

LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

2024

THE YEAR OF IJEVAN

**HONORARY
DIGITAL
NOMADS
AMBASSADOR**

TAVUSH PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

IJEVAN IS TAKING THE LEAD
LAUNCHING THE FIRST MULTILINGUAL
DIGITALNOMADS SUPPORT
CENTER IN ARMENIA

NO UBER, NO PROBLEM!
EXPLORING ARMENIA'S
TRANSPORTATION
MOBILE APPS

**THE NEW FACE OF
DILIJAN'S RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS**
TRANSFORMING FROM
A REGULAR TOURISM HUB
TO A 'LIVE AND WORK' DESTINATION

FROM A DIGITAL NOMAD TO A LOCAL
STORIES OF TRUE CULTURAL
IMMERSIONS IN ARMENIA
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LEGAL TIPS FOR DIGITAL NOMADS
WHAT WORK PERMITS DIGITAL
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SHOULD CONSIDER ARMENIA AS THEIR NEXT BASE

MATHEW ZEIN

EDITOR'S LETTER

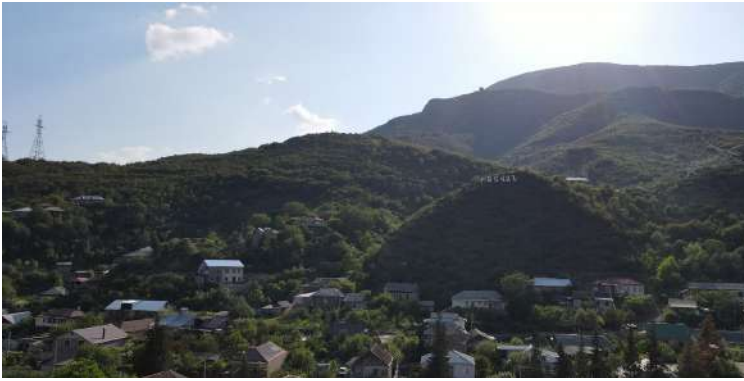
If I had met my future self earlier this year and told me I would be relocating to Ijevan and be assigned the title of Digital Nomads Ambassador of Tavush Province, I would have probably laughed and called myself crazy.

But life has a unique way of pushing us toward things we never expected. Today, with 6,500 readers and a vibrant community, the magazine is starting to make an impact on digital nomadism in Armenia. I have many projects in the works to support this effort on the ground, from collaborating with Tavush TDA to establish the first Digital Nomads Support Center in the region, to planning a self-funded month-long trip to the UAE to promote Armenia as a destination for digital nomads during several conferences and events.

As Master Oogway from Kung Fu Panda says, “You often meet your destiny on the road you took to avoid it.” I never thought I would end up living in Armenia, let alone becoming a domestic digital nomad here. But I’m so glad that my wife and I made the relocation decision in 2017. This place has given us a purpose in life, like nothing else!



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ARMENIAN CUPID WHISPERERS WHAT ROLE ARMENIANS PLAY TO HELP PEOPLE FIND LOVE THROUGH AI

From analyzing facial features to creating perfect matches, the IRIS app is rewriting the rules of modern romance. Read my interview with Dr. Igor Khalatian to discover why Armenia is fast becoming a tech haven and get ready to believe in love at first swipe, all thanks to the Armenian Cupid Whisperers!

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Imagine pitching your startup idea to a jury while roasting marshmallows around a blazing campfire. Dive into this world of networking, knowledge sharing, and competitive pitching, where even baseball and table football are part of the game. Read about the Sevan Startup Summit in Artak N. G.'s article to discover why it's not just a summit – it's a startup soiree!

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IJEVAN IS TAKING THE LEAD

LAUNCHING THE FIRST MULTILINGUAL DIGITAL NOMADS SUPPORT CENTER IN ARMENIA



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



IJEVAN IS TAKING THE LEAD LAUNCHING THE FIRST MULTILINGUAL DIGITAL NOMADS SUPPORT CENTER IN ARMENIA



In recent years, the concept of digital nomadism has gained immense popularity worldwide. With the freedom to work remotely, individuals seek destinations that offer the possibility of **achieving a work-life balance**. In this pursuit, Ijevan City in the Tavush Province of Armenia emerges as a new potential destination on the map, actively showing interest, on a governmental and non-governmental level, in attracting international digital nomads.

As a digital nomad myself, I have had the privilege of exploring various countries and experiencing diverse cultures. However, throughout my journey in Armenia, I have come to appreciate the unique beauty and opportunities that Tavush Province has to offer to digital nomads. I believe that its landscapes, local communities, affordability, and supportive infrastructure make it a **great destination for remote work and living**.

For the last couple of months, I've been collaborating with the Tavush Tourism Development Agency, an NGO founded in cooperation between the Tavush region and the Regen region of Germany, to analyze the true potential of Tavush Province as a destination for digital nomads worldwide. In the framework of our collaboration, I was invited to tour the province, its cities, towns, and villages and explore the various **aspects we can leverage** to attract international digital nomads and retain them for as long as possible.

Earlier, I expressed how I would like to **volunteer and use my expertise** and experience to contribute to the growth and prosperity of Tavush Province as a thriving hub for digital nomads. As a result, in July, the chairman of the board of Tavush TDA, Sos Khachikyan, officially made the decision to assign me the title of **Honorary Digital Nomads Ambassador** in Tavush Province to help formalize my work and bring me closer to achieving our common goal of promoting Tavush Province as a digital nomad destination.

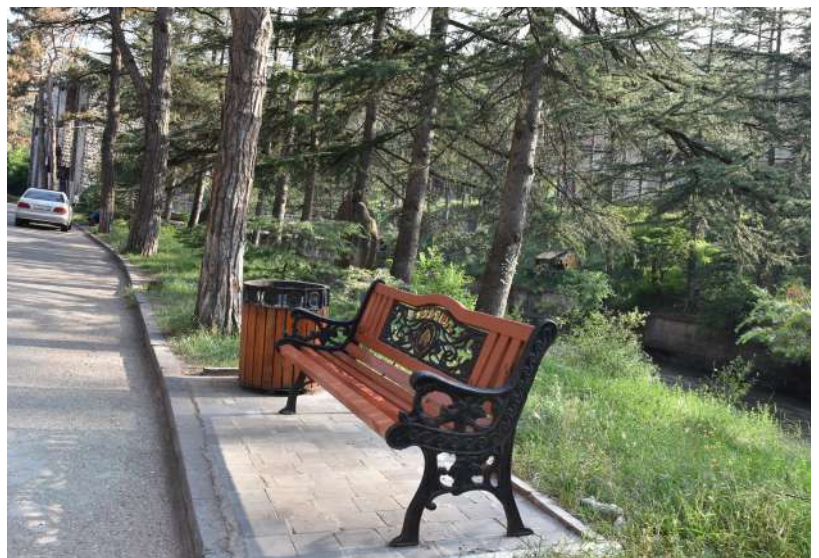
Per this decision, my responsibilities as the Honorary Digital Nomads Ambassador in Tavush Province will be the following:

- 1 Collaborate with local and international stakeholders to develop initiatives and strategies to enhance Tavush Province's appeal as a destination for digital nomads, per his capability and potential.
- 2 Actively engage with digital nomads and provide insights, advice, and support regarding remote work and living in Tavush Province.
- 3 Promote cultural exchange between digital nomads and the local community, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation.

Digital Nomads Support Center

Tavush Province is now taking a step forward by establishing the first multilingual Digital Nomads Support Center in the city and the entire region. It aims to streamline the relocation process for digital nomads choosing Ijevan City as their base.

The Tavush TDA is leading this groundbreaking initiative, recognizing the potential of digital nomads to **enrich the local community and economy**. The anticipated Digital Nomads Support Center will offer many free services to domestic and international digital nomads considering relocating to Ijevan City. The center's services will be available both online and in person at the NGO's office in Ijevan, catering to the needs of digital nomads in English, Russian, French, Arabic, and Armenian languages.



I will coordinate with the magnificent Tavush TDA team to organize and participate in all the support center activities and ensure a seamless relocation for any digital nomad considering Ijevan City. We'll not save an effort ensuring we'll remove all the burdens.

Although the support center will focus on Ijevan first, that's just to keep the efforts concentrated and reach measurable milestones. Later we'll start targeting other destinations in Tavush Province.

For now, Dilijan City in Tavush Province has already captured the attention of many digital nomads and remote workers, and it has developed significant modern and collaborative infrastructure. Its stunning natural landscapes, pleasant climate, and welcoming community have contributed to its growing popularity as a hub for location independent professionals. However,

just a short 30-minute drive away from Dilijan lies Ijevan City, the administrative capital of Tavush Province, which offers no less in terms of appeal and potential for remote workers and digital nomads. While it might not be as well-known as Dilijan as a digital nomad destination at the moment, Ijevan boasts a unique charm and numerous advantages that are worth exploring. Most importantly, being pretty much more affordable than many other cities in Armenia and abroad.

So, what makes Ijevan City such an ideal destination for digital nomads? The answer lies in the perfect work-life balance. One of the most significant advantages of Ijevan is its proximity to the Tavush Mountains. Digital nomads can indulge in meditation and exercise, enhancing their overall well-being. The mountains provide a perfect backdrop for moments of relaxation and self-reflection, allowing individuals to recharge and find inspiration in nature's tranquility.



FINDING THE SILVER LINING

HOW CAN AMERICAN DIGITAL NOMADS OVERCOME DOUBLE TAXATION CHALLENGES WHEN RELOCATING TO ARMENIA



**ANNA
BRUNO**

PERSONAL FINANCIAL ADVISOR

FINDING THE SILVER LINING

HOW CAN AMERICAN DIGITAL NOMADS OVERCOME DOUBLE TAXATION CHALLENGES WHEN RELOCATING TO ARMENIA

For US citizens, whether Armenian diasporans or non-Armenians, before you pack your bags and say goodbye to Uncle Sam, there's one important thing you need to know. While the prospect of starting a new life in a foreign country can be thrilling, the complexities of navigating tax systems in two different countries can be a daunting challenge that dampens your enthusiasm, [especially with double taxation issues between Armenia and the United States.](#)

Double taxation occurs when a taxpayer is required to pay taxes on the same income in two different countries, and it's [a concern that's particularly relevant for US citizens moving to Armenia.](#)

Why? Because the US tax system requires citizens and residents to pay taxes on their worldwide income, regardless of where they live. This means that even living and working in Armenia, you may still be required to [pay US taxes on your Armenian income.](#)

To complicate matters, Armenia also has its own tax laws and regulations, which can vastly differ from the US ones. This makes navigating the world of taxation in Armenia even more challenging for US citizens.



Balancing Two Jurisdictions

US Worldwide Income Obligation

The United States mandates that its citizens report their global income, irrespective of their place of residence. This fundamental principle holds true even when you plant your roots in the fertile soil of Armenia. Your financial activities, whether domestic or international, remain under the IRS lens.

Armenian Tax Residency

A crucial threshold for tax residency in Armenia is [spending 183 days or more within its borders](#) during a calendar year. Once this criterion is met, your status shifts to an Armenian tax resident. This change mandates that your worldwide income, including earnings outside Armenia, becomes subject to Armenian taxation.



Double Taxation Treaties Between Armenia and the United States

In any case, the income you make while living in Armenia is a taxed income you need to declare for the Tax Authority in the Republic of Armenia. It means whether your income is being kept in your [US bank](#) or [transferred to your Armenian bank](#), it is an income you made in Armenia and has to be taxed per Armenian laws.

At the same time, since Armenia and the United States [don't have a Double Taxation Treaty](#), the US government will also tax your income regularly regardless of relocating to Armenia. Does that mean you are going to pay taxes twice? Somehow, the answer is, unfortunately, yes!



Steps to Navigate Double Taxation Complexities

For US citizens contemplating a permanent move to Armenia, an intricate path of tax considerations unfurls. However, strategies can be employed to navigate this complex terrain:

STEP #1 Utilize the Available Treaty

The United States has a tax treaty with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), [which includes Armenia](#), but this treaty is not as comprehensive as a bilateral treaty would be. However, it's advisable to understand its provisions and determine if you can benefit from it per your specific case, employer, income source, profession, etc.

STEP #2 Foreign Tax Credit

Claim [a foreign tax credit](#) on your US return for taxes paid to Armenia. This reduces US tax liability on the same income.

STEP #3 Deduction Optimization

Explore deductions available under both US and Armenian laws. Examine the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion and Armenian deductions.

1. US Tax Deductions and Exemptions:

Foreign Earned Income Exclusion (FEIE): This is a significant benefit for US citizens living and working abroad. For tax year 2023, you can exclude up to \$120,000 (adjusted annually for inflation) of your foreign-earned income from US taxation. It will be as much as \$240,000 for married couples for the 2023 tax year. To qualify, you must meet either the Physical Presence Test or the Bona Fide Residence Test.

Foreign Housing Exclusion: In addition to the FEIE, you can exclude or deduct specific amounts related to housing expenses. The exclusion is based on a calculation that considers the cost of housing in your foreign location and is subject to limitations.

Foreign Tax Credit (FTC): If you pay taxes to Armenia on income the US also taxes, you can claim a credit on your US tax return for the foreign taxes paid. This prevents double taxation on the same income.

Self-Employment Tax Exclusion: If you are self-employed, your foreign-earned income might be excluded from self-employment tax, which funds Social Security and Medicare.

Child Tax Credit and Additional Child Tax Credit: These credits can provide significant tax relief for qualifying US citizen children living abroad.

2. Armenian Tax Deductions and Exemptions:

Personal Exemptions: Armenia offers personal exemptions for individuals and their dependents, which can reduce taxable income.

Social Security Contributions: Contributions made to the Armenian Social Security Fund are generally deductible from your taxable income.

Business Expenses: If you're operating a business in Armenia, you can deduct legitimate business expenses, such as rent, salaries, utilities, and office supplies.

Charitable Contributions: Donations made to registered Armenian charitable organizations may be deductible from your taxable income.

Educational Expenses: Certain educational expenses may be deductible, including tuition fees and educational materials.

Real Estate Deductions: If you own real estate in Armenia, you might be eligible for deductions related to property taxes and mortgage interest.

You might wonder why I should relocate to Armenia and lose more money in taxes. Actually, [do your financials right](#). You might find out that when relocating to Armenia, and with your same income, and even when paying the taxes in both countries, you will have a better lifestyle in Armenia due to the difference in [cost of living between the two countries](#). Plus, by doing so, you'll still benefit from the retirement plans and other US aid programs even when you spend years in Armenia enjoying the life you have always wanted.

STEP #4 Consider forming legal entities in Armenia for tax efficiency. [Seek advice on their advantages](#) and implications. Selecting the proper business structure is crucial for US citizens looking to establish a presence in Armenia while optimizing tax efficiency. The optimal choice depends on factors such as your business's nature, long-term goals, liability considerations, and tax implications. Here are some business structures to consider:

Limited Liability Company (LLC)

- **Advantages:** An LLC offers limited liability protection for its members, separating personal assets from business liabilities. It provides flexibility in management and can have a single member (owner) or multiple members.

- **Taxation:** In Armenia, LLCs are taxed on their profits, and members report their share of the profits on their individual tax returns.

- **Implications:** Forming an LLC requires registration and adherence to local regulations. It's a popular choice for small businesses and startups due to its simplicity and liability protection.

Joint Stock Company (JSC)

- **Advantages:** A JSC allows for the public trading of shares, making it suitable for larger businesses seeking capital investment from a wide range of shareholders.
- **Taxation:** JSCs are subject to corporate income tax in Armenia. Shareholders may be subject to dividend withholding tax.
- **Implications:** Establishing a JSC involves more complex procedures and regulatory requirements. It's an option for businesses with growth aspirations and access to capital markets.

Representative Office

- **Advantages:** A representative office is not a separate legal entity but rather an extension of a foreign company. It can engage in market research, promotion, and non-profit activities.
- **Taxation:** A representative office is generally not subject to corporate income tax but may have tax obligations on certain activities.
- **Implications:** This option is suitable for businesses initially exploring the Armenian market without engaging in direct revenue-generating activities.

Branch Office

- **Advantages:** Similar to a representative office, a branch office is an extension of a foreign company. It can engage in commercial activities and contracts on behalf of the parent company.
- **Taxation:** A branch office is subject to corporate income tax on its profits in Armenia.
- **Implications:** A branch office offers more operational flexibility than a representative office and can be a choice for companies planning to conduct commercial activities.

Sole Proprietorship

- **Advantages:** A sole proprietorship is the simplest form of business with one owner. It's easy to set up and manage.
- **Taxation:** In Armenia, sole proprietors report their business income on their individual tax returns.
- **Implications:** This option suits freelancers, consultants, and small businesses with limited liability requirements.

STEP #6 Income Allocation

Strategically allocate income between countries, considering favorable tax treatment. Minimize the overall tax burden.

STEP #7 Consultation is Key

Engage tax professionals versed in both US and Armenian tax systems. Dual expertise ensures a comprehensive approach.

STEP #8 Stay Updated

Tax laws change. Stay informed about regulations in both countries to avoid surprises during tax filing.

It's important to note that tax laws can be [complex and subject to change](#). The availability and eligibility criteria for deductions and exemptions may vary based on individual circumstances, residency status, and specific tax regulations. To ensure that you're maximizing your tax benefits while maintaining compliance with both US and Armenian tax laws, it's recommended to consult with tax professionals who specialize in international taxation. They can provide personalized guidance tailored to your situation and help you navigate the intricacies of claiming deductions and exemptions in both countries.



WHERE FOUNDERS MEET, AND INVESTORS LOOK FOR THE NEXT UNICORN



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING

**KARÉN
GYULBUDAGHYÁN**

STRATEGIC ADVISOR, ARCHITECT OF ECOSYSTEMS, INVESTOR & UC BERKELEY SKYDECK AMBASSADOR

BREWING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WHERE FOUNDERS MEET, AND INVESTORS LOOK FOR THE NEXT UNICORN

As the startup ecosystem in Armenia develops rapidly, innovative ideas are born daily to add to the thriving entrepreneurship atmosphere in the country. One idea, in particular, caught my attention earlier last month. I couldn't resist the temptation of flying back to Yerevan after 2 weeks of leaving on a business trip when I knew the mastermind behind that idea was present in the country.

Karén Gyulbudaghyan is the founder of [Ground Zero Speciality Coffee](#) in Yerevan, and I had the privilege of meeting him for two hours in the coffee shop. Additionally, I attended a speech and a workshop by him at the FemInno Armenia, the largest female innovation conference, in the same week.





But what's so special about this coffee shop or its founder? To start with, let me introduce Karén by saying he's a founder, strategic advisor, architect of cross-border innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, board member, and investor. Throughout his 30-year all-around and uncommon career, Karén has championed tax and business policy changes, **secured \$1B+ in benefits**, collaborated with 70+ economic development, investment and trade promotion agencies from around the world, advised American multinational corporations in IPO like Tesla, merger & acquisitions (M&A) like Trimble, digital transformations like Autodesk and Symantec, and represented companies in complex cases in the USA. In a unique role at Yahoo!, he has developed strategic partnerships, structured deals and led datacenter

strategy. Karén has helped transform the University of California (UC) Berkeley SkyDeck into Forbes top university startup accelerator in the world. Karén's founded firm Strategic Value Ventures is one of few Global Innovation Partners of UC Berkeley around the world. Their collaboration with Berkeley SkyDeck has been instrumental in boosting the entire tech ecosystem in Armenia and launching over 25 companies to global prominence.

Now things are starting to sound differently. Why would such a successful person consider founding a specialty coffee shop in a small country like Armenia? And most importantly, why is this an important topic for digital nomads considering relocating to Armenia?

The First in The Region

Founded in 2022, Ground Zero Specialty Coffee is the **first venture cafe in Armenia and the region**. It fuses together the unique coffee culture and the spirit of entrepreneurship of San Francisco Silicon Valley with the best of the local culture. The venture cafe provides an enabling environment for individuals, digital nomads, startups and investors' growth. It's a place where idea generation, networking, business breakfasts, and **cross-pollination among techies**, creators, tourists, and entrepreneurs happen daily.



The name “Ground Zero” is a metaphor for the beginning and empowerment of something new like new ideas, new contacts and new ventures. The name also has a more literal meaning. Ground Zero is the point on the ground directly below the point of detonation of a nuclear explosion.

By design, Ground Zero Specialty Coffee creates an immersive environment perceived by all five senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. Customers who work from this venture cafe cite increased productivity and focus and incredible networking opportunities.

All roads lead to Ground Zero Specialty Coffee, literally and figuratively, as Karén like to say. This specialty coffee shop has become the first point straight from the airport or the last destination before the airport for many locals and visitors. All five Armenian startups that have been accepted to the Berkeley SkyDeck accelerator program over the past 12 months started their journey to Silicon Valley from this venture cafe. The majority of these startups are founded and led by women. As a fact, Ground Zero Specialty Coffee has hosted more Berkeley SkyDeck companies than any location in the world outside Berkeley, California, according to Karén.



The “**Breakfast Series at Ground Zero**” are immensely popular early morning business and networking events with top caliber executives from Silicon Valley and industry leaders in sales, engineering, finance, HR and more.

In addition, Ground Zero Specialty Coffee has been driving innovation and profound cultural and lifestyle changes in Armenia. Karén's local business partners, the sisters Sona and Kima Abrahamyan have been known for setting standards in restaurant industry for years and

pursuing them with love and passion. The introduced novelties include grab-and-go concept, pet-friendly space, in-house made American style bagels, gluten-free and vegan food options. Many cafes in Yerevan have since copied and adopted these innovations.



“

Same words delivered in the coffee shop like Ground Zero can have significantly greater effect than when delivered in the office environment.”

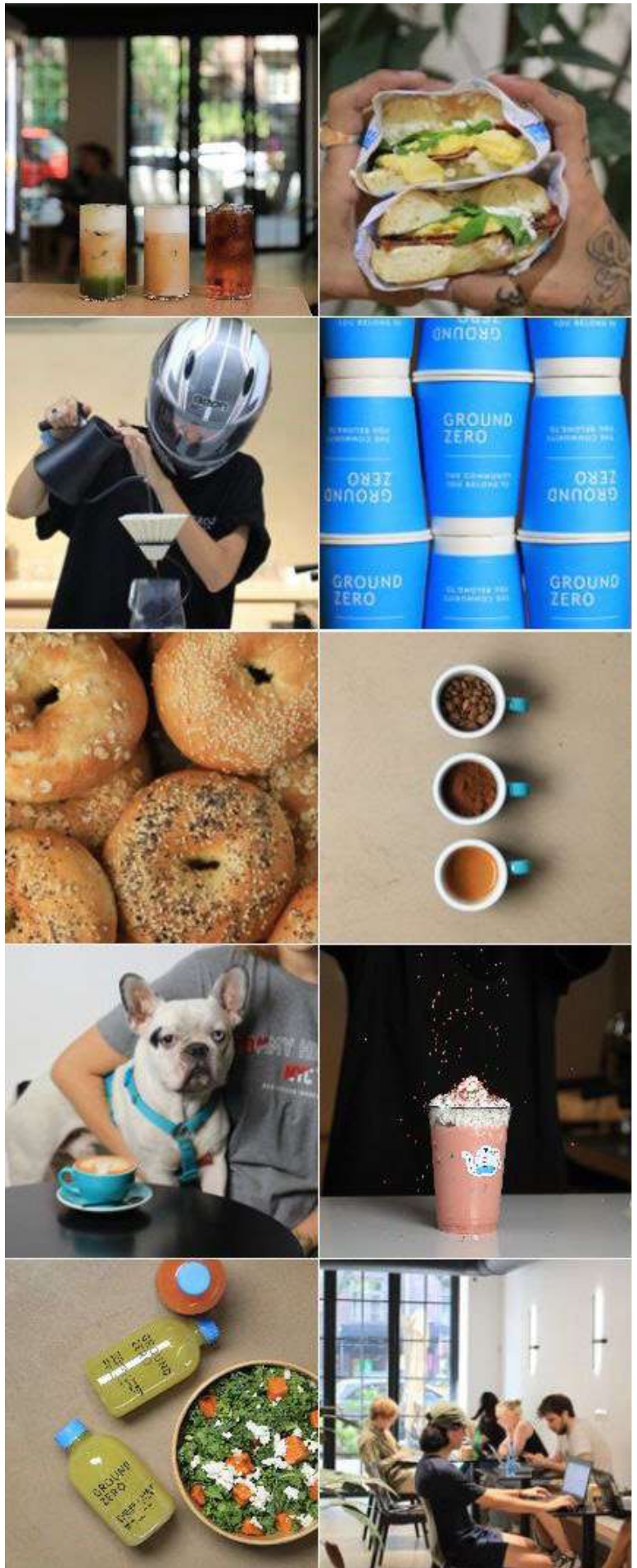
Karén Gyulbudaghyan

According to Karén, Armenians have no problem with resources but with **connecting and leveraging these resources**. In more detail, they lack the right environment and mindset to connect the dots leading to a global impact. This was one of the key reasons that motivated him to found Ground Zero Specialty Coffee. He wanted to create a place to unite like-minded people in Armenia and enable them to **enlarge their impact** on a wider scale.

“ When you talk to global investors or customers, their every statement is a signal, that you need to be able to understand and act upon it.”

Karén Gyulbudaghyan

Karén envisioned a cultural change in Armenia. He wanted to bring people closer together simply and to make the relationship between founders and investors more seamless. This would ensure that no good idea was lost in the crowd.



Are We Still Talking About Coffee?

A question I had to ask Karén when I first met him. In the beginning, things were not clear to me, but as we delved deeper into the conversation, things changed.

According to Karén, **developing a successful startup and brewing a perfect cup of specialty coffee has strikingly close parallels.** Both require passion, hard work, and dedication. Just as a perfect cup of coffee requires high-quality beans, special water, and proper coffee extraction techniques, a successful startup requires high-quality team, product fit and market development. The stages of growing a successful startup can also be compared to the stages of growing, processing, roasting and brewing specialty coffee. Karén is using these analogies to mentor and advise startup founders and industry professionals.



“Whenever I talk about specialty coffee, I don't really talk about coffee.”
Karén Gyulbudaghyan

Just like **selecting the finest coffee beans** as the foundation of a great brew, the first stage of founding a successful startup begins with forming the founding team - understanding the environment that shaped their mindset and vision, learning about their background and motivation behind the new venture. The **specialty roasting process** transforms the chemical composition of the green beans into a tailored high-potential and new-capability coffee beans. Founders undergo similar transformation through intense and intensive acceleration programs, mentorship and guided activities.

Achieving product-market fit and creating a business model is akin to the process of researching and striking a balance among key factors like choosing the right coffee extraction method, grind size and ratio of water to coffee for a perfect taste. That requires domain expertise, attention to detail and precise measurements.

Launching a startup mirrors the excitement of presenting a new coffee

profile to customers. **It's a pivotal moment** that involves eagerness, anticipation, and hope for positive reception.

Let's put it this way: When Karén and his partners have founded their specialty coffee shop in the best traditions of Silicon Valley startup, it has shattered many stereotypes of starting and doing business in Armenia. Surely, customers have noticed and over 75% of daily visitors are recurring customers.

Are You An Espresso or a Glace'?



Just as there are different types of coffee profiles, there are also different types of startup founders. Surprisingly, Karén found a way to **match coffee extraction methods with a founder type!**

The function of time: Patiently steeped over time, **cold brew represents “slowly-cooked” and long-term sustainable startups.** These businesses take time to build, creating a smooth and refreshing experience for the team and customers.

The function of pressure: Espresso is a strong, **concentrated coffee shot akin to a lean startup** - a business emphasizing rapid iterations in a high-pressure environment and optimal use of resources to achieve early growth. Like a quick jolt of caffeine, a lean startup focuses on swiftly delivering a product-market fit.

The function of collaboration: With its harmonious blend of espresso, steamed milk, and frothy milk, **a cappuccino is like a collaborative startup,** where team

members with diverse skill sets come together to create a well-rounded venture.

The function of gravity: Filter coffee is developed while hot water is free-flowing through the coffee particles under the normal gravity. It represent free-minded founders and digital nomads that constantly explore, absorb anything new and expand to broader markets.



A Personal Point of View

Being a coffee addict and a digital nomad myself, I want to share my thoughts on Ground Zero Specialty Coffee. I was shocked by the amount of details Karén and his team cared about in this coffee shop. He didn't just invest in a luxurious setting or appealing cutlery. In fact, he took care of the smallest details in the place, such as the type of water and the type of coffee beans, and even traveled the world to learn more about coffee. The food available at Ground Zero covers all tastes and offers diversity for all international visitors. Most importantly, it's **simple without any sophistication**.

“ A specialty coffee is not just a high-quality coffee, it's a special culture.”

Karén Gyulbudaghyan



As digital nomads, you must have seen many countries already, and one of the major parts of nomading is networking with professionals in every place you visit. In Armenia, **we do things a bit uniquely**. When you're in Yerevan, visit this place, enjoy the atmosphere, and spark a conversation out of nowhere with someone at the next table. See where it goes. You might be surprised by the results. As Karén says about Ground Zero, it's “the community you belong to,” and I would add, “**no matter where you come from**.”



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THE NEW FACE OF DILIJAN'S RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

TRANSFORMING FROM A REGULAR TOURISM HUB TO A “LIVE AND WORK” DESTINATION



**ARTUR
PETROSYAN**

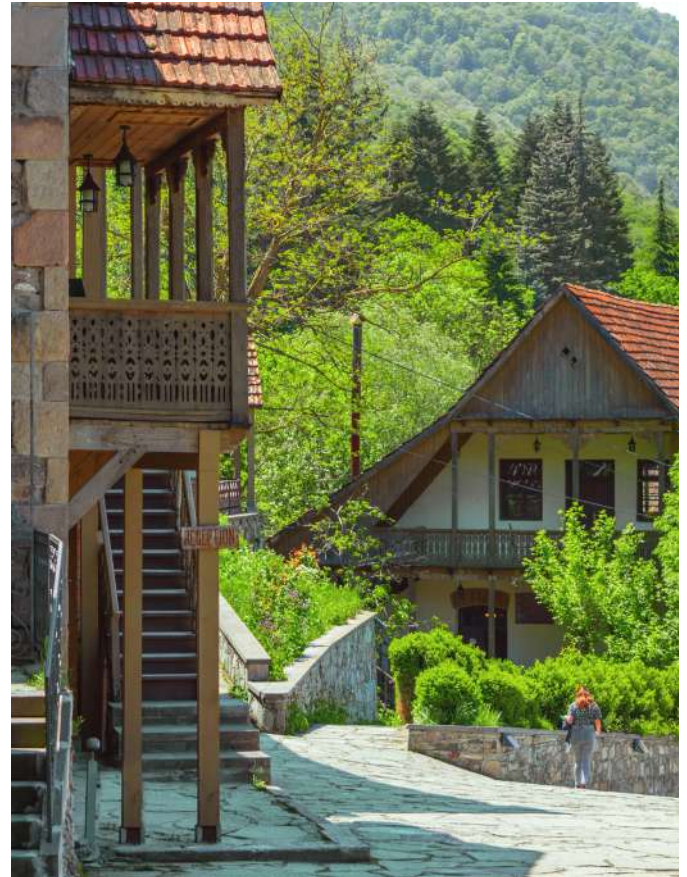
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AT CITY NEST



THE NEW FACE OF DILIJAN'S RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS TRANSFORMING FROM A REGULAR TOURISM HUB TO A 'LIVE AND WORK' DESTINATION

Nestled amidst the breathtaking landscapes of Armenia, Dilijan has long been known as a popular destination for tourists seeking rest, sports, and health rejuvenation. The city has **officially been decreed as a national park**. For sure, it's one of the greenish areas in Armenia, surrounded by high mountain ranges and dense forests.

The Park offers a great variety of activities, including a memorable walk through the vibrant world of flora and fauna, hiking up and rediscovering the forests, and reaching Lake Parz in the end. It is a unique opportunity to unlock the energy of mother nature and breath it fresh. Dilijan also offers a solid historical heritage. It's brimming with hundreds of historic monuments, temples, and statues that reflect the city's glorious past since the 12th century.



However, as the world evolves and new trends emerge, Dilijan is witnessing the development of a fresh culture that embraces remote work and offers an opportunity for individuals to combine work and living seamlessly. In this article, we will explore the transformation of Dilijan into **a potential tech hub** for remote workers, the existing coworking spaces nestled in hotels, cafes, and public parks and now actively popping up in **newly built residential areas**.



Dilijan's Rise as a Remote Work Hub

The advent of the digital age and the rise of remote work opportunities have reshaped how people approach their careers. With its serene environment and abundance of natural beauty, Dilijan has become an attractive destination for digital nomads, freelancers, and professionals looking to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. This migration of remote workers to Dilijan has **laid the foundation for a new culture** that blends work and leisure harmoniously.

To make this happen, both the municipality and private investors of diverse geography are now entering Dilijan with a new

agenda, making it a **self-sustained city** that meets the ever-increasing demands of the new digital generation.

This transformation focuses on public infrastructure, including roads, ropeways, and funiculars to help connect the city, developing healthcare of international standards, renovating city parks, as well as countless private projects, mostly about developing entertainment (cinema, theater, leisure, sports) and modern living designs. This massive transformation aims to **invite people from the new era** to live and work in Dilijan.



Coworking Spaces in Dilijan

As Dilijan embraced the remote work trend, local businesses responded by establishing coworking spaces in cafes and hotels. These spaces provide reliable Wi-Fi and comfortable workstations and offer remote workers a sense of community and networking opportunities. There are popular private and free-of-charge coworking spaces in Dilijan, including Balcony Dilijan, Toon Armeni, TUMO, Tourism Information Center, etc.



Balcony Dilijan

was the first co-working space in this magical small town surrounded by endless forests.

Toon Armeni

is a new co-working space designed for comfortable work, study, and holding events that have been operating in Dilijan since February. Workation is a part of the Toon Armeni guesthouse.

Co-working Dilijan

provides a cozy workspace with 22 seats in the main hall and 12 in ZOOM Room.



Tumo Dilijan

is a place where you can immerse yourself in your favorite classics at the library, work on your projects atop a rooftop with a breathtaking view, and then retire for the night to a cozy hostel room - all amidst the invigorating ambiance of Tavush's nature. 11+1 Coworking & Hostel is set to become your cherished haven in Dilijan.

The number of co-working spaces in the city is seemingly growing, boosted by ever-increasing green construction projects in and around the city. In many cases, **new residential complexes** offer innovative and well-equipped co-working spaces, complemented by nearby cafes, restaurants, and sports facilities, making remote working more vibrant and pleasurable.

This is required to bring more and more of a new and diverse population to

Dilijan that will shade new colors of life in this historical tourist site. One of those fabulous projects is Allur Residence and Mountain Village Terraces, which offer critically different living standards to dwellers. Allur Residence is a **transformation of the abandoned** former Tavush Bread Factory into a modern loft-style living with mesmerizing views and comfortable facilities. Mountain Village Terraces is a mix of architectural art and science that offers A-class living just by Dilijan National Park.

The Transition to Residential Complex Coworking Spaces

While the existing coworking spaces have catered well to the needs of transient remote workers, the demand for more permanent and community-oriented living solutions has emerged. To meet this growing need, CITY NEST, the company with fresh touch in the market, along with reputable investors and developers across the industry are now incorporating coworking spaces within residential complexes in Dilijan.

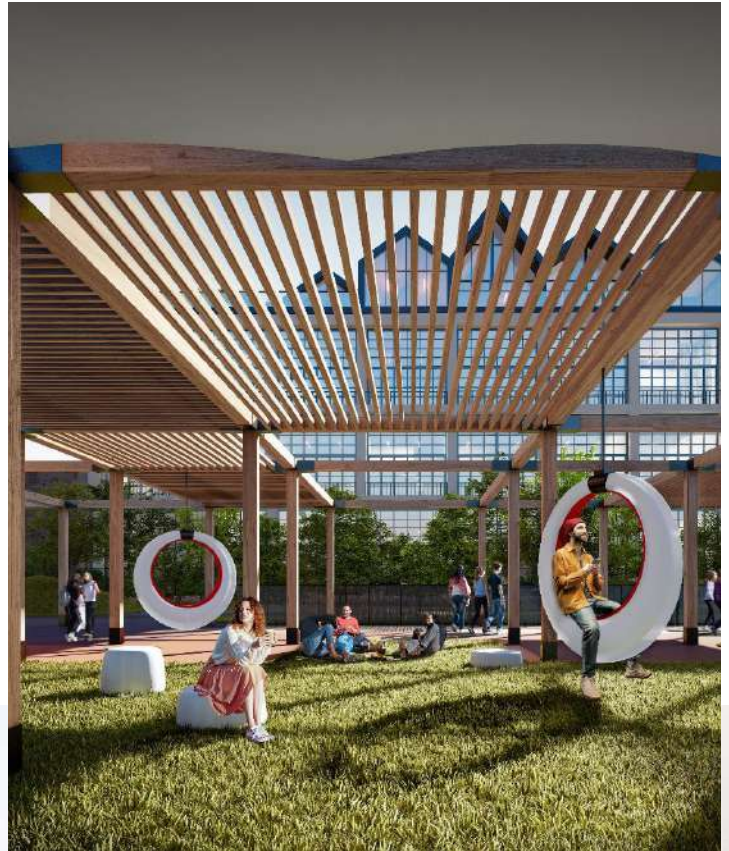
MOUNTAIN VILLAGE TERRACES

unrivaled residential complex where two contradicting energies flow into one - the urban and the natural. It will have a BREEAM certification, a testimony of the highest sustainable building standards. It offers spacious apartments with terraces, individual lockers booked for each apartment, private parking lots, and **quiet and cozy coworking areas.**



ALLUR RESIDENCE

a brand-new residential complex and an innovative concept yet to be seen in Armenia. Located at the heart of everything, it prioritizes the well-being and joy of its residents. Spanning across an expansive 13,000 square meters on an elevated plateau, Allur Residence offers a range of modern and comfortable apartments with mesmerizing views. Additionally, it boasts spacious penthouses **designed for networking and coworking** and meticulously planned indoor and outdoor spaces, including a versatile sports complex with a swimming pool and a specialized yoga hall. There are various outdoor areas designated for exercise and children's playgrounds.



What's the purpose of Residential Complex Coworking Spaces in Dilijan?

Coworking spaces within residential complexes allow individuals to work efficiently without the need for long commutes, fostering a better work-life balance. Moreover, living in close proximity to fellow remote workers and professionals encourages collaboration, idea-sharing, and a strong sense of community.

As Dilijan evolves, it embraces the opportunities the remote work culture presents. The city's transition from being a tourist destination to becoming a hub

for remote workers has been aided by the **establishment of coworking spaces** in cafes and hotels. Now, the integration of coworking spaces within residential complexes presents an exciting prospect, allowing individuals to experience the **best of both worlds** - work and living - in the lap of nature.

Embracing this shift towards a new culture of work and living, Dilijan is poised to attract a diverse community of individuals seeking to thrive in a serene environment that fosters productivity, creativity, and a strong sense of camaraderie among its residents.



WHAT WORK PERMITS DIGITAL NOMADS NEED IN ARMENIA?



**NERSES
ISAJANYAN**

CO-FOUNDER OF VARDANYAN & PARTNERS



LEGAL TIPS FOR DIGITAL NOMADS

WHAT WORK PERMITS DIGITAL NOMADS NEED IN ARMENIA?



This article will explore the legal landscape for digital nomads in Armenia, specifically focusing on work permits and the tax system.

Understanding Legal Basics for Digital Nomads

Despite not having a specific government-designed program for digital nomads, Armenia provides freedom for them to work and live in the country. As a digital nomad engaging in freelancing or remote work in Armenia, you are **not obliged to obtain a work permit** or a work visa reserved for foreign Armenian firm employees. Instead, a regular visa will suffice, and if you are from a visa-exempt country, you can enter Armenia and begin working remotely. However, **obtaining a residence permit** will likely be necessary if you plan to stay in Armenia for extended periods.

Taxes for Digital Nomads in Armenia

In Armenia, digital nomads are **exempt from taxation** on their worldwide income unless they stay in the country for more than 183 days in a calendar year. If they exceed this duration, they will be considered tax residents of Armenia and have tax obligations. The tax rate will depend on the type of income. While business income is generally taxable at 20%, dividends are taxed at 5%, interest income is taxable at 10%, etc.

Residence Permits for Digital Nomads

If digital nomads decide to extend their stay beyond their visa period, they can get a residence permit in Armenia by [registering a business in Armenia](#). The process involves acquiring a local tax ID number by registering as a “private entrepreneur” at the State Registry of Legal Entities, which typically takes 1-2 business days. After registering as a “private entrepreneur,” foreigners can apply for a residence permit. The residency application is typically processed within two months, and an interview with a national security officer may be conducted within around three weeks of submitting the application to verify the genuineness and operation of the business.

Navigating the Tax System

For businesses with annual sales (income) not exceeding AMD 24 million (about USD 62,000), the “microbusiness” status may be granted, [exempting them from taxes](#). However, certain services, such as consulting, marketing, engineering, accounting, etc., cannot enjoy this status. If the “microbusiness” status is not applicable, the turnover tax regime can be used, taxing [income \(sales\) at 5%](#), provided annual sales do not exceed AMD 115 million (about USD 298,000).

Private entrepreneurs under the turnover tax regime pay a fixed amount of AMD 5,000 (around USD 13) per month as income tax, AMD 5,000 (around USD 13) per month as social payments, and AMD 18,000 to 120,000 (around USD 47 to 311) per year as a military tax. To ensure accurate and timely filing of various tax returns, it is highly recommended to engage the services of a local accountant.



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THE HIDDEN OFF-ROAD REPUBLIC

A 4X4 ADVENTURE IN THE HEART OF TAVUSH PROVINCE



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



THE HIDDEN OFF-ROAD REPUBLIC

A 4X4 ADVENTURE IN THE HEART OF TAVUSH PROVINCE

Secluded from the world but among nature, off-roading is an adventure to experience at least once in a lifetime. It is a fire that can't be tamed; the tires slashing through the air can only be best described by saying it is like fuel to an engine; it ignites the soul. The rugged terrain and stunning scenery make for a truly unforgettable journey in the Tavush mountains of Armenia. You'll find yourself winding your way through forests, over mountains, and across rivers, all the while surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery in the world.



A Blast From the Past

Last month, I was invited by the Tavush Tourism Development Agency on a FAM trip for a few days across the region. I was lucky to join multiple off-roading trips, or “Jeeping trips,” as the locals call them, to the mountains of Ijevan and Dilijan.

In the beginning, I was expecting some modern SUVs, but old classic jeeps were the choice. To my surprise, as we climbed the mountains of Tavush, there were so many old Jeeps in every village and small town. It seemed like Jeep was the official car over there. And to be honest, it's worth the reputation. The old Jeeps were built tough, and they handled the rugged terrain like a champ.

Earth's Eden

Being a digital nomad myself, I've been to many forests and mountains across the world; however, **the greenery in Tavush is an Eden**, something about the air is quite different; it is a land resembling a dream, a vast destination where a man can unite with their passion. Tavush lies like a lavish queen among Armenian provinces, lush with her green meadows and peaked mountains. The province has risen 900 meters above the sea among the alpine meadows, swinging between a summer breeze and a mild winter. During those seasons, the mighty oaks hold their ground, drivers are surrounded by rocky roads to climb, and destiny is an Armenian legend.

Wherever the eyes fall, nature enthusiasts can ponder upon wild pear and birch trees; the fauna is rich with berry plants and plums that nourish the sweet palate, and the flora is astounding in pink, the breathtaking false Christmas cactus is found in fall and throughout the winter, fields of chaste trees known as monk's pepper or lilac chaste trees present astounding light shades of violet. Simply put, that's Tavush.



Driving Through Tavush

The opportunity to conquer but not be defeated; on the road, one might have the white lines to company their loneliness but offroad, only a Wrangler can company the distance; the name says it all; this Jeep is built to dispute, but this argument takes place on grounds among the dirt with the gravel, the tires and stones have their own little dance; they sway in a heated tango, the relationship does not identify to gender, in this dance the man and women exchange roles, at times they are both one another and each time one leads the dance.



Still, it's only within the harmony that the dance is completed; the instructor is an axel that supports the weight of this non-withering movement; it observes closely watching. This Jeep is a well-seasoned beauty, mastering the art of taming; she knows when to leap and when to hold, wuthering heights, an old tale that she has told so many times; **Jeep claims her place** on the highest of mountains in Tavush, leaving lovers behind, leaving the terrain that has grown accustomed to its' tires and the steep mountains that have listened to its roaring engine.

On the FAM trip, we had three Jeeps at our disposal, and we were eager to put them to the test. We started our journey in the city of Ijevan and quickly made our way into the mountains. The terrain was rugged, but the Jeeps handled it perfectly. We bounced and rolled our way through the hills, and we couldn't help but laugh as we felt the adrenaline pumping through our veins. As we climbed higher and higher, the views became more and more spectacular. We could see for miles in every direction, and I felt like I was touching the clouds. The pristine nature of the mountains was breathtaking, and I felt a sense of peace and tranquility that I had never experienced before.



The Off-Road Republic?

Mount Dimats is another picturesque of perfect green; it is located in Ijevan Mountains. This mountain rises to 2378 meters and peaks five kilometers from Teghut village. Mount Dimats is the point where **the earth meets the clouds**. The distances are split with rocky slopes, the rocks are covered with astounding grass, and the air is clear.

With rocky roads and a birds-eye view, the road to Dimats is long and packed with adventures; this road calls for one of a kind, a knave 4x4 wheeler, and the **Wrangler is a beast**, a vehicle with hard-core appeal; this baby packs a punch, no matter how muddy it gets the iconic mudguards rally the forces to thrash the dirt of a muddy road, inspired by stone arch they preserve the look of nature with a squared-arch look, its eyes hide behind a seven-slot grille below the headlights.

The road to Kirants holds a romantic sense within the thrill of off-roading; Kirants Monastery was built in the 8th century. The incredible tale begins with a love story between a wealthy daughter and a young craftsman whose entire hope was to marry the love of his life.

To win her hand in marriage, the father requested that the young lad would build a church, and so he did; it was made entirely from brick and mortar; unfortunately, the young lad didn't get the approval, as the father said that the church line was uneven, realizing he was never going to get the fathers approval, desperate, he took his life and leaped to his fate from the "drum or dome."

Unlike modern 4x4s, the Wrangler doesn't deprive the

driver of the driver seat; they can charge with their car using a high and low option switching between rear-wheel-drive or four-wheel, it has the advantage of higher torque and slower road speed, and the ground clearance is optimal with a minimum of eight and a half inches, 2.5 liters engine and four cylinders, resulting in a 200 to 238 torque, no road is too harsh.

Opposite to new 4-wheel automatic systems, old manual gears allowed the driver to **switch and send power** to either the front or rear wheels for better grip, making the classic the steady monster that knows when to retrieve and when to prevail.





In Tavush, classic jeeps finally get to **do what they are built for**, facing the dirt, breaking through the gravel, and gliding through murky waters, the destination is a fully off-road experience, and the reward is cozy days and nights among nature's greatest beauty, surrounded by nothing but landscapes, the surprises are hidden as one might sight a unique grey horse or a lovely forest cat. But the grizzly brown bears can sneak up on car enthusiasts. So much to see and so many roads to conquer.

Wandering around the mountain villages feels like a day in the Jeep Republic, where Jeep is unofficially the official car for everyone. Although I doubted the power of old Jeeps in the Tavush mountains, I was totally wrong **when we put them to the test**.

A quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson comes to mind: "Do not always go where there's a path. Go instead where there's no path and **leave a trail for others**." And I think it most captures the true essence of off-road experiences in Tavush. It is more than metal and roads clashing; it is a sense of discovery, a sense of purpose, and pure love. The difficulty of it entices the heart, and the stakes only increase the itching desire. The Heart of Tavush Province is truly the off-road Republic and Earth's Eden.



DECODING ARMENIA'S TECH INDUSTRY

AN INSIGHTFUL PERSPECTIVE FROM AN ARMENIAN PROGRAMMING GENIUS ON ARMENIA'S THRIVING TECH ECOSYSTEM



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING

**ASHOT
VARDANIAN**

FOUNDER OF UNUM.CLOUD

DECODING ARMENIA'S TECH INDUSTRY

AN INSIGHTFUL PERSPECTIVE FROM AN ARMENIAN PROGRAMMING GENIUS ON ARMENIA'S THRIVING TECH ECOSYSTEM

Last month, I was lucky to catch up with Ashot Vardanyan in Yerevan. We grabbed a bite and talked for two hours. For those who don't know him, Ashot is the programming mastermind behind Unum.cloud, a Deep-Tech research company designing scalable data - processing algorithms.

Although I'm an IT engineer, it was hard for me to follow up on all the terms and the topics Ashot discussed. Still, I managed to grab these tips:



Employment Tip

If you're living in Armenia and interested in developing a one-of-a-kind career, **consider applying to work at Nvidia**. The amount of experience you'll get there is unmatched and will take you to new heights. Even if you believe you have enough knowledge and experience to be a senior and were offered something less than you anticipated, consider the options because working in companies with deep engineering culture is different.



Founding a Startup Tip

If you're considering a startup and looking forward to building your business, make it AI-centred. Outsourcing in Armenia will bring in some dollars but will not take you far; meanwhile, AI, these days, **will take you to international recognition** if you come up with something solid. Never fear taking a bold step and doing something very big when you believe you have the right thing in hand. Once you do, the titans of the global Tech industry will come after you – bringing more recognition to Armenia and your company.



Hiring Tip

When looking for a specific talent for your company in Armenia, **stop targeting the same pool of talents** in the same countries and start looking in other destinations for the minds you need because you will also encounter many professionals like the ones you're looking for in these countries, Africa, as an example.



Investment Tip

If you have some funds, invest in innovative startups and trust what they're doing because the chances are high that they'll grow into something outstanding and end up **paying a considerable ROI**.



Business Monetization Tip

I never focused on monetizing my business from day one; I've been building a core engine other companies can use in the future, which consumes years of research and experience until the final product is ready. However, when the time is right, the product **sells like nothing comparable**.

My conversation with Ashot was unlike any other conversation I've ever had before. It was an insightful two hours, and I was happy to have managed to grab a few tips that I wanted to share with the magazine readers, whether they are local Armenians or digital nomads considering relocating. These tips apply to everyone, whether they are living in Armenia or outside the country.



WHY LATIN AMERICAN DIGITAL NOMADS SHOULD CONSIDER ARMENIA AS THEIR NEXT BASE



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INTERVIEWING



**VARTI
KALAYDJIAN**

INTERNATIONAL RISK EXPERT



DISCOVERING ARMENIA

WHY LATIN AMERICAN DIGITAL NOMADS SHOULD CONSIDER ARMENIA AS THEIR NEXT BASE

Latin American digital nomads, in general, and Brazilians, specifically, have been exploring diverse destinations worldwide to set up their temporary bases. While many might opt for well-known hotspots in Southeast Asia or Europe, only [a few know about Armenia](#) as a potential destination for digital nomads.

I couldn't help but wonder what might captivate Brazilian digital nomads in a country like Armenia. Brazil boasts stunning landscapes, a mesmerizing coastline, and affordability, making it an attractive destination for travelers. So, [what could possibly draw Brazilians to Armenia?](#) Delving deeper into this question, I stumbled upon a video shared by Varti Kalaydjian on Instagram, a Brazilian Armenian living in Brazil who has been instrumental in revealing Armenia's hidden treasures to her fellow Brazilians.

Despite Brazilians' passion for traveling to new places, [Armenia remained relatively unknown](#) as a destination. Varti noticed this lack of awareness and took it upon herself to showcase the beauty of her ancestral homeland. Hosting a TV show about Armenia in Portuguese, she gradually introduced Armenian culture, history, and landscapes to Brazilians. Moreover, she started organizing tours from Brazil to Armenia every year.

I reached out to Varti, and we had an interesting conversation. Although her audience is tourists, not digital nomads, I wanted to know what makes Armenia appealing [to this particular demographic](#).

One of the reasons Armenia wasn't on the radar of Brazilian travelers was the absence of travel packages offered by local agencies. Unlike other popular destinations, Armenia was yet to be explored by mass tourism. As a result, Brazilians who wanted to visit the country had to plan their trips independently or seek specialized [Portuguese-speaking tour agents](#), which were not always readily available in Armenia.



The sight of Mount Ararat, a symbol that resonates deeply with many Brazilians, creates [an immediate emotional connection](#). As they arrive at Zvartnots International Airport, travelers eagerly inquire about the best spots to see this iconic mountain. Beyond the majestic Ararat, Yerevan, the capital city, offers a captivating blend of [modernity and ancient history](#). The Cascade area and downtown Yerevan, in particular, exemplify how the city has evolved into a developed metropolis while preserving its rich cultural heritage. For many Brazilians, the atmosphere in Armenia feels like a harmonious fusion of [European sophistication and ancient civilization](#). It's not uncommon for Brazilians to compare the charm of Armenia to that of Paris on a smaller scale.



Safety is another major draw for Brazilians in Armenia. The country is considered remarkably safe, allowing travelers to explore with a sense of ease and tranquility. Witnessing families strolling the streets and children playing in public areas late into the evening is heartwarming for visitors [accustomed to heightened safety concerns](#).



The warmth and respect shown by the Armenian people also leave a lasting impression on Brazilian travelers. Furthermore, Varti mentioned that public education in Armenia is better than in Brazil, making it a favored destination for digital nomad families considering relocating.

Armenians possess a unique talent for enjoying life's simple pleasures, a characteristic important for Brazilians seeking a more balanced and fulfilling lifestyle. Moreover, the care taken to keep the streets clean and preserve public facilities demonstrates [a sense of civic responsibility](#) that further endears Armenia to its visitors.



As the digital nomad movement continues to grow in Latin America, Armenia emerges as a promising destination based on the captivating features that have already captured the interest of Brazilian travelers.

Are you a digital nomad in Brazil planning your next destination? How about Armenia? Brazilians who have been here have fallen in love with the country, and I believe you will. Like I always say, [give Armenia a week](#), and it will do the rest on its own.



FROM A DIGITAL NOMAD TO A LOCAL

STORIES OF TRUE CULTURAL IMMERSIONS IN ARMENIA FROM OVERSEAS



**GEVORG
BABAYAN**

CO-FOUNDER OF LIKELOCAL.IO



FROM A DIGITAL NOMAD TO A LOCAL STORIES OF TRUE CULTURAL IMMERSIONS IN ARMENIA FROM OVERSEAS

Frankly, this should also be an appreciation to Matthew Zein for his enthusiasm in developing the Digital Nomad community in Armenia. I know of at least two cases that didn't succeed earlier. Of course, this is a new era, and things are changing not only in Armenia but also in the world.

I have seen attempts by digital nomads or expats to move to Armenia since 2006 when the monthly internet fee for 3GB upload and download would cost 3000USD. Yeah, Armenia was not the easiest place at that time, but there were people who had enough guts to battle Armenian stubbornness.

From my experience, I know that there are certain tricks to integrate into the community and make your life sweeter. **I would mention the language** as the main one.

Believe me, every Armenian will feel like they are on the Moon when you greet them in Armenian, but living in Armenia with only that is not enough. In a previous article, I mentioned that the deepest integration happens when you work and earn your money in that country. I believe many of you don't work in Armenia but only live there. However, you interact with the locals, whether it be a shop, café, gym, taxi, etc. So, how do you "survive" without locals overcharging you? It would be good to know some Russian phrases like "privet" (hello) and "poka" (see you), and a little bit more. But be careful not to fall into a trap. If you use some Russian phrases, locals might respond with more that you don't understand, and oof, that can be funny; I know some cases.



Since 2022, LikeLocal.io has become very **active among Russian Digital Nomads**, helping them integrate into the Armenian community. We arranged dinners for many large company founders, VPs, CEOs, or just regular travelers who wanted to experience authentic local culture.

Locals often don't realize the power of difference, particularly Armenians, when very few of them travel, and all of us consider everything Armenian to be the absolute best. I promise you that many locals think the whole world lives like us, and if someone does not, then they are the strayed child and need to be brought to the path of truth.

It's not easy to live in such societies, so we try to smooth this connection by focusing on positive events. The first time I heard about cross-cultural exchange was when I was cooperating with the US Peace Corps in Armenia. Then I learned that there are even training sessions for volunteers to ease their integration into the community.



The first and most important thing is to **focus on similarities** rather than differences. And we can assure that most people like to eat and feast. That's why our events are about dinners, birthdays, weddings, and other happy events that families or communities celebrate, and you become part of them. It's historically known that vodka connects people – that was much before Nokia. We have young individuals who have already made quite close bonds with local families through LikeLocal.io and often visit each other for a cup of coffee.

Particularly during these hot days, many of the DNs want to leave the city but **don't have a summer house**. LikeLocal.io solves this issue. There are families in villages not too far from Yerevan who are happy to receive guests. So, we can say we provide your “uncles” or “aunts” in a village that you can escape to over the weekend.

Community feeling is another feature that we see as a trigger to move to Armenia. You might know that Armenian families are connected quite tightly with each other. We see that many foreigners are interested in these stories – how families have lived in the same neighborhood for generations, married each other, and still live in the same place. Such stories are hard to find in large cities, but they give this cozy and close community feeling to people. Even if you are not practicing

such relationships, living among people who do allows you to feel the warmth, care, and love of the community. Of course, this also comes with conservative pressure, which you need to filter for yourself.

It's fun to hear parents discuss how everyone reacts, touches, and plays with their little babies. At first, it's a shock for many, but at some point, they give up; remember that Armenian stubbornness – it wins. Even my wife gave in, and now we allow our daughter's hands to be touched because they are easy to wash later. A friend of mine refused to go back to Australia even with a large salary just because his son (Յոյ) **gets much more socializing in Yerevan** than he could get in Sydney. These are cultural values that everyone sets for themselves and guides their family life.



Common interest among foreigners and locals is a field we try to foster too. Armenia, being small, makes it easy to **create your bubble and never leave it**. We try to widen the scope of the network among people with similar interests. Many locals are not that active in socializing in public spaces like cafes or bars, but LikeLocal.io brings them to the digital platform, allowing all parties to reach out to more people with the same interests. We have vegetarian hosts that are quite famous among our expats. Learning local vegetarian tricks is very valuable.

Our intention here is not to show you innovation but rather to confirm an already existing opinion based on data. Of course, we also want to tell you that there are now easy and secure platforms for cross-cultural exchange like LikeLocal.io that can help your integration.

I hope this article will positively influence your decision to move to Armenia, or if you are here already, make it just one point easier. Thanks very much.



NO UBER, NO PROBLEM!

EXPLORING ARMENIA'S TRANSPORTATION MOBILE APPS



**INESSA
MANUKYAN**

DIGITAL MARKETING EXPERT



TAXI

NO UBER, NO PROBLEM!

EXPLORING ARMENIA'S TRANSPORTATION MOBILE APPS

In many countries worldwide, Uber has become synonymous with modern ride-hailing services, offering convenient transportation options to millions. However, in Armenia, **Uber has not made its mark**. The unique landscape of Armenia's taxi services is shaped by two prominent players - gg and Yandex Go. While Uber's absence may have puzzled some, it has given rise to innovative local alternatives that have successfully filled the void.

Armenia's transportation sector has long relied on traditional taxis before the advent of ride-hailing apps. With Uber out of the picture, **gg and Yandex Go have stepped up** to revolutionize the taxi experience in the country. Both companies have garnered immense popularity and transformed how people move around cities like Yerevan and beyond.

Certainly, the first thing a foreigner arriving in Armenia thinks about is how to move around the city. For the growing community of digital nomads who have chosen Armenia as their base, gg and Yandex Go have become indispensable allies in easily navigating the cities.

Digital nomads often **seek flexibility and convenience** in their daily routines, and these ride-hailing services offer just that. With gg and Yandex Go user-friendly apps available in the App Store, and Google Play Market, and English language support, digital nomads can effortlessly request rides and communicate with drivers, eliminating language barriers and ensuring a smooth experience. Moreover, the option of cashless payments provides added convenience for those who prefer a hassle-free transaction process.



Revolutionizing The Culture of Taxi Services in Armenia

gg: A homegrown Solution For Ride-Hailing Service

Back in 2014, in response to Uber's absence, local entrepreneurs saw an opportunity to create a homegrown solution for ride-hailing services. gg was born, reflecting the aspirations and needs of the Armenian community. gg Taxi is an app-based car service similar to Uber, and its **focus on local values** and understanding of the market has played a crucial role in its success. Within one year after the launch, gg was reporting 300 daily orders.



gg's Transportation Types and Average Prices

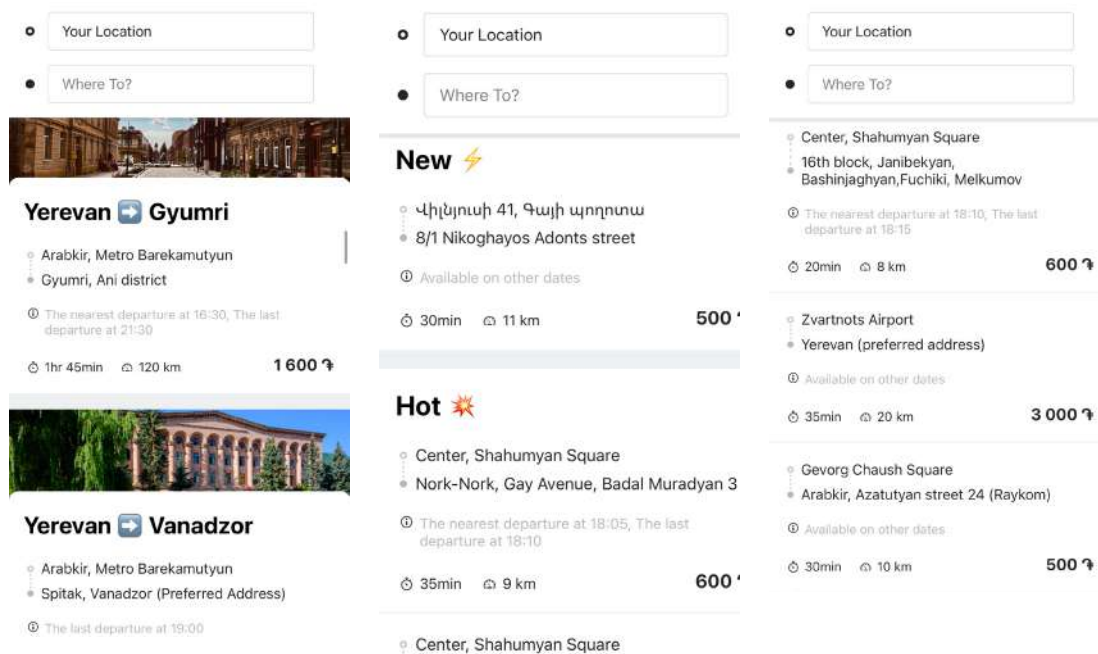
gg Taxi offers various types of transportation, including regular cars, luxury cars, vans, moving trucks, and vehicle transport trucks. In the scope of gg's collaboration with Yerevan Ride, one can easily order scooters and electric bikes through the gg mobile app. gg also offers ggShuttle, which offers rides to different destinations at **comparatively affordable prices**.

The gg ride prices might vary **based on the demand patterns** for a route at a specific time. There are times when the number of people requesting rides exceeds the number of cars available on the road. For instance, bad weather, rush hour, and special events may result in unusually large numbers of people wanting to request a ride with gg simultaneously. Thus, the fares can differ.

Digital nomads can request rides through the mobile app and easily move throughout Armenia. Here are some estimations to certain destinations through gg taxi: (exchange rate \$1 = ₴ 389)

- Ride to Dilijan from Yerevan's Center: gg (\$28); gg special (\$40); ggEconom (\$27); ggDelivery (\$28); ggTruck (\$80); ggXL (\$41); ggEvacuator (\$115).
- Ride to Gyumri from Yerevan's Center: gg (\$33); gg special (\$49); ggEconom (\$32); ggDelivery (\$34); ggTruck (\$98); ggXL (\$49); ggEvacuator (\$138).
- Ride within Center (Moskovyan to Komitas): gg (\$3); gg special (\$4); ggEconom (\$2.5); ggDelivery (\$3.5); ggTruck (\$7); ggXL (\$4); ggEvacuator (\$18)

The ggShuttle offers rides to various destinations with affordable prices not only within Yerevan but also from Yerevan to Gyumri, from Yerevan to Vanadzor, from Yerevan to Tbilisi, from Yerevan to Tsagkadzor, etc.



Payment Methods

gg Taxi accepts both cash payments and credit card payments.

Features Available In The Cars

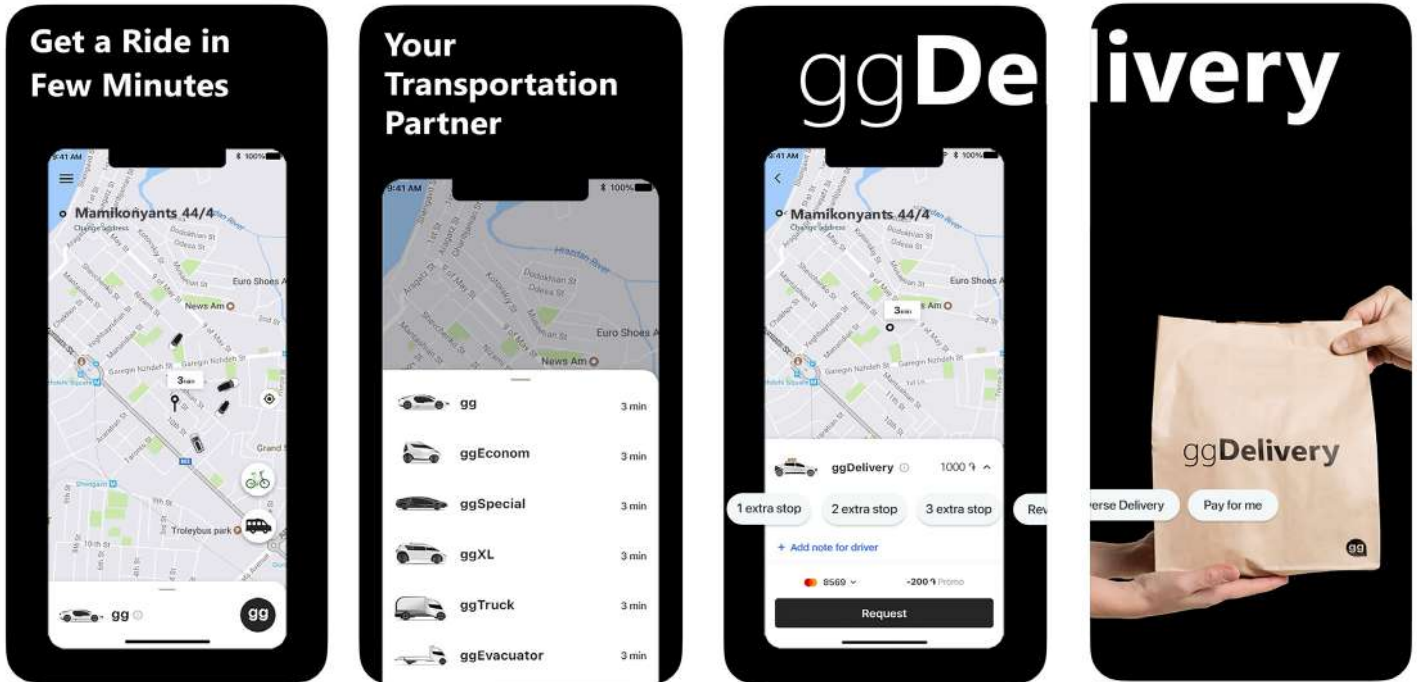
- Air Conditioner
- Trips out of town
- Pets-friendly cars
- English-speaking partner-driver availability
- Door-to-door delivery
- Reverse Delivery

Except for the English-speaking partner-driver feature, the minimum fare and prices for wait time and distance might fluctuate for each feature.

User-Friendly App

gg's mobile app is user-friendly. One can easily download the app at App Store and Google Play Market. The registration requires a **simple input of one's mobile phone number**. gg has differentiated itself in the market through unique features, such as personalized service, extended driver knowledge, and a strong emphasis on customer satisfaction. The gg platform allows users to register as customers or partners.

The app users can easily access their ride history and **instantly start a conversation** with the Support Team in case of any inquiries or questions. Both the driver and client can rate each other after the ride.



Yandex Go Made It To Armenia

When Yandex Go Taxi, a Russian multinational corporation, expanded its reach into Armenia's taxi market in 2016, it did an experiment setting the price for 1 km 0.2 USD (AMD 100). As of today, the prices have certainly changed, but the number of drivers has increased, and the availability of transportation types and services offered by Yandex Go has also been expanded.

One can easily access the [Yandex Delivery](#), and [Yandex Eats](#) integrated into Yandex Go mobile app. The mobile app is available for iOS and Android.

Digital nomads can use the following:

- [Yandex Go](#) to request a ride
- [Yandex Delivery](#) to send and receive documents, flowers, small and big items
- [Yandex Eats](#) orders food delivery from cafes and restaurants, deliveries from supermarkets, grocery stores, pharmacies, pet shops, flower shops, electronics, and much more.

Yandex Delivery offers three options:

- [Delivery by a courier](#): small packages weighing up to 10 kg are the best for this option. The courier delivers either by moped or on foot.
- [Delivery by car](#): bigger packages weighing up to 20 kg are suitable for this option. A courier picks up the parcel by car.
- [Delivery by van](#): big packages, such as furniture, can be delivered through this option.

Payment Methods

Digital nomads can enter their destination and see the estimated fare and route [before requesting the ride](#). The app accepts payments with cash and by card.

Yandex Go Transportation Types and Average Prices

Yandex Go offers a variety of rides to its customers. The list includes comfortable cars, VIP cars, vans, and motos. The Yandex Go ride prices might [vary based on the demand](#) patterns for that route at that time. There are times when the number of people requesting rides exceeds the number of cars available on the road. For instance, bad weather, rush hour, and special events may result in unusually large numbers of people wanting to request a ride with gg simultaneously. Thus, the fares can differ.

Digital nomads can request rides through the mobile app and easily move throughout Armenia. Here are some estimations to certain destinations through Yandex Go: (exchange rate \$1 = ₴ 389)

- **Ride to Vanadzor from Yerevan's Center:** Start (\$41); Comfort (\$52); Comfort+ (\$68); Business (\$80); Minivan (\$53); The fastest (\$41); Delivery: Moto (\$45); Car (\$31); Van (\$127).
- **Ride to Tsaghkadzor from Yerevan's Center:** Start (\$20); Comfort (\$26); Comfort+ (\$3); Business (\$35); Minivan (\$26); The fastest (\$20); Delivery: Moto (\$23); Car (\$16); Van (\$64).
- **Ride within Yerevan's Center (Baghramyan to Komitas):** Start (\$3); Comfort (\$3); Comfort+ (\$3.5); Business (\$4); Minivan (\$3.5); The fastest (\$2.8); Delivery: Moto (\$1.5); Car (\$3); Van (\$8.4).

Features Available in the Cars

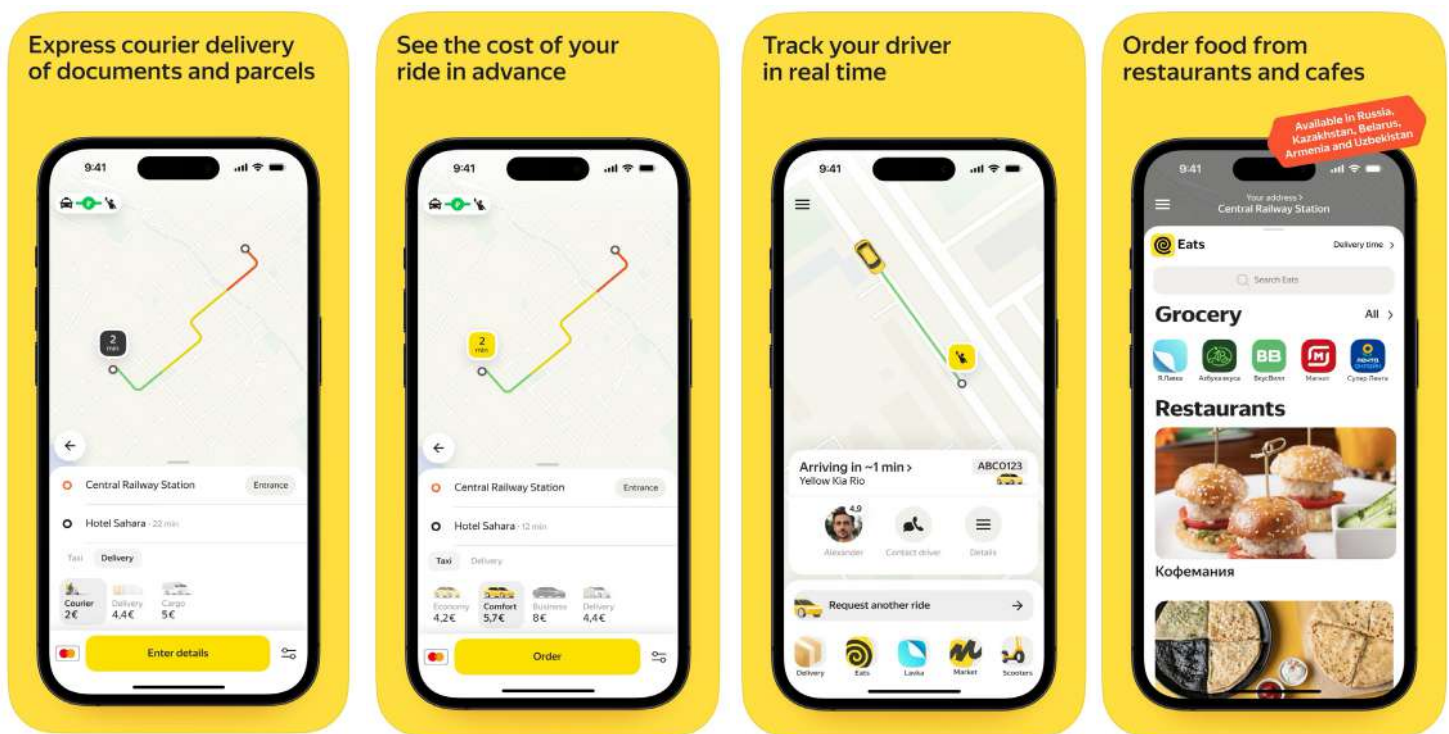
- Driver instructions
- Opportunity to request a ride for someone else
- Special options (wheelchair, help to find the car, etc.)
- Pet transportation availability



Yandex Go's User-Friendly App and Services

One of the factors contributing to Yandex Go's success is its user-friendly app, which allows passengers to easily request rides, track their drivers, and make cashless payments. The app's **seamless integration with local maps and GPS** technology has made navigating through Armenia's winding streets a breeze for drivers and passengers.

The application allows the users to access their ride history, start an instant chat with the Support team, invite up to 3 family members and, create a daily account for family rides, create a Business account for companies that want to make the process of requesting rides and deliveries easier as well as Safety option to call a 911, report an emergency situation and share the route.



The application has a rating system that allows both the drivers and the passengers to rate one another after the ride. Once the ride request is accepted, the passenger can see personal information and the rating of the driver. It's worth mentioning that Yandex Go has more than **100 million downloads** on Google Play Market.

The Positive Impact of gg and Yandex Go on Creating a More Convenient Taxi Culture in Armenia

The emergence of Yandex Go and gg has led to positive economic and social implications. By providing flexible job opportunities for drivers and convenient options for passengers, these services have contributed to the country's economic growth and improved residents' overall quality of life. Additionally, both gg and Yandex Go occasionally provide discounts through promo codes on their apps.

As Yandex Go and gg continue to evolve, the future of taxi services in Armenia looks promising. With technology playing a pivotal role in transforming transportation, these companies are likely to introduce innovative features and services, further enhancing mobility and accessibility for all. The absence of Uber has sparked a unique journey for Armenia's taxi services, opening doors for local entrepreneurs and reshaping the country's transportation landscape for the better.



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Vol 2.0
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Yerevan

WHAT ROLE ARMENIANS PLAY TO HELP PEOPLE FIND LOVE THROUGH AI



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING



**DR. IGOR
KHALATIAN**

FOUNDER AND CEO OF IRIS



ARMENIAN CUPID WHISPERERS

WHAT ROLE ARMENIANS PLAY TO HELP PEOPLE FIND LOVE THROUGH AI

Armenia is a small country in the Caucasus Mountains, but it punches above its weight [when it comes to IT talent](#). In fact, the country is home to a number of world-renowned IT companies, including Picsart, Krisp, ServiceTitan, Digitain, and others.

For those who don't know, ancient Armenia was once known as the "Land of Cupid," and today, Armenians are still playing a role in helping people [find love through artificial intelligence](#). Although it might sound strange at first glance, it's true. Last month, I spoke with Dr. Igor Khalatian, who was the vice president of Oracle for 8 years before [founding IRIS](#) recently.



What is IRIS?

IRIS is a mobile application helping to carry on Armenia's tradition of love in a new and innovative way. The company uses AI to match users based on their interests, personality traits, and compatibility. The platform has been used by [over 2 million people worldwide](#), and it has helped to facilitate thousands of relationships.



Iris Dating uses a combination of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to match users based on their [physical attraction preferences](#). When users first sign up for the app, they are asked to upload a photo of their face. The app then uses AI to analyze the photo and identify the user's facial features. This information is then used to create a unique facial profile for the user.

As the user swipes through profiles, the app tracks them and uses this information to learn their physical attraction preferences. For example, if the user swipes right on a profile that is considered attractive, the app will learn that the user is more likely to be attracted to people with those features. Over time, the app's AI [algorithm becomes more sophisticated](#) and can make more accurate matches. The app also uses machine learning to improve its matching algorithm.

Armenia is Where the Magic Happens

I recently had the opportunity to visit the IRIS offices in downtown Yerevan accompanied by Anna Bruno, a US financial advisor and the founder of Get Skills Academy and Thrive Armenia Foundation. The company is home to 75 professionals covering various fields, from Apple front-end developers, android, backend, database, security and operations, system test, QA, data science, AI, call center, supervisors, marketing department, PR, etc.

One might wonder, does Armenia possess the intellectual skills required for such sophisticated tasks? Dr. Khalatian confirms that his Armenian team is responsible for a wide range of tasks, from

front-end development, AI, and scientific research to public relations, marketing, and multilingual customer support. He says that the level of skills among Armenian developers is “the best of the best” and that they are comparable to those found in Silicon Valley or New York City. However, he acknowledges that there might be “some cultural personality differences,” but the technical prowess remains unquestionable.

While it’s true that the IT sector in Armenia has become slightly more expensive, the value proposition remains significant. With an IT culture akin to Silicon Valley’s ethos, Armenia provides a conducive atmosphere for businesses to flourish.



Armenia Under the Spotlight

Why would non-Armenian companies establish their operations offices in Armenia over any other country? According to Dr. Khalatian's firsthand experience, the answer is quite compelling. When he initially set up a branch in Armenia in 2007, he had doubts about the quality of talent. However, he quickly realized that Armenia had much to offer. Nowadays, [the demand for skilled developers](#) in Armenia has skyrocketed, and there is a shortage of these sought-after professionals.

International companies are setting up back offices and HQs in Armenia for several reasons. First, living costs are relatively low, meaning companies can save money on salaries and other expenses. Second, the Armenian government is very [supportive of the IT industry](#) and offers a number of tax breaks and other incentives to businesses. Finally, the Armenian education system is very strong in mathematics and science, which helps to produce a well-educated workforce.

“Playing chess is like writing code, you have to keep combinations in mind. I think this helps Armenian programmers to be better at their jobs.”

Dr. Igor Khalatian

Relocating to Armenia?

Armenia is not only a land of breathtaking landscapes and rich history but also a center for technological advancement. With companies like IRIS leading the charge, the nation is poised to become a global [high-end tech and scientific research hub](#).

For professionals seeking a dynamic and innovative environment, Armenia presents a world of opportunities. Embracing its heritage of intellectualism, [Armenia welcomes digital nomads](#) eager to contribute to its thriving tech ecosystem, where brilliance meets opportunity.

The next time you feel down about your love life, remember that people in Armenia work hard to [help you find your soulmate](#). And who knows, maybe you'll even end up meeting your match through an Armenian-developed dating app.

You can download the IRIS dating app through this link (www.irisdating.com)

VENTURING EAST

A DIGITAL NOMAD'S JOURNEY TO ARMENIA'S STARTUP SCENE



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING



**ELIE
TENBELIAN**

FOUNDER OF LEANZER



VENTURING EAST

A DIGITAL NOMAD'S JOURNEY TO ARMENIA'S STARTUP SCENE

Armenia has recently become a thriving tech hub on the global stage. In the midst of this exciting wave, one individual's remarkable journey from Lebanon to Armenia changed the lives of many individuals seeking transformation and fitness success. I'm happy to introduce Elie Tenbelian, the founder of Leanzer, whose story serves as a shining example of what can be achieved **when passion meets opportunity in Armenia.**

How it All Started

Elie was born and raised in Lebanon. He always struggled with his weight and developed an eating disorder in his early twenties. He was desperate and unhappy, and he knew he needed to make a change. He dedicated himself to learning everything he could about fitness and nutrition. He immersed himself in books and studies, and he began to make changes to his lifestyle. He started exercising regularly and eating healthier foods.

Over time, Elie's hard work paid off. He lost weight, built muscle, and improved his overall health. He was so **inspired by his transformation** that he started helping others achieve their fitness goals.

His own success did not go unnoticed, and soon Elie was inundated with requests from people seeking his guidance and support in achieving their fitness goals. Recognizing the potential to make a broader impact, he launched the **"100-day Transformation Challenge,"** a program that marked the birth of Leanzer.



The Birth of a Startup

With two of his friends joining him, Leanzer was established to revolutionize the fitness industry. This comprehensive fitness platform combined the best elements of existing software with innovative features, creating an **all-in-one solution for fitness enthusiasts** and trainers alike.

However, as with any entrepreneurial venture, the path to success was not without its challenges. Lebanon's financial crisis in 2019 presented a significant roadblock, prompting Elie to **boldly move to Armenia**, a country with a thriving tech ecosystem. There, he encountered the additional obstacle of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, but he persisted, offering online fitness services to a select group of clients.

The journey of building Leanzer was not without its share of ups and downs. Initially facing architectural challenges, Elie successfully **rebuilt the platform from scratch**. In March 2021, Leanzer LLC was officially established in Armenia, taking advantage of the country's **supportive tech ecosystem** and startup-friendly environment.

By Q3 2022, Leanzer's beta version was launched, gaining recognition through participation in prestigious **tech and startup events in Armenia**. Today, [Leanzer](#) is available for the public through a web platform, and it's started growing in popularity with more and more downloads every day; it has 5 team members and more than 100 real users. Until now, Leanzer helped 50+ people achieve the transformation they wanted when they signed up initially.

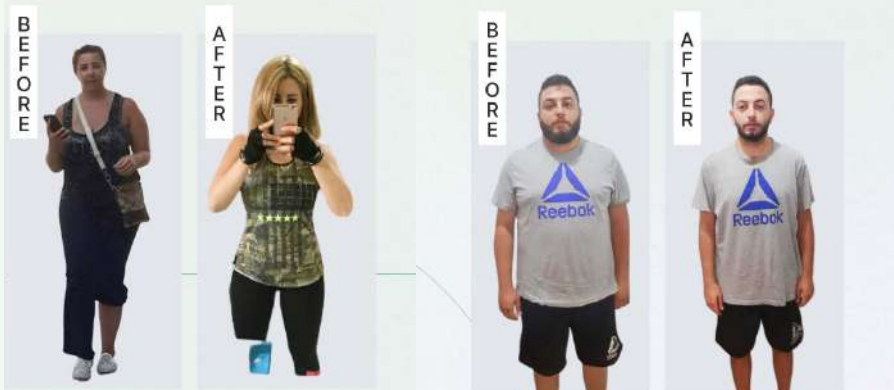


Participating in Seaside Startup Summit

During Leanzer's growth and success, Elie and his team decided to take on a new challenge by participating in this year's Seaside Startup Summit, a renowned gathering of aspiring entrepreneurs and seasoned professionals from around the world. Held annually in Armenia, the summit provides a unique platform for startups to showcase their innovations, connect with potential investors, and network with industry leaders.

Throughout the summit, Leanzer received significant attention and interest. Participants and coaches were intrigued by the platform's comprehensive approach to fitness transformation and its potential to revolutionize how people approach their health and well-being.

As the competition progressed, Elie and his team did their best to impress the judges and demonstrate Leanzer's value proposition. They received positive feedback and encouragement from the panel of judges, who recognized the platform's potential impact on the fitness industry. However, despite their efforts, they faced fierce competition from other outstanding startups and making it to the final proved elusive.



Founding a Startup in Armenia

Elie's journey to Armenia sheds light on the supportive tech ecosystem of the country. As a digital nomad, he found Armenia a fertile ground to sow the seeds of his vision, with a community that embraced his passion for fitness transformation and welcomed Leanzer with open arms.

Armenia's startup scene, with its vibrant community, nurturing environment, and dedication to innovation, has proven to be the perfect backdrop for Leanzer's growth. Elie's story is an inspiring testament to the potential of chasing one's dreams and positively impacting lives, all while contributing to the ever-evolving landscape of startups in Armenia and beyond.

Elie's story serves as an invitation to other digital nomads and entrepreneurs to venture eastward and explore the exciting opportunities that Armenia's startup

scene has to offer. In this land of ancient history and modern progress, dreams are nurtured, and ambitions are brought to life, making Armenia a rising star in the global tech arena.

By the time I shared this article with Elie for his confirmation, he had informed me that he was invited to join a state program titled "Neruzh 4.0," which aims to support Armenia's economic progress and the development of a startup ecosystem. He received an invitation with full expenses covered by the program, including travel fees and accommodation.

To end my article, I recall the first words Elie told me a year ago when I met him in Yerevan and asked about what brought him to this country to find a startup. His words were: The tech ecosystem, government support, and the Armenian culture.



Startup Tip
Armen A. Avakian
@NotForEveryone
YouTube Channel



Armen A. Avakian

Co-Founder and Chief Business Development Officer at Hexact
Helping over 100,000 users stay one step ahead of their market



Top Myths About Startups

If you have a great idea, you can find an investment

There is a lot of money; you have to have a good idea to be able to bring investment! This is absolutely not true. There are so many different factors and **so much complexity** that goes into actually getting funded.

I spoke to a lot of VCs, and a lot of VCs have the same sort of mindset, the same mantra if you want; they say I would rather invest in an **A team with a B idea** rather than a B team with an A idea.

They are not just investing in your idea or your products but **investing in your team**, the founders. They believe you are the management team, the people that can grow this business and

ultimately generate a capital gain for them. It is not just the great idea but the team. A lot of people have great ideas. If you can't be the entrepreneur, if you can't generate growth, if you can't bring in users, if you can't generate demand, if you can't manage that business, then they are not going to invest.

So, having **a great idea is only the starting point**, and the team is probably more important than the idea you have. If you have a great team, it's easier to generate revenue. If it's not Idea A, you can move on to Idea B and then move on to Idea C. You can always shift and pivot, but the team is there to stay.

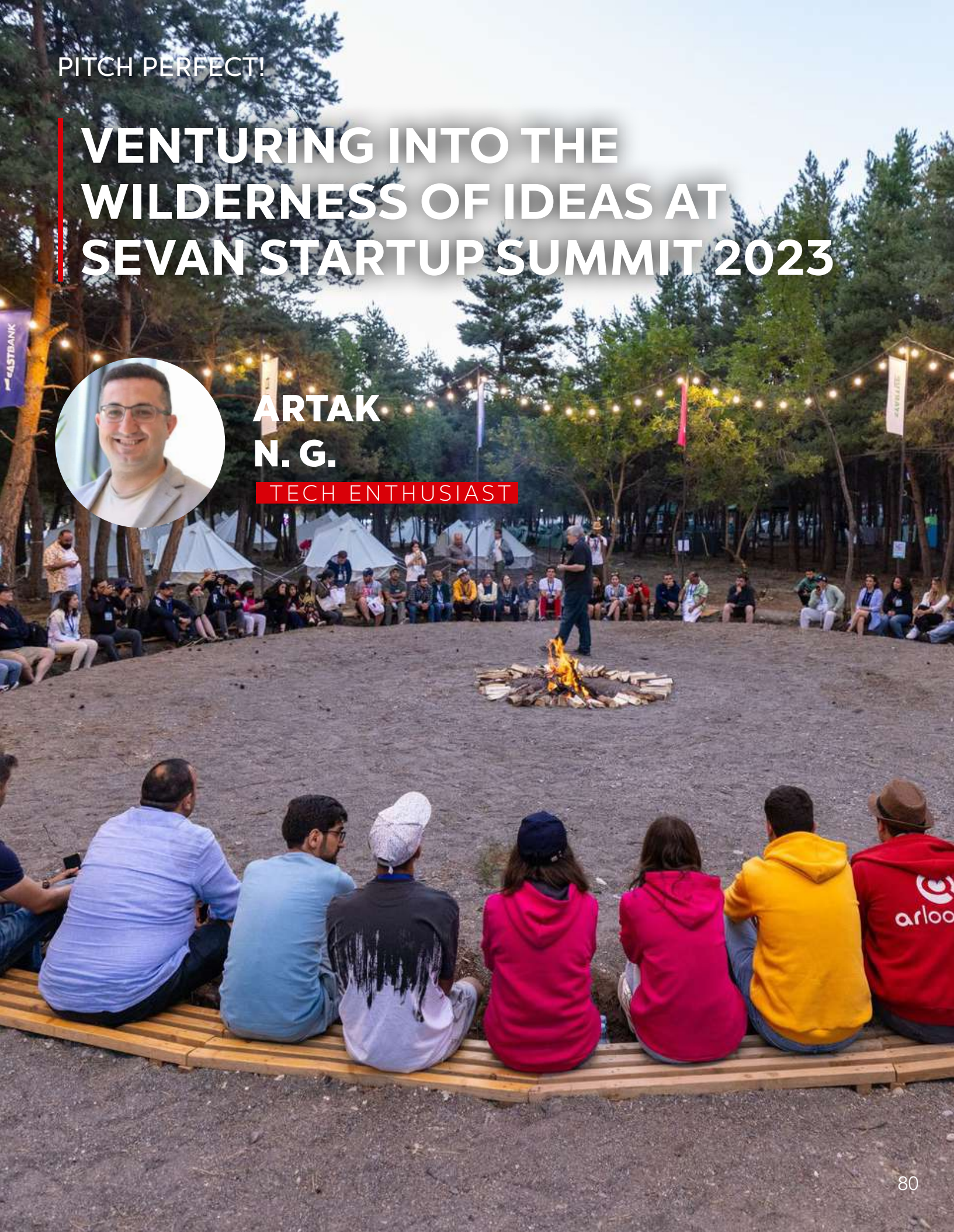
PITCH PERFECT!

VENTURING INTO THE WILDERNESS OF IDEAS AT SEVAN STARTUP SUMMIT 2023



**ARTAK
N. G.**

TECH ENTHUSIAST



PITCH PERFECT!

VENTURING INTO THE WILDERNESS OF IDEAS AT SEVAN STARTUP SUMMIT 2023



Sevan Startup Summit is a business camping forum that unites startup teams, investors, innovative entrepreneurs, and policymakers in one place on the seaside of Lake Sevan. The summit's main purpose is to create an environment that will **inspire venturing** and progressing innovative ideas.

The Summit encompasses Networking, Knowledge sharing, Business Development, Competing, and Having Fun in one place, making the summit unique. The event has been taking place since 2016, skipping one year due to Covid. This year the event has gathered **90 startups from 30 countries**.

Networking

The summit is being visited by thousands of participants, so it is the largest networking platform with plenty of time to contact and network. One can find peers to discuss insights, investors to attract funding, experts to get advice, and entrepreneurs to start a collaboration.

High-level policymakers have visited the summit to express their support and present the programs they have implemented for the innovative entrepreneurship ecosystem development in Armenia. The contacts and network established can be beneficial long after the summit for business purposes and new friendship ties.

Knowledge

The participants have an opportunity to participate in different panel discussions, talks, and speeches by professional experts. One of the unique traditions of the summit is non-formal talks around the big Campfire, during which speakers share their **insights in an informal atmosphere**.

Professional mentors are there to guide startup entrepreneurs. After an intensive learning week, the startup team will understand if they are on the right track, what direction they should take, what changes to make, what to prioritize, and what risks to pay more attention to.



Business Development

Many investors and entrepreneurs visit the summit, which provides a great business opportunity for startup company founders to find funding and new business partners. During the summit, investors can get acquainted not only with business ideas but also better know the founders of startups and their teams personally, which make them more comfortable with making investment commitments as they invest not only in business idea but, in many cases, in **the team potential** they see and feel confidence.



Competing

The startup teams pitch their innovative ideas and products to Jury and can earn prizes in the form of money that they can use to develop their startups. Besides the prize, it is also a test for the teams to work together to make them stronger as a team, which is a crucial part of any company.

Just to note that SuperAnnotate is one of the startup participants that **won the final prize in the summit of 2019**, and at this moment, the company is the world's leading platform for building the highest quality training datasets for computer vision and NLP with 14.5 mln USD series A funding, 9.5 mln USD revenue and 45 employees in the team. Advanced tooling enables machine learning teams to build incredibly accurate datasets and successful ML pipelines 3-5x faster.

Fun

Having fun is also an inseparable part of the summit: evening parties, dances, game competitions, swimming, playing baseball, table football, and much more. Having a fun time helps to relax for a while, gather energy, and get a muse for innovation and that component is quite alluring for many participants.



The informality of the environment makes everybody look relaxed and joyful, and that is one of the secrets that **new innovative ideas come up** when there is no formality and tension and helps to network and communicate with everybody without feeling any frustration.



The summit has partnered with about **100 state and private organizations** as sponsors and partners. Particularly among them, they collaborate with outstanding ecosystem partners such as Granatus Ventures, Angel Investors Club of Armenia, Berkley Skydeck, BAJ accelerator, Founder Institute, Startup Foundation India, National Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, etc.

In the territory of the summit, partner organizations have created innovative pavilions with smart designs. One of the original pavilions was created by the Armenian AeroSpace agency in the form of a space dome. Armenian AeroSpace agency will carry out a four-week Mars mission simulation in Armenia in March-April 2024, preparing for future human and robotic Mars exploration missions and has created an aerospace teaching platform for the young generation.

When one is far away from home, from the workplace, and in an atmosphere created for them, one can see their business from another perspective, challenge established ideas and ways of doing business, and shape up a new, more competitive strategy and approach for their business. I could feel the motivational energy in the air that charged participants to deal with future challenges resiliently.

The summit is an international one, and participants from all over the world come to join the venture with their ideas. **The atmosphere is cosmopolitan.** For many participants, it is their first visit to Armenia, and they are truly surprised by the country, the ecosystem, and the transformations that are taking place in Armenia.

I am also the one who has been inspired by these transformational changes and has shifted from another industry to the tech industry to be part of this unique disruptive progress that the Armenian high-tech industry experiences.

The Summit is considered to be one of the best models for developing a startup ecosystem in Armenia, and it marks Armenia as a techno hub country on the world tech map. Sevan Startup Summit has already **gained an international reputation**, and it is getting high year by year.

The summit is shortly abbreviated as 3 S (Sevan Startup Summit), which I will rephrase with 4 S formula, adding a new S letter as Sevan Startup Summit of Success, as **there are no losers but**

only winners: the winners of experience, knowledge, contacts, positive emotions, motivation, development and much more.

Many international technological, successful companies have passed similar paths, and among those startup companies, surely we will see such cases. I will be there to make another post in the "Life in Armenia" Journal. I would encourage digital nomads relocating to Armenia and also anyone living abroad and engaged in the startup ecosystem to **join SSS as an opportunity to empower their startups**, to make successful investments and new business collaborations as the startup ecosystem is already well established and has recently been considered as one of best in Eastern Europe according to StartupBlink agency.



VOLUNTEERING FOR A PURPOSE

HOW ARMENIAN YOUTH ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR COUNTRY



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



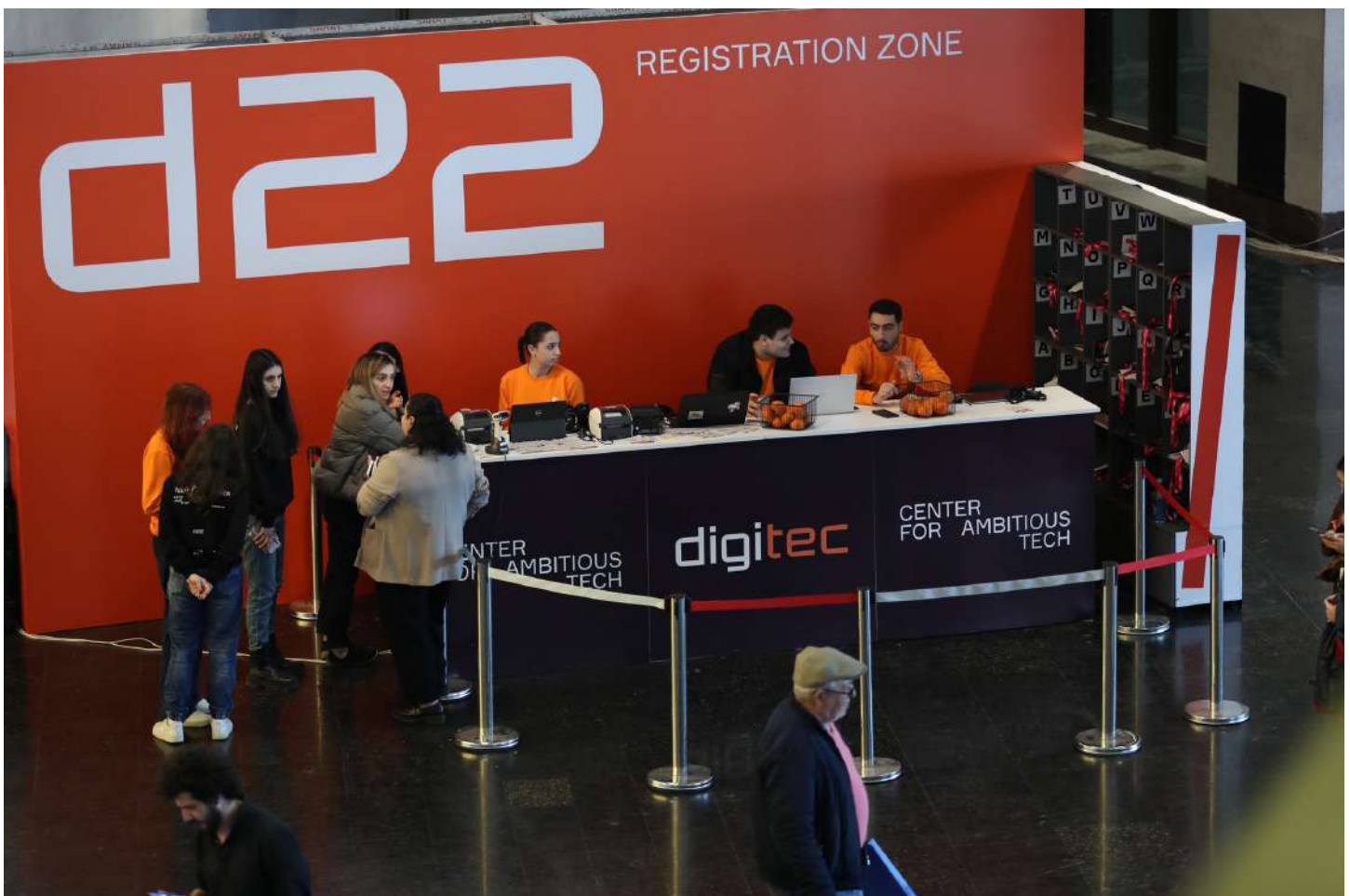
VOLUNTEERING FOR A PURPOSE

HOW ARMENIAN YOUTH ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR COUNTRY

As a digital nomad myself, I've traveled the world and attended many tech events, big and small. Volunteers always catch my eye, and I'm always impressed by the amount of enthusiasm they put into their work. This is especially true in Armenia, where I've been [following the volunteering scene](#) for some time now.

Armenian youth demonstrate their unwavering commitment to their country by [volunteering in large numbers](#) and providing assistance wherever needed. This truly reflects their patriotism and dedication to building a better future. Two recent events that highlighted the power of volunteering in Armenia were [Digitec](#) and [FemInno](#).

Digitec is Armenia's largest technology and innovation exhibition; it's a tech conference that brings together entrepreneurs, investors, and tech enthusiasts worldwide. During Digitec22, which took place earlier this year, what greatly impacted me was the number of passionate young volunteers working tirelessly to ensure the event's success. From guiding visitors to handling logistics, the [volunteers were everywhere](#), giving their best to present the country in the best possible way. Their warm smiles and unwavering commitment to their tasks left a lasting impression on all event attendees.



Similarly, FemInno, a groundbreaking initiative supporting female innovators and entrepreneurs, took place in Yerevan last month, demonstrating Armenia's dedication to gender equality and women's empowerment. Once again, I was captivated by the incredible efforts of the young volunteers. They were **not just fulfilling their responsibilities**; from offering cold water and morning coffee to attendees to organizing workshops, managing registrations, and providing friendly assistance throughout, they went above and beyond to **ensure that international visitors** received an authentic and positive image of Armenia.

I recall a couple of positive acts that caught my attention. I grabbed a bottle of water, and one volunteer followed me, asking to replace it with a cold one because the weather was hot. Also, when I first arrived, I asked about where to get coffee. Instead of just telling me the directions, the volunteer walked with me all the way to the "food zone." Although these were small acts, they tell **what kind of attention** volunteers have during these events.

During my time at both events, I had the opportunity to interview tens of these remarkable volunteers. Their responses reflected their pride in their country and their strong belief in the transformative power of volunteering. Most notably, all volunteers are **highly**

educated, and many of them **speak perfect or near-perfect English**, besides other languages.

One young volunteer, Lilit, shared, "As an Armenian, I feel responsible for contributing to our nation's growth and development. Volunteering allows me to showcase our rich cultural heritage."

Another volunteer, Mariam, said, "Armenia has so much to offer, and as volunteers, we are the face of our country during these events. It's an incredible feeling to be helping to **shape the perceptions** of people from different parts of the world."

The volunteers at Digitec and FemInno were just two examples of the many young people in Armenia who are making a difference through volunteering. These young people are the future of Armenia and are committed to building a better future for their country.

Whether you are considering visiting Armenia temporarily or relocating to Armenia in the near future, keep in mind that the youth in this country are helpful, energetic, collaborative, and eager to do anything to represent their country in the best possible way. Planning an event in Armenia? Reach out to volunteers and engage them in your event to ensure that everything goes smoothly and that you have **a successful event with an Armenian touch!**



FOSTERING INCLUSIVITY

EXPLORING ARMENIA'S TAPESTRY OF CULTURES



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING



**EDWARD
MANASYAN**

MANAGING DIRECTOR AT ONE
PLANET STUDIOS ARMENIA

FOSTERING INCLUSIVITY

EXPLORING ARMENIA'S TAPESTRY OF CULTURES

An embracing and inclusive host country becomes imperative for digital nomads seeking a new destination, especially those accompanying their families. Whether they belong to the majority in the host country or not, digital nomads want their kids to learn about inclusivity from surrounding communities to grow up accepting others wherever they are.

Armenia is a small nation with a profound Christian heritage, yet a nation that has

woven a tapestry of unity, welcoming diverse races and faiths over the ages.

There are several religious minorities living in Armenia today. The largest is the Yezidis. Other religious minorities in Armenia include the Armenian Evangelical Church, the Molokans, the Jews, the Baha'is, and the Muslims. These religious minorities live peacefully alongside the majority Armenian Apostolic Church.

Baha'is in Armenia



Exploring the unique experiences of the Baha'i faith community in Armenia, a religious minority numbering between 500 to 1000, sheds light on the dynamics of living within this nation. This emerging faith may have a relatively modest following, but the lives of its adherents hold insights into the broader narrative of acceptance in Armenia.

To gain a comprehensive understanding, I met Edward Manasyan, the Managing Director of One Planet in Armenia, a few months ago, and he also invited Maryam Manasyan, a recent graduate from the American University of Armenia (AUA), and Irshat Madyarov, an Associate Professor and Program Chair in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at the American University of Armenia (AUA).

Edward and Maryam are Armenians, while Irshat is a Russian who relocated to Armenia many years ago. All three are Baha'i adherents deeply rooted in Armenia's diverse cultural landscape.

One striking observation from our conversation was their deliberate choice to eschew the term "Baha'i community" and their inclination to correct my usage. This nuanced linguistic detail underscores a fundamental aspect of their perspective – they view themselves not as a separate group within Armenia

but as **integral components of the Armenian tapestry.**

"We are all fruits of one tree, the leaves of one branch, the flowers of one garden," a statement descending from the Baha'i faith, which Edward repeated a few times during our conversation, caught my attention.

This conscious alignment with the broader Armenian identity signifies a profound degree of unity and integration, emblematic of **Armenia's inclusive ethos.**

Powerful is the Light of Unity

During our conversation, Irshat informed me about the events they occasionally organize, inviting Armenians from local surrounding communities. He showed me several videos depicting the nature of these events. To my surprise, these gatherings were brimming with joy as both **Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís danced** to Armenian folkloric tunes, thoroughly enjoying themselves. There was a notable absence of diversity issues and discrimination among the attendees.

Bringing Benefits to the People

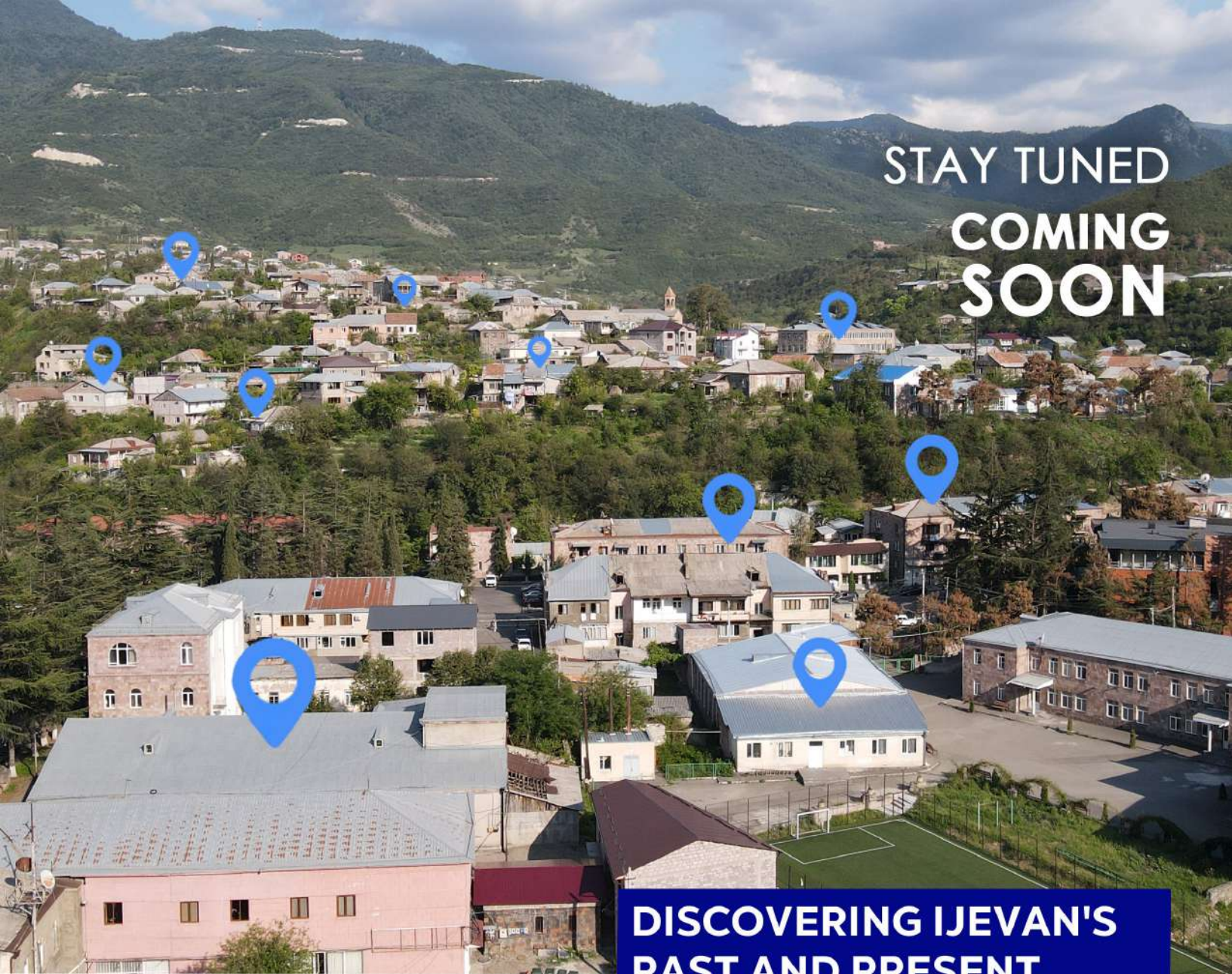
Having recently completed her studies, Maryam decided to spend a year **volunteering for the common good** before starting her professional career. Collaborating with fellow young volunteers, she immersed herself in community-centric projects dedicated to helping others in Armenian regions. Mariam's choice to extend her benevolence beyond the confines of her faith community is a testament to her desire to reciprocate the inclusiveness she experiences.

Maryam told me about an initiative she started with her fellow Armenian volunteers, where they encouraged people to write kind letters and share them with their neighbors in small jars as a way to spread joy and happiness across rural Armenian communities. Volunteers participated joyfully, writing letters and leaving them on their neighbors' doors. It is a simple act, indeed, but one that can **leave a smile on someone's face** by the end of the day, something we all need in the face of life's challenges.

The question arises – is Armenia’s inclusivity an innate trait borne out of the inherent benevolence, peace, and warmth exhibited by its people? Alternatively, could it be attributed to the Baha’i believers’ shared belief in unity and harmony? As far as I believe, *it’s a mix of both.*

In conclusion, Armenia’s embrace of diverse races and religions, epitomized by its interactions with the Baha’i faith adherents, underscores the nation’s commitment to fostering an inclusive and harmonious environment. By examining the experiences of these individuals, it becomes evident that *Armenia’s culture of acceptance* is not merely a trait but a proactive ethos that embraces unity, diversity, and shared humanity.





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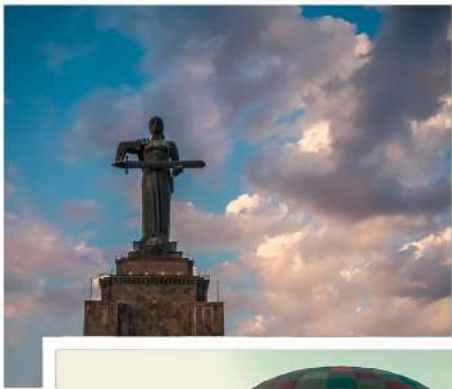
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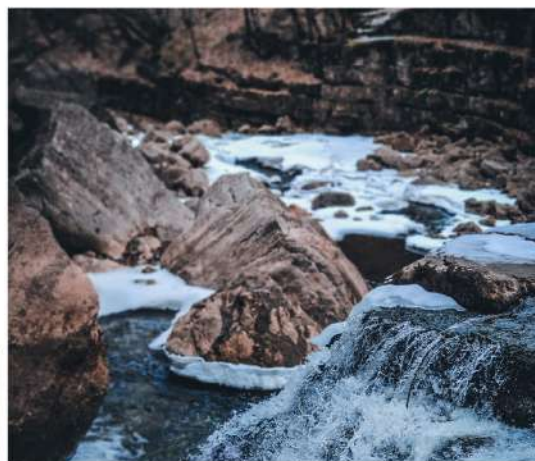
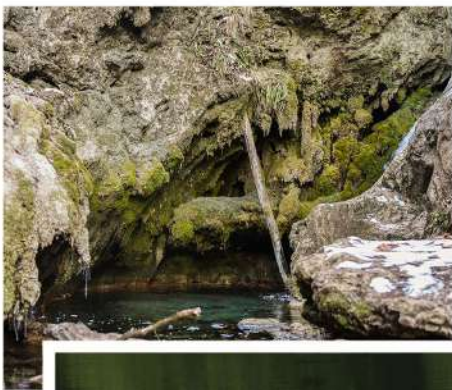


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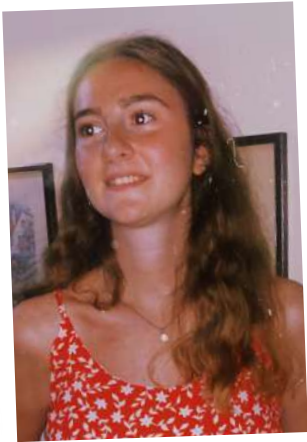
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