

LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

UNLOCKING TAX ADVANTAGES

HOW TO BECOME A TAX RESIDENT IN ARMENIA

THE IT LEARNING ECOSYSTEM IN ARMENIA

A NATION ON THE FRONTLINES OF IT EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

THE KEY TO IMMERSIVE CULTURAL INTEGRATION ABROAD

HOW TO TURN FROM AN OUTSIDER TO AN INSIDER WHEN RELOCATING AS A DIGITAL NOMAD

FAST, RELIABLE, AND AFFORDABLE

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NOMADIC REFLECTIONS

A WOMAN'S JOURNEY FROM GLOBAL DIGITAL NOMAD TO AN AUTHOR IN ARMENIA

MATHEW ZEIN

EDITOR'S LETTER

It has been half a year since the magazine started, and I've published six editions, attracting over 5000 readers. Over time, I have focused on providing more informative and in-depth content, introducing Armenia in a unique way not found elsewhere online.

It's important to acknowledge that Armenia, like any country, isn't perfect. It has its own set of issues. Nevertheless, it's easy to find information about a country's problems. In this magazine, I aim to showcase Armenia's strengths, positive aspects, and the opportunities it offers for digital nomads and remote workers. In fact, it was Armenia's imperfectly perfect charm that got me to settle down in the country for over seven years, and I know that many will do the same once they pay a visit.

Starting this month, I'm thrilled to announce free online group calls for digital nomads worldwide interested in moving to Armenia. Come prepared with questions, and I'll be ready to answer and assist you in exploring Armenia.

www.lifeinarmenia.com/subscribe



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UNLOCKING TAX ADVANTAGES HOW TO BECOME A TAX RESIDENT IN ARMENIA

Armenia imposes low tax rates, with only a 5% tax on dividends for tax residents. What advantages does tax residency in Armenia bring to digital nomads relocating to the country? How hard is it to become a tax resident in Armenia? In this article, Nerses Isajanyan explains all the details in simple and clear language.

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THE IT LEARNING ECOSYSTEM IN ARMENIA A NATION ON THE FRONTLINES OF IT EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

What makes a coding training academy in a small country so remarkable? Aren't there similar academies in other countries? The prime factor lies within the Armenian people—people determined to immerse themselves in the IT industry through all possible means. I interviewed Anahit Sargsyan and Narek Aslikyan, and the insights I got were surprising.

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THE KEY TO IMMERSIVE CULTURAL INTEGRATION ABROAD HOW TO TURN FROM AN OUTSIDER TO AN INSIDER WHEN RELOCATING AS A DIGITAL NOMAD

If you are considering starting your digital nomad journey, this article is for you. Join Gevorg Babayan, a seasoned digital nomad who has been to countries only a few know about, as he introduces the necessary steps to transform from being an outsider to an insider in foreign cultures.

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Buffering? Not in Armenia! Although a small country, Armenia has an advanced internet infrastructure including fiber-optic cables and 4G/5G networks. In this article, Anush Bichakhchyan introduces the top internet service providers, available internet packages, technologies, prices, and coverage in rural areas.

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ONE WEEK IN ARMENIA **IS ARMENIA READY TO EMERGE AS THE NEXT DIGITAL NOMAD HOTSPOT?**

Join James Meads on his 7-day exploratory journey in Armenia as he investigates its potential as the next digital nomad destination. Discover the unique advantage of the country that James uncovered, as it might be exactly what you've been looking for.

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FAST FORWARD **ACCELERATING ARMENIA'S JOURNEY TO INNOVATION EXCELLENCE BY 2041**

As a digital nomad yourself, wouldn't you prefer moving to a country where becoming an innovative nation is a goal accompanied by a plan and tens of programs? Armenia is on a mission to transform itself into a top innovative nation by 2041. I interviewed Ruben Osipyan to learn more, and we had a pretty interesting conversation.

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ARMENIA'S PMP CHAPTER A THRIVING COMMUNITY FUELED BY LEE LAMBERT'S EXPERTISE

Step into the world of project management in Armenia, where a small but vibrant community is making waves. Read the article written by Sevan Konu to find out why Lee Lambert, a PMP founder, said he'll be back to Armenia and why he believes the PMI chapter there serves as a great model for much bigger chapters. Quoting his words, "This PMI Chapter ROCKS!"

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NOMADIC REFLECTIONS A WOMAN'S JOURNEY FROM GLOBAL DIGITAL NOMAD TO AN AUTHOR IN ARMENIA

Discover the transformative power of Armenia: From a global digital nomad seeking healing to an author finding inspiration and new beginnings. Join Olga Litvinova on her nomadic reflections as she shares her journey of self-discovery, friendship, and the captivating beauty of Yerevan.

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UNLOCKING TAX ADVANTAGES

HOW TO BECOME A TAX RESIDENT IN ARMENIA



**NERSES
ISAJANYAN**

MANAGING ATTORNEY
CO-FOUNDER OF VARDANYAN & PARTNERS

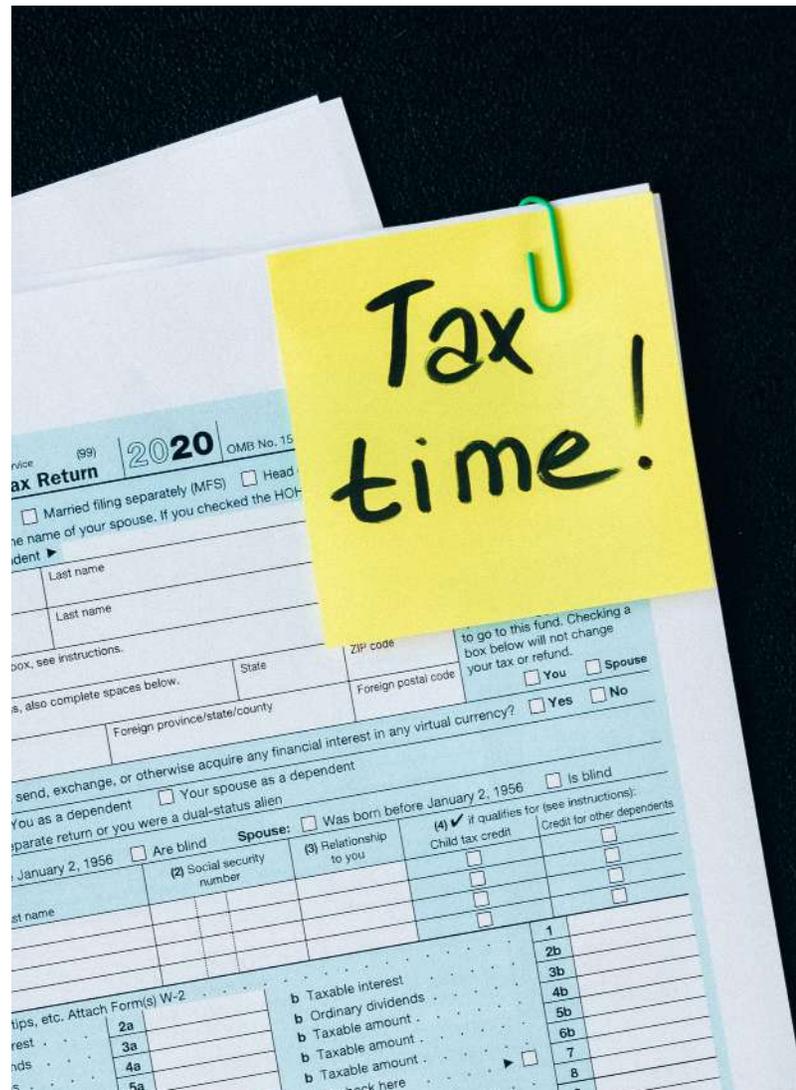
UNLOCKING TAX ADVANTAGES HOW TO BECOME A TAX RESIDENT IN ARMENIA

Tax residency holds great significance for digital nomads, requiring careful consideration to ensure optimal financial outcomes.

Why Choose Armenia for Tax Residency?

Armenia has emerged as an appealing choice for digital nomads seeking advantageous tax conditions. Notably, the country boasts low tax rates, levying a mere 5% tax on dividends for tax residents, while interest income is taxed at 10%. Moreover, Armenia generally refrains from imposing taxes on capital gains from the sale of securities, real estate, and other assets, regardless of the origin of these gains.

Certain income sources, including insurance and pension payments, also enjoy tax exemptions, alongside exemptions on gifts, inheritances, and net worth. Another notable advantage of Armenian tax residency lies in its extensive network of double taxation treaties, spanning approximately 50 countries.



Understanding the Steps to Tax Residency in Armenia

To establish tax residency in Armenia, it is essential to comprehend the criteria outlined by the Armenian tax authorities. According to Armenian tax laws, two avenues exist for obtaining tax residency and obtaining a tax residency certificate, which serves as proof of one's tax residency status. The first path deems an

individual a tax resident if they spend a minimum of 183 days in Armenia during a fiscal year.

An alternative route to securing a tax residency certificate involves petitioning the tax office, even without fulfilling the 183-day requirement, by substantiating

that one's center of vital interest is based in Armenia. As per the law, the center of vital interests is the place where a person's family or **economic interests are concentrated**. Specifically, if an individual's family resides in Armenia or if their primary property or main economic (professional) activity takes place in Armenia, the center of vital interests is considered to be in Armenia. In simpler terms, if an individual can establish that their ties to Armenia are stronger than their ties to any other country, they could obtain a tax residency certificate even if they spend less than 183 days in the country.

Tax Residency Certificate Application Process

Once one of the criteria mentioned above is met, an individual can apply for a tax residency certificate at the Tax Service of the Republic of Armenia. In order to do so, it is necessary to provide copies of relevant documents indicating income received from abroad, as well as copies of all passport pages. The Tax Service may also require additional documentation at their discretion.

Alternatively, the tax residency certificate application can be submitted through a Power of Attorney, thereby eliminating the requirement for physical presence. Upon application submission, a response can be expected **within two business days**. It should be noted that the tax residency certificate is issued specifically for the particular year.

Tax Obligations for Digital Nomads in Armenia

Digital nomads who acquire tax residency in Armenia bear certain tax obligations. Generally, upon applying for a tax residence certificate, individuals must declare the income they received from abroad in the respective year. If taxable income has been obtained, an income tax report must be submitted to the State Revenue Committee **by April 20 of the subsequent year**.

Tax residents are liable for taxes on their worldwide income. However, if taxes have already been paid in the country where the income was earned, individuals are granted a tax credit equivalent to the taxes already paid in that foreign jurisdiction. In other words, if the tax

rate in the foreign country surpasses that of Armenia, it is unlikely that any taxes will be payable in Armenia.

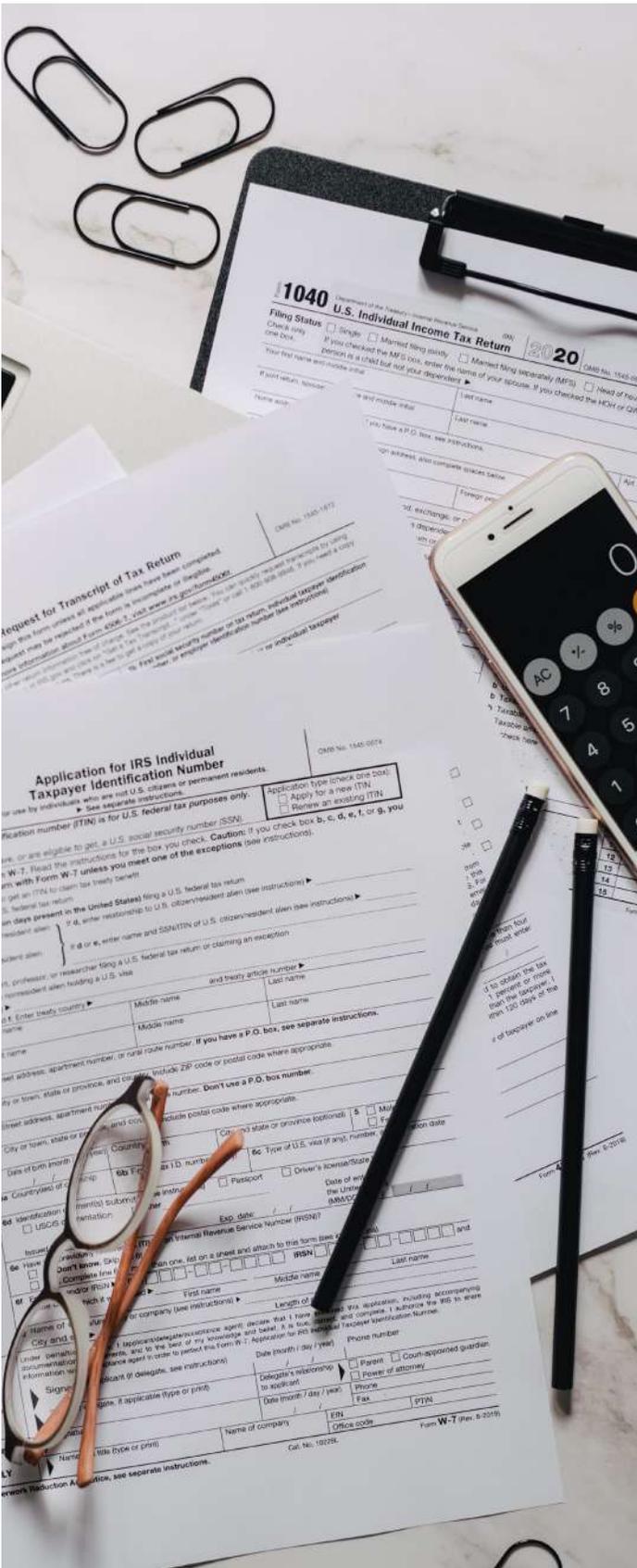


Common Misconceptions About Tax Residency in Armenia

The most common misconception surrounding tax residency is that obtaining a residence permit (temporary, permanent, or special) automatically makes you a “tax resident”. However, it is crucial to note that tax residency is regulated by tax laws, not immigration laws. Consequently, an individual only attains tax residency upon fulfilling the requirements outlined in this article. Thus, possessing a residence permit without being a tax resident is possible, and vice versa.

Is Tax Residency in Armenia Right for You?

Tax residency in Armenia can prove advantageous for digital nomads seeking a low-tax jurisdiction that offers an appealing quality of life. The country’s straightforward tax system, expansive double tax treaty network, and affordable cost of living render it an enticing destination. Nevertheless, each digital nomad’s circumstances are unique, necessitating careful consideration of personal factors, tax obligations, and long-term plans before deciding.



THE IT LEARNING ECOSYSTEM IN ARMENIA

A NATION ON THE FRONTLINES OF IT EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT



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EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING



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ARMENIAN CODE ACADEMY



INTERVIEWING

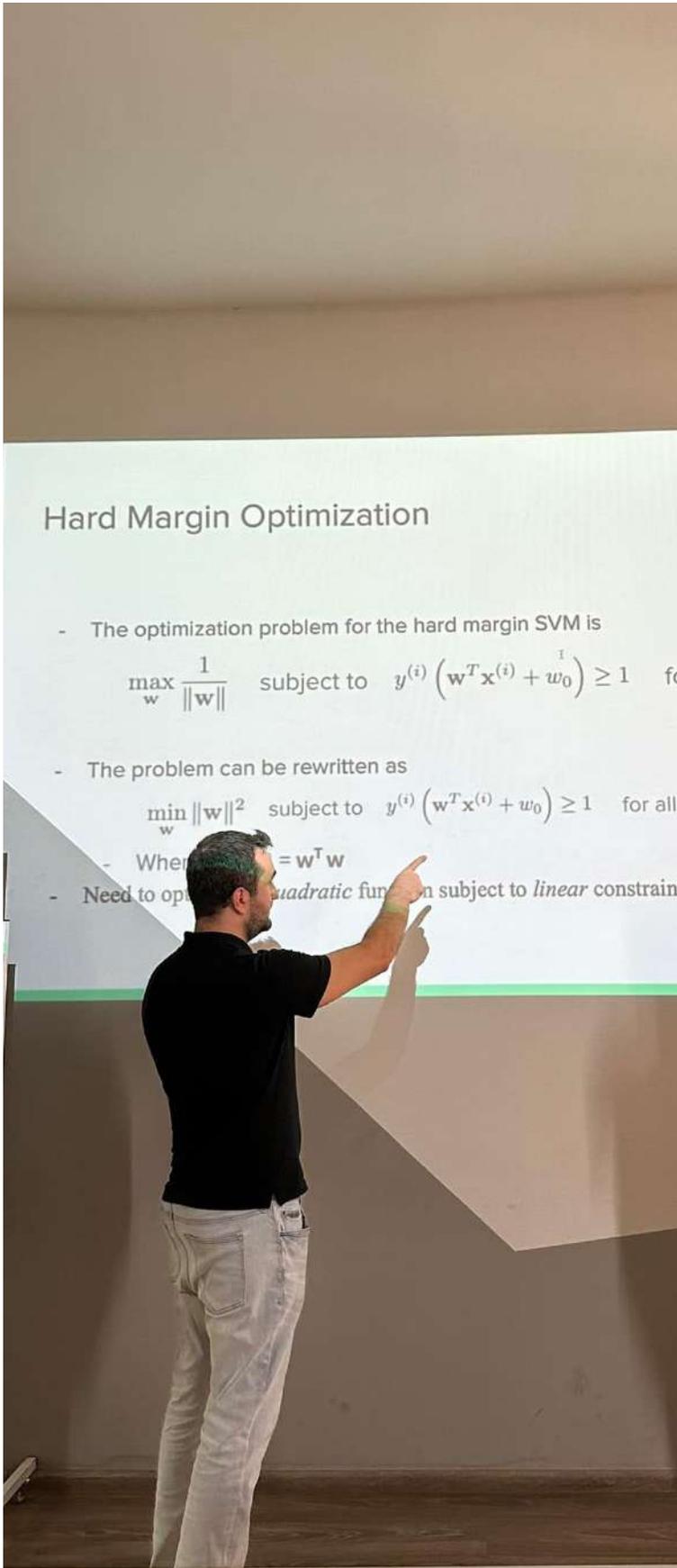


**NAREK
ASLIKYAN**

CO-FOUNDER AND CEO AT
ARMENIAN CODE ACADEMY

THE IT LEARNING ECOSYSTEM IN ARMENIA

A NATION ON THE FRONTLINES OF IT EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT



There is more to this small yet dynamic nation than meets the eye. In recent years, Armenia has emerged as a hub for [IT education and skill development](#) as a result of its thriving IT industry and ecosystem. With a population of just over 3 million, Armenia has established itself as a global player in the tech world, attracting attention from domestic and international investors. At the forefront of this transformation is the Armenian Code Academy (ACA), an institution dedicated to equipping Armenians with the knowledge and expertise needed to excel in the IT industry.

But what makes a coding training academy in a small country so remarkable? Aren't there similar academies in other countries? Of course, there is, and in reality, nothing inherently unique about a training academy, no matter how advanced it may be. However, the prime factor [lies within the Armenian people](#)—people determined to immerse themselves in the IT industry through various means. This dedication transcends age groups and, importantly, showcases near-equal participation from both genders. Moreover, the number of annual applications to the Armenian Code Academy surpasses the number of students in all Armenian universities combined, leading to one inevitable conclusion: Armenians are [genuinely committed](#) to their professional growth and careers.

The presence of a large and skilled IT workforce translates into a supportive community, knowledge-sharing platforms, and a conducive environment for growth. By relocating to a country with such a thriving population of IT professionals, digital nomads can tap into a pool of talent and expertise, [fostering collaboration](#) and innovation in their pursuits.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Anahit Sargsyan, the Chief Operating Officer at Armenian Code Academy. Throughout our conversation, I aimed to explore two main topics: the level of interest among individuals in advanced development training and how it could impact the lives of digital nomads considering relocation to Armenia.

Changing Lives, One Graduate at a Time

Founded eight years ago, the Armenian Code Academy has nurtured a generation of IT professionals. With over [10,000 graduated professionals](#), 45,000 applicants, almost 50% of whom are females, and 50+ tailored educational programs, ACA has become a destination for individuals seeking a rewarding career in technology. Their inclusive approach has helped bridge the gender gap in the tech industry and created opportunities for talented individuals to thrive.



To assess the success of their initiatives, ACA surveyed their graduates. The survey revealed fascinating insights about the composition of their student body. Of the 284 respondents, 44.4% were male, while 55.6% were female. The age range of the graduates was diverse, with [28.5% falling between 14 and 24](#), 40.5% between 25 and 30, 27.8% between 31 and 40, and a small but noteworthy 3.2% aged 40 or above. Furthermore, the survey demonstrated the impact of ACA's education on employment prospects. An impressive [77.5% of the respondents](#) reported being employed, illustrating the demand for IT professionals in Armenia's market.

Armenia's thriving IT market is an essential factor that attracts remote workers and professionals to consider relocating to this country. With almost 80% of ACA graduates securing jobs, the demand for IT professionals is evident. The country's growing reputation as an IT hotspot is further bolstered by the fact that last year alone, ACA received 18,000 applications but could only accept 4,000 students due to their strict selection criteria.



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PODCASTLE

Gevorg Minasyan Aram Sargsyan
 Armen Mkrтчumyan

Since the first days of their operations, Armenian Code Academy understood the importance of the regional tech development and the human capacity that Armenia has. In 2022, ACA launched in the regions, starting from Vanadzor and Ijevan. In Ijevan they cooperated with local IT companies with the aim to create professionals that were ready to join their companies as junior JavaScript Developers. The case with Vanadzor was a bit different, their aim here was to create the much needed talent pool in order to [negotiate with Yerevan based companies](#) to open branches in the regions.



The challenge was very interesting, on one hand the companies would not go to the regions due to lack of trained and skilled professionals while on the other hand the locals don't want to study because there are no companies that would hire them. Thus ACA started a project called "Tech for All" with the aim to provide free, high quality technological education to as many regional youth as possible. Since the start of the project [more than 150 students](#) from extremely diverse communities started their journey in tech.

“ ACA boosted the Machine Learning and Data Science industry in Armenia by creating a talent pool of 100+ professionals since 2017. Now our graduates work in senior positions in the best AI-based product companies in Armenia and abroad.”

Anahit Sargsyan
Chief Operations Manager At Armenian Code Academy

Earlier this year, I talked to Narek Aslikyan, the co-founder and CEO of ACA, regarding the factors contributing to success in learning software engineering. He emphasized that motivation to become a software engineer is often [more important than education](#). While having a math or computer science background may accelerate one's progress toward

becoming an engineer, individuals with degrees in fields such as finance, law, or other popular domains can still excel in this field. Combining this insight with Anahit's statistics and information about ACA graduates offers a deeper understanding of [the nature of Armenian youth](#) and their keen interest in professionally developing their careers.

Furthermore, Narek explained how their approach is entirely [employment-oriented](#), catering to applicants with no prior background in software engineering. He also highlighted that engineering educational programs make up a significant portion, approximately 50%, of their product line. In today's tech industry, there is a growing demand for professionals in various roles, such as product managers, product designers, infrastructure engineers, data scientists, and digital marketing experts. In response to this demand, ACA has released multiple programs to provide comprehensive coverage for these positions.



What's in it for Digital Nomads?

Armenians' commitment to improving their intellectual skills and software engineering expertise reflects a mindset that digital nomads can expect when traveling to Armenia: a competitive environment, a focus on innovation, a drive to accomplish goals, and a strong sense of determination.

If this is the type of people you would like to deal with on a daily basis, [welcome to Armenia!](#)





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THE KEY TO IMMERSIVE CULTURAL
INTEGRATION ABROAD

HOW TO TURN FROM AN OUTSIDER TO AN INSIDER WHEN RELOCATING AS A DIGITAL NOMAD



**GEVORG
BABAYAN**

FOUNDER AND CEO OF LIKELOCAL.IO

THE KEY TO IMMERSIVE CULTURAL INTEGRATION ABROAD HOW TO TURN FROM AN OUTSIDER TO AN INSIDER WHEN RELOCATING AS A DIGITAL NOMAD

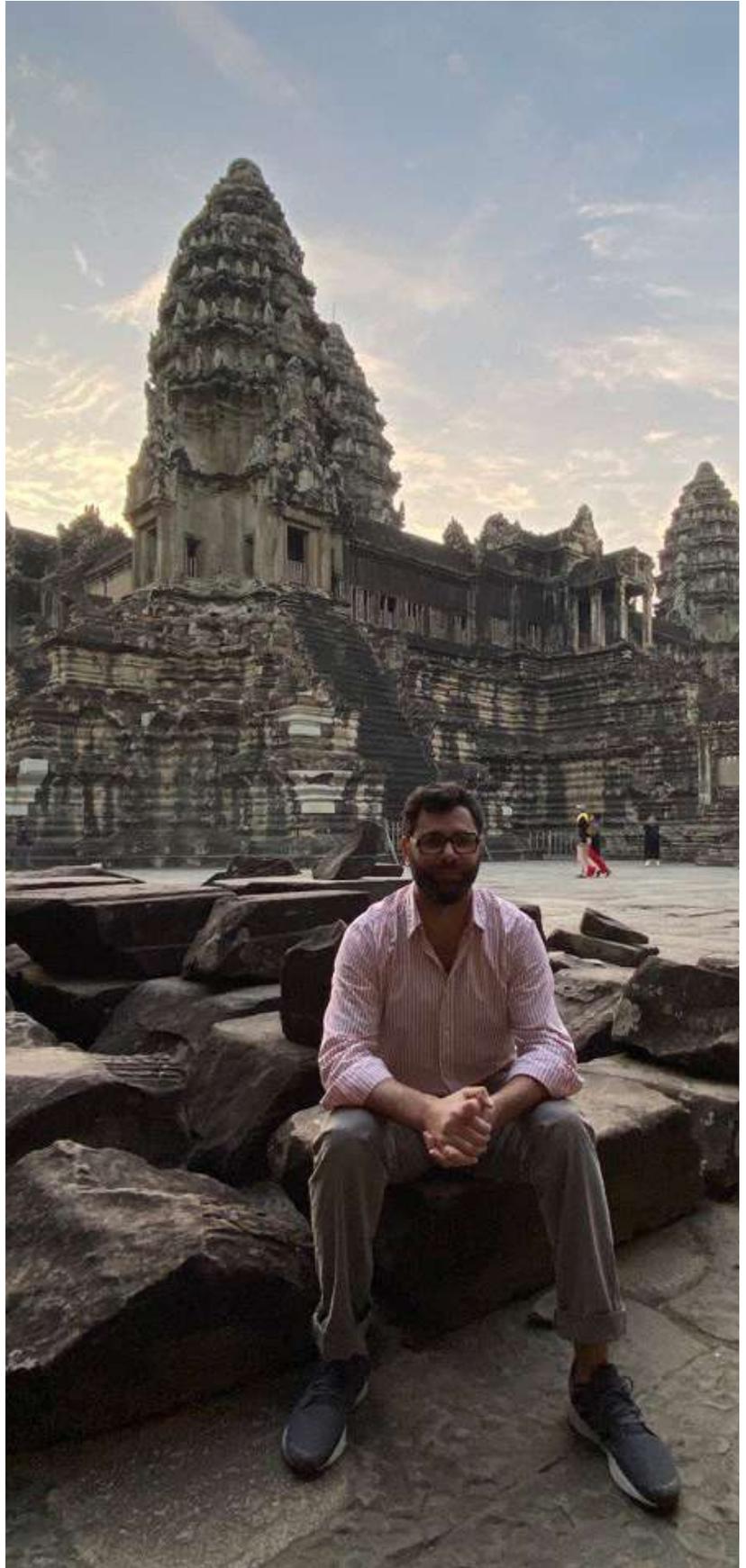
Hi, I'm Gevorg, a digital nomad like many of you are planning to be.

The first country I lived in was Timor-Leste. Do you know where that is without Googling? Right, not so many do. It was tough. Later, I lived in Phnom Penh, Cambodia for two years. Then, living abroad became a habit, and I've managed to live in a few other countries too. Currently, I'm residing between Moscow, Yerevan, and Ho Chi Minh with my wife and our two-year-old daughter.

Once, I read an article stating that if you've been an expat, there are 17 aspects of your life that won't revert. You experience unique psychological shifts that are irreversible. You're welcome; no need to thank.

All these experiences have guided me to make various observations and discoveries, to face some frustrations, and created everlasting memories. In short, they have shaped me into who I am now.

The work I did wasn't digital back then; no, I earned my living working in traditional businesses, establishing and managing a hotel-hostel, a tour operator, and a restaurant, conducting financial and administrative work, etc.



A wise person once said that the deepest integration into a community occurs when you earn your living there, among the locals. Ah, that's me again. Working on the ground with locals, you embrace the entire color palette of the culture: the mentality, habits, tricks, craziness, and kindness of that society.



Moving to another country and living abroad is quite a bold decision. It speaks to your character, your ability to make significant decisions, and your capacity to adapt to new environments while not losing your identity or assimilating completely into the new culture. However, whether you intend to or not, you change; you absorb some of the new culture. I'm sure this isn't a revelation. But how do you manage it? What are your indicators that keep you alert and measure the level of your change? I assume it involves making decisions and comparing your behavior before and after



similar situations. This can be very useful, but of course, you should set your marks right at the beginning and keep them in your memory. Cheat sheets won't help here; it all comes down to the moment. If your self-reflection and memory can collaborate with your decision-making process and tell you what's changed in you, or what cultural approach you're practicing, that's key.

Isolation is not only impossible, but I would also say it's dangerous. If you move to another country, you better be sure you want to live with that society, not just take advantage of the tax system or the internet speed. So, how do you integrate? Actually, your integration starts way before you arrive. It might even start before you decide to visit that country, through the ideas, information or a phrase picked up from a movie quote about that nation.

Never underestimate confirmation bias. Even if you're more liberal than a millennial who actively watches CNN, it's still cleverly packed into our subconscious and guides us to make mistakes at the most inappropriate times. There are several studies showing that when we travel to a new country, we are not inclined to change our opinion about the nation we visit. Rather, confirmation bias pushes us to find evidence to support our stereotypes. The reason is that interaction between intercultural representatives often doesn't occur on the right terms. There is a sociological theory that promotes four principles of positive cross-cultural exchange.

Allport (1954) and Amir (1969) suggest that for interracial contact to yield favorable results, participants should be:

1. of equal status;
2. majority group members should interact with high-status representatives of minority groups;
3. in a voluntary contact situation;
4. engaged in intimate interaction, pursuing common goals in a cooperative relationship with institutional support.

Without hammering you with science, I can say that travel-integration products currently available on the market don't address this. Somehow, my experience has led me to dedicate myself to promoting positive cross-cultural exchange on a global scale. All my experience in tourism (around 20 years) has been applied to this on a small scale, but I feel the urge to expand this initiative, making it available to everyone. Please

don't think it's grandiose when I say I've dedicated my life to this. It wasn't intentional; I just founded a startup, and that takes everything :) It is called LikeLocal.io. Through our platform, you can visit local homes for lunch or dinner, birthdays, weddings, or any event that happens in their real lives. We'll have a chance to discuss some of the outstanding experiences our guests have encountered through us in future articles.

However, if to share an advice on ways to ensure your comfort, mental health, and prosperity, make sure how do you practice tolerance and equality? Whether passively or actively? Are you a person who is happy to connect, engage, and celebrate? If the answer is a certain inner "yes", then you'll be fine wherever you set foot.

FAST, RELIABLE, AND AFFORDABLE

EXPLORING ARMENIA'S TOP INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS



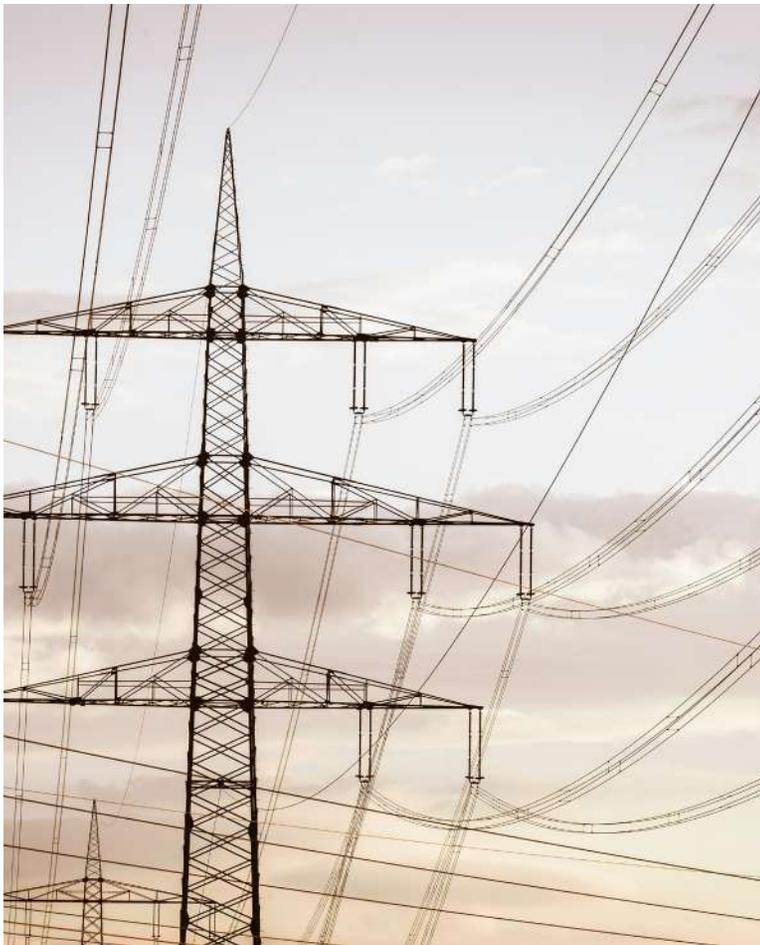
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FAST, RELIABLE, AND AFFORDABLE **EXPLORING ARMENIA'S TOP INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS**

Armenia's modern internet landscape boasts a combination of mobile and fixed-line services delivering high-speed connectivity to users across the country. Today, about 22 large and small providers offer 2G, 3G, and 4G mobile internet and fixed-line services, giving 96% of Armenia's population access to broadband internet and **66% coverage across the country**.

Broadband connections are widely available, with download speeds ranging from a few Mbps to several hundred Mbps, depending on the provider and the chosen plan. The remarkable progress in its internet infrastructure is supported by modern technologies, such as fiber optic for fixed-line internet connections, ADSL broadband internet, LTE, and WiMAX.



Internet Convenience for Digital Nomads in Armenia

For digital nomads in Armenia, the internet service quality can vary depending on various factors such as location, provider, and infrastructure. Here are some key points to consider:

Broadband Speed

The internet speed in Armenia has been steadily improving in recent years. In urban areas, especially in the capital city of Yerevan, you can generally find **high-speed internet connections** ranging from 10 Mbps to 1 Gbps, depending on your chosen plan. However, in more remote or rural areas, the speeds may be lower.

Infrastructure

Armenia has been investing in its internet infrastructure, including **fiber-optic cables and 4G/5G networks**. This has resulted in improved connectivity, especially in urban areas. The country is also actively working on expanding its broadband coverage to reach more remote regions.

Reliability and Stability

While the internet infrastructure in Armenia has been improving, occasional outages or fluctuations in service may still occur. However, in general, the **internet reliability is considered very decent**, and downtime is typically minimal.

Cost

The cost of internet services in Armenia is **relatively affordable** compared to many other countries. The prices vary depending on the speed and data allowance of the plan you choose.

Coworking Spaces and Cafés

In addition to home or apartment internet connections, digital nomads in Armenia can find coworking spaces and cafés with reliable and high-speed internet access in urban areas. These establishments cater to remote workers and offer a productive environment with internet facilities.

Armenia's Top Internet Service Providers

The demand for internet penetration became critical when Armenia witnessed a major inflow of digital nomads, whose main concern was connection and its quality. The industry is quite extensive, with multiple large and small providers, creating a healthy, **competitive market with relatively low prices**.

Larger companies providing both internet and mobile services offer mixed packages that include internet, digital TV, and mobile. Such packages are extremely popular among locals, who pay in one place and get three or more services.

Here is a list of large internet service providers in Armenia with detailed information about available packages, knowing that the information and package prices are grabbed from official websites at the moment of content creation. Rates in USD are approximate based on current exchange rates (\$1 = 383 AMD).





Viva-MTS is one of the leading telecommunications companies in Armenia, with over 2 million subscribers, providing both mobile and fixed broadband services.

Technology

Viva-MTS operates on GSM, UMTS (3G), and LTE (4G) technologies. The company is one of the first to introduce advanced mobile technologies in Armenia, including 4G and LTE, providing faster and more reliable mobile internet connectivity. **In 2023 Viva-MTS launched the first 5G network in Armenia.** Owing to the 5G network, Armenia has joined the ranks of countries with a developed telecommunications sector.

Coverage

Viva-MTS has so far the widest coverage and network reach throughout Armenia, including major cities, towns, and rural areas. Currently, Viva-MTS 4G/LTE network is available to 99.3% of the population.

Availability in Remote Areas

Viva-MTS has made efforts to expand its coverage to remote and rural areas of Armenia. There may be some variations in network availability and signal strength in certain remote regions, providing 2G, 3G, or 4G, depending on the location.

Service Support

The services are available through the provider's website and mobile application, which offer comprehensive features to manage accounts, track expenses, and pay for fixed and mobile services.

Sample of Available Packages

For mobile users, there is a convenient plan offering [unlimited internet](#) access for just 4500 AMD (\$11.5). Businesses seeking [fixed-line internet](#) connectivity can choose from packages starting at 15000 AMD (\$39). Additionally, corporate customers can opt for corporate packages, which range from [Smart Business Start](#) at 1900 AMD (\$5) to [Smart Business Unlim](#) at 9900 AMD (\$26), both of which include unlimited internet access.



A significant number of digital nomads are operating within the IT industry. For most of them, the main criteria in selecting a mobile operator include speed, ping, latency, and network reliability. A smaller portion of them also focus on the price. Industry professionals also take into account whether the operator offers cloud services and owns data centers, as well as the level of these data centers and the range of services available for use in cloud computing.

We place great emphasis on the aforementioned parameters and make substantial investments in our network. We do so not only for various reasons but also because we genuinely believe that Armenia deserves the highest quality of internet connectivity comparable to global leaders. Additionally, we believe that all modern communication technologies should be implemented in Armenia in order to bridge any gaps between the country and the rest of the world. We hold the belief that this directly impacts the satisfaction of our customers. After all, in recent years Armenia has proven to be one of the desired destinations for digital nomads to live and work..”

Armen Avetisian
General Director of Viva-MTS



Operating under the Beeline brand up to 2022, the company is now Team Telecom, a completely rebranded provider with innovative services in mobile and fixed communication, digital television, and the internet.

Technology

The provider now utilizes the new NGN (Next Generation Network) fiber optic network on innovative XGPON technology, as well as FTTH, FTTB, VDSL, and ADSL technologies.

Coverage

While mobile communication has almost complete coverage, fixed communication is still available only in the major cities of the region. In remote areas, the internet is available through mobile services (2G, 3G, or 4G).

Availability in Remote Areas

In remote areas, the provider offers CDMA wireless technology connections.

Service Support

Account support and management are available through Team's new application for Android and iOS. The app also provides the current month's report of used services, service activation, and payment.

Sample of Available Packages

For businesses, [fixed-line internet services](#) are available at different price points depending on the desired speed, with plans starting from 10,000 AMD (\$25) and going up to 40,000 AMD (\$104). Private clients can also enjoy [fixed-line internet](#) connectivity starting at 8,000 AMD (\$20). Additionally, there is a specific [plan](#) offering 15GB of mobile internet for 5,000 AMD per month (\$13). These options cater to the diverse needs of both businesses and individuals, ensuring reliable and affordable internet access throughout the country.



With over 650,000 subscribers, Ucom offers a range of services to residential and business customers, including fiber optic, ADSL, and LTE.

Technology

Ucom has switched to fiber-optic connections that have proven to provide high-speed and reliable internet access, making it suitable for digital nomads and remote workers who require fast and stable connectivity for their work.

Coverage

Ucom has extensive internet penetration in major cities across Armenia. Their network infrastructure is continuously expanding to cover more areas within the country.

Availability in Remote Areas

The fixed network is available only in major cities in the regions, while 2G, 3G, and 4G are available across the country.

Service Support

Ucom services are available through a website and mobile application, providing complete freedom and flexibility to manage the internet and a subscription-based fixed internet package. Users can also pay for Ucom services through all mobile banking applications, mobile wallets, and payment terminals.

Sample of Available Packages

For corporate users, [fixed internet plans](#) start from 12,000 AMD (\$31) and offer a range of features and speeds. On the other hand, individuals looking for internet connectivity at home can opt for [fixed personal internet plans](#), which start from 6,500 AMD (\$16) and provide unlimited internet access. Moreover, there are [mobile internet packages](#) that come bundled with free minutes, SMS, and extra credit limits, with prices starting from 3,000 AMD (\$8).



Rostelecom

Rostelecom Armenia, formerly known as GNC-ALFA, is a subsidiary of Rostelecom, the largest telecommunications company in Russia.

Technology

Rostelecom Armenia uses a mix of technologies, such as fiber optics, DSL, and wireless connections. The provider offers only fixed-line internet and no mobile internet services.

Coverage

The provider has 92% coverage with 3000 km of optical data transmission systems, providing services in major cities in 11 regions.

Service Support

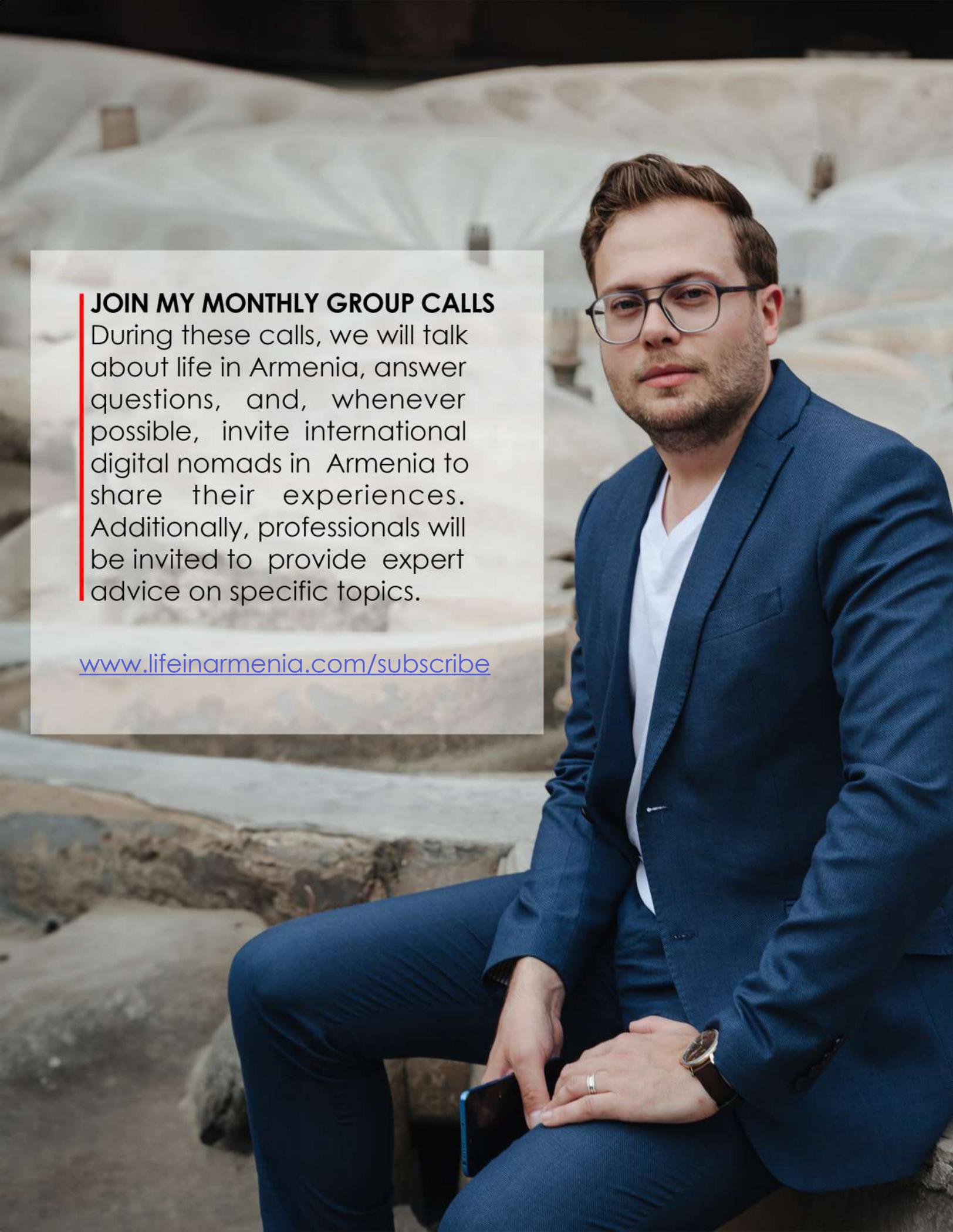
Users can navigate the services on the Rostelecom Armenia website and pay for subscriptions through mobile banking, mobile wallets, payment terminals, or branded service centers.

Sample of Available Packages

[Packages](#) range in price from 6,000 AMD (\$15) to 8,500 AMD (\$22), allowing individuals to select the option that suits them best. Additionally, small businesses in Armenia can choose from a range of [internet packages](#) tailored to their requirements. These plans are available at prices starting from 10,000 AMD (\$25) and going up to 35,000 AMD (\$91).

More Internet Providers to Choose From

Besides the large companies discussed above, as a digital nomad, you may search for and find other companies available both in the capital and regions, providing no less compelling (and sometimes even more affordable) packages for fixed-line internet. Service providers such as [iNet](#), [Fnet](#), [FastNet](#), [Skynet](#), etc. are more popular among locals for affordable combo packages that include internet and digital television.

A man with short brown hair, glasses, and a beard is sitting on a stone ledge. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a white t-shirt. He is holding a smartphone in his right hand and has a watch on his left wrist. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with stone walls and a white structure.

JOIN MY MONTHLY GROUP CALLS

During these calls, we will talk about life in Armenia, answer questions, and, whenever possible, invite international digital nomads in Armenia to share their experiences. Additionally, professionals will be invited to provide expert advice on specific topics.

www.lifeinarmenia.com/subscribe

IS ARMENIA READY TO EMERGE AS THE NEXT DIGITAL NOMAD HOTSPOT?



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING



**JAMES
MEADS**

FOUNDER OF LIBERTY NOMAD AND
PROCUREMENTSOFTWARE.SITE

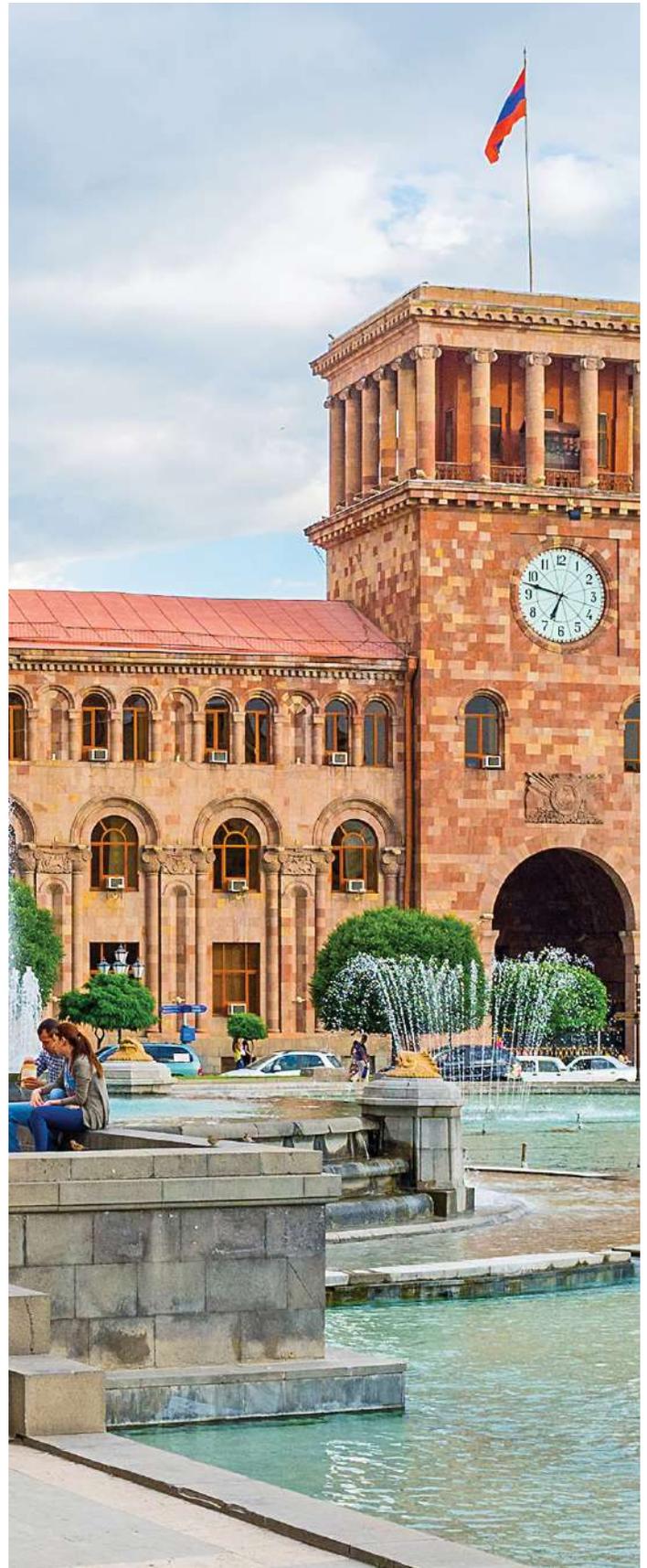
ONE WEEK IN ARMENIA

IS ARMENIA READY TO EMERGE AS THE NEXT DIGITAL NOMAD HOTSPOT?

Earlier this month, I interviewed James Meads, an experienced digital nomad who recently spent one week exploring Armenia's potential as a digital nomad destination. James, a British entrepreneur, who had settled in Bulgaria after touring the world, wanted to witness firsthand if Armenia could become the next hotspot for remote working professionals.

During his stay in Armenia, James was captivated by the country's pristine nature, bustling downtown Yerevan, and unique lifestyle. However, one aspect that caught his attention was the [surge in rental prices and general cost of living](#) in Yerevan and a few other major cities compared to other destinations in South-East Europe, which he hoped would change shortly to allow Armenia to compete more effectively with other digital nomad destinations.

Concerned about this development, I assured James that prices had been much more affordable in the past and that there are still cities in Armenia that [offer affordable accommodations to this day](#). It became apparent to James that while Armenia has great potential, it will take time for the country to develop its infrastructure outside the capital to provide affordable facilities to an international standard on a wider scale to cater to digital nomads. Another aspect that James found challenging during his stay in Armenia was the traffic. Like many other cities worldwide, [Yerevan's traffic congestion](#) posed a significant inconvenience for him.



However, what truly excited James about Armenia's potential as a digital nomad hotspot, was its opportunity for well as it having lots of investment potential and a [business-friendly environment](#) to establish a base address, as well as the for anyone wishing to start a physical relatively straightforward process to business there. Its pristine nature, unique obtain temporary residency. It's also a lifestyle, and delectable cuisine serve as great hedge for anyone who wants to strong attractions. However, it is evident have some geopolitical exposure to non-EU, that further development is needed to non-NATO countries as part of their flag create affordable facilities outside the theory. [With taxes as low as 5%](#), Armenia capital, improve transportation infra- provides an attractive proposition for structure, and address the cost of living those looking to launch a startup or reg- vs. standard of living challenge. ister a company. Having a presence in Armenia allows entrepreneurs to take Armenia is undoubtedly [on the right path](#), advantage of the favorable tax regula- and with continued efforts to enhance its tions, positioning the country as an digital nomad ecosystem, it has the po- appealing destination for digital nomads tential to emerge as a significant player in seeking to combine work and business the global remote work community. The endeavors. the country's favorable tax regulations further solidify its position as an ideal destination for digital nomads and remote workers Armenia, James recognized the country's looking to establish a base address.

FAST FORWARD

ACCELERATING ARMENIA'S JOURNEY TO INNOVATION EXCELLENCE BY 2041



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTERVIEWING

**RUBEN
OSIPYAN**

ENTREPRENEURIAL PROGRAMS
LEAD AT FAST FOUNDATION

FAST FORWARD

ACCELERATING ARMENIA'S JOURNEY TO INNOVATION EXCELLENCE BY 2041

Digital nomads are interested in countries where innovation is a goal because it signifies a dynamic and forward-thinking environment. Innovation-driven nations tend to have a thriving startup ecosystem, cutting-edge technologies, and a supportive community of like-minded professionals. This **creates opportunities for collaboration**, networking, and personal growth. Being in such an environment allows digital nomads to stay at the forefront of industry trends, gain exposure to innovative ideas, and potentially form partnerships with local entrepreneurs.

Countries prioritizing innovation also invest in digital infrastructure, providing reliable internet connectivity and modern workspaces essential for remote work. The focus on innovation also means government incentives, grants, or programs are likely available to support entrepreneurial endeavors, making it an attractive destination for digital nomads looking to launch their own ventures.



Is Armenia an Innovation Hub?

Armenia, a country steeped in rich history and culture, is on a mission to transform itself into a top innovative nation by 2041. At the forefront of this ambitious endeavor is the FAST Foundation, a dynamic organization dedicated to propelling Armenia's journey to innovation excellence.

The FAST Foundation, also known as the Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology, is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering scientific and technological advancement in Armenia. It was established in 2017 with the aim of strengthening Armenia's position in the global

science and tech community and **driving socioeconomic growth** through innovation.

Finding information online about FAST Foundation and its work in Armenia is quite easy. However, instead of rewriting the topics readily available on their website, I arranged a meeting with Ruben Osipyan, the Entrepreneurial Programs Lead at FAST Foundation, earlier last month. We met over a cup of coffee in downtown Yerevan to explore their mission and discuss **how their efforts indirectly contribute** to positioning Armenia as a potential digital nomad destination.



Sailing in the Right Direction

One of the key objectives of the FAST Foundation is to push Armenia away from the path of becoming an outsourcing nation and instead **position it as a hub for science**, technology, and innovation. FAST aims to foster a culture of sciencepreneurship that will drive Armenia's growth in the coming years by focusing on sectors such as artificial intelligence and biotechnology.

During my conversation with Ruben, we discussed how Armenia's success in outsourcing can be attributed to several factors, including its highly skilled workforce, competitive labor costs, and favorable business environment. These factors have attracted international companies to **outsource their software development projects** to Armenian firms, leading to the growth of the IT industry in the country.

However, becoming an industry leader goes beyond offering affordable services. It requires a **holistic approach** encompassing innovation, research, and development and the ability to provide high-quality solutions that meet today's evolving needs.

Armenia, being a country with a relatively small population, faces challenges when it comes to expanding and competing with larger nations that have a bigger workforce. Therefore, it becomes essential for Armenian companies to concentrate on generating globally scalable, science-backed ideas and establishing **collaborations with research centers** globally. In doing so, they can prioritize services that not only offer financial benefits to the country but also effectively leverage the skills and knowledge of its educated workforce.



According to Osipyan, Armenia possesses a wealth of talent and potential waiting to be harnessed. He believes that **if the proper ecosystem is created**, Armenian professionals can do a remarkable job in the fields of technology and innovation. To achieve this, the FAST Foundation aims to **rebuild the connection** between education, research, and industry, enabling knowledge and ideas to flow seamlessly between these sectors.

The Science and Tech Angel Network (STAN) is One of the core programs launched by the FAST Foundation that has now spun off into a separate entity. This platform seeks to **connect aspiring startups** with investors who can provide the necessary funding to realize their ideas, as well as diasporan investors from more than 8 countries and various sectors who don't only bring capital but also a wealth of knowledge and network. Another notable program is ADVANCE Research Grants, a pioneering platform that invites distinguished scientists worldwide to lead new teams comprised of ambitious Armenian researchers. Local

scientists who join the selected programs receive funding, enabling them to pursue globally competitive research. Moreover, it is worth noting that FAST Foundation prides itself on fostering gender diversity and empowering women in Armenia. Their Aspiring Female Entrepreneurs program aims to provide a unique experience for young women with aspirations to start their own businesses. Additionally, the WIN Program (Women Innovators), which is set to be launched, aims to unleash the full potential of women, encouraging them to compete and generate out-of-the-box ideas.



With a dedicated team of 33 employees, including **5 men and 28 women**, FAST sets an example of gender diversity and women's empowerment in Armenia. The significant representation of women within the workforce of FAST demonstrates the valuable contributions they make to their country's development on a high level.

Numbers Talk

While the journey is ongoing, the impact of FAST Foundation's efforts is already evident. Over the past five years, they have launched 25 programs, positively impacting over 10,000 individuals in Armenia. Additionally, STAN angels has invested about \$625,000 in 14 startups out of 288 that applied for funding. Their network of angel investors has grown from 18 to an impressive 42, further fueling the growth of innovative projects in the country. With 55 researchers and 10 principal investigators on board, some of whom are **on the brink of publishing scientific papers**, Armenia's scientific community is thriving under the influence of FAST.



There is No Critic More Severe than Oneself

Osipyan shed light on a methodology of venture building they have applied in several FAST programs like InVent and ASCENT. It's a methodology of an innovative project development that passes through several stages:

- Idea Generation & Exploration
- Prototype development (ProtoCo - prototype company)
- Scaling (NewCo, new company)
- Growth (GrowthCo, growth company)

During the Idea Generation & Exploration phase, the users develop ideas and apply a deep exploration to vet out the ideas. The exploration includes literature-based reviews, interviews with key opinion leaders, etc. The goal is to come up with feasible, great ideas that can have a **strong scaling potential**.

This model is specifically to help people with no business experience who are **first-time founders**; most of them have scientific or technical backgrounds, as science is at the product's core. Great results were derived by applying this model in science-intensive venture building done in the scope of the ASCENT program, where scientists and researchers were involved in generating ideas in the domains of AI/Data Science & Life Sciences. Denovo Sciences, a deep technology company that creates novel therapeutics using state-of-the-art AI technologies, is a graduate of

this program. This model was also successful in helping professionals with entrepreneurial and technical backgrounds to team up and build innovative ideas in the scope of InVent programs; for example, HopShop, a mobile app that helps shoppers to find and buy any fashion-related product from images and videos, and Bliink, an app that allows users to prevent and reduce computer-related health problems.



Now back to our pivotal point of discussion, **what's in it for digital nomads?** Armenia's commitment to innovation and the efforts of organizations like the FAST Foundation make it a promising destination for digital nomads. The foundation's focus on fostering a culture of innovation, supporting research and development, and connecting entrepreneurs with investors creates a dynamic environment that aligns with the needs and aspirations of digital nomads. By positioning itself as an innovation hub, Armenia offers digital nomads opportunities for collaboration, access to cutting-edge technologies, and a supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurial ventures.



As a digital nomad yourself, wouldn't you prefer moving to a country where **becoming an innovative nation is a goal** accompanied by a plan and tens of programs?

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 You Can't Survive Without Funding

Everyone keeps telling you that you have to have investments, you have to have funding, you can't survive without investments, you have to have money. What are you spending if you don't have investments? This is a pure myth.

Funding is necessary when you want to grow and accelerate, but you can continue your organic growth and bootstrap all the way to 2, 3, 5, 20, and 50 million dollars a year in revenue. The positive thing about bootstrapping and not going through fundraising cycles is that we know all the

money we generate comes from sales, so we have demand, and our product has demand, and we know we are adding value.

You don't need funding to survive. Just the opposite right now. If you look at the IT world, many companies that are funded are not surviving and having issues, and their runways become much shorter. Companies that have bootstrapped are surviving because they are generating demand and revenue.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY FUELED BY LEE LAMBERT'S EXPERTISE



**SEVAN
KONU**

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL
AND DELIVERY MANAGER



ARMENIA'S PMP CHAPTER

A THRIVING COMMUNITY FUELED BY LEE LAMBERT'S EXPERTISE

Once again, my homeland Armenia is making waves in project management with its vibrant and dynamic community. While Europe and the US often dominate the project management landscape, the PMI Armenia Chapter has quietly fostered a **thriving environment for project management** professionals. One recent event, in particular, stood out among the crowd, featuring none other than Lee Lambert, an esteemed leader in the project management industry.

According to PMI's official website, Lee Lambert is a project management industry thought leader with nearly 45 years of experience. He is known for his leadership in establishing education and practitioner measurement standards. Since embarking on his project management journey in 1966, he has implemented multiple enterprise project management processes and educated more than 40,000 professionals in 22 countries. Mr. Lambert was instrumental in creating PMI's Project Management Professional (PMP)® credential.



Mighty Impact in a Small Nation

Having traveled to 51 countries already, Lambert continues his globe-trotting adventure, sharing his wealth of knowledge and experience with PMI chapters worldwide. The PMI Armenia Chapter had the honor of **hosting Lambert for a highly anticipated event** titled “Mastering Project Management with Lee Lambert - A PMP Founder.” As a project management enthusiast, I couldn’t pass up the opportunity to attend this exceptional gathering, made even more special as it took place in my homeland, Armenia.

Two separate events were held in Yerevan, offering unique insights and learning opportunities. The first event, “Mastering the PM with Lee Lambert,” spanned an entire day. The event was an unforgettable experience for all participants, thanks to PMI Armenia Chapter and volunteers. Attendees enjoyed thought-provoking discussions, practical case studies, and in-depth explorations of project management principles with Lee Lambert and 7 other local and international speakers.



Following the full-day event, the second event, “Career Advice for Project Managers,” was organized by Astghik Sahakyan, a PMI Armenia board member and events organizer. This evening event focused on fostering an interactive environment, allowing attendees to engage in a two-hour Q&A session with Lambert. Aspiring project managers and seasoned professionals alike had the chance to seek advice, gain valuable insights, and delve into the details of successful project management careers.



Armenian PMP professionals participated in discussions, sharing their experiences and perspectives on the unique challenges and opportunities in the field. The diverse range of attendees brought in-depth questions, sparking lively conversations on topics such as stakeholder management, risk assessment, and agile methodologies. The session concluded with an air of inspiration. It renewed determination as attendees left with a deeper understanding of the key skills and strategies required for success in their project management endeavors.



Meeting Lee Lambert in person was an extraordinary opportunity, akin to obtaining a PMP certification. His vast knowledge and ability to articulate complex concepts left a lasting impact on everyone in attendance.

As the PMI Armenia Chapter continues to spotlight the country’s project management community, it fosters an environment where local talent can thrive while attracting professionals worldwide. The dedication

and commitment of individuals like Lee Lambert and the tireless efforts of the chapter and its volunteers ensure that Armenia's project management community remains at the forefront of industry advancements and best practices.

Despite its small size, Armenia offers a thriving professional community for digital nomads. Professionals can connect, learn, and network with like-minded individuals through organizations like the PMI Armenia Chapter.



Quotes

“ By Lee Lambert A PMP Founder

Have you heard of David & Goliath? Well it turns out that the Armenian PMI Chapter is the David of Project Management Conferences. This small PMI Chapter just put on a Conference that will **serve as a great model for much bigger Chapters**. The special short presentations were amazing delivered by true practicing project professionals. Topics like new bank branding project, infrastructure projects, applied Agile were just a few of the outstanding presentations. After lunch nearly 250 stayed for a 4 hour workshop before moving to the pool for a highly anticipated “after party. This PMI Chapter ROCKS!!

”

“ By Davit Iskandaryan PMI Armenia President, Managing Partner at PMA - Project Management Advisory

The Armenian community of project managers was blessed with the visit of Mr. Lee R Lambert to Yerevan, Armenia. The energy and experience shared with the community will drive our vision of making the PM world better to come true. The man is bringing more impact to the world; thank you very much!

”⁴⁵

“ **By Astghik Sahakyan** **PMI Armenia Chapter Board Member, Organizer of the Event, and PMP Trainer/Consultant**

I've been in touch with Mr. Lambert on LinkedIn for over three years. Two years ago, we held a joint webinar during Covid-19, and the Armenian project management community **got to know Mr. Lambert and his invaluable input** in the project management profession. Since then, I have been planning to invite Mr. Lambert to Armenia, and finally, early this year, we agreed with him on a suitable time for traveling to Armenia.

Together with the chapter team, we organized a big project management event having Mr. Lambert as a main guest; all the community was **impatiently waiting to meet him in person** and to learn from him. We organized a conference comparable to our annual event, or even bigger, with 300+ people attending.

I have to say that this was a true celebration for the Armenian project management community. Mr. Lambert held a 4-hour session at the main event, and then we had one more event where he explained the value of PMP and inspired people to go for the certification.

This was a fantastic opportunity for the Armenian project managers to meet Mr. Lambert. His presence and expertise have left an indelible mark on all those fortunate enough to have witnessed his remarkable contributions. Lambert's visit was eagerly anticipated by professionals, enthusiasts, and everyone keen to **expand their knowledge** in project management.

His engagements were nothing short of extraordinary. His unparalleled mastery of the subject matter and his ability to connect with the audience made every interaction a memorable and enriching experience.

Moreover, the impact of his visit extended beyond academic or professional settings. His willingness to engage with the local community, students, and aspiring professionals was heartwarming. His visit has had a lasting impression on me and countless others. The Chapter and the community thank him for leaving an indelible mark and inspiring a generation of enthusiasts and professionals.

”



By David Grigoryan

PMI Armenia Chapter Board Member, General Manager at Devsoft Armenia

Lee R. Lambert's visit to Armenia holds immense significance for the local project managers' community, providing a unique opportunity to interact with a globally recognized professional. The exchange of knowledge and experiences during his master class enriched the attendees' understanding of project management and fostered a sense of connection to the **broader global project management community**. Such encounters are vital in expanding horizons, promoting growth, and enhancing professional development within the local community.

During his visit to Armenia, **Lee R. Lambert expressed his fondness for the country**. In a morning live program on Public Television of Armenia, he shared that he typically spends only 1-2 days in each location. Still, he was captivated by Armenia to such an extent that he stayed here for four days. Notably, Lambert took the opportunity to explore the country's cultural heritage, indulging in sightseeing activities and even partaking in an Ararat brandy tasting experience. We'll be waiting for his next regional visit to the program we're already working on.

To end this article, I would use the words of Lee Lambert himself, which he posted on his LinkedIn account upon visiting Armenia: **Each day I learned more about this incredible country. I'll be back!**



NOMADIC REFLECTIONS

A WOMAN'S JOURNEY FROM GLOBAL DIGITAL NOMAD TO AN AUTHOR IN ARMENIA



**OLGA
LITVINOVA**

DIGITAL NOMAD, AUTHOR AND
ENGLISH TEACHER



NOMADIC REFLECTIONS

A WOMAN'S JOURNEY FROM A GLOBAL DIGITAL NOMAD TO AN AUTHOR IN ARMENIA

I came to Armenia for the first time back in May 2022 to literally heal my heart. It wasn't broken as you might think remembering Hollywood stories. I hadn't been having any major emotional problems at all till my body started telling me something was seriously wrong, making me eventually see a heart doctor. Apart from some medications I was prescribed, she suggested I [consider a change of scenery](#).

A Journey of Healing and Friendship

I had spent all of my career teaching English and translating and later researching and writing. I had traveled to a few linguistics conferences in Europe and back in 2017 I won a Fulbright scholarship (one of the world's most prestigious academic exchange programs) and was at a U.S. university (New Jersey) for a year where I collected data for my research on bilingualism.

Earlier in 2022, me and a fellow Fulbrighter from Russia as well as our mutual friend from Austria we had met back in the U.S. decided to go on a trip to Armenia and Georgia together. Just a couple of weeks before that long-awaited trip to what we Russians refer to as "near-abroad" countries, I had to see that heart doctor and was actually thinking of calling off the trip altogether. Actually, apart from that change of scene the cardiologist suggested, she advised I should listen to my heart and [probably even stay in either of the countries](#) if I felt like it as I was working onlin anyway.



On the early morning of May 29 (just a day after Armenia's First Republic Day) we landed at Zvartnots Airport in Yerevan. It was a great feeling reuniting with my friends as well as getting to know a few Armenian Fulbrighters. I hadn't dressed up much and hadn't worn my contact lenses since 2020, so being able to put on a dress in my favorite color (khaki green matching my eyes) and stare at the gentle beauty of pink tuff buildings in Mashtots Avenue (one of Yerevan's central streets where we were staying) made me [fall in love with the city](#) from the very first (unusually clear) glance.

In Armenia, and having gotten a taste of my former life where meeting and talking to interesting people, dressing up and enjoying nice meals was normal, I had started feeling a lot better physically and emotionally. We visited Georgia as well, but even our Austrian who must have found this part of the world less familiar than me and my friend agreed that [Armenia and its hospitality were hard to beat](#).



A Journey of Senses in Armenia

I returned to Armenia on my own in October 2022 with a one-way ticket. Myself and the internal struggles of a woman who is expected to be empathetic and caring by the mercy of nature often finds herself fighting such as balancing your elderly parents' needs against your own. They had never expected their daughter would be able to travel even outside her city, let alone the country. And even if you are, why would you go to a former Soviet country that is not richer and more prosperous than your own? At this point I decided not to get into arguments with my parents, because all that mattered at the end of the day was for them to be healthy. So, I just left and said Hello to Yerevan.

Being here on my own left me enough time to think and reflect on my own life as well as the country I had made a conscious choice of living in. Quite a few things might have seemed similar to those back in Russia now and even of the earlier years, but the unique "Armenian-ness" of Yerevan was in the details.

First of all, the amazing beauty of the people around me. It was about all the

"eyes". It was here that I had literally for the first time been told my eyes were beautiful and eventually I started noticing the unique beauty and depth of thousands of pairs of eyes my own were meeting in the streets of Yerevan everyday.

Armenian food was one more detail that needed to be savored to be properly enjoyed. Of course, in Russia we always had "lavash", the Armenian classic bread served with so many dishes. But once I first tried "matnakash" in Armenia, it became a ritual to carry one home from a bakery across the road from my apartment. Choosing a bottle of wine and cheese to pair it with was my own mundane gastronomic delight. Of course, exploring numerous cafes and restaurants had been a delight on its own.

Another gorgeous attention-arresting detail to admire was the Armenian nature. I was here in the autumn, my birthday season, which I honestly used to consider grey and dull. I no longer thought like that, waking up to all sorts of colors of leaves in the English Park my apartment overlooked and experiencing the beauty of nature as I traveled outside the capital.



Tales of Writing and Inspiration in the Paris of the East

I eventually chose to stay in Yerevan when winter came. It wasn't winter in the way I imagined it to be. I was able to enjoy my food and wine as well as admiring the beauty of passing humans wearing my coat cozily seated outside. It was a particularly amazing experience every time in Saryan Street, the famous "wine" street that must have played a big part in my decision to come here to Yerevan again. You just have to be here to feel its laid back vibe and you will get what I am talking about.

All of these beautiful, tasty and mesmerizing details must have inspired me to do what I hadn't had enough courage to do. Despite trying extra hard to build up and maintain connections, while living alone in a new place you have more time to do all the thinking you might have not done back home. Having asked myself a lot of questions about what exactly I wanted in life, one of the very first things that came to mind was: [writing a book before I turned 35](#) in September 2023. Me be-

ing me, I couldn't just start writing about random stuff. It had to be something I was genuinely passionate about.

The major topic of my research as a Fulbrighter back in the U.S. was bilingualism. I had never thought I'd be living and contemplating this topic in a former Soviet republic, but to come to think about it, the use of at least two languages seemed so natural here in Armenia. One of them was my language, Russian. You truly never know what is around the corner as I had spent more than half of my life learning and teaching the language that I now see as absolutely international allowing people all across the world to connect. But in the process I might have not appreciated my mother tongue enough. It took me to come to Armenia where lots of people spoke very good or as I would jokingly say much better Russian than some compatriots. It was incredible how the current situation in the world and life in a "near-abroad" country had made me contemplate the role of the lan-

guage of Russian that had become an essential part of my life and had been allowing me to be able to work from anywhere.

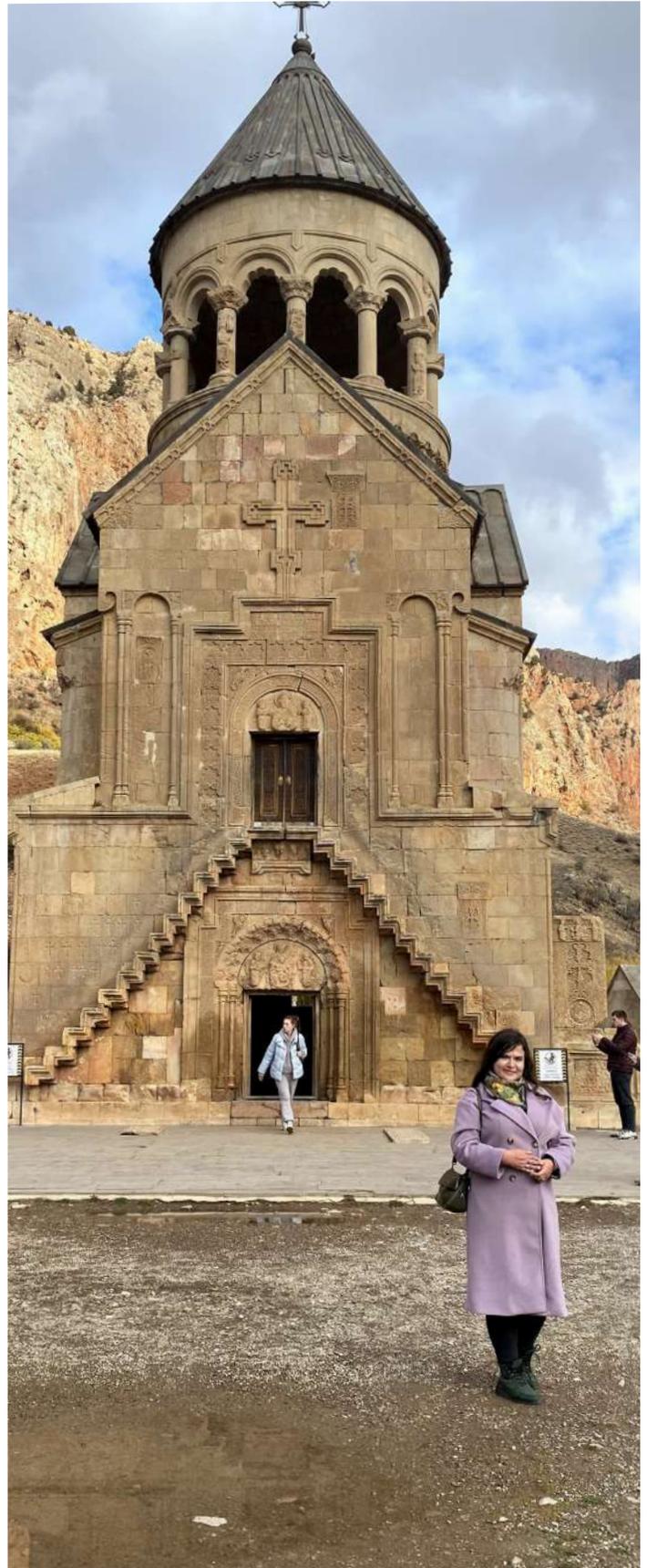
So, I decided to put the interviews with bilinguals around the world during my year in the U.S. into a book. Writing and journalism have been my long-standing passions. As my PhD research had been up in the air for a while due to the global uncertainties, I thought it might be a good idea to mix the academic style, memoirs and journalistic writing into one book. Somehow I had been able to find a creative solution for a seemingly rigidly scientific task, which completing a PhD thesis would have been. I [truly and genuinely thank Yerevan](#) and the people that came my way here for granting me these creative (super)powers. They say that [Yerevan is the Paris of the East](#). It is true as you can feel like Hemingway and find your own Armenian Les Deux Magots cafe here and write something that might turn out to be pretty impressive.

Homecoming and New Beginnings

On December 1, 2022 I started writing my book in a historic 19th century building of Mirzoyan Library in central Yerevan. I had always [wanted this moment to be special](#) and I had succeeded in making it feel like that as the foreword of my book took my readers here, to the city I had never thought would be featured in a book I hadn't been so sure would ever see the light of the day. Its whole structure was magically pieced together in my head and I knew there was no going back now. I had to finish this book by the next time I came back to the Armenian capital which was supposed to be in April 2023.

Having left Armenia in mid-December, I was back in mid-April just as I had been planning – with a one-way ticket again. I landed at Zvartnots airport with a suitcase with a few dozens of my books to give to my local friends and probably even sell during my presentations in Armenia. I had managed to achieve the goal of completing a book in around 3 months! I had also been working on my own linguistic repertoire and had been learning some Armenian while I was away.

Honestly, being Russian one can get by using our national language in 99.9% of everyday interactions. But I was gently encouraged (in perfect Russian, of course) by local friends to at least give it a try. I know for a fact my Armenian would never come any close to their Russian, but that was my way of pay-



ing some respect to the country I was making longer-term plans for. On coming here I was able to read some of the Armenian alphabet. Honestly, I hadn't been able to understand much at all and experienced a sort of frustration almost all language learners normally would.

Having had three book presentations in Yerevan and one in Gyumri, the nation's second largest city, I am now [ready to embrace my identity as a writer](#). I have really been impressed by how open locals were to any new initiative and how having people from other (albeit very familiar) places might actually bring a lot of new energy into the city whose charm many people have already fallen under. Being able to acknowledge my multifaceted professional identity – despite having my teaching and translating gigs as my major sources of income – I had been able to connect with more and more people – either fellow Fulbright scholars or colleagues (teachers, researchers and now writers).

Apart from that, I have also been eager to [embrace my femininity here in Yerevan](#). I guess a woman tends to blossom wherever and whenever she is happy, which might explain the amount of (not really obnoxious) attention I have been getting.

Anyway, I am going to explore the topic of femininity in my second book. I have just started writing here in Yerevan, which might by now have become a tradition. I am also thinking of trying to explore some writing-related jobs here to give me an even more valid excuse to stay. I have also been considering pursuing a second degree in International Relations, the field I have been interested in for a long time and even dared to discuss a bit in my first book. I am still not sure how much Armenian I would be willing or have to master. When it comes to staying single, I am not actively seeking to change that, but being here on my own has made me [rethink some of my priorities in life](#), so we will see.

Having spent a total of around 4 months in Armenia, I am leaving for Russia again for my Mum's birthday. I am actually planning to celebrate mine here in Yerevan in September. Life is really ironic as I have spent so much time and effort looking to settle in places far more remote culturally and even sometimes linguistically, but recently have been busy making plans for a life in Armenia. Life is also unpredictable as I would have never thought I'd be using this fancy term "digital nomad" to describe my identity, but here I am. I am looking forward to new chapters and new books and for now I don't mind [writing them here in Armenia](#).

**STAY TUNED
COMING
SOON**



VOLUNTEERING FOR A PURPOSE

HOW ARMENIAN YOUTH ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Armenian youth has always demonstrated their unwavering commitment to their country by volunteering in large numbers and providing assistance wherever needed across various public and private events and celebrations, truly reflecting their patriotism and dedication to building a better future.

CREDITS AND SPECIAL THANKS



ARMENIA
The Hidden
Track



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

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