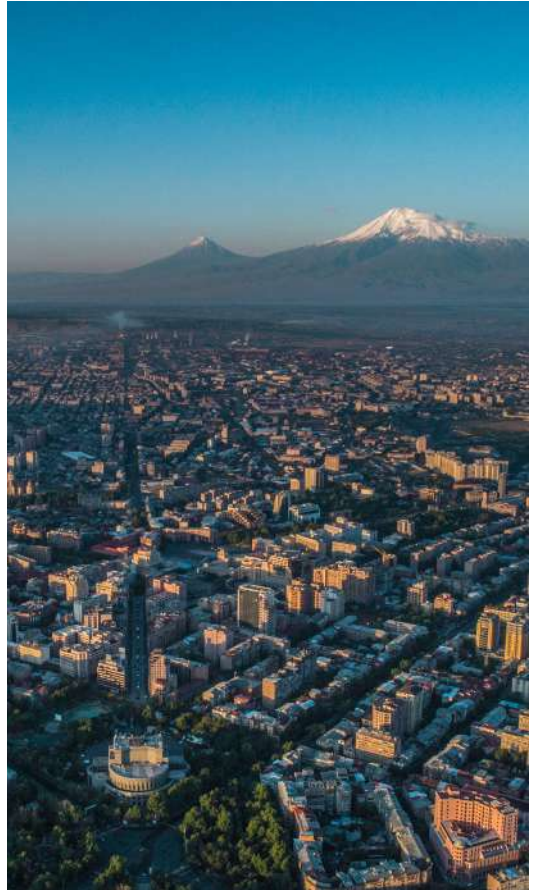
# CONTENTS

DEC 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 | No. 22 | LIFE IN ARMENIA

## TOUCHING THE SOUL OF ARMENIA DISCOVERING THE NATION THROUGH SIGHT, SOUND, TASTE, TOUCH, AND SMELL

Discover Armenia through a unique adventure that engages all five senses. I joined a group of international journalists in Yerevan to experience the nation's beauty through autumn flowers, aromatic wines, intricate carpets, tasty cuisine, and soulful music.

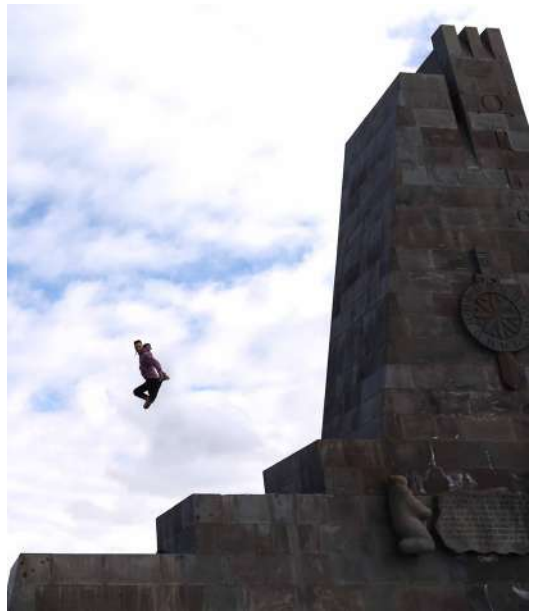
P 07



## HOPE-BASED COMMUNICATIONS FOR ARMENIA REFLECTING ON A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR AND EMBRACING THE FUTURE

How can a collective vision and hope-based strategies transform Armenia's future? Raffi Niziblian reflects on a year of growth, shares insights from the Generation N Conference, and explores the role of Armenia's diaspora in building a brighter tomorrow.

P 14



## BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE UATE IN ARMENIA, TECH IS HUMAN, AND IN ARMENIA, TECH CAN DANCE

Just as in a Yarkhushta, where each Armenian contributes to the harmony and beauty of the dance, Armenian tech lives on the collective ingenuity and dedication of its people. Let me take you behind the scenes with UATE to learn what makes the Armenian tech industry special.

P 22

## STORY OF PIRATES AND THE 30 ARMENIANS HOW CAN ARMENIA BREATHE LIFE IN ITS HISTORICAL TRADE NETWORKS

In the 18th century, Armenian merchants had to race against time to prove ownership of a pirated ship near the UK. To do so, they had to reveal the secret network of 30 Armenians connecting continents through daring, untraveled routes. Read this story and find out how it relates to Armenia today.

P 33



## MY EXPERIENCE IN ARMENIA WHAT BODY LANGUAGE REVEALS ABOUT THE ARMENIAN PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

What does body language reveal about Armenian professional culture? Nadia Ait, a body language expert from Denmark, shares her observations from her visit to Armenia, discussing cultural nuances, beauty standards, personal space, and the power of nonverbal communication in business.

P 40

# CONTENTS

## THE CODE OF THE ANCESTORS DID ARMENIANS INVENT CODING BACK IN THE DAYS?

Did Armenians invent coding long before computers? Kyle Khandikian explores the ancient art of Armenian rug weaving as a form of code. Each rug tells a story through its woven ornaments, preserving cultural myths and beliefs in every knot.

P 48



## EVERY WORD COUNTS HOW TO COMMUNICATE ARMENIA TO GENERATION N IN 2025?

Your words can help shape perceptions, inspire action, and even influence decisions across the globe. Consider how you can contribute to this positive narrative—whether in personal posts or broader communication efforts—and help build a more optimistic, inspiring image of Armenia.

P 57



## SIMPLIFYING PAYMENTS IN ARMENIA EMPOWERING REMOTE WORKERS IN ARMENIA TO MANAGE THEIR FINANCES

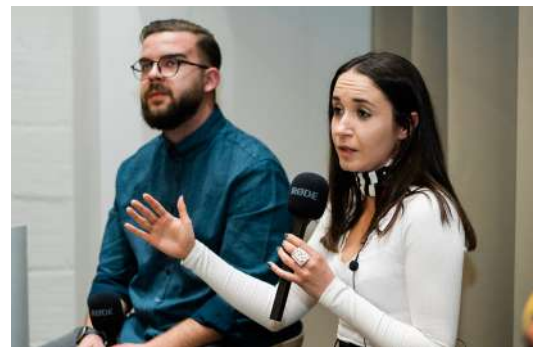
Native Teams, in collaboration with Life in Armenia magazine, introduces the Remoter Plan to simplify financial management for remote workers. This solution offers employment contract management, automated tax compliance, and a multi-currency wallet.

P 65

## OVERCOMING URBAN CHALLENGES IN YEREVAN - PART 2 THE QUEST FOR BIODIVERSITY IN YEREVAN'S PUBLIC PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

Think about how Yerevan's parks could be transformed by embracing nature's ability to regenerate when given the space to do so. Notice the delicate balance between human intervention and the unplanned beauty that nature creates, as seen in the unexpected flourishing of wildflowers during the pandemic. As always, an interesting read by Vahram Elagoz

P 71





**BANA**  
ANGELS

50

ANGELS

500+

JOBS CREATED

127

BENEFICIARIES

WITH 7 EDUCATIONAL  
PROJECTS

33

STARTUPS

---

\$180M+

CAMULATIVE  
VALUATION OF  
THE PORTFOLIO  
STARTUPS

\$4M+

INVESTED

# All-in-One Solution for Freelancers: Payments, Productivity, and More with Native Teams

- ✔ **0% Transaction Fees:** Enjoy fee-free transactions with Native Teams.
- ✔ **Global Payments & Multi-Currency Support:** Streamline your payments without hidden fees.
- ✔ **Remoter Plan:** Automate your tax payments, invoicing, and contract management with ease. Plus, enjoy exclusive discounts on the best local gyms, co-working spaces, and professional courses.

Explore more and get a **20% discount** on your first month by scanning this QR code.



TOUCHING THE SOUL OF ARMENIA

# DISCOVERING THE NATION THROUGH SIGHT, SOUND, TASTE, TOUCH, AND SMELL



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

## TOUCHING THE SOUL OF ARMENIA DISCOVERING THE NATION THROUGH SIGHT, SOUND, TASTE, TOUCH, AND SMELL

There are countries where you enjoy what you see, countries where you enjoy what you eat, and countries where you enjoy what you do. And then there's Armenia, a country that engages all the senses, **a place where beauty isn't just seen but felt**—a symphony of sights, sounds, tastes, and textures that can only be truly appreciated through direct experience. Having lived 8 years in Yerevan, trying to convey the magic of this city to my friends in Europe who haven't been is like trying to describe color to the blind; **life in Armenia is a sensation that defies words.**

Last October, I was invited to join 10 other international journalists and a select group of local bloggers, influencers, and game changers in tech, hospitality, wine, PR, and more at a dinner hosted by [Shant Petrossian](#), Global Director of [The Armenia Project](#) (TAP), in Yerevan. The dinner became a sensory journey that went beyond all my expectations when Shant introduced the theme of **discovering Armenia through all 5 senses**. Before I start telling the story, it's worth noting that all 10 international journalists and 2 award-winning chefs were invited to Armenia by the [Dar Foundation](#) and [Bon Vivant Communications](#) to tour the country, experience it, and write about it. I guess whoever came up with this idea knows what I'm talking about and understands that **you can only describe Armenia when you feel it.**



As I walked into the dinner room at the Toufenkian Heritage Hotel, a historic building in Yerevan, the tables were all set and magnificently decorated with **Armenian natural flowers in autumnal colors**. The selection was not random; Yerevan was bidding farewell to autumn, and the flower designer, [Armen Aleksanyan](#), wanted us to feel the last moments of Armenia's golden spring. Seeing the beauty of Armenian flowers in late autumn was **pleasing to the soul, not just the eyes**. That part of the event was **feeling Armenia through our eyes**.

Our names were on the tables, all handwritten and well-organized. **One thing I can't ignore is the beauty of handwriting** at a time when everyone is rushing to embrace digital methods for everything.

As guests arrived, we were greeted with a selection of Armenian wines from different wineries, each with a story about its wine and a unique character. It caught my attention that **all wineries were family businesses inherited across generations**. We had [Tushpa](#), [Keush & Zulal](#), [Dilvados Distillery](#), [Voskeni](#), and [Invino 6100 Wine Bar](#).

The wine-tasting experience was all about **smelling Armenia through its fruits and distinctive soil**. Did you know the Armenian mountains possess a unique acidic terroir, imparting a unique character to their wines? It might not be the best for everyone, but it's unique to Armenia, and that's cool enough.



In the lobby, we were also treated to Jingalov Hats from Tumanyan Arts Cafe. It's a traditional Armenian flatbread filled with a seasonal variety of fresh herbs and greens sourced directly from the Armenian mountains. I first tried this bread in 2018 and noticed how the flavor varied throughout the year. Later, I learned the stuffing is changed seasonally based on what fresh greens are available.



Next, we were toured through Toufenkian Artisan Carpets, where we watched two women weaving an Armenian carpet by hand using a large wooden loom. A young host explained that weaving a single Armenian carpet **can take up to a year for an individual weaver** or less time when two work together; we learned that a single Armenian carpet could **contain over a million** knots.

She talked about the beauty of Armenian carpet designs, highlighting the unique shapes and patterns that characterize them.



We all had the chance to touch these carpets and feel the Armenian merino wool. In a sense, **holding these carpets was like holding a piece of Armenia itself**. I asked one of the weavers for a carpet thread I've worn on my wrist ever since. The carpet-touching experience was all about **touching Armenia through its carpets**.



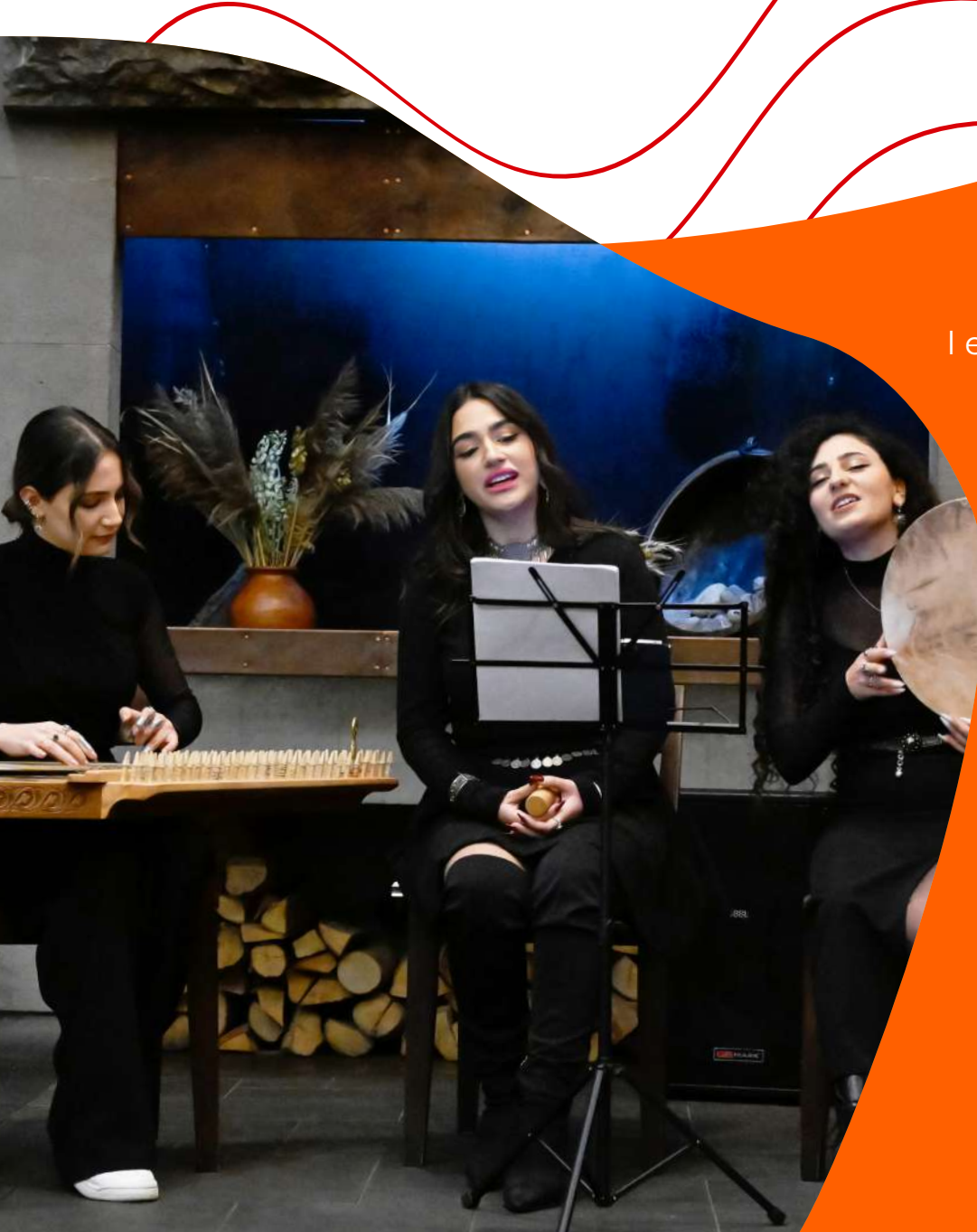
We all went inside as it was time for dinner, and what a great dinner it was. The Armenian chef at Tufenkian Kharpert Restaurant did a great job with a selection of national dishes, all amazingly prepared, with **tasty pomegranate sauce stealing the show** with its sweet flavor. Among the guests at my table was Hans Neuner, a Portuguese chef awarded “Portugal’s Best Chef” twice and the head of 2 Michelin-starred OCEAN restaurants. Looking at him, I could tell **he really enjoyed the Armenian flavors in some of the dishes.**

Next to me was an American journalist, and on the other side of the table, a Georgian, a Swedish, and others. **Everyone enjoyed the food, and no one could hide it.** It was one of those dinners where your classy etiquette goes away, and you just start pouring more and more because you want to savor that taste for as long as you can.



While enjoying the food, a local Armenian band, [Ser U Meran](#), was invited to the stage to perform a few Armenian folk songs. The band, composed of three talented young Armenian women, reminded me of the popular Georgian group Trio Mandili.

I've always said that Armenians can teach the world one thing, and that's **how to enjoy local music in formal settings**; that night was just another example! It's impossible to hide a smile as three young Armenian women played music. The beauty is that you don't understand a single word they are singing, yet you intuitively enjoy the moment and move your body to the rhythm.



I expected everyone to jump up and start dancing, but perhaps the table setting didn't allow that night. Usually, Armenian music encourages everyone to stand up and dance, likely **stemming from the Armenian tradition of circle dancing**, where everyone holds hands and dances in circles, similar to Greek culture.



The **final performance was a combination of senses**. As the trio sang “Gapama,” attendees were served Gapama, a traditional Armenian dish of pumpkin stuffed with rice, nuts, and honey; we enjoyed the pumpkin while listening to the song. The music was an experience of **listening to Armenia through its traditional music**.

Finally, a dessert selection of cakes made by a young Armenian enthusiast, Arthur Poghosyan, looked so nice and tasted even nicer. They were so beautiful you didn’t want to mess with them, yet so delicious **you wanted to keep them all for yourself**.

In 3 hours, we saw Armenia in its flowers, smelled Armenia in its wine, touched Armenia in its carpets, tasted Armenia in its food, and listened to Armenia in its music.

**We experienced Armenia with all 5 senses** and had enough content to write about.



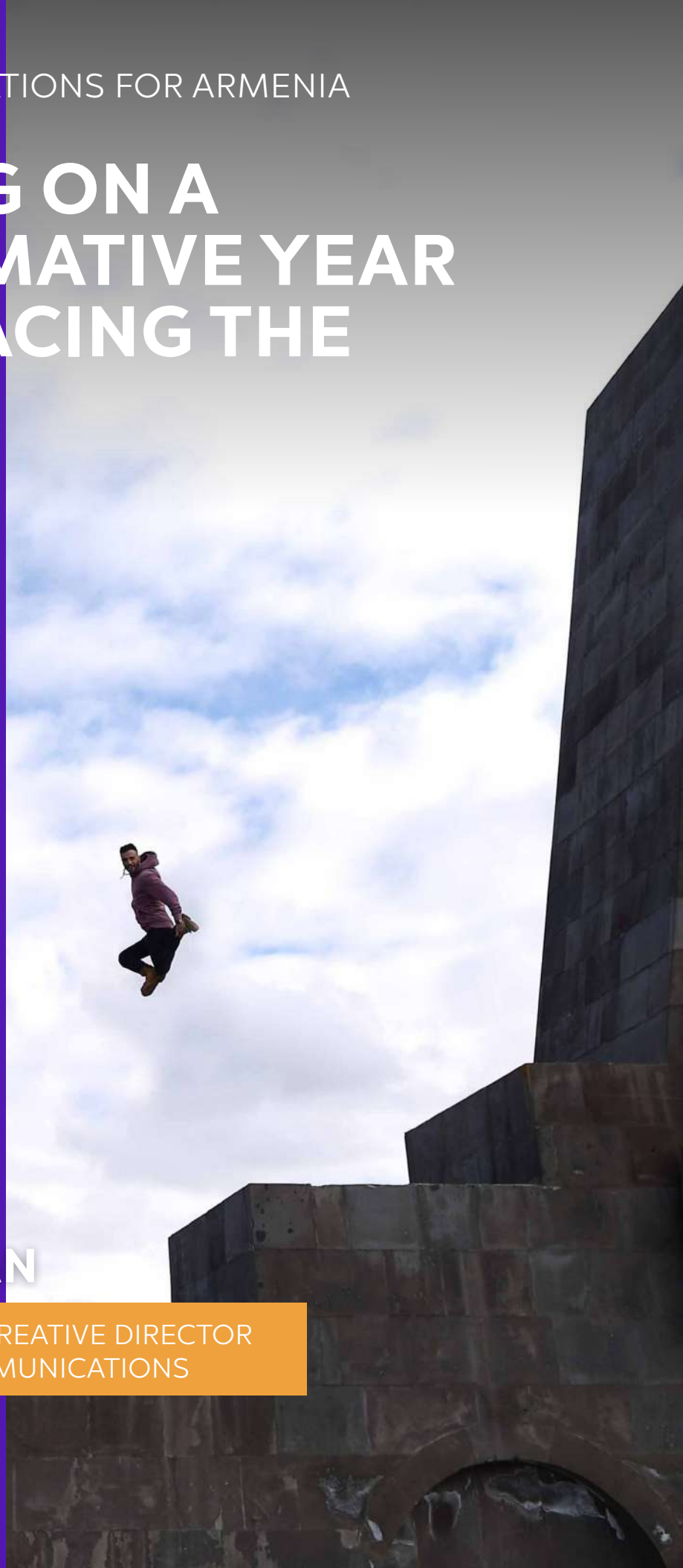
HOPE-BASED COMMUNICATIONS FOR ARMENIA

# REFLECTING ON A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR AND EMBRACING THE FUTURE



**RAFFI  
NIZIBLIAN**

STRATEGIC & CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
AT DEEM COMMUNICATIONS



## HOPE-BASED COMMUNICATIONS FOR ARMENIA REFLECTING ON A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR AND EMBRACING THE FUTURE

What a year this has been!

As we approach the end of 2024, it's natural to look back on our accomplishments, at those unfinished or unstarted projects. Whether or not we're ready to check off everything on our to-do lists, this time of year often sparks thoughts about the future too. After all, choices we make today *will impact our experiences of tomorrow*.

For me, 2024 has been a year of exceptional growth. I've had the privilege of starting my master's studies at the University of Edinburgh, sharing my professional expertise with the staff of the Ministry of Finance of Tajikistan, and delivering the second edition of the Generation N Conference, which was titled *Hope as a Strategy*. These moments stand out among many other events because they reflect my belief that evolving goes beyond financial success. It is about expanding our knowledge, challenging our thought processes, and *building networks that drive us forward*.

As a third-generation genocide survivor raised in an average family that highly values education, I've always sought ways to grow my understanding of the world. The new master's program I'm pursuing, Future Narratives: Data, Science, and Art, delves into the ways in which AI is shaping our societies. This intellectual journey will help me make sense of the larger challenges we face as technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace. On a more tangible level, my role as a Senior Communications Expert consulting for the Ministry of Finance in Tajikistan has given me a deeper understanding of Central Asia and post-Soviet societies. Meanwhile, my long-standing commitment to creating platforms for collaboration in Armenia has been quite fruitful. Starting with the [PR Summit Armenia \(2011-2014\)](#) and more recently with the Generation N conference launched as a result of the COVID-19 challenges, my aim has always been to create a space for global thinkers and change-makers to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and share solutions for inspiration.

The [second edition of Generation N](#), held on November 15, brought together practitioners and professionals from the UK, Bulgaria, Argentina, Sweden, Canada, Australia, and Armenia. Their purpose was to share visions and practical work on [how to visualize a future that transcends mere problem-solving](#) to focus instead on creating sustainable strategies that guide us toward a better tomorrow. So, with 2025 just around the corner, I want to take this moment to reflect on what's ahead—for [Armenia, its diaspora](#), and for all of us who may share an overlapping vision for the future.

## The Power of a Collective Vision

---

As we step into the new year, many of us will be writing down new resolutions—setting goals for our personal growth, our careers, and perhaps even maybe for our communities. But beyond the resolutions, I'd like to highlight the importance of focusing on a more long-term vision. On my end, the Gen-N Conference was designed with this idea in mind: [to inspire collective action for a better future](#). It was about fostering hope not only as an emotion but [as a strategic map to overcoming the challenges ahead](#).

Our keynote speaker, Thomas Coombes, founder of [Hope-Based Communications](#) (HBC), shared an inspiring vision of using this approach to visualize this better future, to [picture the outcomes of these changes we want to see](#). By painting a clear picture of it (cleaner environment, healthier populations, and peaceful coexistence), we can identify other like-minded people and unite around shared goals. It's common and easy to dismiss such visions as overly idealistic, naïve even. But history teaches us that [collective imagination and determination have shaped the course of society](#). Just look at the major changes that followed the Industrial Revolution or the transformative periods after the World Wars.





# What About HBC, Armenia, and its Diaspora?

---

You may be wondering—why is all of this important for Armenia? Why am I sharing this vision here, in *Life in Armenia* magazine? The answer is simple: Armenia's future is **intricately linked to the vision we create for it**, not only within its borders, but with its neighbors and **more importantly with its diaspora**. The Armenian diaspora, diverse as it is, is a powerful and unique resource that must be considered in Armenia's long-term growth and transformation.

For centuries, as a dispersed and global community, Armenians have always maintained a strong connection to their homeland. From the political and cultural movements that continue to shape the narrative of the Armenian people, to the ever-growing economic and social investments in the country, the diaspora has played some role in advancing Armenia's development. Now, more

than ever, there is an opportunity to engage that collective power to create a thriving, innovative, and inclusive future for Armenia. Since there are more Armenians living in the diaspora (close to 10 million) than in Armenia (around 3 million), and since much of the diaspora is organized based on regions where they found refuge (post-genocide and other conflicts), they bring with them new culture, language, and other distinctions; this could be seen as both a challenge but also a great opportunity for global networking and generating new ideas.

Using the Hope-Based Communications model, I reflected on two key shifts that are crucial for Armenia's future: moving from fear to hope, and from problems to solutions. Here's my visualizing of Armenia's future: Armenia is a leading economy in the Caucasus region, having

fostered collaborations with neighboring democracies (at least in my vision they have become democracies) and focused on key sectors such as IT, tourism, and green energy. This strategy has attracted foreign investment and cultivated homegrown talent, positioning the country as a hub for innovation, with a young and dynamic workforce driving its growth. One of Armenia's key strengths is its ability to retain its youth and encourage the return of those who had previously left. With individual rights safeguarded and abundant opportunities available, young Armenians—both at home and abroad—actively invest their skills, knowledge, and resources into shaping the country's future. This not only drives economic growth but also nurtures a vibrant civil society where the voices of all generations are heard.

This vision may sound utopian to some, but **the power of shared imagination is what drives real change**. Countries around the world have built their futures through collective will and determination—take a look at the success stories of Singapore or Estonia, for example. Both countries were able to rapidly modernize their economies and societies through concerted efforts by government, civil society, and the private sector.

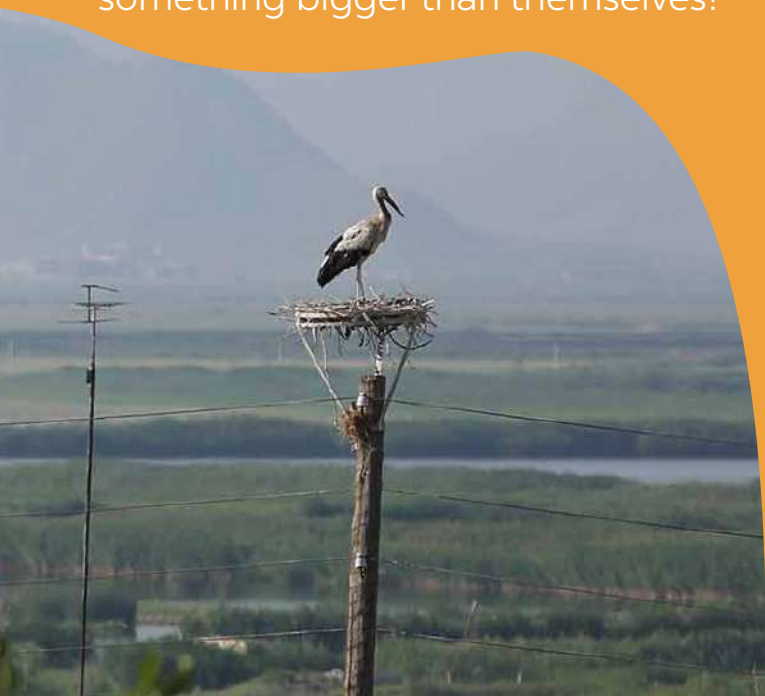
At the Gen-N Conference, speakers like Petra Hultman from Sweden and Shahe Simonian from Australia spoke about integrating sustainable practices into daily life and promoting a narrative of hope. I'm **personally committed to telling the story of a brighter Armenia**, participating in initiatives focused on regional security, and promoting integrity in every aspect of my life. It's all part of creating a future we can be proud of, where Armenia shines as a beacon of opportunity, peace, and prosperity. After all, who doesn't want to be part of something bigger than themselves?

## Connecting the Diaspora to Armenia's Growth

---

There are already many initiatives that help connect the diaspora with Armenia's future—offering opportunities for involvement, investment, and collaboration. Organizations like Birthright Armenia and Armenian Volunteer Corps are providing incredible opportunities for young Armenians abroad to return to Armenia, work, volunteer, and bring their talents back to the homeland. iGorts, a program run by the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, is another long-term initiative aimed at building strong connections between Armenians abroad and Armenia's political, social, and economic landscape.

But it's not just about volunteering or taking an internship. **The diaspora also has an important role to play in investment**. Through sectors like tech, tourism, and real estate, the diaspora can drive significant economic growth in Armenia today. And beyond traditional investments, initiatives like Hakawati.org, a nonprofit focusing on storytelling and cultural preservation where I am also involved in show how individuals can leverage their skills and passions to contribute in meaningful ways.




# The Future Is Now

---

Armenia's growing international partnerships with countries like France, India, China, and the UAE are another positive sign for the future. Global media coverage of Armenia is increasingly highlighting its potential as a dynamic, emerging nation. The BBC recently mentioned Armenia as a unique tourism destination. So have many other bloggers and reporters. These are great examples of how Armenia's visibility and influence are expanding.

So, what does all of this mean for you? The year 2025 is just around the corner, and Armenia's future is waiting to be shaped by the people who care about it. I encourage you, the reader, whether you are an Armenian in the diaspora or in Armenia; or someone with a passion for positive impact, to be engaged. Armenia is more than just its government or its historical references. It is an actual vibrant, growing nation, and it is already building its next chapter—will you be part of it?

As for me, I will move beyond the status quo and embrace new ways of thinking. 2025, here we come.



All photos in this article are captured by Lumen Photography and Art Direction by Raffi Niziblian

*Raffi Niziblian has become a regular contributor to Life in Armenia magazine. He is a communications specialist with an MA in Community Economic Development. He founded Deem Communications in 2006, three years after his repatriation from Montreal, Canada. He also recently registered the Hakawati Cultural NGO in Armenia.*

# HIGHWAY

YOUR WAY TO BANKING

We create highways to make banking **easier**, **faster**, and **available** to everyone.

We accomplish this by pioneering cutting-edge financial solutions and services.

Retail Bank



Credit Pipeline



Digital Lending Platform



Mobile Banking



Customer Onboarding



+374 33 088 116



9 Grigor Lusavorich Street, Yerevan, RA



info@highway.tech



www.highway.tech

# Andava Digital Marketing Agency

**Achieve Greater Heights**


Our 15 years of experience allowed us to test, try, and put together the combination of services that work best together for your specific business type.

**Currently, we have bundles for the following businesses:**

## B2B Service Marketing Bundle

-  Search Engine Optimization
-  Pay Per Click Services / Google ads
-  Social Media Marketing Services
-  Website Support
-  And More...

## Ecommerce Marketing Bundle

-  Search Engine Optimization
-  Pay Per Click Services / Google ads
-  Pay Per Click Services / Meta Ads
-  Email Marketing Services
-  And More...

## Local Business Marketing Bundle

-  Website Development and Design
-  Website Support
-  Search Engine Optimization
-  Local Service Advertisement
-  And More...

## SaaS Marketing Bundle

-  Email Marketing Services
-  Pay Per Click Services
-  Search Engine Optimization
-  Social Media Marketing Services
-  And More...

Please Note that all our bundles are customizable to best meet your business goals.

[Contact Us](#)

hello@andava.com  
www.andava.com

+374 94 500 250  
+374 95 744 733

4 Hrachya Kochar St, Yerevan, Armenia 0033  
201 N Brand Blvd, Suite 200, Glendale, CA

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE UATE

# IN ARMENIA, TECH IS HUMAN, AND IN ARMENIA, TECH CAN DANCE



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

## BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE UATE IN ARMENIA, TECH IS HUMAN, AND IN ARMENIA, TECH CAN DANCE

At first, this might seem a bit out there! What does it mean for tech to be human or to dance? For many, it might just be a catchy slogan. However, *if you live in Armenia, you'll understand*. Armenians have a unique tradition of circular dances as a symbol of unity and community, where people of all ages, backgrounds, and genders *join hands and move in concentric circles*. Just as in a Yarkhushta, where each Armenian contributes to the harmony and beauty of the dance, *Armenian tech lives on the collective ingenuity* and dedication of its people.

The tech ecosystem in this country is not far from a dance; it's spontaneous yet planned, random yet organized; it's an extension of how I described Armenia on my first day here: *imperfectly perfect*. And yes, tech in Armenia is human because it represents every ambitious young Armenian working hard for a better life. In one way or another, it's the best hope for the country and its nation. It's not just code or software; *it's the Armenian spirit*.



“

## Khachatur Hakobyan

DigiTec Executive Director

DigiTec 2023 was a serious challenge. We had to hold a technological event, whereas there was a technological crisis in Armenia and the world. The situation in the country was unfavorable, and UATE itself was undergoing reconstruction. But I didn't hesitate even for a moment; I took the responsibility. DigiTec 2024 was even larger, but we were also better prepared and exceeded expectations.”

## Armenia Punches Above Its Weight

The first time I came across the phrase “Tech is Human, and Tech can Dance” was during DigiTec in 2022. For those unfamiliar with DigiTec, it's the largest tech expo in the region, organized in Armenia, **the smallest country in the region!** The moment I heard it during the opening ceremony, I fell in love with it. Whoever came up with it truly understands the tech industry in Armenia.

DigiTec, held this past October, **attracted 20,000 visitors, 185 exhibitors**, 14 embassies, 16 media outlets, 12 organizations, and 89 speakers at the concurrent DigiTalks conference. Considering Armenia's population of just over 3 million, **this remarkable turnout speaks volumes** about the country's growing tech industry.





While the scale of DigiTec may not yet compare to major tech events in larger, more established economies like the United Arab Emirates or Germany, it's important to acknowledge the unique challenges Armenia faces. The **ongoing geopolitical instability and limited access to funding** constrain the event's growth potential. When evaluating DigiTec, we must take into account **the unique context in which it takes place**.

Despite these obstacles, DigiTec's organizers have their eyes set on 2025. Next year marks **the 25th anniversary of this event**, and the organizers have ambitious plans to elevate its international profile further. A key focus will be attracting diverse international exhibitors to introduce the Armenian tech industry to global players. This strategic move aims to position DigiTec as an international platform **beyond being a local tech expo**.

## “ Anahit Sargsian

Chief Operations Officer at UATE

We had technical issues, but we managed to do everything so that it would not impact visitors' experience. We're running to and from the venue all day long, which is why we didn't appear in any of the photos. DigiTec is an endurance test for UATE employees.”

My initial feedback on DigiTec when I first attended in 2022 was **the lack of internationalization**. Currently, DigiTec primarily attracts a domestic audience. What's missing is an influx of international visitors traveling to Yerevan specifically to network with Armenian tech players, book meetings, and explore potential collaborations. Similarly, there's a need for a stronger presence of international exhibitors who would invest in showcasing their solutions to both **local and international buyers within the Armenian market**.

DigiTec will transcend its current limitations and achieve a breakthrough when it evolves into a platform that connects local and international, or at least regional, sellers and buyers. This way, the expo can **increase Armenia's global visibility** and provide opportunities for Armenian tech companies to connect with international investors, partners, and customers.

## The Team That Makes It All Happen

---

The Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises in Armenia (UATE) is the founder and organizer of DigiTec. When I was first introduced to the UATE, I expected them to be like many other industry associations: dominated by people in suits, perhaps a bit arrogant, and eager to brag about their achievements, but my experience in Armenia was entirely different.

I remember meeting Sargis Karapetyan, the CEO of the UATE, at his office; I was surprised. He was a humble gentleman, dressed casually, greeted me warmly, and used a simple whiteboard to explain their work. At DigiTec 2024, I had a memorable conversation with Sargis on the first day. When I asked him about his impressions of the expo, he didn't just offer generic praise. Instead, he was honest, sharing his constructive criticism and acknowledging areas where he felt the expo fell short of his expectations. For example, he mentioned that he had hoped to establish stricter criteria for selecting Armenian startups to participate in the startup alley. Still, due to time constraints, they could not implement this effectively.



I thought maybe only he acted this way, but others were different. However, I soon discovered that **humility is a common trait among UATE team members** when I started working with them one by one on different occasions. I've met many team members within the UATE – from the Deputy CEO, Edita Ghazaryan, to the Marketing and PR Director, Armen Hovhannisian, and project managers– and found them to be **intelligent, ambitious, and really down-to-earth**; they are friendly, approachable, and have a passion for technology.

My interactions with the UATE are **way different than my experiences with similar organizations** in other countries, where I often encountered individuals who seemed aloof and difficult to communicate with. Somehow, some people think it's **part of their job to be arrogant and distant**, as it would add to their case.



In Armenia, it's different; I love working with them because I like how they **interact on a human level**; maybe that's also part of the reason why tech in Armenia is human and can dance. Maybe it's because the **people responsible for it are humans like everyone else**, and I've seen them dancing many times before. Yes, in Armenia, everyone dances, no matter their age or profession; when it's time for Armenian music, hands are held, circles are formed, and dancing starts.



## Armen Hovhannisyan

Head of Marketing, UATE

It's been six months since I joined UATE, and what's amazed me is how a large, established organization can still operate with the agility and mindset of a startup. The team here is flexible, innovative, and always ready to tackle new challenges with an open mind.

One of the most exciting moments came when we were organizing DigiTec 24, the biggest tech event in the region. With days left before online registration closed, we faced a serious problem – very few participants had signed up.

Instead of panicking, we gathered the team to figure out what was going wrong. The culprit was clear: the registration process was too slow and complicated.

In true startup style, we quickly reworked the process, making it simple and fast. Within days, registrations skyrocketed, and we ended up surpassing our previous records by 10 times. It was a perfect demonstration of how, even in a large organization, the right mindset and quick action can lead to incredible success.”



The UATE isn't only responsible for DigiTec but also for **strengthening the Armenian tech ecosystem on various levels**. For example, the Armath Engineering Makerspaces educational program was established by UATE in 2011. In 2023, **630 Engineering Makerspaces** operated on the territories of Armenia, Artsakh, Georgia, Kuwait, France, USA, Bangladesh, Eswatini, and India. **Around 17,000 students get an engineering education**. At Armath Engineering Makerspaces, kids aged 10-18 are introduced to science, technology, engineering, and math education through interactive after-school classes, exciting competitions, innovative camps, and more.

“

## Maya Shahumyan

Project Manager, Armath Engineering Makerspaces

I joined UATE a year ago. I didn't have a tech background, but I was happy I was engaged in educational projects. Whenever I interact with the students and see them participating in different expos, I feel proud since I realize how much Armath Makerspaces helps them change their lives. My job is putting out the fire and turning on the light inside the community and the children.”



Another UATE project is Innoljevan, an initiative to **decentralize Armenia's tech ecosystem** and encourage innovation beyond Yerevan. Located in Ijevan, Innoljevan is a dynamic ecosystem where education, innovation, and entrepreneurship meet. Inside Innoljevan is the “Real School,” a unique educational institution that **offers secondary vocational education with a strong focus on technology**.

“

## Hayk Andreyan

Graphic Designer, UATE  
(Graduate of Real School)

The years of my effective work for the Innoijevan project gave me the opportunity to join UATE as a graphic designer and grow as a professional. Working here is an important milestone for my career since I develop both my hard and soft skills”.

Students at the Real School can gain practical skills in areas like robotics, programming, and 3D printing. Innoijevan also provides a supportive environment for aspiring entrepreneurs. The CoWo-coworking network offers **incubation and acceleration programs**, providing entrepreneurs with the resources, mentorship, and guidance they need to turn their innovative ideas into successful businesses.

At this point, many would be asking themselves, is it paying off? Is the Armenian tech ecosystem working well as expected, or is this just country promotion rather than real tech work?



To answer these questions, it's worth mentioning that the Armenian startup ecosystem ranked 11th in Europe in the mobile application industry in 2024, which is huge for a small country with limited resources. Also, the Armenian startup ecosystem in Yerevan ranked 200 out of 1000 cities worldwide in 2024, improving from its 221st position earlier this year. This becomes even more impressive when you consider that larger neighboring economies ranked far behind Armenia on the same index.



Look at the recent growth of tech companies here, the number of those receiving Series B funding in Silicon Valley and elsewhere, and the increasing number of international companies considering Armenia for their regional headquarters. These factors indicate that **something is happening behind the scenes within the UATE**; something promising, positive, and motivational.



# City of Smile Charitable Foundation



Helping Children and Young Adults on their Journey  
of Conquering Cancer in Armenia

*Barev it means hello!*



LEARN MORE

● ● ●  
[www.cityofsmile.org](http://www.cityofsmile.org)

*you can  
scan here!*





STORY OF PIRATES AND THE 30 ARMENIANS

# HOW CAN ARMENIA BREATHE LIFE IN ITS HISTORICAL TRADE NETWORKS



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

## STORY OF PIRATES AND THE 30 ARMENIANS HOW CAN ARMENIA BREATHE LIFE IN ITS HISTORICAL TRADE NETWORKS

I recently came across a real-life tale about Armenians and pirates, fit for a Hollywood movie. In the 18th century, Armenian merchants had to race against time to prove ownership of a pirated ship near the UK. To do so, they had to **reveal the secret network of 30 Armenians connecting continents** through daring, untraveled routes. My imagination ran wild, and I imagined the film and even started casting actors and actresses in my mind. If you're unaware of the story, I'll summarize the main events and tell you **why I believe this is an interesting topic to discuss** especially these days!



An Armenian trading ship laden with goods from India was pirated near the UK. Armenian merchants appealed to the British court for compensation but had to prove ownership of the stolen ship and its cargo. They had to provide documents verifying the ship's departure from India. Typically, **such documents take 6 months to reach the UK** via the traditional sea route around the Cape of Good Hope. The Armenian merchants, however, **presented the required documents in just 3 months**, which raised questions about their authenticity.

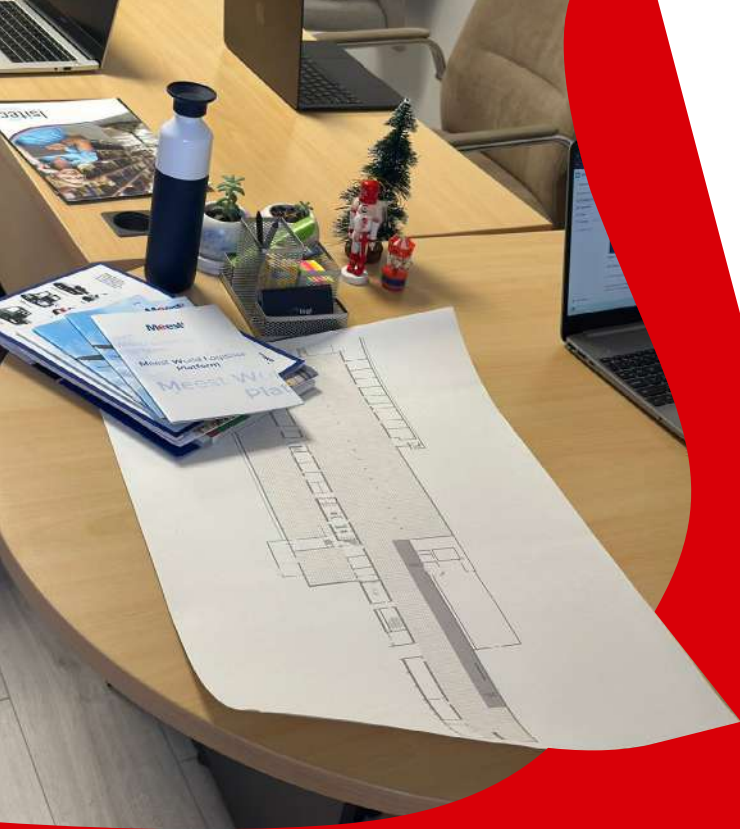


When pressed for an explanation, the Armenians revealed a complex network of 30 Armenian-owned trading businesses that delivered the document from India to the UK through an alternative route from India through Iran to Armenia and ultimately to Europe. To spice things up, Armenians used their language to encrypt their communication and ensure the documents were being transferred from one trusted Armenian to another. Back then, no one knew about such a route!

Fast-forward to the 21st century. Despite a rich history in trade and transportation, Armenia currently occupies a marginal role in international logistics routes. This can be attributed to various factors, primarily the region's complex geopolitical situation. Ironically, that complexity could be Armenia's greatest asset. Its strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East positions it to play a key role in e-commerce and regional logistics, especially during times of uncertainty in the entire region.

Recognizing this potential, the Armenian government has recently launched the ambitious "Crossroads of Peace" initiative. This project aims to connect major waterways, including the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea, transforming Armenia into a key node in global trade routes. Additionally, the government has given preliminary approval to the "Dry Port" project in Shirak Region, which is intended to serve as a logistics hub connecting rail, air, and road transport near the Gyumri Airport.





## Cristina Yeremyan



Co-founder of  
E-Logi Fest 25

We know this is an early stage in Armenia's logistics journey, but it's the right time to start laying the groundwork for this industry. We're neither too early nor too late. We believe we're at the right time."

While these initiatives hold great promise, none have been implemented yet. International partners are being contacted to ensure the smooth implementation and utilization of these facilities, and high-level discussions are underway. **Logistics is an ecosystem** that includes a whole chain of connected industries operating together to ensure the smooth transition of goods from one point to another in any country. For this reason, **governmental efforts alone cannot be sufficient** without the support of other local and international stakeholders. Governmental efforts can multiply when **more global logistics experts and businesses** turn their attention to Armenia.



The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) recently funded an expo and summit in 2025 **focused on e-commerce and logistics routes**. [E-Logi Fest 25](#) is scheduled in Yerevan from May 30th to June 1st, 2025. International key players in the e-commerce and logistics industry were invited to participate and showcase their latest solutions. The event will also discuss possible collaborations to **breathe life into Armenia's role in this industry**.





## Shushan Margaryan



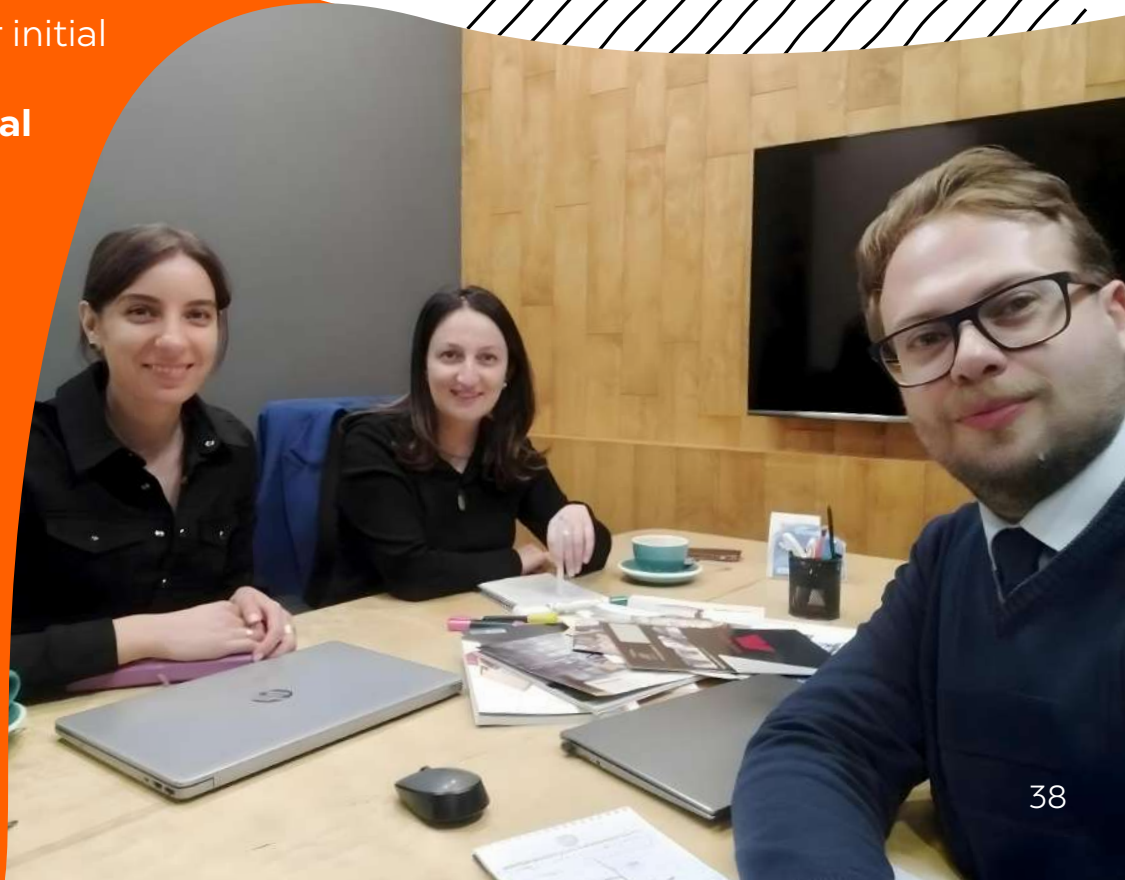
Co-founder of E-Logi Fest 25

Logistics could contribute to Armenia's national income, similar to the tech industry."

I wasn't surprised to learn that many foreign embassies offered to cooperate with the expo's organizers. They recognize the potential of logistics to contribute to Armenia's economic growth by **becoming a major revenue stream**. While some may remain skeptical, it's important to remember that the tech industry in Armenia **was once a niche sector**. Today, it's a major economic driver, proving the transformative power of strategic investments and innovation.

Now, returning to our initial tale, **Armenia could revitalize its historical role in logistics.**

The "30 Armenians network" could be reactivated, albeit in different forms, to ensure the **safe and fast delivery of goods across continents.**



# TECH EVENTS



with  
**ARTAK N. G.**



TECH BLOGGER

<b>JAN 5</b>	Innovating and Digitizing of Coffee house	
<b>JAN 12</b>	UI/UX in Gyumri	
<b>JAN 17</b>	Hackathon Data against corruption	
<b>JAN 19</b>	Strategic Project management	
<b>JAN 26</b>	Armsec 2024 Cybersecurity conference	
<b>JAN 27</b>	Hackathon in business analysis	
<b>JAN 31</b>	Hackathon in business analysis	

MY EXPERIENCE IN ARMENIA

# WHAT BODY LANGUAGE REVEALS ABOUT THE ARMENIAN PROFESSIONAL CULTURE



**NADIA  
AIT**

GLOBAL SPEAKER, CEO & CO-FOUNDER OF THE  
BODY LANGUAGE ACADEMY BY JOE NAVARRO



## MY EXPERIENCE IN ARMENIA WHAT BODY LANGUAGE REVEALS ABOUT THE ARMENIAN PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

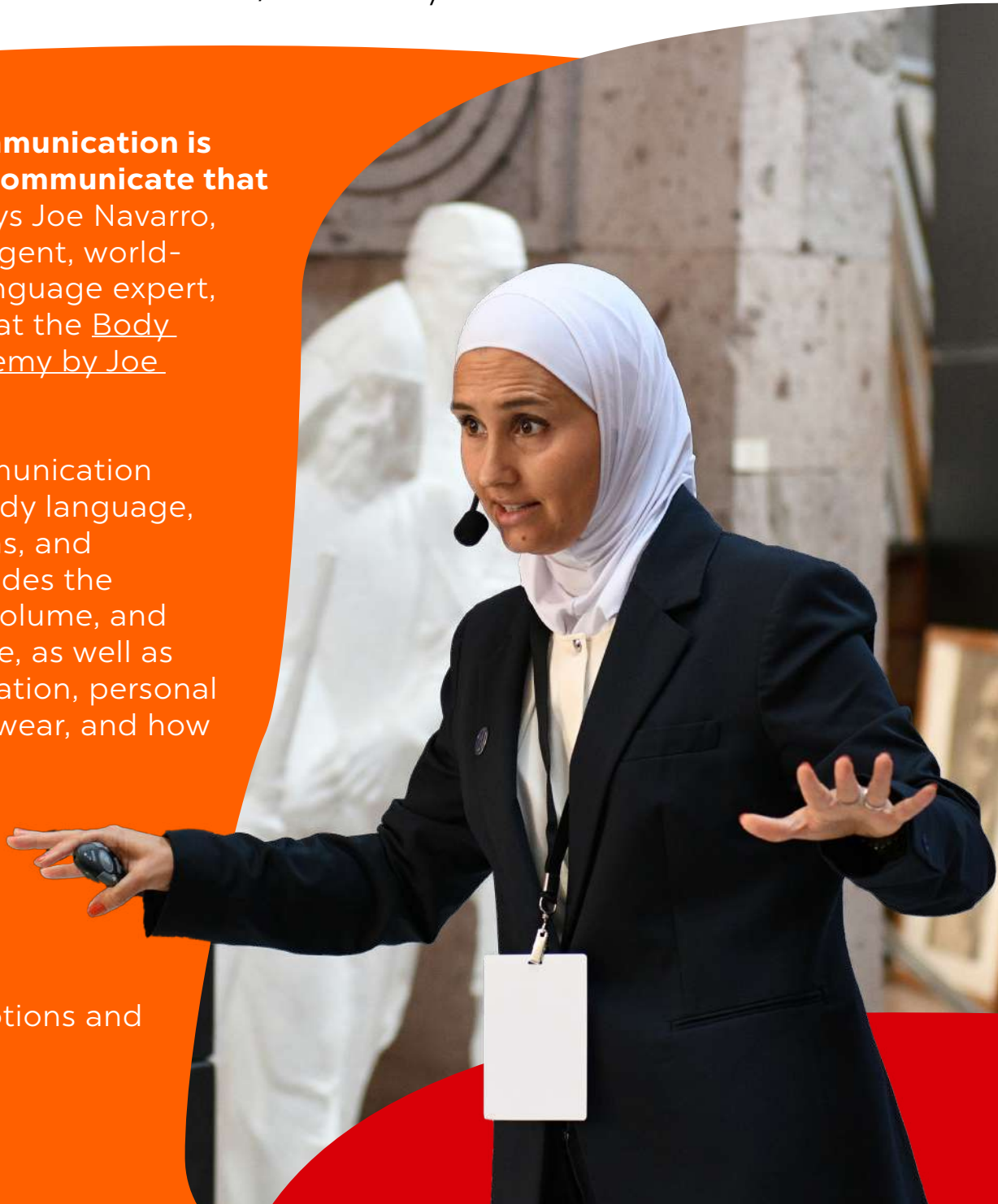
Have you ever wondered what a body language expert notices **when they set foot in a new country** and meet new people? As a dedicated observer of nonverbal cues, I was excited to go to Armenia, where I knew every

handshake, gesture, and smile tells a story or transmits information. While I could spend hours dissecting every subtle detail, let me share some of my thoughts and a glimpse into my unforgettable visit to this beautiful country.

**“Nonverbal communication is everything we communicate that isn’t a word,”** says Joe Navarro, ex-FBI Special Agent, world-leading body language expert, and my partner at the [Body Language Academy by Joe Navarro](#).

Nonverbal communication goes beyond body language, facial expressions, and gestures. It includes the cadence, tone, volume, and pitch of our voice, as well as the context—location, personal space, what we wear, and how we wear it.

All of these things send signals and **influence how others perceive us**, shaping emotions and impressions.





## The Power of Nonverbal Communication

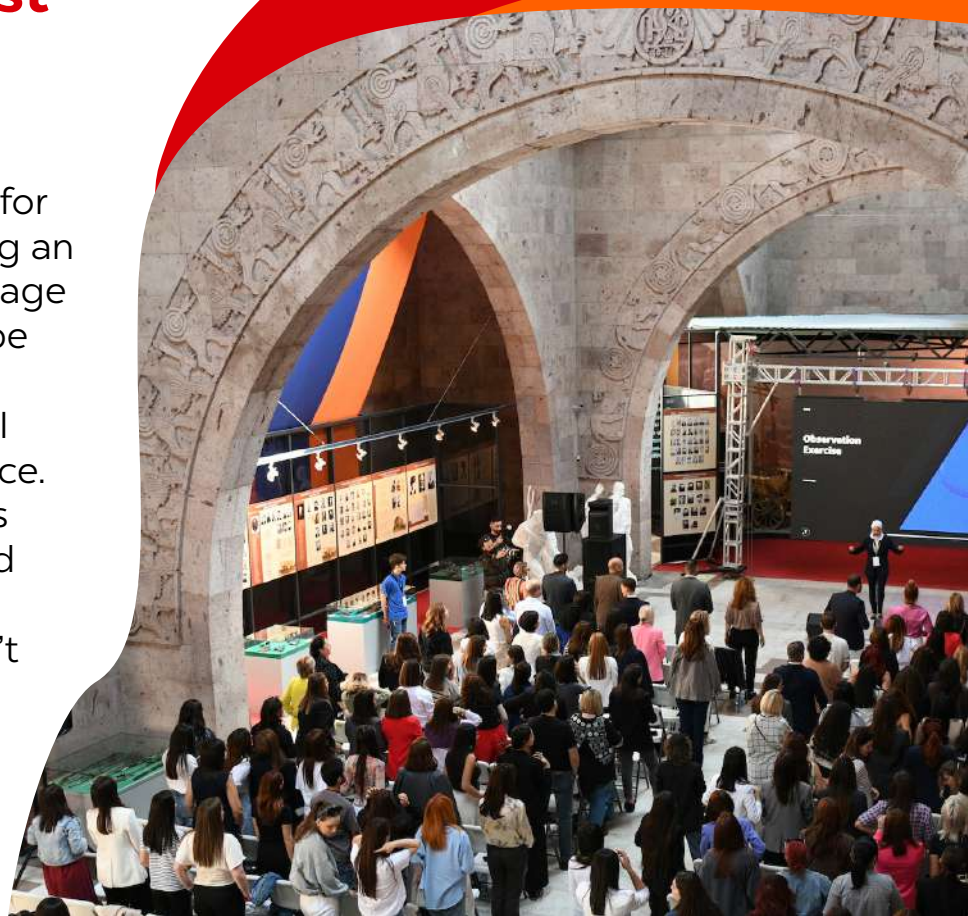
---

[Arpi Karapetyan](#), leader of Cascade People & Business, invited me to speak at [The Science of Leadership Conference](#) and the World Congress of Innovation & Technology in Yerevan. Though I could only attend one conference, I was thrilled to open The Science of Leadership with my keynote: “The Importance of Nonverbal Communication in the Age of AI.” Arpi also encouraged me to stay for a few extra days to explore her beautiful country. I’m so glad I did! I had heard of Armenia, but **I never anticipated how deeply I’d connect with it and its people.**

## First Impressions Last

---

As a body language expert and behavior analyst, my main focus for my visit to Armenia was delivering an impactful keynote with the message that the best future leaders will be the ones who can navigate and balance the remarkable tool of AI with human emotional intelligence. I aimed to emphasize that, in this digital age, the human factor and strong relationships are more important than ever. What I didn’t expect, however, was **how much this trip would leave a lasting impression on me personally.**



# Body Language in Business

At the event, I was surrounded mostly by women in elegant business suits and knee-length skirts. I find that men and especially women in Armenia value being **well-dressed and well-groomed**. So much so that the audience pictures sometimes looked like a well-planned photo shoot.

In business, beauty sells. It is a fact that you may or may not like, but it is true! On average, companies that hire highly attractive employees tend to earn 10-15% more than those employing individuals with ordinary looks. As a business consultant, I was impressed by the effort and **attention to detail regarding their nonverbal signals**.



## Beauty Standards

Armenian beauty standards often highlight curvy body types, long, healthy dark hair, long lashes, full lips, and features such as slightly elongated noses—reminiscent of models like Gisele Bündchen. During the conference, several women shared their pride in the distinctively longer noses common among Armenians, seeing them as a unique and cherished facial feature that embraces their cultural heritage. **I absolutely love that!**



# Personal Space & Gestures

---

One cultural difference that stood out was **the proximity at which Armenians communicate**. People tend to speak much closer than what many Westerners are accustomed to. If you conduct business in Armenia, **you'll need to get used to this**. Conversely, if you're Armenian and working in places like Scandinavia, be aware that standing too close **can cause discomfort and create a negative first impression**. This is something we teach in the [Expert Program](#) at the Body Language Academy by Joe Navarro.

Personally, I've navigated this balance throughout my life, shaped by my Danish and Moroccan heritage, where personal space norms differ greatly. This concept is called proxemics, which is the study of how we use and perceive physical space in communication.

At the conference, I was pleased to see that **both the audience and the speakers immediately applied many of the nonverbal techniques** I discussed. One notable example was the confident "steeple" gesture, which is often used by heads of state, politicians, celebrities, and CEOs around the world. This hand gesture, where the fingertips of one hand press lightly against those of the other, conveys authority and confidence.



# Female Empowerment

---

**The self-awareness of the audience** was among the things that left a lasting impression on me. After my keynote, a group of passionate and intelligent Armenian women gathered around me, asking profound questions and providing feedback. “Please come back, Nadia. We need you to teach us about confidence and empowerment in female leadership. Because of the hardships that our people have endured, some of this confidence has been lost.”

I felt their need; I understand that our body language helps shape who we are. Our emotional state is reflected in our body language, but I also know that if we adjust our body language to fit our goals, it will affect our emotional state and influence the people around us. How the world reacts to us is **very much dependent on the signals we send out into the world.**

In these young women, I saw an eagerness to learn, to strive for excellence, and to do so collectively. I was deeply touched. **I can't wait to return to Armenia** and contribute to this meaningful goal.

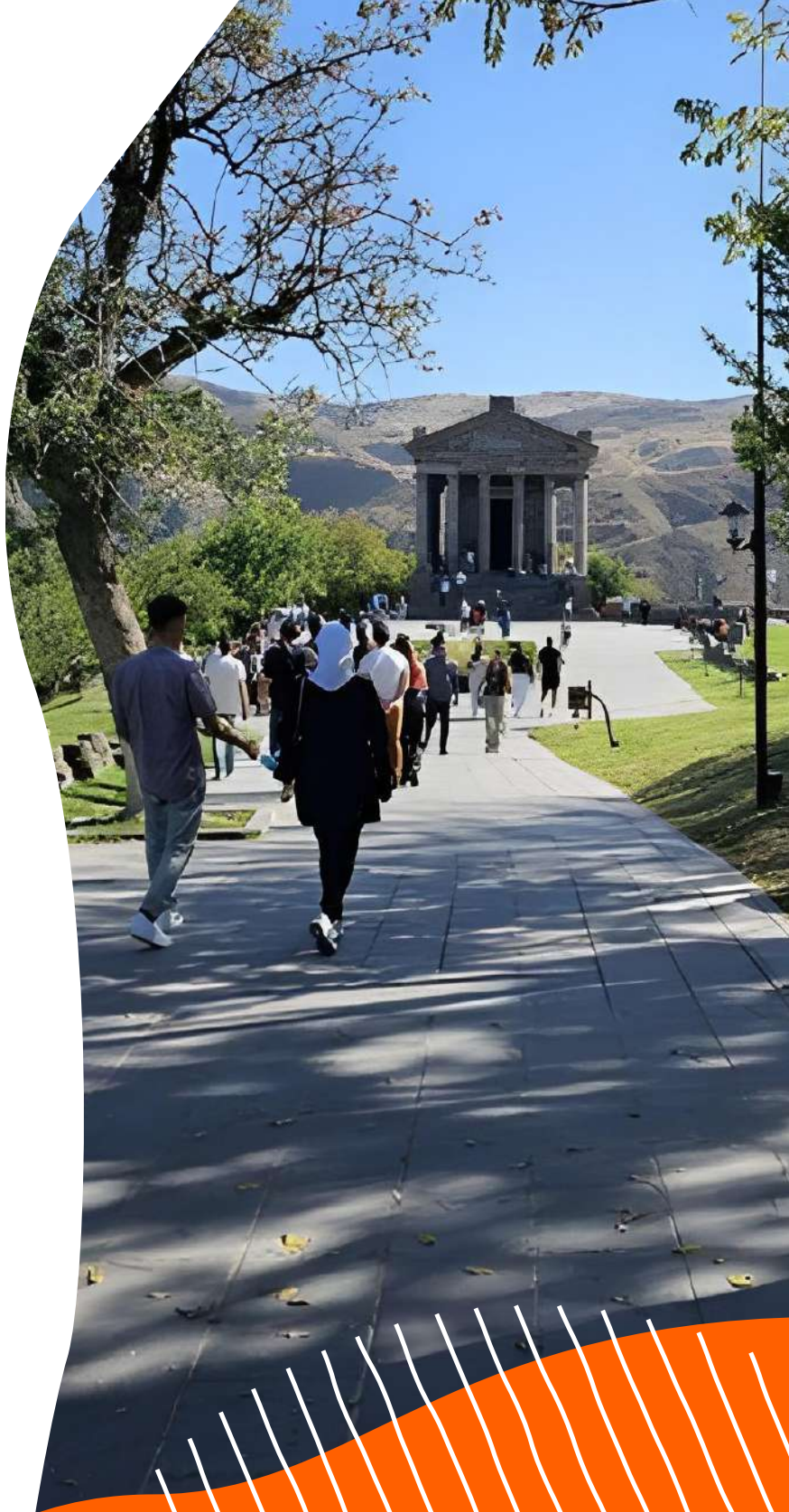


# Nonverbal Intelligence

---

The event, held in a beautiful museum surrounded by nature, was a perfect **example of how setting shapes an experience**. The stunning architecture and acoustics created a captivating atmosphere. Honestly, even if the speakers hadn't been excellent (which they absolutely were!), **the setting alone would have made the trip worthwhile**.

I admit, I was biased going in—I didn't expect to be so impressed. But I was **blown away by the attention to detail**, from the location to the service to the technology. Arpi and the Cascade team clearly went above and beyond to ensure every attendee felt valued, also understanding that networking was just as crucial as the technology being discussed. They truly embodied the principles I teach. Understanding the importance of nonverbal communication in human relations helps you achieve excellence even in this digital age.



# Nonverbal Signals & Culture

---

The venue felt like going back in time, a deliberate contrast, a fitting nonverbal signal, emerging between the old with the newest technology. This aligns with my general impression of Armenia as a rapidly developing ecosystem, hyper-focused on growth and development while **keeping its roots firmly grounded in the history of the country and its people**. The outcome is a unique identity—a mix of being dynamic and flexible while holding on firmly to their national identity and old traditions.

This balance can be challenging, as clinging to old ways, roles, and traditions can sometimes hinder progress, but not in Armenia. Human relations and collective identity in this small country seem to be at the core of this impressive drive for innovation and technical advancements.

Armenia is a place where **the past and future coexist in harmony**, and I'm certain I'll return to witness its continued evolution.



THE CODE OF THE ANCESTORS

# DID ARMENIANS INVENT CODING BACK IN THE DAYS?



**KYLE  
KHANDIKIAN**

FOUNDER OF THE RUG CODE



## THE CODE OF THE ANCESTORS DID ARMENIANS INVENT CODING BACK IN THE DAYS?

Before there was programming, and before there was writing, there was weaving. Weaving was **the original code used by the people of the Armenian Highlands** to express stories and ideas about cosmological myths, ancient beliefs, and cults.

Historic Armenian rugs have **information and messages coded into every knot**. These messages, represented by ornaments woven into designs, come to us from the distant past, a time long before the code languages of computer technology today.



Photo by  
Narek Harutyunyan

Just as the programmer of today creates digital mini systems and worlds using computer code, so does the weaver create their own microcosm within the bands of their rugs, imbuing the fabric of their creations with their stories, experiences, and spirit. Armenian weavers, or coders, as I like to call them, **carry on Armenia's 4,000-year-old weaving tradition today.**



Photo by Narek Harutyunyan

Winter photos by Valentin  
Chesneau-Daumas



Armenia is one of the **oldest weaving centers in the world**, yet it is not recognized as such. Today, rug making is on the verge of disappearing from the country's villages. The primary reason why the art form is no longer widespread is because **local weavers lack the visibility** necessary to reach interested buyers.

For this reason, I founded [The Rug Code](#) two years ago in Armenia. My goal was to introduce the world to the **beauty and artistry of Armenian rugs and coding** and to make purchasing an Armenian rug directly from village-based weavers an easy and transparent process. Our mission is to deliver high-quality rugs from Armenia's villages to shoppers around the world, **sharing where they come from, what they're made of, who makes them, and their codes** – what their ornaments represent – all in a transparent way, creating real economic benefits for rural weavers in the process.



Deciphering and sharing the coded meanings of traditional Armenian ornaments is a key element of The Rug Code. On every product page, visitors to our online shop can learn the **meanings of the ornaments** used in our rugs, researched by us and reviewed by the leading experts on Armenian rugs from around the world.

Winter photos  
by Valentin Chesneau-Daumas

# How We Decode the Art of Armenian Rugs



## We Search

We travel across Armenia in search of coders who have the skills to make high-quality rugs but lack the visibility to make a living through the art form.



## We Connect

If weavers don't have their own designs in mind, we connect them with local artists to create beautiful new rugs that are rooted in tradition and made for contemporary life.

Winter photos  
by Valentin Chesneau-Daumas



Photo by  
Narek Harutyunyan



## We Decode

The ornaments of our designs are studied by local and international rug experts, who help us decode their meanings. These codes are included in the details of each rug featured in our shop.



## We Source Locally

Meanwhile, high-quality wool is sheared from the flocks of local shepherds and sent to be thoroughly washed, dried, and spun by hand into thread.



### We Dye Naturally

The thread is either left with its natural hues of cream, brown, gray, and black or dyed by hand in small batches with organic, plant-based materials using traditional, time-tested methods.



### We Weave

The new yarn is threaded onto looms, and the weaving process begins. Depending on the size, each rug can take 4-16 weeks to complete from start to finish. All our rugs are made outside Yerevan in various locations around the country. Some rugs are made in the dedicated workshops of our rural partners, while others are made by coders at home, giving them the flexibility they often need to take care of other responsibilities.



### We Deliver

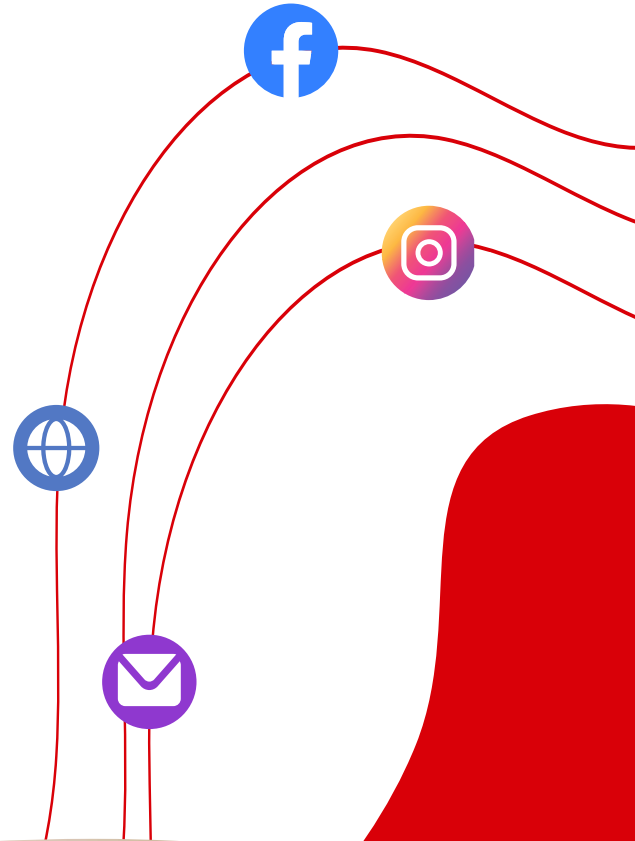
Finished rugs are sent to be washed with water and left to dry in the warm Armenian sun before they're shipped directly to our customers around the world.



Photo by Narek Harutyunyan

# Our Positive Local Impact

One of the weavers we're proud to represent is Milena, a refugee from Berdzor, Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). Prior to the 2020 war, weaving accounted for 21% of Milena's total average monthly household income. After losing her home and relocating to Armenia as a result of the war, Milena's average monthly household income decreased by 65%. Thanks to The Rug Code, however, **her family has seen a 124% increase in their total monthly income.** Weaving now accounts for 55% of Milena's monthly income, a 162% increase from before the war. We're dedicated to continuously improving working conditions, benefits, and wages for our partners like Milena, **no matter how far they are from Yerevan.**



# “ Magazine Feedback ”

United Kingdom



**T. I.**

I am based in London. I wanted to send a message to say that I enjoy reading your 'Life in Armenia' magazine. Keep up the great work. My wife, I and our newborn will be moving to Armenia early next year. Hopefully we can meet up for a drink soon!

United States of America



**John P.**

I've been loving your magazine lately! It's really got me stoked to visit the Caucasus. Never been before, but I might swing by next year on a business trip to Armenia and Georgia. Who knows, maybe I'll catch up with you at that coffee shop you work from. Keep up the good work!



EVERY WORD COUNTS

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE ARMENIA TO GENERATION N IN 2025?



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



**MARIAM  
NAVASARDYAN**

LIFE IN ARMENIA REPORTER & WRITER



## EVERY WORD COUNTS HOW TO COMMUNICATE ARMENIA TO GENERATION N IN 2025?

People of varied ages can be connected and progress in the same digital environment. This is where the term “Generation N” comes from to describe a new inter-generational collective **heavily reliant on digital technology**. We’re talking about hundreds of millions, if not billions, of people who share and consume information from the Internet every day – from entertainment to shopping and news.

As people rely on online sources, both trustworthy and untrustworthy, every word used to portray a country to the world matters. This is a critical topic for a relatively small country like Armenia, especially with eight million diasporans living abroad and **interacting with their homeland through the Internet**. A single misstep can have unintended consequences. One photograph from Yerevan or another region and a few carefully chosen words can now resonate across the globe, **shaping public opinion and influencing decisions** such as traveling, investing, relocating, and others.



Misinformation can spread rapidly, leading to misunderstandings and unfounded decisions. Sometimes, this misinformation isn't intentional; it might be a personal political opinion or a funny moment shared among friends. However, even **innocent posts can trigger unintended chain reactions**. When someone shares negative comments about Armenia without offering constructive criticism or solutions, these words contribute to **the collective online discourse** that shapes others' perceptions.

Our experience with **Life in Armenia magazine** shows that sharing positive stories about Armenia and focusing on its future potential can impact people's lives. We've always been honest about challenges but **prioritized highlighting inspiring stories** and suggesting improvements where needed. As a result, the magazine has grown, reaching over **17,000 readers worldwide in just two years** and inspiring many to be connected to Armenia in one way or another.



In a world where uncertainty has become the norm, **hope shines as a star**, a value that gives us the strength to keep going and the belief that better days are ahead. Last month, [Deem Communications](#) hosted a conference at Yerevan's Ararat Brandy Company Museum entitled **Generation N: Hope As a Strategy**.

Generation N is a biennial flagship event by Deem Communications designed to cultivate strategic thinking and analytical skills among its participants, **starting essential discussions on pressing issues to create a better society.** This thought leadership initiative aims to better understand new trends and their correlation with old habits and traditional practices. This year, 10 international and local communications professionals took the stage to **discuss the power that hope generates** in building a communications strategy, with a highlight on Armenia and the narrative it wants to share with the world.



## Raffi Niziblian

Founder, Strategic & Creative Director at Deem Communications

"We are the change and the drivers of change."



## Thomas Coombes

Founder of Hope-Based Communications

"The story we tell today is the action that will be taken tomorrow."

Raffi Niziblian, Founder, Strategic & Creative Director at Deem Communications, gave one of many examples; for instance, migration is driven by economic and socio-political instability, with many families migrating out of fear or the need for survival, especially parents protecting their children. One way to shift the narrative for Armenia is to consider **using hope-based communications.** First, identify the current fears and challenges that drive migration, then reframe them into hope. Then, **identify the core problems and what their positive opposites** look like. Defining these will guide a strategy that reflects a more hopeful, prosperous future for the country.

This approach helps policymakers and change-makers visualize new solutions—**often simple but clouded** by repeated negative narratives. By focusing on hope, we can uncover fresh ideas and pave the way for sustainable change, addressing migration at its root. The answer is the same for economic development, social injustice, and other global issues. Questions to be asked are: What are the areas to be developed? What are the impactful and inclusive processes? What is the final visual you wish to see as a result?



Hope is especially needed during a crisis, but it can be hard to maintain a hopeful outlook when facing multiple challenges, as in Armenia's case. The big picture may seem unclear. However, drawing from past experiences, it's possible to assess the situation, identify major challenges, and **determine how individuals, communities, or even the nation can address them.**

For someone unfamiliar with communication strategies and their impact, the above might seem somewhat theoretical as they may not understand the nuances. Therefore, here are a few examples of how shifting the communication strategy to a hope-based approach can **convey the right message about Armenia** without disseminating false information.

Consider a post that says, "Armenia is a war-torn country with a fragile economy." Such a statement could negatively impact foreigners or diasporans,

who may not experience daily life in Armenia and how things are going. Now, imagine changing that post to something like, "Armenia is rebuilding its economy and society after decades of conflict, emerging stronger than ever." **The core message remains the same** – the country needs to rebuild its economy – but the hopeful tone makes a difference that resonates differently with the audience.



## Raffi Niziblian

Founder, Strategic & Creative Director at Deem Communications

The power of a story creates ripples, leaving a lasting impact."

Another example: “Armenia is a small country with limited resources.” Why not say, “Despite its size, Armenia has untapped potential in various industries, such as technology, that can compensate for resource limitations.” By infusing hope into messaging while remaining authentic, one can **create a more impactful and inspirational narrative** about Armenia.

During the Generation N conference, Thomas Coombes, founder of hope-based communication, explained how we must **collectively shift our perspective and approach** to life’s challenges to pave the way for a brighter, more promising future. He emphasized that we should embrace hope and optimism instead of surrendering to fear and anxiety. Focusing on positive outcomes and visualizing our desired future can **manifest positive change in our lives**.



## Thomas Coombes

Founder of Hope-Based  
Communication

If we want people to be open to changes and take action, they need to feel hope.”

He went on to say that while raising awareness about negative issues is important, we should prioritize highlighting positive initiatives and values. It’s of the utmost importance to **avoid adopting a victim mentality**. Instead, we should embrace our agency and recognize our capacity to shape our own destiny. In the end, Thomas mentioned how important the role of communication specialists is in society, describing them as **the heart of changing society**.

Imagine a general approach, starting from government bodies and extending to individuals, where everyone prioritizes constructive messaging and a hopeful tone when sharing content about Armenia. The collective image we can build of the country would be vastly different. Those seeking opportunities **would be more likely to see them** in the positive online content; those considering relocation might pause and give it serious thought rather than dismissing the idea outright. The examples are endless!



“

## Thomas Coombes

Founder of Hope-Based  
Communication

It is easy to be cynical and say change will not happen, as you don't have to do something for the change.”

There were two panel discussions that followed Thomas' keynote speech that raised many interesting ideas from visual communications and how hope can be visualized to incorporating the visual narrative and the key messages in a variety of strategies. One example was the Armenian Spotlight session with Sisian Boghosian, former Head of the Tourism Committee of Armenia. The visualization was also enhanced with Swedish examples from Petra Hultman and Ana Alexieva from Bulgaria, who spoke about the Ukrainian model of communicating hope in times of crisis.

Next time you want to share anything on social media, whether it's a personal thought or an experience in this country, **pause for a moment and consider a hope-based approach**. Remember, you are part of a chain reaction that can influence someone's decision halfway across the world. This mindful approach can also positively **shape your own perception of the country**. Eventually, you are your own thoughts!





SIMPLIFYING PAYMENTS IN ARMENIA

# EMPOWERING REMOTE WORKERS IN ARMENIA TO MANAGE THEIR FINANCES



**ANI  
SAFARYAN**

DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER  
AT NATIVE TEAMS

## SIMPLIFYING PAYMENTS IN ARMENIA EMPOWERING REMOTE WORKERS IN ARMENIA TO MANAGE THEIR FINANCES

Over the past years, Armenia has become an emerging destination for freelancers, remote workers, and digital nomads. But as the tech community in the country grows, having the right tools and support for this lifestyle can make a difference.

As part of our collaboration with Life in Armenia magazine, [Native Teams](#) is dedicated to simplifying financial management for remote workers in Armenia and beyond. Today, we're excited to introduce the **Remoter Plan**, the ultimate solution to enjoy the best of both worlds: the **security of local employment in Armenia** and the freedom to work globally.

### The Remoter Plan for Simple Remote Working

The idea behind the Remoter plan was to introduce a solution that balances job stability and freelance freedom. This optimal package, **now also available for Armenian professionals**, provides the right support to grow your career worry-free from receiving client payments and complying with Armenian tax and labor laws.



## Employment Contract Management

Working as a freelancer while being legally employed is now possible with the Native Teams Remoter package. With **local legal entities in 70+ countries**, including Armenia, freelancers can get a locally employed status, a compliant employment contract, and all the benefits **as if they were employed by any company in Armenia** - without sacrificing the freedom to work on the global freelance scene.

## Automated Tax Compliance

By being locally employed through Native Teams' entity in Armenia, freelancers can ditch their worries about compliance with tax laws. Native Teams will ensure that your income taxes and contributions for healthcare and pension are covered while you only focus on delivering your best work to your clients.

## 24/7 Local Support

Freelancing comes with its share of challenges, but with Native Teams, help is always at hand. **Our dedicated team in Armenia is always available**, whether assisting with labor laws, tax-related questions, or global payment issues. With support this tailored, you can rest assured that you have a partner who knows the ins and outs of the local system and takes care of the tricky parts for you.

## Multi-currency Wallet

Tired of juggling between payment platforms and paying steep fees to get your earnings? Leave these worries in the past with Native Teams' multi-currency wallet, where you can manage your income with a few clicks. Invoice global clients, receive international payments, and manage your funds how you want - **with zero hidden fees on global transactions**.





## Building a Community to Support Your Growth

The inspiration behind the Remoter package was beyond just a profitable business idea - it came from a deeply personal place. What began as a search for a solution for our own challenges quickly advanced into a revolutionary platform that solves the most pressing issues of freelancing and remote work.

However, Native Teams' vision doesn't stop at offering professional tools. Thanks to our partnerships, Armenian freelancers can enjoy perks that enhance health and wellness, provide work convenience, and create networking opportunities for career growth.



## Exclusive Partner Perks for a Balanced Remote Lifestyle

---

Freelancing and remote work are all about flexibility and freedom, and we're here to help you make the most of it. By partnering with the best local and global service providers, we ensure that our all-inclusive package goes hand in hand with exclusive perks and discounts to elevate your remote lifestyle:

Stay healthy and active with **20% off at Gold's Gym.**

Level up your professional skills with **20% off on Armenia Code Academy's courses.**

Secure your peace of mind with **5-10% off on INGO ARMENIA Insurance.**

Boost your productivity with **15% off in co-working spaces, including Impact Hub, Nera Project, and Anahit Hub.**

Access top-notch tech and ICT programs **with 15% off on AITC courses.**

## A New Chapter for the Remote Community

---

Native Teams' Remoter package offers a new way of working and living in Armenia. The platform simplifies the most difficult aspects of remote working and empowers you to step into the ultimate remote lifestyle **without worrying about your admin duties or law compliance.**

Ready to start a new chapter and skyrocket your solo career? Join the Native Teams community of fellow freelancers, remote workers, and digital nomads in Armenia now!



**SCAN ME**

Back in Soviet times, Armenia invented and created about 40% of all tech-related stuff for the USSR. This innovative mindset has remained here, and today, you find many IT and high-tech enterprises, including a vibrant start-up scene. All this is combined with a rich culture, ancient wines, and lovely people.

When I'm in Armenia, I usually have ideas. I work with my team on our leadership training simulation or remotely work on my projects from their premises or from one of the great cafés in town. When I return to Switzerland, I usually have many more ideas, I have increased my network with many Armenian and international contacts, and I feel the urge to return ASAP 😊

**in** **Alexander Stork**

CEO and Founder of NINECUBES,  
Creator of Interpersonal Skills  
LAB, Simulation-Based Learning  
Pioneer



OVERCOMING URBAN CHALLENGES IN YEREVAN - PART 2

# THE QUEST FOR BIODIVERSITY IN YEREVAN'S PUBLIC PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

in



**VAHRAM  
ELAGOZ**

ADJUNCT LECTURER



# OVERCOMING URBAN CHALLENGES IN YEREVAN - PART 2

## THE QUEST FOR BIODIVERSITY IN YEREVAN'S PUBLIC PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

In concluding remarks of Part 1 of my essay, I emphasized how letting nature take its course in urban green spaces would improve biodiversity. What I – somewhat casually- referred to as ‘intentional neglect’ are, in reality, carefully monitored steps as part of contemporary maintenance strategies for parks and green spaces, which, for example, encourages the re-establishment of wildflowers by simply leaving large areas unmown. This will subsequently attract pollinator insects and birds, thus increasing biodiversity even within the confines of the smallest urban greenspace.



Life in armenia Oct 2024

Many Western metropolises have successfully implemented such projects, which have found wide support among urban residents. In reference to Yerevan’s **Circular Park**, the attentive reader will remember that I purposefully used the word ‘unintentional’ as it was not something planned ahead but rather dictated by circumstances, namely restrictions of movement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although I frequently walked the entire length of **the Circular Park**, the segment I visited most is located between Abovyan Street and where Isahakyan Street gives way to Alek Manukyan Street. This portion of the park is rather interesting and quite a lively one, too, as it houses a diverse bunch of businesses, attracting people from various walks of life: a store belonging to a major supermarket chain, a used book store/ kiosk with an incredible inventory stacked up in random and disorderly fashion; and a few abandoned or half burned-down outdoor cafés with abominable designs, at least back then.



There stand also some remarkable monuments, including one dedicated to Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930), the Norwegian humanitarian and high commissioner for refugees for the League of Nations; Hovhannes Aivazovsky (1817-1900), the famous Armenian painter, considered one of the greatest masters of marine art; Mikayel Nalbandyan (1829-1866), a 19th-century Armenian writer and poet, as well as a touching memorial immortalizing the plight of Yazidis. Also to be found here is the so-called Bird Zoo, located behind what is known as the Alley of Armenian Benefactors. With its exotic collection of birds, including albino peacocks and Mandarin ducks, kept under less than adequate conditions –which, in my view, should have been dismantled a long time ago- it is hard to miss. Like the ghost merry-go-round or a structure shaped like a pirate’s ship made of stones with moving wheels, spraying water I would come across in other parks of Yerevan, this is one of those **curiosities preserved as mementoes from a different past.**

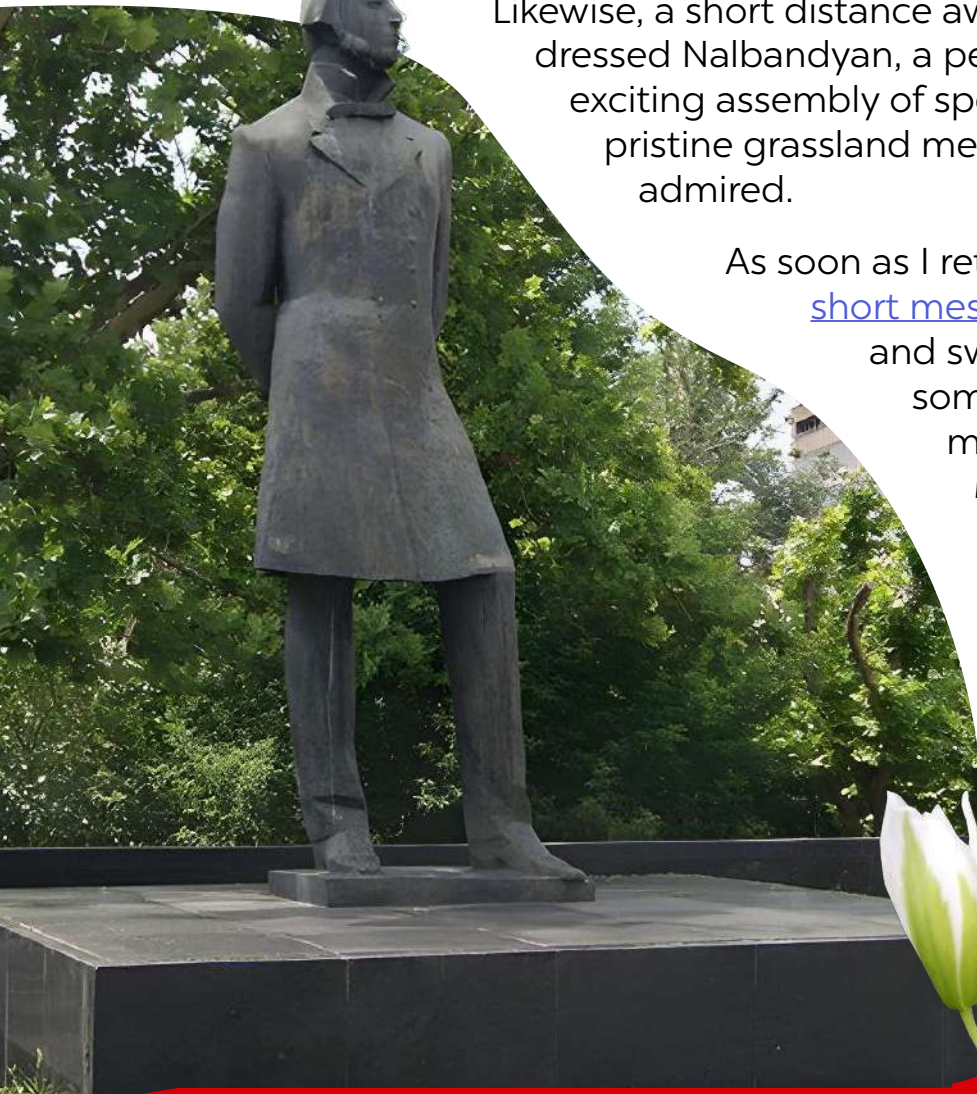


By far the most eye-catching structure in the park, however, is undoubtedly the National Centre of Chamber Music (NCCM), honoring Komitas Vadapet (1869-1935), where I had the good fortune to attend several musical events. According to the [NCCM website](#), the center, along with the adjacent water feature, including a fountain, was completed in 1977. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I used to walk through the park, briefly stopping in front of the monuments and memorials or leafing through some of the books at the used book store before continuing to the Yeritasrdagan metro station on my way to work.

With the pandemic, the purpose and the duration of my visits changed: instead of walking through, I would sit down on one of the benches and admire the flourishing nature around me, thanks to a complete halt to maintenance work due to the pandemic. To tell you the truth, the assortment of tree species on site wasn't much different than anywhere else in the city: several black mulberry (*Morus nigra*, սև բաբինի) trees –quite annoying as a choice of urban shade trees if you ask me; several black locust trees (*Վայրի մրփենի*), some Judas trees (*Cercis siliquastrum*, Յուդայածառ) on their last legs, and some overgrown lilac bushes (*Syringa vulgaris*, եղրևանի), in badly need of proper pruning; and last but not least equally annoying, decades-old stands of an obnoxious invader, oddly known as the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*, երկնածառ).

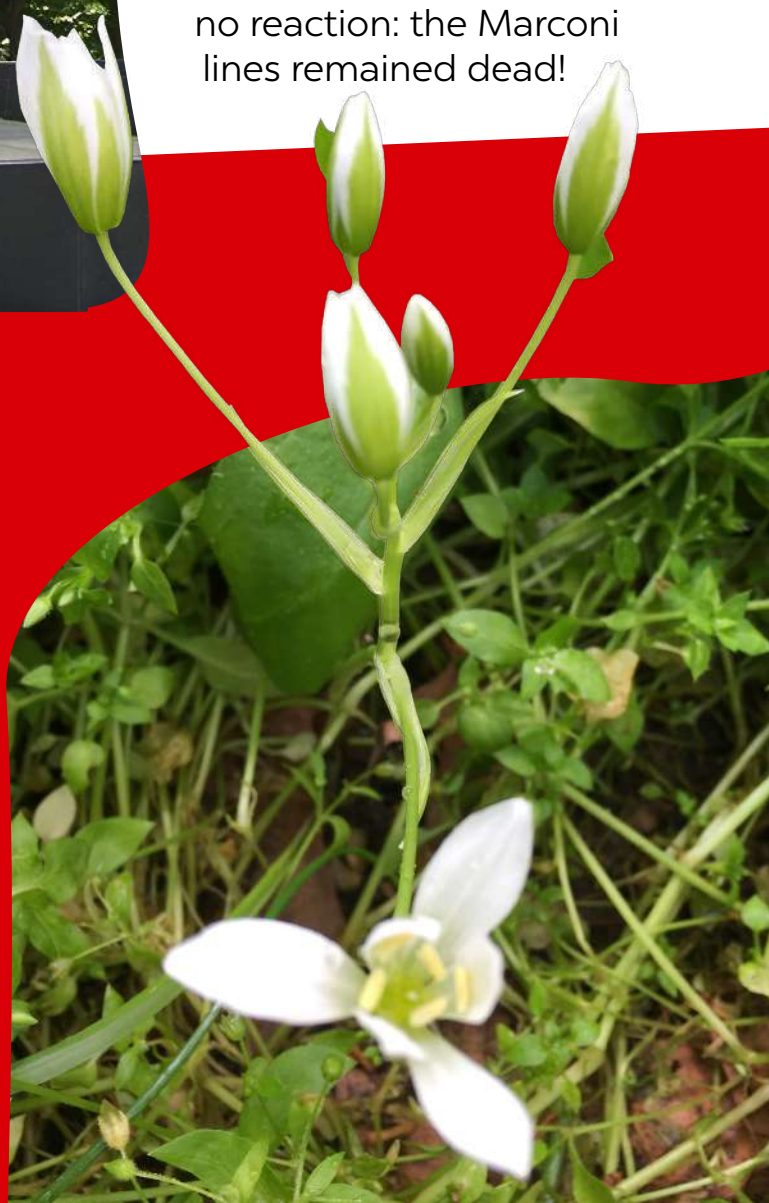
Even during those eerily silent days of the pandemic, one didn't need to strain his/her neck to admire a suddenly budding biodiversity above one's head: there was nothing new to be seen. But as far as straining body parts goes, the burden certainly fell on one's knees: the main action was rather under one's feet. And what a worthwhile burden it was! One bright spring morning, after several weeks of confinement to our homes, as I returned to the park, I witnessed an unbelievable metamorphosis. A small parcel of otherwise dull grassy patch not bigger than perhaps 50 m<sup>2</sup>, sandwiched between the west-facing walls of the NCCM and the path leading to the Aivazovsky monument, was displaying a kind of biodiversity one would normally observe in woodland meadows. Side by side and in great harmony, a notion that seems to be long forgotten by the human species today more than ever, were plant species –and here the patient reader is well-advised to seek the assistance of a botanical dictionary- representing families of Graminae (*Հացազգիներ*), Boraginaceae (*Գաղտրիկազգիներ*), Brassicaceae (*Կաղամբազգիներ*), Asteraceae (*Աստղածաղկազգիներ*), Fabaceae (*Բակլազգիներ*), Convolvulaceae (*Պատաստուկազգիներ*), Papaveraceae (*Կակաչազգիներ*), Apiaceae (*Նեխուրազգիներ*), Apocynaceae (*Շնամեռուկազգիներ*), Aspargaceae (*Ծներեկազգիներ*) and probably a few others that I wasn't able to identify, all in front of me and at their best!





Likewise, a short distance away, at the feet of the elegantly dressed Nalbandyan, a perhaps less diverse but equally exciting assembly of species commonly at home in pristine grassland meadows were waiting to be admired.

As soon as I returned home, I [penned a short message](#) in my best Armenian and swiftly emailed along with some photos I had taken to my acquaintances at the Ministry of Environment and the City Hall, imploring them to do their best to prevent any disturbance of the emergent plant communities on these few square meters. Alas, no reaction: the Marconi lines remained dead!



You can imagine my disappointment when I walked by the same spots a few days later to see that everything was mowed down: the rigidly prescribed 'proper order,' strangely cherished by some, was restored back. My frustration was, understandably, so deep that for quite some time I avoided the park. Afterward, the usual weeds with many bald patches in between and the omnipresent saplings of that notorious invader, the Tree of Heaven, returned to the center stage, replacing the short-lived but memorable splendor of those unique wildflowers.

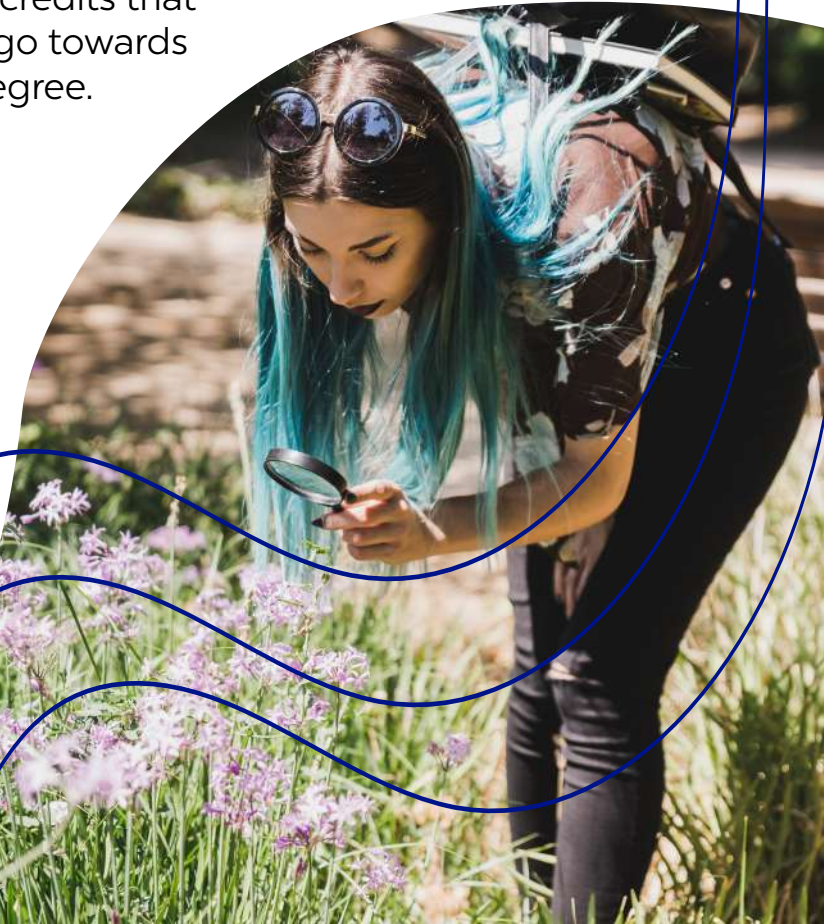
What we can learn from these observations is that when left undisturbed, **nature reclaims its rightful place with a design rarely achieved by human hand.** My observations above suggest that, in all likelihood, the topsoil, along with the initial cover vegetation intact, was brought from other parts of the country – a practice I witnessed on a few occasions elsewhere in the city – most likely containing the seeds and dormant roots of the meadow flowers I observed, waiting to emerge and thrive if permitted again. However, robbing habitats of their natural wealth in order to re-green urban green spaces is a practice that should be strongly discouraged.

## Where to Begin and How to Proceed?

---

**Taking inventory** and carefully assessing what is already on site is an important first step on the biodiversity path. Collecting the necessary data on the number of trees and shrubs in parks and green spaces, their age and health, species they represent, their distribution within the city limits, the health of soils etc. will determine the steps that need to be taken.

**Recruiting volunteers from various walks of life** can be both educational, instill a sense of belonging, and provide the necessary manpower under the supervision of experts. This would also be a good opportunity to engage university students pursuing degrees in a related field who need practical experience in exchange for, say, a small stipend or course credits that would go towards their degree.





**Preventive arboriculture** is nowadays a crucial aspect of sustainable urban tree management in European practices. The emphasis is on the importance of timely, proactive responses to tree stress. By addressing these issues promptly, the revitalization and eventual full recovery of stressed trees can be achieved. This requires the inspection of public and private green spaces in order to identify trees under stress (insufficient rainfall, prolonged high temperatures, deteriorating soil health, root, and bark damage, to name a few) and begin to take the necessary steps before it is too late. However, to implement these necessary steps, the departments in charge of parks and green spaces within the municipal administrations also have to have the necessary tools at their disposal: sufficient funds, trained professionals, and maintenance crews that are aware of new standards.

One of the major challenges facing efforts to increase biodiversity in Yerevan's green spaces in general and trees and shrubs lining the streets and avenues, in particular, is air pollution, which must be urgently addressed. In recent years, the Transport Department of Yerevan has added a new generation of buses -recognizable by their blue color- into its transport network that replaced outdated minibuses (known as marshrutkas), upgrading the existing trolleybus lines as well as finally realizing the much-talked-about extension of the existing subway system will greatly help alleviate the problem.



Airborne pollution (e.g. particulate matter, noxious gasses, ground-level ozone, to name a few) is not only a great threat to human health but also poses major challenges to the health of existing trees and shrubs. Plants are, in general, very sensitive to pollution: the damage caused by air pollutants can be seen on their foliage much earlier than, say, in human respiratory organs. Facing the extent of existing pollution levels even the most resistant tree species will eventually succumb to the consequences of damage caused by pests and diseases, emboldened by weakened defense mechanisms of their hosts, as I witnessed in several locations in Yerevan. This inevitably accelerates the loss of biodiversity, including some of the seemingly insignificant but highly valuable species, at a much faster pace. I am referring to lichens (քարաքոս) and mosses (մամուռ), important bioindicators: early detectors of air pollution and, as such, valuable warning mechanisms of pollution. In a recent [interview](#), lichenologist Dr. Arsen Gasparyan, the former director of the Takhtajyan Institute of Botany at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, explains this issue eloquently.

One of the points he raises in relation to Yerevan's green spaces is the absence of a carefully planned, overarching strategy supported by a majority of stakeholders in pursuit of dealing with a wide range of issues, such as increasing green spaces or creating buffer zones for the protection of existing green spaces. One such buffer zone could be created

by re-greening the hills surrounding Yerevan—as denuded surfaces are a major source of particulate matter pollution, especially on windy days. It almost sounds like wishful thinking, but additional measures should be put in place for the total protection of wildlife in and around Hrazdan River without further delay.



To claim that encouraging biodiversity in urban settings is a complicated task would be an understatement. It comes with challenges overcoming of which depends on several factors. Limited public funds to improve the conditions of existing green spaces and parks within an urban setting is one; the courage of municipal administrations to finally initiate the necessary steps is another one. **A key premise for success is to engage with citizens:** without listening to their concerns and taking into account their needs and expectations, planned changes will be meaningless, to say the least. Based on my observations, I can state that a visible lack of involvement (or willingness to do so) **on the part of Yerevan's citizens**, who are going to be the principal beneficiaries of the potential improvements, **is another major obstacle.**

Community involvement and the dissemination of a sense of stewardship or belonging is crucial. Changes by decree or force are not only short-sighted but also short-lived unless residents and organizations are brought into the processes early on. Once the necessary mutual trust and understanding between various stakeholders are established, the next steps can be easily built up.

While nature's response to environmental changes can be rather quick, lasting changes take a long time. Quick fixes don't last long and are extremely costly. **The fragmentation of public green spaces** in Yerevan is yet another challenge biodiversity efforts have to overcome. In order to succeed, preventing further fragmentation is of

paramount importance. The issuance of concession permits on public property to private individuals for bargain prices should be stopped at any cost.

A superb example of investigative journalism highlighting this problem in a recent series of articles in great depth was published in [Hetq](#) by [Amalia Margarian and Ani Hovhannisyan](#) (30 May 2019), by [Trdat Musheghyan](#) (31 July 2019), and by [Trdat Musheghyan](#) (29 January 2020).

In the third and last part of my essay I will highlight the importance of multifunctionality of green spaces catering to various needs using as examples two other of my favorite parks in Yerevan: **The English Park and the Children's Park.** So stay tuned!

*Merry  
Christmas*

— AND —  
HAPPY NEW YEAR

**LIFE IN  
ARMENIA**

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES







RAFFI  
NIZIBLIAN



NADIA  
AIT



KYLE  
KHANDIKIAN



MARIAM  
NAVASARDYAN



ANI  
SAFARYAN



VAHRAM  
ELAGOZ



TVÍN  
ZEYTOUNIAN

## CONTRIBUTORS

DEC 2024



# CREDITS AND SPECIAL THANKS



TOURISM COMMITTEE  
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA.

**ARMENIA**  
The Hidden  
Track



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE TOURISM  
COMMITTEE AT THE MINISTRY OF  
ECONOMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA  
FOR BEING COLLABORATIVE AND  
PROVIDING THE DIGITAL MEDIA (PHOTOS  
AND VIDEOS) TO USE IN THE MAGAZINE.

[www.armenia.travel](http://www.armenia.travel)

