

# LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

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JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2024 | NO.17 | LIFE IN ARMENIA

**SMALL NATION, BIG POTENTIAL**  
WHAT EUROPEANS COULD LEARN FROM ARMENIANS?

**FROM AMBITION TO ACHIEVEMENT IN ARMENIA**  
THE LAND WHERE I FOUND MY PURPOSE AND SUCCESS

**BEYOND THE BALCONY**  
THE JOY OF COMFORT IN YEREVAN AND THE CALL FOR MORE

**EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT IN ARMENIA**  
A SUMMER TRADITION FOR OUR FAMILY

**WHAT DIGITAL NOMADS NEED TO KNOW**  
CAN DIGITAL NOMADS START A LEGAL BUSINESS IN ARMENIA?

**CALL OF THE MOTHERLAND**  
FROM TORONTO TO YEREVAN AND GYUMRI

**SARDARAPAT FC**  
BRIDGING SPORTS AND EDUCATION FOR ARMENIA'S FUTURE





# MATHEW ZEIN

## EDITOR'S LETTER

While many professionals worldwide race to acquire the most luxurious corner offices in skyscrapers overlooking other skyscrapers and choked highways in those concrete jungles we call cities, I find Yerevan the most relaxing and inspiring destination on the planet.

My office here is nothing more than a small table on the balcony that has little to do with luxury by today's standards. However, this small setting on my balcony, overlooking a few trees, a historic street, and a calm area, provides the utmost creativity and peace for the soul.

Traveling to different places for the past three months has only reaffirmed my love for Armenia. Even in so-called first-world countries, I couldn't help but re-discover the reasons my wife and I chose Armenia over other destinations.

Although my balcony is old, in a not-so-modern building, and it's relatively small, too, it has life. It's a living balcony, and so many others are in this city. That's what I love about it, and that's what I'm inviting you to experience for yourselves in this country, and that's why I called my magazine "Life in Armenia."



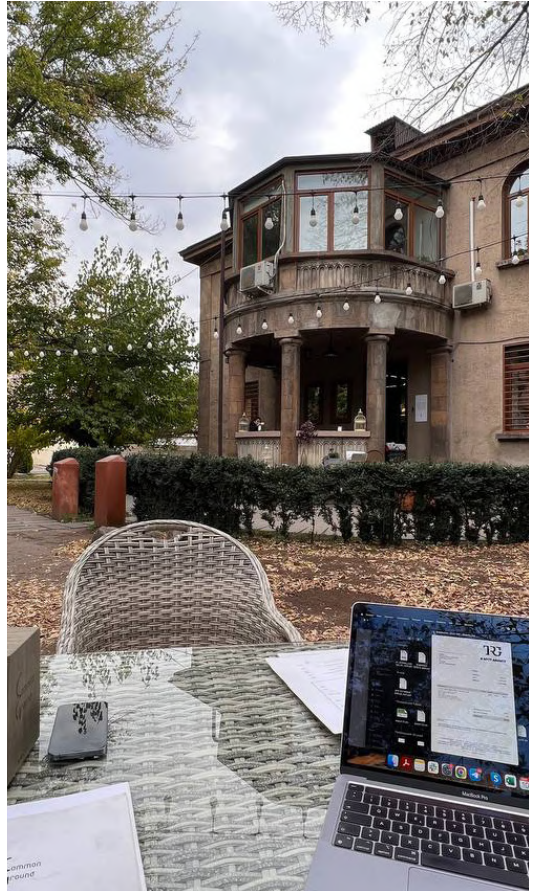
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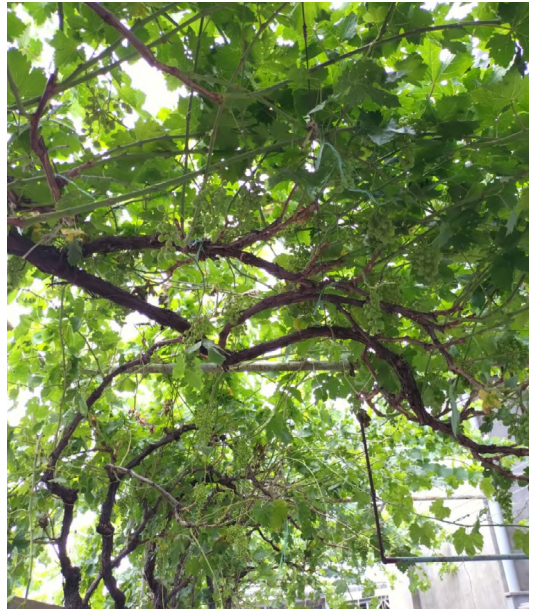
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SMALL NATION HUGE POTENTIAL

# WHAT EUROPEANS COULD LEARN FROM ARMENIANS?



**LERA  
KRAVAL**

FOUNDER OF STEADFAST AGENCY  
& DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER AT TRG



## SMALL NATION HUGE POTENTIAL WHAT EUROPEANS COULD LEARN FROM ARMENIANS?

My name is Lera Kraval. I am an expat (I moved to the Netherlands in 2017 and a year later to Berlin), a founder (with my team, we help businesses sell on LinkedIn globally), a marketing specialist (I work at Berlin's TRG agency, overlooking 6-digit campaigns for global brands), and just a Eurosceptic. Being born a citizen of the EU in 1998, I see how, especially in the last two years, **Europe, as we know, is losing its quality.**

We, as Europeans, feel tired, grumpy, burned out, and out of ideas. We are lazy & uncreative, **thinking in terms of 'is it allowed' first.** The statistics are marking my words: the number of startups in the EU has been decreasing. The highly skilled workforce is out of work for 6-14 months on average right now as there are no new projects. VCs and investors have low confidence about the European future (for at least the next couple of years) as we are in an obvious economic stagnation phase.

This sparked my curiosity: is it like this... everywhere?





Is innovation, new ideas, and the thrill of entrepreneurship still present anywhere on this planet in 2024? As a person who generally enjoys life and small, aesthetic things, I am on a constant curiosity voyage. **In search of an answer to my initial question**, I wandered around the world with my laptop as my dearest friend, doing 100% remote work. This is when I landed at Zvartnots.

When I first arrived in Yerevan, I was invited to lead a workshop about LinkedIn in a co-working near the city center. It was a neat, organized space that some local women rented out and opened a few weeks earlier my arrival. The infamous Armenian welcome awaited me: my coat was taken care of, I was guided to the room, and snacks immediately appeared out of nowhere. Everyone was asking how my road was with a kind smile. This is point number 1: Armenian goodwill, regardless of the situation, is **something many logic & practicality-first Europeans lack**.

The morning after, my friends and I went to this beautiful historical place called 'Lumen Coffee 1936' on Mashtoca Avenue. Its gorgeous ceiling and interior leave you stunned for a second (like the feeling you get when you are in a church). The team at the specialty coffee place incorporated history with the ultra-latest global trends. The interior doesn't remind you of anything - you can't say there's been, for example, "British" or "German" influence in it or that it looks "Middle-East," as many Europeans would generalize as we lack global history lessons in schools. **The historical interior seemed on its own. It just seemed Armenian.**







So, point number 2, my dear Europeans, the world is extremely diverse. Being Eurocentric and thinking only from your perspective is a losing perspective. Embrace and deep-dive into other nations' histories.

Later, when our food was served, I kept looking around the Lumen Coffee room. And that's when it hit me: I had drunk one of the wines from a shelf. A few years ago, at a corporate party in Berlin, my ex-Armenian colleague brought her own wine with her. **It's only a 3000-bottle edition series**, so I was so shocked to see it again in real life. Yet, I remembered our initial conversation with her.

I asked, "But you are an Account Manager! How can you keep this venture going with your full-time job? I mean, it's not like you just consult someone online as a side hustle. You have to do a full wine-cycle production!"



Her reply stunned me. “Yes, but wine production does not burden me - it frees me, as this is the business that brings my country, my land, out there in the world.” Remembering the taste of Yasmik’s wine, I am drawing point number 3. Don’t be afraid to innovate. Don’t be afraid to be patriotic. **Be proud of working hard and juggling a full-time 9/5 job with your own business.**

This is the thought I am going to sleep every single day now. After I eventually came back to Europe, I could not see this anymore. The people are different here. The society is stiff. **There are a lot of**

**restrictions and regulations in place.** This is not the place to just open a cafe in the 1936 historical building - ‘cause you will probably need licenses, agreements of historical committee, regulation documents, and so on, and the process of obtaining a license will be so long you won’t even want a cafe anymore.

This is the weakest spot in Europe right now: **over-regulation and lack of creativity.**

We have so much to learn from Armenia, **a country where bills are paid at any digital ATM on the street,** and mobile app designs are from the future.





FROM AMBITION TO ACHIEVEMENT IN ARMENIA

# THE LAND WHERE I FOUND MY PURPOSE AND SUCCESS



**ALFRED  
YERANOSSIAN**

ENTREPRENEUR & PROJECT DIRECTOR  
AT NEWSWEEK | INVESTMENT REPORTS



## FROM AMBITION TO ACHIEVEMENT IN ARMENIA THE LAND WHERE I FOUND MY PURPOSE AND SUCCESS

Around a year has passed since I moved back to Armenia. It's a serene Sunday afternoon, and I'm lounging on my canopy swing, watching the grape vines crawling from our house wall to the roof of our stone house, creating a lush roof of sorts.

I have been living in my family house in Armavir, which was built by my grandfather, who is my namesake. I often find myself reflecting on his life and how he started working at six years old, endured the hardships of the Second World War, and managed to build everything he ever had, including this beautiful house and garden.

### Imagining Armenia from Afar

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Our garden is a paradise with apricots, figs, cherries, and a pomegranate tree that I've named Solomon. While I lived in Sweden, I often imagined mornings in Armenia, feeling the warm sun and picking fresh fruit straight from the trees; I had many ideas, images, and expectations of Armenia like this. My father, Argishti, mother, Arminé, and sister, Tzovinar, all had to leave Armenia before I was able to speak.

I was raised in Sweden and learned everything I know there. It is a country that has shaped me a lot, and for this, I feel a lot of gratitude. For the first years, we lived in a refugee camp, eventually relocating to our first apartment when we had the right paperwork and necessities. Our family always did everything for us, and despite the good life my family provided, I always felt a pull towards Armenia.





# Building a New Life and Career in Armenia

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2020 was a turning point for me and changed me a lot. I knew it was time to return to Armenia, but I needed a practical skill. My academic background in History and Sustainable Development from Uppsala University wasn't immediately useful, so I turned to sales. This led me to find a sales job in Lisbon, Portugal, where I enjoyed the incredible life available there, and where I worked my way up and honed my sales skills. A year ago, coinciding with my relocation to Armenia, I founded my own sales agency, providing companies with sales consultancy. With a fairly shaky start, it did not take me long to stand on my own feet.

My current mission, and the most successful so far for Alfred's Sales Agency, started when I met the two lovely ladies Sorina Dumitru and Irina Negoita. They run Investment Reports, which is a content provider for Newsweek. **They contracted me as a Project Director.** Something I enjoy a lot and for which I am immensely grateful. Newsweek is a global media outlet, reaching numbers of 100 million readers per month. We create industry-specific journalistic projects that take several months to complete, and in the process of doing so, we get to speak with the leaders of the biggest companies on earth. It is not uncommon for me to speak with, negotiate, and collaborate with companies far exceeding 100 billion euros in market cap.

The leaders of these industries tell me that the world is experiencing a transformational period because of technological innovations, sustainability policies, AI, and politics. They tell me about how industries and supply chains are restructuring globally due to offshoring efforts and shifting geopolitical lines and allegiances.

Meanwhile, I am on my swing in my garden, built by my grandfather

One of my favorite moments in conversations with industry leaders is when we ask each other, "Where are you calling from?" As I mention Armavir, Armenia, **I sense their surprise, and it fills me with pride.**

It's fulfilling to share my story of relocating back to Armenia and to tell the world about my homeland.





# The Ease and Enjoyment of Life in Armenia

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One thing that surprised me is how effective and easy all bureaucracy has been so far. All types of banking, certificates, and any other measures that need to be taken **seem easier for me than they have been in Sweden and far better than they have been in Portugal**. Usually, it's just a matter that takes a few minutes to resolve. I have not found anything to be lacking here in Armenia in terms of entertainment, facilities, sports, and talent.

**Armenia is a small nation; everything is condensed and concentrated.** So, going to a café for a quick espresso, you will find yourself sitting next to a minister, later you'll have a conversation with a quite suspicious-looking man with gold teeth and tattoos, and very quickly after, you'll meet a group of people pioneering a space company. Walking down laid-back Yerevan, a city quite small in comparison to other capitals, **everything is a walking distance**, and the entire city is a blend of various lifestyles and subcultures. Bubbling in culture, art, food, and all the necessities of a major city, however - with a forty-minute car drive, you'll find yourself in the middle of nowhere surrounded by sheep and shepherders.

For me personally, everything from business, personal, health, creativity, and all other matters have only significantly improved. I travel a lot to Yerevan; on the way there, I always look at Ararat and remember how my biggest understanding of Armenia was mostly that of Ararat and all the stories surrounding it. **But Armenia is much more than that.** For me right now, Armenia is the beautiful people I've gotten to know, the taxi drivers with their incredible, sometimes fantastical stories, the co-working cafés I often spend my time in, the gym I go to, the daily routines, arguments, and laughter. **Armenia is my country now!** I challenge you to try to understand what you think about Armenia and why. Where do the ideas that you have about this nation come from, and why are they there?





## Seeing is Believing

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My advice to you is, whatever idea you have that is stopping you from coming here, just put it aside, **take a chance, and come and see for yourself.** Remember that your internal side paints the world far more than the actual world itself, so be open, like a blank canvas, and let this happy, sad, rich, poor, ugly, and beautiful country paint its colors.

For me, that canvas is very mixed. My first half of being here was an absurdly strange time, with my life being turned upside down and a growth period like never before. **The other half has been the most successful period of my life in all matters.** I have the personal belief that Armenia is right now rising, and if we all make an effort, it can become a global technological, educational, financial, and research hub.

Currently, I have work trips scheduled for the rest of the year that will take me to various business corners of the world, and I can, at any point, live and work exactly where I want. However, lying down on my canopy swing in my family house, **I know that I am exactly where I need to be.**

My advice to you is, whatever idea you have that is stopping you from coming here, **just put it aside, take a chance, and come and see for yourself.** You will find that somewhere between the mystical lands of Nairi and all the terrible rumors is a nation and a people. Remember that your internal side paints the world far more than the actual world itself, so be open, like a blank canvas, and let this happy, sad, rich, poor, ugly, and beautiful country paint its colors.

For me, that canvas is very mixed. My first half of being here was an absurdly strange time, with my life being turned upside down and a growth period like never before. The other half has been the most successful period of my life in all matters. I have the personal belief that **Armenia is right now rising**, and if we all make an effort, it can become a global technological, educational, financial, and research hub. Currently, I have work trips scheduled for the rest of the year that will take me to various business corners of the world, and I can, at any point, live and work exactly where I want. However, lying down on my canopy swing in my family house, in my garden, and with Solomon, I know that I am exactly where I need to be.





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Life in Armenia

# SARDARAPAT FC



READ THE ARTICLE  
AT PAGE 37



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BEYOND THE BALCONY

# THE JOY OF COMFORT IN YEREVAN AND THE CALL FOR MORE



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



Earlier this month, the [PMI Armenia Chapter](#) hosted a conference in Yerevan on project management in the construction industry. The event featured local, regional, and international industry experts who delivered speeches and participated in panel discussions throughout the eight-hour program. I attended the conference [seeking interesting stories for Life in Armenia readers](#), and, as always, I found what I was looking for.

Among the speakers was Bal Raju, Partner and Co-founder of [RSiPM](#) and a project manager specializing in mega and giga infrastructure projects. He captivated the audience with his hour-long talk about projects in which he's been involved in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. While discussing multi-billion dollar projects, [Bal Raju highlighted the latest technologies and innovations used](#), along with the project management approaches employed in these massive undertakings.

As I listened to his speech, a sudden realization struck me – something I had been blind to for years. It was a wake-up call. [I recognized that I had](#)

[fallen behind on the latest business developments](#) for the past few years. For some reason, I had stopped chasing big dreams and settled for something different.

Bal's concluding remarks left me lost in thought for an hour. Later, it hit me – [life in Yerevan had created a cozy bubble](#), fostering a sense of contentment that I'd unknowingly embraced for years. Perhaps I'd become too comfortable, and Bal's talk rekindled my passion for chasing bigger dreams.

[Yerevan offered a sense of happiness and comfort many spend a lifetime searching for](#). I was fortunate to find that peace here. For years, I reveled in this comfortable haven – a haven filled with friendly faces, familiar routines, and the contentment of a life well-lived.

Unwilling to leave it behind, I settled into a comfortable routine. It wasn't that I lacked ambition or work ethic; I put in the daily grind, held a steady remote job, and contributed. But [Yerevan's charm had instilled a sense of complacency](#). I hadn't actively pursued bigger goals, the kind that might push me outside my comfort zone and challenge me to grow.



Yerevan becomes a place where **life slows down to a happy hum for those who make a good income**. Imagine mornings with coffee on the balcony, long walks on wide sidewalks, and seasons that bring their own unique charm. It's a life so joyful that the idea of leaving it behind feels like risking a piece of your happiness. Subconsciously, the question whispers, "**Why mess with something this good?**"

Capping off the project management conference, Kayane Mahrejian, Associate Director at [Mace Group UAE](#) and Bal Raju's wife, delivered a one-hour training session on risk management. She explained the concepts in simpler terms and emphasized the importance of mastering this skill.

Kayane's risk management training hit me hard. As she spoke, Bal's words echoed in my mind, and a cold realization washed over me. I carefully considered my career over the past five years, and **I couldn't pinpoint a single significant risk I had taken**.

During Kayane's training, a concept clicked for me. She explained risk management as aiming from point A to point B but sometimes landing at unexpected point C and accepting that as a possible outcome. Conversely, she said, **reaching your exact target B feels more like luck**.

This resonated with my experience in Armenia. **Perhaps I found my own point B here** – a life filled with simple joys. Maybe it was pure luck, or maybe I got so comfortable that I stopped seeking anything more.





Was it luck that brought me to Armenia, or maybe a kind of magic that kept me enchanted for years, not taking any further steps? I can't say for sure right now, but one thing's clear: I've been enjoying the simple pleasures of life for years, content in my comfort zone. Maybe Kayane's training was also the wake-up call I needed to start considering some risks or challenges outside of it. **Am I leaving Armenia? Absolutely not!** But maybe I'll start considering a few challenges and risks from now on.

As I write this article for those considering a visit to Armenia, I'm basking in the morning sun on my balcony – my simple yet inspiring workspace. Here, I savor my coffee, read a book, get some work

done, and simply enjoy the good life. If this peaceful routine sounds like your ideal destination (point B), then Armenia welcomes you with open arms. But if your heart beats for towering skyscrapers and concrete jungles, this might not be your perfect fit. However, life has a way of surprising us, and **Armenia might just become your unexpected point C – a place you never knew you were searching for.**

Considering a visit to Yerevan? Get ready for some authentic experiences. But be mindful not to get too comfortable with your life there. Think about adding some spice with a new career move or an exciting challenge every now and then. That's **my advice for those coming to this charming and cozy country.**





EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT IN ARMENIA

# A SUMMER TRADITION FOR OUR FAMILY



**SATENIK  
STEPANYAN**

BILINGUAL BUSINESS ANALYST AT EPAM CANADA





## EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT IN ARMENIA A SUMMER TRADITION FOR OUR FAMILY

As digital nomads residing in Canada, we constantly seek opportunities to enrich the educational experiences of our children, aged 9 and 12. While the flexibility of our professional lives is a blessing, the schooling limitations we face can initially seem like a daunting obstacle. However, we have discovered a wonderful solution that seamlessly blends learning and adventure: **spending our summer holidays in Armenia.**

With planned summer curricula, our time in Armenia becomes a journey of deep educational enrichment. Our agenda is filled with rigorous academic pursuits such as Math, Languages, and Academic Writing, **balanced with engaging physical activities**, including tennis, swimming, and hiking.

Armenia offers a unique cultural and educational landscape that supplements our children's school education and broadens their horizons in ways that traditional schooling sometimes cannot.

Moreover, this consideration comes with several advantages, not the least of which is financial. The cost of academics and sports pursuits in Armenia is **3-5 times cheaper than in Western countries, including Canada.** This affordability allows us to provide a rich and diverse educational experience for our children with less financial strain.

Curious about how you can transform your children's summer into an educational adventure? Discover how Armenia can become your go-to destination for two months of exciting learning and growth!





# Tailored Academic Curriculum

## Math and Languages

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On our journey to blend Canadian and Armenian educational systems, we've carefully designed a Math curriculum that ensures **a seamless continuation of our children's learning** while accommodating their specific needs.

Over the two months in Armenia, we schedule four days a week for Math, four days for English, and three days for French. This structured yet flexible approach allows for intensive learning while still enjoying the summer.

In our English curriculum, we place a strong emphasis on academic and creative writing, which we highly recommend for its broad applicability and enhancement of critical thinking skills. As for the second language, we consider French, though this can be tailored based on each family's location and educational needs.

Finding the right tutors was an adventure of networking and engaging with various social groups. For those without personal references, reputable schools in Armenia, such as Quantum College, Shirakatsy Lyceum, and Ayb School, are excellent resources. Tutors from these institutions are highly **qualified professionals who ensure a high standard of education.**

By sharing our approach, we hope you can gather insights and adapt this experience to fit your family's educational journey. Customize your schedule and curriculum to ensure your children receive the best possible education tailored to their specific needs while making the most of your time in Armenia.





# Tailored Sports Curriculum

## Swimming, Tennis, and Hiking

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In our pursuit of a comprehensive educational summer in Armenia, we've integrated a diverse sports curriculum to complement our children's learning journey. For swimming, we utilize facilities such as Golds Gym, boasting an Olympic-standard pool, where our trainer Samvel Restagyan, a three-time champion of Armenia in swimming, **provides personalized at a comparably competitive price.**

Moving onto tennis, our children benefit from coaching by Anna Movsisyan at Ararat Tennis Club, conveniently located in Yerevan city center. Anna's pending Level 3 tennis coaching qualification highlights her expertise, making her lessons a remarkable value, especially **compared to international rates for such high-level coaching.**

For those inclined towards adventure, hiking in Armenia's mountainous terrain offers a perfect blend of physical activity and natural beauty. At 4 Peaks Alpine Club, led by Narine Tshagharyan, routes are tailored to match the age and experience of each child, **ensuring a safe and enriching outdoor experience** at a very reasonable cost.





These opportunities not only enhance physical fitness but also provide valuable life skills and unforgettable experiences. By sharing our experiences, **we hope to inspire others to craft their own educational and sports adventures in Armenia** tailored to their family's interests and aspirations.

Join us in exploring Armenia's educational and recreational offerings—your children will return enriched and **eagerly anticipating the next Armenian summer.**





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Life in Armenia



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WHAT DIGITAL NOMADS NEED TO KNOW

# CAN DIGITAL NOMADS START A LEGAL BUSINESS IN ARMENIA?



**NERSES  
ISAJANYAN**

CO-FOUNDER OF VARDANYAN  
& PARTNERS LAW FIRM





## WHAT DIGITAL NOMADS NEED TO KNOW

### CAN DIGITAL NOMADS START A LEGAL BUSINESS IN ARMENIA?

Digital nomads can work with international clients from Armenia on a tourist visa for up to 180 days. For longer stays and local clients, they need to consider registering as Private Entrepreneurs, which grants them a local tax ID and [opens the door to applying for a residence permit](#). This allows digital nomads to work legally and enjoy Armenia's benefits for remote workers.

The residence permit program in Armenia is well-suited for remote workers. This program competes with digital nomad visas in many countries and offers several advantages for digital nomads, including:

- 1 No minimum income requirement.
- 2 No restrictions on working with local clients.
- 3 Relatively easy application process.
- 4 Can stay in the country for up to five years with the option to renew.
- 5 Tax exemption on worldwide income for stays under 183 days per year.

Registering as a Private Entrepreneur, which is essentially a one-person business, is [a way to qualify for a residence permit in Armenia](#). Digital nomads in Armenia can apply in person at the State Registry with minimal documents and pay a small fee. This simple process typically takes 1-2 business days.



As a Private Entrepreneur, a digital nomad will be subject to Armenian income tax on their business earnings. Additionally, they are personally liable for all business debts and obligations. This means their personal assets can be used to cover any business losses. However, the advantages include its uncomplicated setup, no dividend taxes, and simplified accounting procedures.



Armenian Private Entrepreneurs (PEs) have a few tax options depending on their annual turnover:



### **Micro-Entrepreneurship:**

Ideal for businesses with a turnover of less than AMD 24 million (around USD 60,000) annually. These businesses benefit significantly by being exempt from most taxes, including corporate income tax (CIT), VAT, and even most social security contributions for employees (except a flat fee of AMD 5000 per employee).



### **Turnover Tax:**

This regime applies to businesses with a turnover between AMD 24 million and AMD 115 million (around USD 60,000 to USD 287,500) annually. Instead of CIT and VAT, they pay a turnover tax between 1.5% and 5% on their revenue, depending on the specific activity.

From January 1, 2025, the turnover tax rate will increase from 5% to 10%. Businesses under this tax regime can also deduct up to 9% of their expenses from taxable income, effectively setting the actual tax rate between 1% and 10%.



### **Standard Corporate Income Tax:**

This applies to businesses exceeding AMD 115 million in annual turnover. The standard CIT rate in Armenia is 18% of the taxable income (gross income minus deductible expenses).

There are no restrictions on the source of income as a Private Entrepreneur with regard to the residency of clients. As long as a digital nomad follows the regulations for their chosen Private Entrepreneur tax regime (micro, turnover, or standard), they can freely receive international payments.

Digital nomads must **comply with Armenian banking regulations** and be aware of potential currency fluctuations when dealing with international clients. It is advisable to open a bank account as a PE to manage finances professionally. Also, registration for taxes with the State Revenue Committee is required after PE registration

If you're a solopreneur in Armenia considering formalizing your business, being a Private Entrepreneur is a good option to explore. But, if you plan on growing your business or limiting your personal liability, a **Limited Liability Company (LLC) might be a better fit**. Choosing the appropriate business structure requires a comprehensive assessment of legal and financial considerations.

We advise digital nomads considering starting a business in Armenia to consult a professional accountant or business lawyer to find out more about the details before taking any steps. Additionally, our website, [Armenian Lawyers](#), has updated all the information to date in the English language.



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# Life in Armenia

## VARDANYAN & PARTNERS

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- ✓ Work Permit & Worker Relocation
- ✓ Residency & Address Registration
- ✓ Tax Registration & SSN
- ✓ Incorporation & Employer of Record
- ✓ Citizenship & Special Passport

📞 +37499001167

✉ info@vardanyanlaw.com

📍 4/3 Pirumyanner, 4th Floor, Suite 12, Yerevan,  
0054, Armenia





CALL OF THE MOTHERLAND

# FROM TORONTO TO YEREVAN AND GYUMRI



**EFFIE  
KARADJIAN**

CULTURAL EVENTS MANAGER AT THE  
MUNICIPALITY OF GYUMRI



## ENHANCING WELL-BEING AND PRODUCTIVITY HOW CAN NEUROSCIENCE TRANSFORM ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK POTENTIAL

Having been born in Tehran, Iran, and raised in Toronto, Canada, I always felt like an outsider, an immigrant in another person's country, never quite fitting in, even though Canada always had a very multicultural population. It was **during these trips to Armenia that I finally felt like I was home**. Due to family obligations, I always found myself back in Canada, but I always knew that I planned to return to Armenia one day.



Fast forward to 2020, when the onset of the Covid pandemic brought those plans to fruition much faster than anticipated. Laid off from my position as the GM of a health and wellness institute and in lockdown. It was then that I felt the call of my Motherland. I had no plan. I had a family meeting with my daughters, and after getting their blessing, I sold off my furniture and car, gave my thirty-day notice, and on January 1st, 2021, I left Toronto, my hometown of 42 years, and **came to Armenia to answer the call**.

Upon arriving in Yerevan, I remember feeling like I was coming back home. Although it was a tough time to be here after the war, there was also a sense of excitement about being in Armenia as part of the post-war effort to rebuild and help heal the country. There was, however, **a distinct difference in the demographic of the people**. The last time I was in Armenia in 2015, there was a much more homogenous population of local Armenians only, aka "Hayastantsis."

This time, I could see and hear the different dialects of diaspora Armenians being spoken on the streets. The sound of the Western dialect was much more prominent now. I loved the new sound of Armenia; I thought, "This is what Armenia should be like, both eastern and western dialects being spoken, Syrian, Lebanese, Iranian, American, Canadian, European, and South American Armenians, all coming together to join the native Armenians, to create a new stronger and better Armenia."



Not only has the addition of Diaspora Armenians to the local population added more variety to the local cuisine, as **they are very hard-working and entrepreneurial people** who have opened up restaurants and cafes with a Middle Eastern influence, but they have also elevated the quality of customer service, inspiring local Armenians to also adjust their standards, to a more client-centric, hospitable and higher quality of client care.

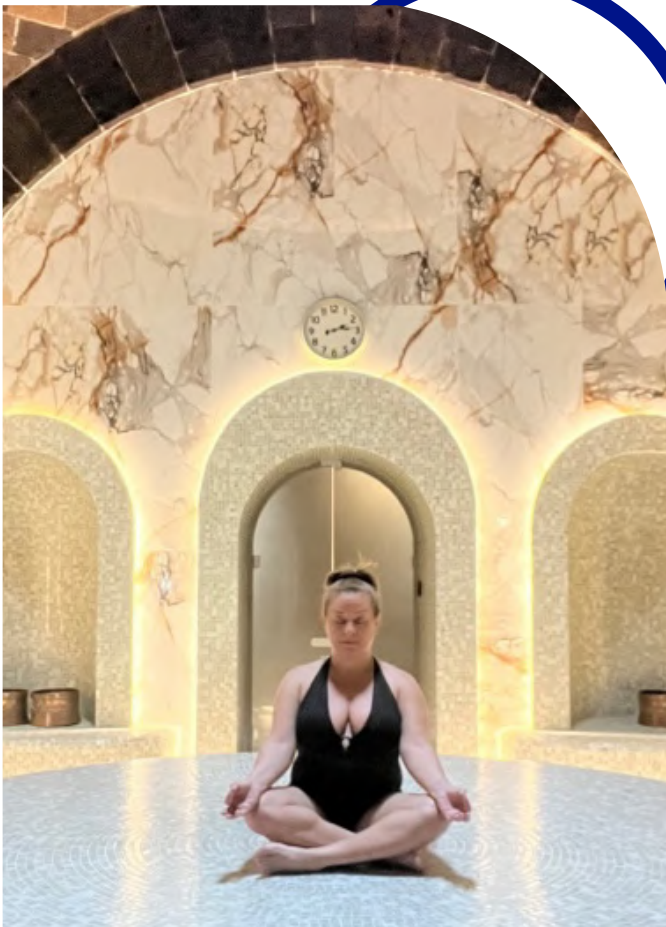
The mosaic of different cultural backgrounds and traditions of Armenians from different regions has **created a more diverse and tolerant Armenia**, ready to welcome even more culturally different visitors from Europe, Russia, and other parts of the world.



After volunteering at a mental health center in Davtashen, teaching yoga classes at various studios in Yerevan, and working as an eco-tour manager at a local NGO, I have now repatriated permanently to Armenia. I gained my citizenship in August 2022 and bought a house just outside of Yerevan.

Currently, I am excited to be part of the iGorts Fellowship program, run by the High Commission Office of Diaspora Affairs, as the initial candidate for the Pilot Project in the Regions, funded by the Hovnanian Foundation, as the Tourism and Cultural Events Manager for the Municipality of Gyumri.

For one year, **I have lived in the beautiful and quaint city of Gyumri**, the cultural capital of Armenia. I am looking forward to applying my event planning and marketing skills to create new and exciting events for the city and developing initiatives that will increase local and international tourism to the Cultural Capital of Armenia.



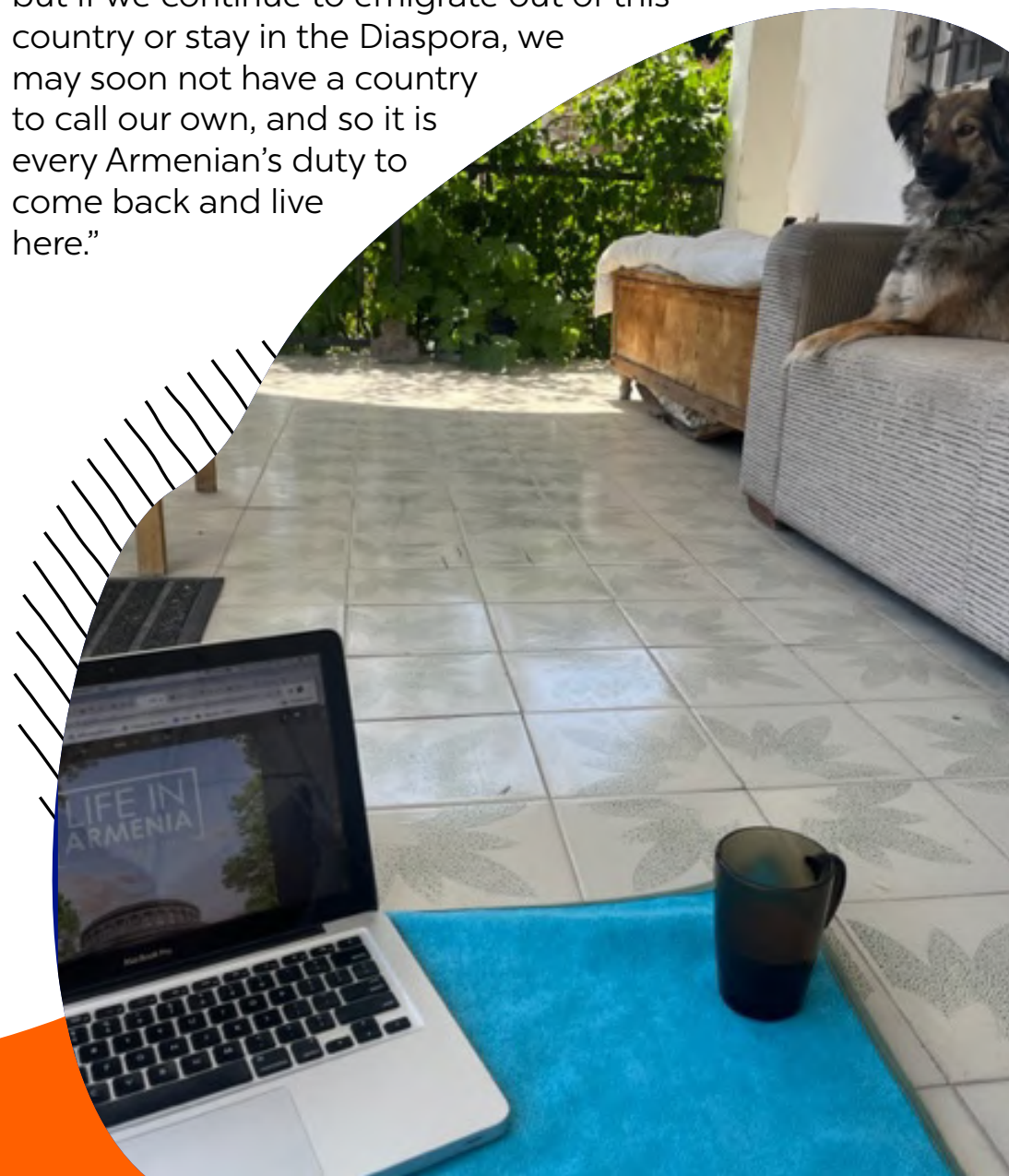


During this time, I took a pause in my yoga teachings to concentrate on getting settled into my new life in Armenia. However, I realized that **yoga was too important of an aspect of my life to leave out of the equation**. It has always made me feel more relaxed and centered, giving me the peace of mind to cope with the stresses and challenges of life. During this time, my meditation practice also faltered, and **I could feel the effects of its absence** as I was more scattered and stressed about all the challenges I faced.

As I started to practice daily again, I realized that this was a much-needed regimen to deal with the stresses of life and that local people were still quite unaware of its benefits. And so I committed myself to **start teaching yoga again**, this time online and in bilingual classes, for both locals to learn English and Diaspora Armenians to brush up on their Armenian language skills.

I love my life in Armenia. I love the rich history of the land itself, the traditions and culture, the daily life, and the nightlife. **There is something for everyone here**, from world-class museums and art galleries to classical, jazz, and folk music, from theatres and variety shows to clubs and pubs, from hiking and adventure sports to restaurants and cafes, from music festivals and tech conferences to monasteries and ancient sites. You can find anything you want here.

I often get asked by local Armenians, “Why did you leave a country like Canada to come and live in Armenia?” And my answer is always, “Because every Armenian should come back to live in Armenia. There is no better country for us to live in than Armenia. We have been around for as long as there has been civilization and even more, but if we continue to emigrate out of this country or stay in the Diaspora, we may soon not have a country to call our own, and so it is every Armenian’s duty to come back and live here.”







But **it's not just a country for Armenians**; its diversity has evolved to include Russians, Germans, French, and Argentinians, to name just a few cultures that I personally have met who have made Armenia their new home. **Its geographic location allows you to travel to anywhere on the continent within a few hours**, especially since many airlines have added new direct flights from European cities to Yerevan in the last few years. It is also a remarkably safe country to live in; as a woman, **I have never felt scared or in danger walking home at night**, and whenever I have needed road assistance with my car, total strangers have come to my rescue and helped.

Since my parents also repatriated here, my sense of community has really shown itself recently. With my father on a scooter, we have had some issues with accessibility while walking on sidewalks. However, **there has never been a shortage of young men who have run up to us and helped maneuver the scooter to a safe position.**

Life in Armenia has its challenges, much like anywhere else in the world, but its positive aspects outweigh the negatives tenfold. We tend to think the grass is greener in Moscow or Los Angeles, but **the grass is greener where you water it**, and there is nothing better than the sweet waters of Armenia. If only we appreciated our own land as much as we did foreign ones and watered our own garden, then we would return to the original Garden of Eden, Armenia. Repatriate, it's great.



# TECH EVENTS



with  
**ARTAK N. G.**



TECH BLOGGER

## EVENTS

**JULY 1-4**



Web3 International  
meetup by Fastex

**JULY 2-18**



Introduction  
to Aerospace  
Engineering

**JULY 4**



Silicon Mountains in  
Gyumri

**JULY 12**



How we trained an  
LLM to enhance  
molecular  
optimization  
algorithms

**JULY 20-26**



Sevan Startup  
Summit

**JULY 24-27**

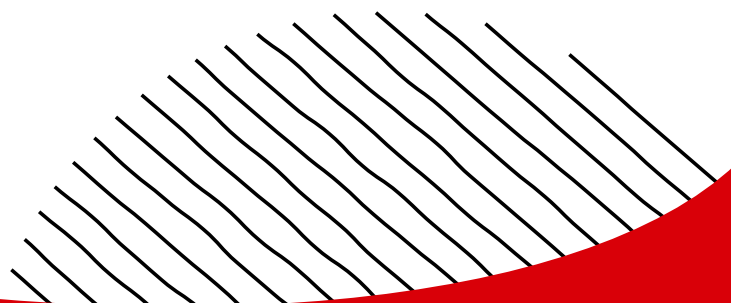


Sevan Agritech  
Summit

**JULY 27-28**



Female Innovation  
Conference,  
Femmino





# TECH EVENTS



with  
**ARTAK N. G.**



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## PROGRAMS

AgriTech Incubation Program by Tumo Labs



DemTech Sprint project by Tumo Labs



Offline 3D Props Art Bootcamp by Sperasoft



Armath technocamp for kids in Dilijan



SARDARAPAT FC

# BRIDGING SPORTS AND EDUCATION FOR ARMENIA'S FUTURE



**ANUSH  
ANANYAN**

CEO AT SARDARAPAT FC  
FFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER



## SARDARAPAT FC

# BRIDGING SPORTS AND EDUCATION FOR ARMENIA'S FUTURE

Sardarapat FC, founded in 2021, is an Armenian Football Club based in Armavir, Armenia. It goes beyond football to bring opportunities to rural kids in the country, educate them, and help them **gain life-long skills that are useful on and off the pitch!** The club aims to improve the living and educational conditions of the local children through innovative programs centered around sports, and football in particular.

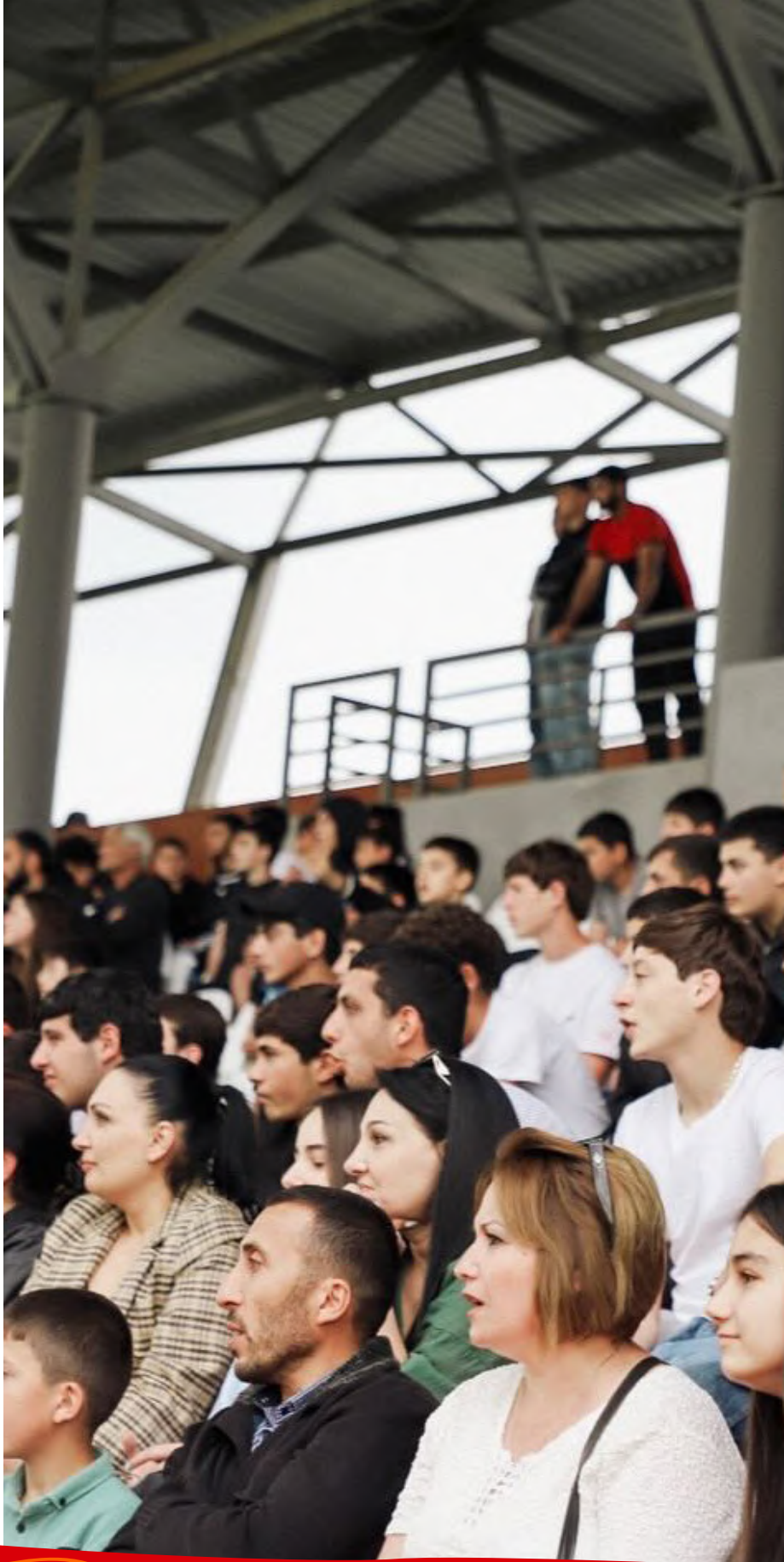
It was conceived to embody and transfer Armenian identity through sports. The club was founded by Sevan Karian, a French-Armenian sports lawyer who has been actively involved in charitable activities in Armenia since the early 2000s. Mr. Karian's organization, AYO, focuses on enhancing the quality of life in Armenian regions, villages, and children. In his continued efforts to develop Armenia, Mr. Karian chose the Armavir region as the home for Sardarapat FC due to its favorable climate, substantial population, and proximity to the capital.

The club's name, Sardarapat FC, is inspired by the nearby Sardarapat Monument, a national symbol, and its colors, rouge and beige, reflect the monument's palette. Sardarapat FC was officially inaugurated on August 1, 2022. Since its establishment, the club has experienced significant growth, boasting an academy with over **400 children who receive top-tier European-level football education** under the same roof. The club consists of 19 male teams and 2 female teams. It participates in Armenian youth national championships across all age categories and has already achieved notable success.



A key distinguishing feature of Sardarapat FC is its **partnership with the French football club RC Lens**. This collaboration provides the best academy players with opportunities for intensive training in France while **French coaches visit Armenia to train Armenian talent**.

In 2024, Sardarapat FC expanded its international partnerships by announcing a collaboration with Atlético de Madrid. **The Spanish club will send coaches to Armenia** to conduct a football camp under the roof of Sardarapat FC.

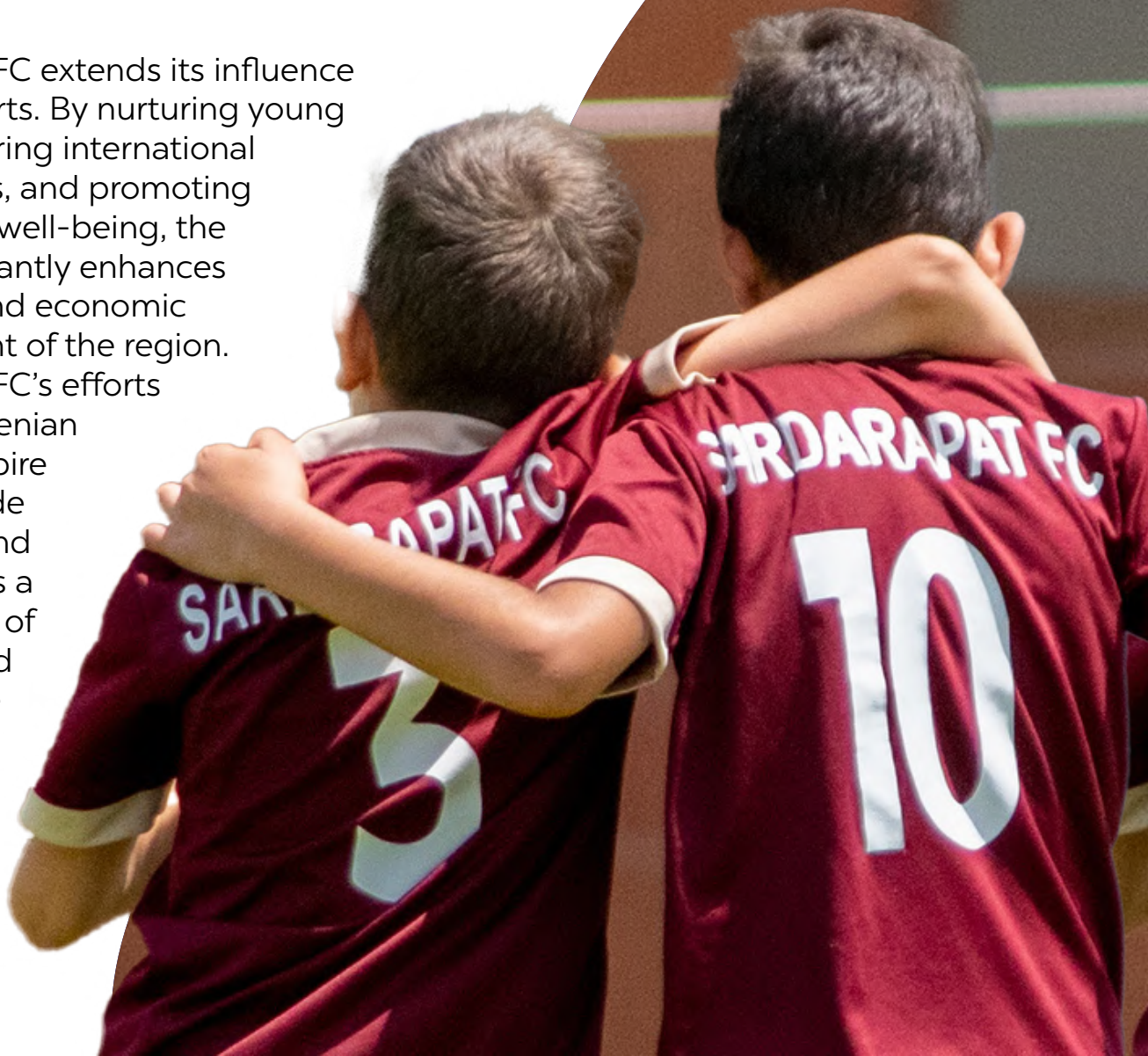






Moreover, Sardarapat FC is a member of the European Clubs Association (ECA). This membership is particularly noteworthy as the ECA typically includes only clubs with professional teams, highlighting Sardarapat FC's exceptional status within the European football community.

Sardarapat FC extends its influence beyond sports. By nurturing young talent, fostering international partnerships, and promoting community well-being, the club significantly enhances the social and economic development of the region. Sardarapat FC's efforts elevate Armenian football, inspire national pride and unity, and position it as a cornerstone of progress and hope for the country.





# Facts and Stats About Sardarapat FC

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- Sardarapat FC has sent 4 delegations to France with coaches and players for a two-week training program at League 1 club RC Lens.
- Champions of U16 and U15 championships in Armenia.
- The highest attendance was at a youth football match in Armenia (over 1000 spectators).
- There is a new collaboration with a Spanish side, Atletico de Madrid.
- 3 Players were invited to the National Team of Armenia of their corresponding age group.

Considering visiting Armenia with your kids? Don't think that Armenia has nothing to offer your family. We know our country is relatively small, but think of it as an advantage. This translates to more opportunities for more enthusiasts. **Football is just one example, and there are many others to explore** across the country.





THE LINKEDIN ADVANTAGE IN ARMENIA

# UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL DYNAMICS FOR A SMOOTH RELOCATION



**MARIAM  
SARGSYAN**

INITIATOR & CEO AT LINKEDIN ARMENIA



## THE LINKEDIN ADVANTAGE IN ARMENIA UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL DYNAMICS FOR A SMOOTH RELOCATION



When relocating to a new country, basic information is readily available online, but it doesn't paint the whole picture. Online resources might tell you a country is collectivistic, but they won't tell you how that translates to everyday interactions. Does it mean prioritizing group decisions or respecting authority figures? **Social dynamics help you understand unspoken rules and expectations.**

How welcoming are people towards outsiders? Are there specific customs or behaviors expected from foreigners? Understanding these dynamics can help you avoid unintentional faux pas and integrate smoothly. **Daily life involves interacting with people beyond basic transactions.** Are people reserved or open? Is direct communication valued, or are there more indirect ways of expressing oneself? These dynamics shape how you build friendships and navigate social situations.

Relocation often involves building a new social and professional network. Learning how people connect and form relationships is key. Are there work-social events, or do friendships start through shared activities? Understanding social dynamics **equips you with the tools to build a support system.** For foreigners relocating, especially with their families, such a support system is really important because it makes the new destination feel like home. Social dynamics are the unwritten rules that govern how people behave and interact. By understanding them, you can transition from simply surviving in a new country to truly **thriving and feeling like you belong.**



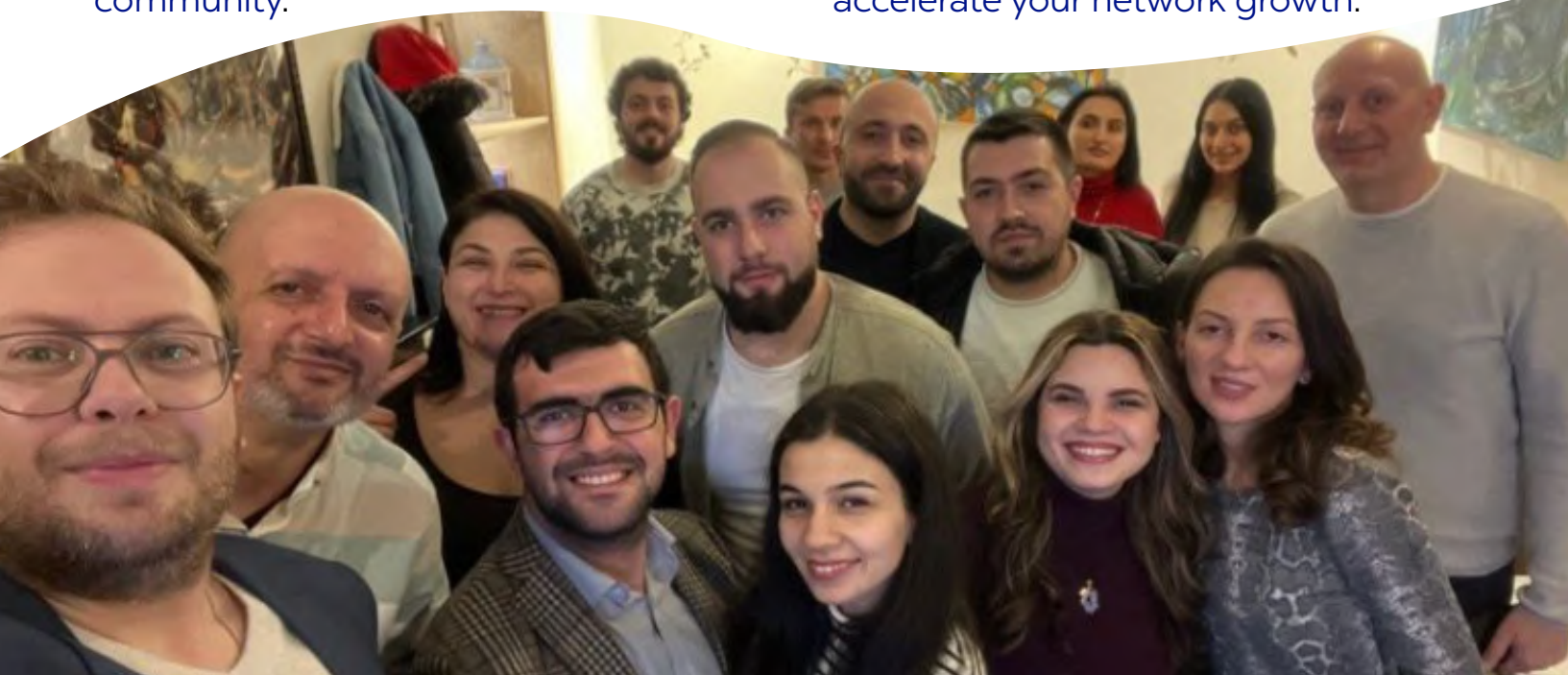


Many countries have strong professional networks, but accessing them often requires being physically present. Armenia, with its active LinkedIn community, [allows you to start connecting with top talent proactively](#). This head start lets you connect with recruiters and hiring managers to gauge job openings and industry trends, engage with discussions and groups related to your field, learn about the Armenian tech scene firsthand, and connect with experienced professionals who can offer guidance and support as you transition.

Armenia has a unique advantage - [a relatively small country with a high concentration of highly skilled tech professionals](#). This means you'll find a larger pool of relevant connections on LinkedIn compared to countries with a more dispersed tech workforce. But isn't that the case in many other countries? Now, how do you actually find Armenian professionals on LinkedIn and connect with them? That's precisely why I wanted to contribute this article to Life in Armenia magazine. [Armenia presents a unique case when it comes to its LinkedIn community](#).

[LinkedIn in Armenia is both inclusive and exclusive](#) at the same time. This might sound contradictory at first glance, but bear with me, especially if you're unfamiliar with the country. Here's why: Armenians typically share the same endings for their last names, "-ian" and "-yan." This [makes it easy to identify Armenian profiles on LinkedIn](#). While some sources differentiate between local Armenians ("-yan") and the diaspora ("-ian"), this distinction isn't universally applied. Despite this inherent inclusivity, [the community remains very welcoming towards international members](#). This shared identity fosters a sense of familiarity and ease of connection for Armenians on the platform, but it doesn't create an exclusive barrier.

Once you establish initial connections with a few Armenian professionals, something interesting happens. Armenians often have strong social and professional networks. By connecting with them, you gain access to their network, leading to [introductions and referrals that can significantly accelerate your network growth](#).



By leveraging LinkedIn's active Armenian tech community, you can hit the ground running in your career upon arrival, Gain valuable insights into the Armenian tech industry, and **Build a supportive network of colleagues and potential collaborators**. This pre-arrival network building can significantly smooth your transition and contribute to a successful and enriching relocation experience in Armenia's tech industry.

The Armenian tech community on LinkedIn isn't just present; it's vibrant and enthusiastic. Members actively share information, participate in discussions, and organize events, which translates to a more dynamic and engaging experience than passive online communities.

You'll connect with a wider range of professionals than just developers. The community encompasses tech innovators, business leaders, creatives, and entrepreneurs. This diversity allows you to build a well-rounded network and gain insights from various perspectives within the industry.



Armenians optimize their LinkedIn profiles, build networks, and develop strategies for finding international projects. This allows Armenian professionals to work remotely and connect with clients around the world. LinkedIn Armenia also offers guides and support for those considering relocating to Armenia.



**Samson Avetian** • 1st

CEO @eqwefy.com | CEO @AICA | Investments, Finance and Star...  
1mo • 🌐

Great session on LinkedIn business profile optimization, engagement data and other valuable insights from **Mariam Sargsyan** at **Kommuna Home** 😊  
Definitely recommend checking out her future events and forums.



Considering relocating to Armenia? Start from LinkedIn and we'll be more than happy to connect with you virtually and meet you in person when you're here.



ENHANCING WELL-BEING AND PRODUCTIVITY

# HOW CAN NEUROSCIENCE TRANSFORM ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK POTENTIAL



Reference: Possmann, Hille & O'Doherty, John  
Pleasantness, 103, 1030-4.

in



**TATEV  
KISHOYAN**

DIGITAL MARKETING SPECIALIST



## ENHANCING WELL-BEING AND PRODUCTIVITY HOW CAN NEUROSCIENCE TRANSFORM ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK POTENTIAL

Neuroscience is the scientific study of the nervous system, which includes the brain, spinal cord, and all of the nerves that connect them. It essentially tries to understand **how our nervous system gives rise to our thoughts, feelings, and actions**. Neuroscience offers a fascinating lens to understanding how our brain influences well-being. By incorporating these insights, we can cultivate habits that promote mental and emotional health.

I personally believe that neuroscience holds significant importance in Armenia, and its growing role can be particularly beneficial because of its attractiveness to remote workers. With a growing remote workforce, Armenia can leverage neuroscience to **address potential mental health challenges associated with remote work**, such as isolation or burnout. Neuroscience can inform the development of targeted interventions and support systems, creating a more well-rounded work environment for remote workers.





Neuroscience insights can be used to **design personalized wellness programs for remote workers**. These programs could incorporate mindfulness practices, stress management techniques, or cognitive training exercises, all backed by scientific evidence on how they impact the brain and well-being. This would **give Armenia a competitive edge in attracting remote workers** seeking a holistic work-life balance.

Given that I have written the [first book in Armenian](#) on Brain and Neuroplasticity, a few weeks ago, I organized [NeurOn Talks](#), the first-of-its-kind conference in Armenia. Attendees gained insights from leading experts in personal development and neuroscience and learned about the latest advancements and trends in the field. The conference **offered practical ways to apply neuroscience principles to enhance well-being**, productivity, relationships, and personal growth.







Our partner's AI technology, [Gotcha](#), was used to detect micro emotions before and after attendees consumed the treats provided by our catering partner, [Cofix](#). This innovative use of AI allowed participants to **gain insights into how different stimuli, like food, can affect their emotional states**. The data collected provided a unique perspective on the interaction between nutrition and emotional well-being, showcasing the potential of AI in neuroscience research.

NeurOn Talks 2024 was an extraordinary event, offering attendees the chance to **activate new brainwaves and transform their lives**. Focusing on the intersection of personal development and cutting-edge neuroscience, the conference inspired participants to embrace change and unlock their potential.

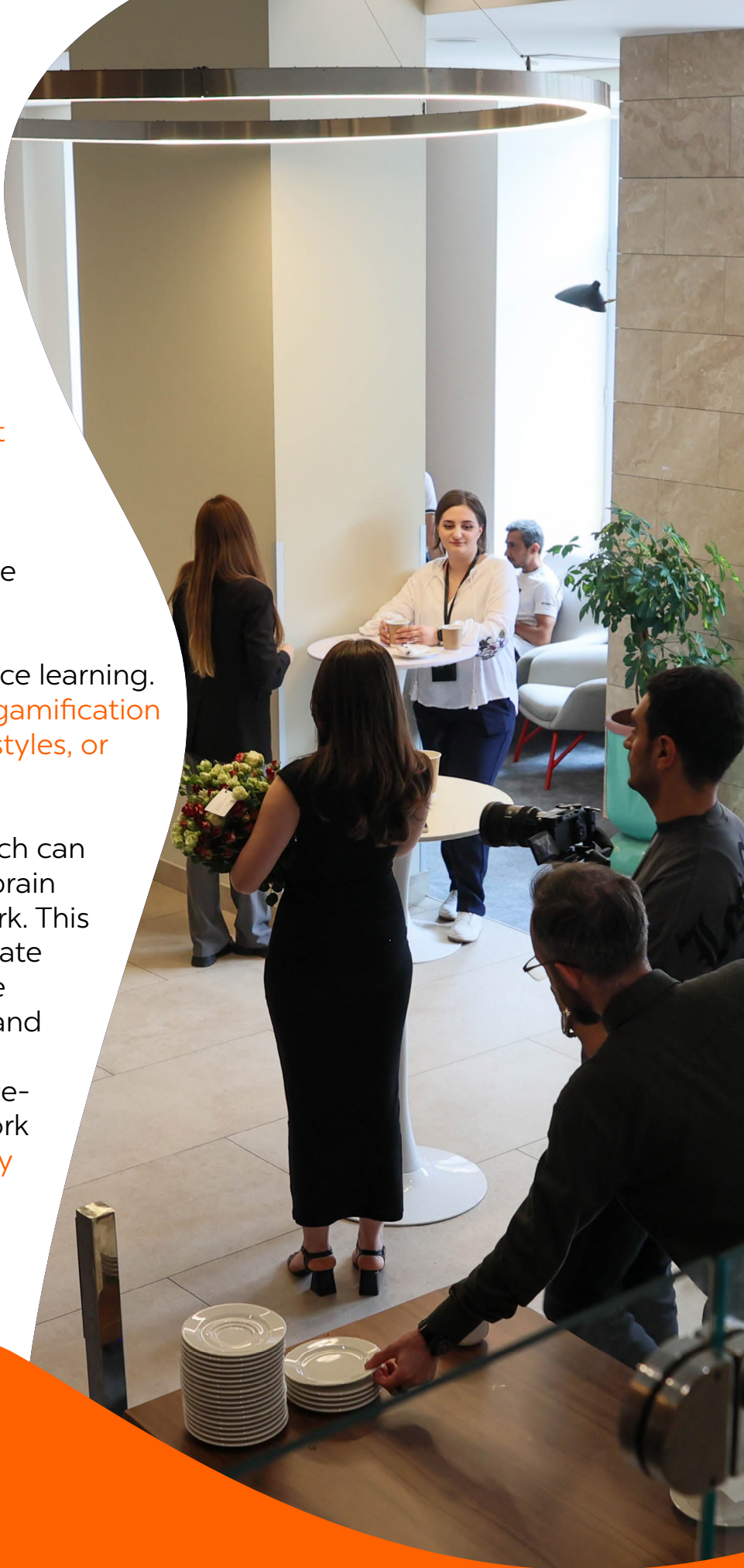




Attendees left with not only a deeper understanding of neuroscience and neuroplasticity but also practical tools and techniques to foster their personal and professional growth. The conference successfully blended theoretical knowledge with practical application, creating a **unique experience that stood out from other events in the field.**

I wanted to share this with Life in Armenia readers because I believe Armenia can develop or attract educational platforms that utilize neuroscience principles to enhance learning. This could **involve incorporating gamification elements, personalized learning styles, or memory-boosting techniques.**

Additionally, neuroscience research can be used to understand how the brain functions best during remote work. This knowledge can be applied to create optimal work schedules, promote focus-enhancing environments, and encourage breaks that maximize cognitive function. A neuroscience-informed approach to remote work can lead to **increased productivity and satisfaction for Armenia's remote workforce.**



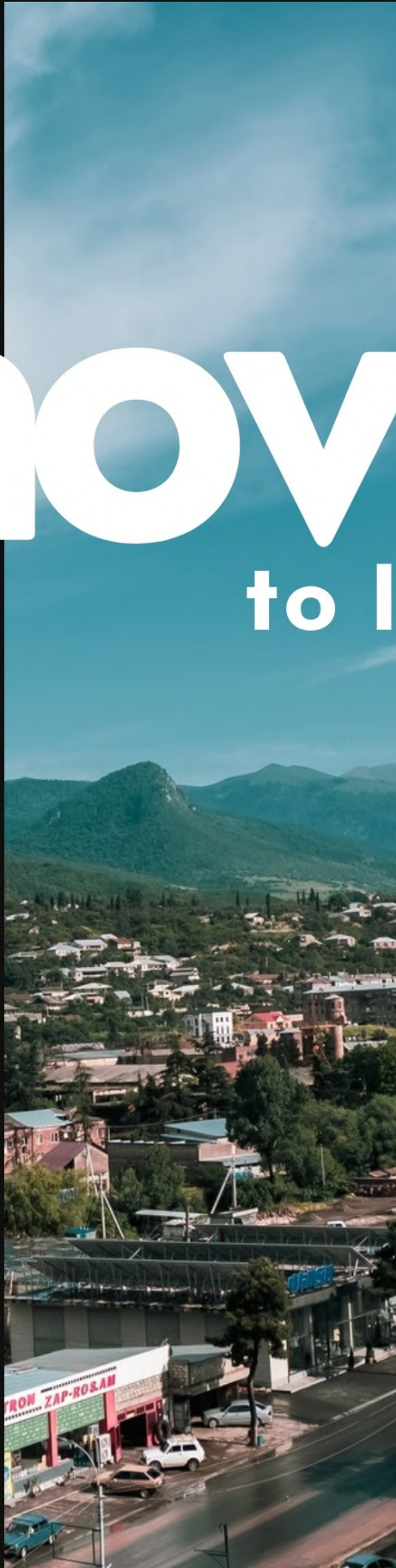


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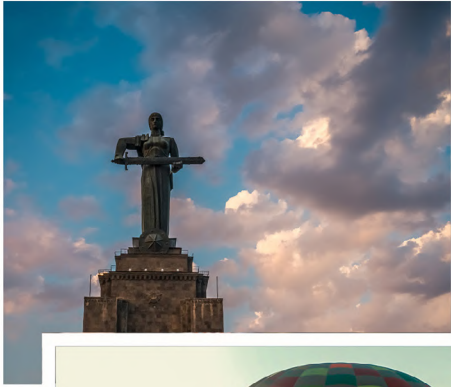
## CONTRIBUTORS

JULY 2024





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TOURISM COMMITTEE  
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**ARMÉNIA**  
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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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# LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2024 | No. 17 | LIFE IN ARMENIA

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