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for a better business environment

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MS. LILIT GEVORGYAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Reader,

Another year comes to an end, this one also full of various challenges both on global and regional levels, including the Azerbaijani aggression in September. Our businesses learnt to operate under “new normal” reality since 2020, when COVID-19 crisis and the 44-day Artsakh war tested our economy and the society in many ways. It should be mentioned – proudly - that most of the businesses adapted to the continuous stress and found new ways of doing business, new markets, new partners. However, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict added new “dimension” to the overall post-conflict uncertainty, and became one of the most significant factors impacting the Armenian economy.

So, with all those challenges on the one hand and global development trends on the other, the importance of business continuity and of strategic thinking, innovations, and education is very high for the further development of the Republic of Armenia.

We have decided to dedicate the current issue of the AmCham Business Magazine to the topic of Education and Culture, based on the results of a survey conducted among our members.

No doubt fundamental education is one of the key pillars of a successful life, starting from kindergarten. As it was mentioned by Karine Sarkissian back in 2019: “With educated individuals we can build a better society and a great competitive Armenian nation.” It is not only about public educational institutions but also personal commitments and corporate initiatives. The last decade brought us new technologies, new jobs, and need for new skills. So, businesses around the globe learned to quickly react to these changes and needs by generating new professionals internally, based on their specific expertise, until educational system gets adapted to the new requirements of the industry.

AmCham enjoys having members from various fields, including educational

institutions, NGOs, and foundations that provide people with lifelong educational opportunities in Armenia. Our member businesses keep training young professionals with new capacities in their respective fields, contributing to the economic growth of Armenia.

Culture is another cornerstone of the society. AmCham considers all aspects of culture, including business culture and corporate culture. One of the roles in which we see us is that of a platform where global/international businesses meet local companies to share knowledge and the best corporate culture for a better business environment in Armenia.

Hope, our members enjoy their AmCham membership and the advantage of being a valuable part of the leading business community. In 2022 we were happy to welcome many new members to our AmCham family thus making our network, knowledge and expertise even richer! I would like to express gratitude to each and every AmCham Member for their strong support and extensive involvement.

Enjoy reading!



MR. DAGEN VALENTINE

COUNTRY DIRECTOR
*American Councils for
International Education*

MESSAGE FROM THE AMCHAM BOARD

Dear Reader,

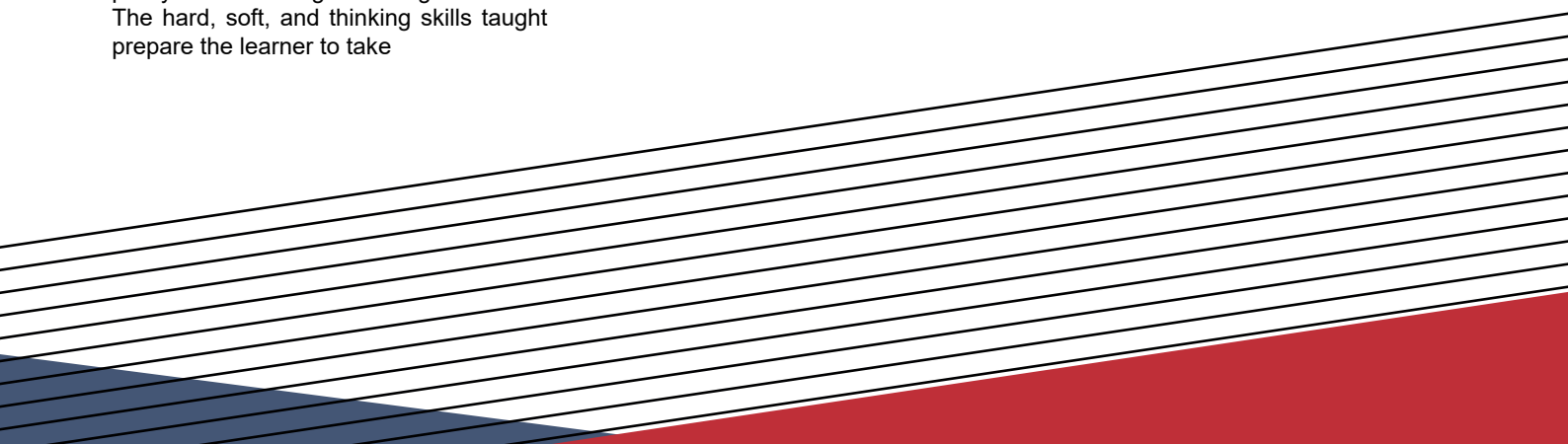
The issue on Education & Culture addresses a multi-faceted concept important for societal and economic progress in Armenia.

There are two Latin roots of the English word “education.” Educare means to bring up or to train; the transfer of knowledge, culture, and attitudes to the learner. While educere means to lead or to guide; preparing the learner for the future. Some researchers contend these are two opposing paradigms influencing education today, however they can be two sides of the same coin. A balanced educational approach of educare and educere solidly trains the learner and prepares the learner for positive well-being and ability to engage in the workforce.

AMCHAM supports and engages partners to impact the educational initiatives and policy that encourage a strong workforce. The hard, soft, and thinking skills taught prepare the learner to take

on the opportunities and challenges of today and the future. I see positive signs of progress in Armenia: Initiatives from the different ministries of the RA Government; and the RA government collectively, has increased public-private dialogue with AMCHAM and other private sector partners. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport has initiated new policy and activities the impact the full pre-kindergarten to university (PreK-16+) system. In addition to formal education programs many non-formal initiatives are taking place, including Technical & Vocational Education & Training (TVET). Many non-governmental and private organizations/businesses are engaging Armenian youth in amazing and interesting educational opportunities. On top of all that, many

AMCHAM members' CSR initiatives invest in the talent of Armenia through trainings and educational initiatives. Collaboratively, diverse sectors and partners are continuing to engage Armenian learners (old and young) in a balanced educational (educare & educere) ecosystem which uplifts Armenia's most important resource, the Armenian people. AMCHAM, together with many partners, are working together for a better business environment which fosters individual and societal well-being, lifelong and pervasive learning, and quality of life that uplifts the emerging social and economic context and drivers of innovations that are shaping the future of jobs and work in Armenia and the world.

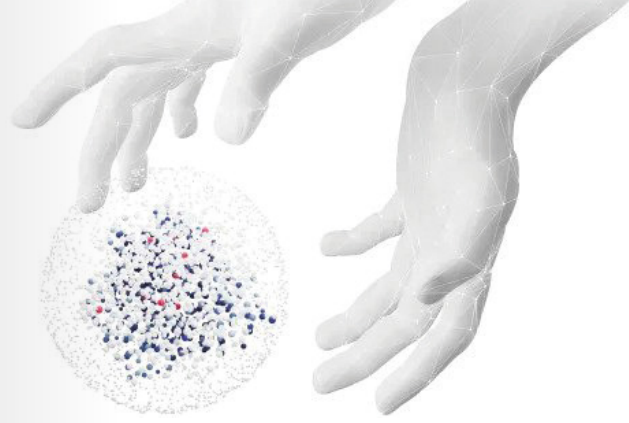


MEET OUR NEW GOLD MEMBER



ACBA BANK is one of the leading financial institutions of Armenia, providing numerous banking services to its customers:

- opening and service of bank accounts;
- money transfer;
- foreign exchange operations;
- attraction of demand and term deposits;
- financing of international trade transactions (letters of credit, guarantees);
- provision of commercial, agricultural, consumer, mortgage loans;
- issuance and service of international and local plastic cards;
- account management through ACBA Digital application;
- provision of brokerage services, register maintenance and custody of corporate securities.



MEET OUR NEW GOLD MEMBER

BostonGene

BostonGene is pioneering the use of biomedical software to identify novel and personalized treatment options through next-generation multi-platform analytics, advancing and optimizing outcomes for cancer patients.

We perform comprehensive

integrated genomic (WES) and transcriptomic (RNA-seq) testing of tumors and tumor microenvironments, which equips doctors with actionable intelligence that helps identify individual treatment plans. Our mission is to power healthcare's transition to personalized

medicine using our AI-based molecular and immune profiling to improve the standard of care, accelerate research, and improve economics.

leading experts, introducing modern materials and high-tech equipment.



MEET OUR NEW GOLD MEMBER



Consel Ltd. was founded in 2001 as a company specializing in selling and maintenance of air-conditioning and ventilation systems. Growing in a short period of time in 2002 the company was presented in the Armenian market as an official distributor of Mitsubishi Electric - one of the world giants of its field, and later on became an official distributor of another leading company- Toshiba & Carrier. In the mentioned sphere the company took a leading position and continued to keep it stable constantly developing its services and providing the most contemporary technologies and equipment to the market.

Henceforth, the company expands the portfolio of its services and nowadays offers its customers more integrated solutions in the spheres of air-conditioning, ventilation, heating, lighting, and security systems.

Currently the company represents in the market the world-famous brands, such as:

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC and TOSHIBA - air conditioning

VAILLANT, PRANDELLI, TECE, ZEHNDER, SCHUSTER, KAMPMANN - heating

RAPISCAN SYSTEMS - security

PHILIPS Lighting - lighting



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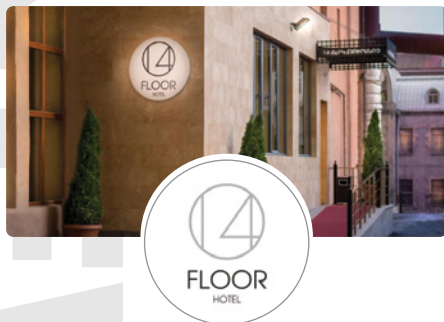


AmChamArmenia



AmChamArm





HOTEL FOURTEEN FLOOR LTD

Hotel Fourteen Floor is ideally located in the city centre, where you will receive a warm welcome. Our location gives you everything, being only some meters away from the heart of the city, surrounded by restaurants, cafes, museums, buildings of extraordinary beauty. All the most interesting city sites are within a short walking distance from the hotel.

The hotel is arranged on three floors. On the 14th floor, apart from the reception, there is a comfortable lounge where you can sit and drink tea/coffee or just read in the cozy library. There is also a splendid terrace, where, you can relax and immerse yourself in the atmosphere of Yerevan daily/night life. The buffet breakfast is served on the terrace, where you can enjoy wonderful view of Ararat and Yerevan.



ALEXANDREA WINERY LLC

ALEXANDREA WINERY was established in 2017. Since then the company has started the plantation of vineyards in 3 different regions of Armenia as Kotayk, Aragatsotn and Vayots Dzor with 18, 37 and 20,5 hectares respectively.

The company founder, Adam Kablanian, has a vision of creating the best wines that Armenian terroir can offer and making Alexandria a destination of choice for people who seek memorable experiences by offering wines made using state-of-the-art technology in a contemporary, yet natural setting.

Alexandrea Winery is an investment project of about 10 million US dollars, and since 2017 25% has been already invested in the vineyards. The winery will produce high-quality wines both for domestic consumption and export prospects. The company will provide a comfortable infrastructure for tourists to get acquainted with the traditions of Armenian winemaking. About 60 jobs (including seasonal ones) as well as necessary infrastructure will be created within the framework of the project.



THE GURUS

The Gurus is a biotechnology company assembling highly qualified professionals in the industry.

We deliver Clinical Statistical Programming and Data Management and Biostatistics services to CROs and Pharmaceutical Companies around the world. We work on multiple Therapeutic areas including Oncology and Rare disease.

Since 2021 The Gurus became the official and sole Silver Partner of SAS Institute USA in Armenia.

The company has the biggest and most experienced Clinical SAS Programming Team across Armenia.

The Gurus replenishes its Programmers Team through the implementation of its own free of-charge SAS Base Trainings to

ensure required quality according to International Standards.

The Gurus has conducted more than 30 SAS Base trainings across Armenia.

The Gurus has a state-of-art facility in Yerevan and 2 branches one in Vanadzor and one in Ijevan.

We have plans in place to expand its frames to other cities in Armenia and other countries.



GN CAPITAL LLC

GN CAPITAL LLC is an asset management company incorporated in Armenia in October 2021.

On January 2022 we registered our first hedge fund GN Formula in the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia, the bases of GN Formula fund's unique investment strategy is systematic approach of identifying trends of commodity markets with tactical asset and risk allocation models.

GN Capital is a privately owned, independent firm.



STRATEGIC VALUE VENTURES

Founded by Karén Gyulbudaghyan, Strategic Value Ventures, LLC (SVV) is a San Francisco-based strategic advisory company. SVV connects strategic interests and aligns incentives of multiple stakeholders (e.g., companies, government, universities) to create synergistic value, leverage resources, and

develop global capabilities. SVV builds cross-border bridges and enables:

Tech startups and companies a soft landing in the USA and Silicon Valley, and Global partners a jump-starting and developing their innovation & entrepreneurship ecosystems.

SVV is the official Global Innovation Partner of the University of California (UC) Berkeley SkyDeck, the Forbes' top university startup accelerator in the world. The collaboration between the UC Berkeley SkyDeck and SVV has been instrumental in developing the Armenian tech ecosystem and launching 25 startups to global prominence over five years, including fast-growing superstar companies like Krisp.ai and SuperAnnotate.

organization or business working to drive positive change is invited to join the community.



JAVAD COMMUNICATIONS LLC

JAVAD Communications is involved in the research, development, and manufacturing of high precision GNSS and radio communication equipment for navigation, aviation, surveying, construction, machine control, mining, timing, atmospheric

up-to-date services and the most innovative financial solutions. These include:

- Research and Analysis
- Portfolio Management
- Securities Brokerage
- Venture Investments
- Business Consulting
- Corporate Solutions
- Capital Fundraising
- Dealing

We constantly strive for improvement and innovation in the financial industry. Our expertise and extensive experience make us a trusted lifelong partner for your financial journey.



THE INSURANCE FOUNDATION FOR SERVICEMEN

The Insurance Foundation for Servicemen (IFS) was created in 2017 after the 4 Day War with the sole mission to provide compensation to families of fallen heroes and to veterans severely injured due to war. It is not a just another charity organization, but rather a social impact life insurance model that allows us Armenians in Armenia and worldwide to take care of those who gave life or limb for Homeland. IFS is Congressionally chartered, it is governed by an independent and professional board, mainly from the Diaspora. As of 1 November 2022, IFS has provided compensation to 4,935 beneficiaries in the amount of 67.2 billion AMD (roughly \$168.2 million). IFS funds equal 91.6 billion AMD (roughly \$229.3 million) out of which 13% come from donations. The numbers change regularly.



IMPACT HUB YEREVAN

Impact Hub Armenia Social Innovation Development Foundation (aka Impact Hub Yerevan) is a non-profit organization registered and based in Armenia. Impact Hub Yerevan is a social innovation space and community with a mission to support social impact projects and enterprises which propel the positive development of Armenia.

Since opening its doors in February 2016, Impact Hub Yerevan has designed and implemented 20+ programs, hosted over 400 educational workshops and events, and now hosts over 220 members with over 100 projects/organizations representing every sector in Armenia.

Impact Hub Yerevan provides its entrepreneurs and innovators with networking opportunities, resources, educational programs and events all within an inspiring space. Impact Hub Yerevan is also part of a global movement of 100+ Impact Hubs around the world. Any individual,



INCORE

At INCORE Investments, we understand the challenges of navigating today's complex financial landscape. That's why we've spent over 20 years honing our expertise and building a network of valuable connections in the industry. Our mission is to provide you with the toolset and guidance you need to optimize your assets and achieve financial success on a global scale.

Our team of seasoned professionals is dedicated to helping you streamline your asset management, identify and seize new opportunities, and ultimately achieve your financial goals with speed and efficiency. Based on the cornerstones of a deep professional approach, analysis of the experience of 20 years, and continuous improvement, INCORE offers its partners a wide range of

Masterful Investment

In a world of increasing professional competition, one of the most powerful tools we can wield is a graduate diploma. Investing in a graduate degree yields a plethora of benefits which will pay dividends for years to come. A **master's degree** allows you to deepen your knowledge and gain expertise in a specific field, rendering you an attractive candidate for competitive companies. Completing a master's program provides you with greater opportunities to expand your professional network, while also allowing you to demonstrate the patience, focus, and perseverance necessary to receive your diploma. Armed with these valuable skills, you are also able to increase your earning potential. According to a report by Northeastern University, graduate degree holders can expect to earn \$13,000 more per year than bachelor's degree holders.

The American University of Armenia (AUA) is perfectly poised to enable students pursuing a master's degree to reap the greatest benefits from their studies. Home to an international student population, small class sizes, and faculty from rich and diverse professional backgrounds, AUA is proud to offer its students a world-class education. AUA faculty hail from all over the globe, having been educated abroad in some of the top universities, with a wide array of research interests. In addition to their academic experience, they have extensive practical experience as well, which allows them to best prepare students for the next step in their academic and professional journeys.

AUA is pleased to offer eleven graduate programs housed in its four Colleges: **Master of Business Administration, Master of Science in Economics, Master of Science in Management, Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Master of Laws, Master of Public Affairs** (*pending MoESCS license*), **Master of International Relations and Diplomacy** (*pending MoESCS license*), **Master of Arts in Human Rights and Social Justice, Master of Public Health, Master of Engineering in Industrial Engineering and Systems Management, Master of Science in Computer and Information Science**. In keeping with the spirit of academic growth, AUA alumni frequently go on to pursue post-graduate degrees at some of the top universities in the world, open their own businesses, and contribute to society around them in a multitude of ways.





Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company

Author: Elina Markaryan, Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Director at "Coca-Cola HBC Armenia" CJSC

Coca-Cola System globally advocates education and environmental consciousness. Our Company is always thinking how to help nurture generations of youth to take care of water, recycle, and know about environmental commitments and challenges at large. The best vehicle to do this is education. This, we believe, is a natural part of the journey to progress, all together.

Coca-Cola Hellenic Armenia's environmental, social and governance (ESG) priorities are integrated into its strategy. We are focused on areas where we can have a measurable, positive impact on the communities we serve around Armenia. The Company's vision is to create a system globally where every bottle can get second life by being reused as a new bottle. Our environmental impact management efforts are enshrined in our World Without Waste (WWW) strategy. Under this global program, we engage and share our expertise, help to implement recycling pilots in Armenia through 3 core principles: design, collect and partner, with a heavy focus on education and awareness raising.

We seek an exponentially greater impact by fostering collective action: partnering across industry, government, and society to address shared challenges towards proper waste management.

"World Without Waste"

The most important part of our project is to educate people by raising awareness to affect behavior change.

WWW educational campaign started in 2021 and has already been implemented in 120 schools in Yerevan. The development of a culture of waste sorting among schoolchildren through educational program is important to influence the shift in mindset of people from early ages and the effective operation of the waste management system in the community of Yerevan. The project is executed within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2021 with Yerevan Municipality to ensure proper and timely collection. The emphasis here is to improve waste management systems in Armenia by focusing on waste collection, recycling culture, and practical work.

In the framework of the project, we organized environmental trainings, competition among schools, developed and disseminated environmental workbook

for schoolchildren, as well as conducted Train-the-Trainers workshops. The results of the project showed that schoolchildren participating in one short environmental training have drastically increased their knowledge of environmental issues by putting knowledge into practice, by recycling. I do hope that this project is going to impact the development of waste management culture in Armenia significantly, because everything starts from school.

Speaking of the results of the project, we managed to place 550 sorting bins for plastic and paper waste in 120 schools of Yerevan, conducted a series of online/offline courses for more than 6000 children. As a result, about 14,000 kg of waste was collected.

In parallel with the Company's business activities, we collaborate with other representatives of the industry through **AmCham** to set up a system where each bottle can be reused and recycled several times. CCHBCA continues to share its international expertise through **AmCham Waste Management Working Group** to support waste management project implementation in Armenia, to make sure that the best-case studies are considered to achieve better results.

I believe that it is a very good collaborative platform for bringing together all the business associations and engaging industry representatives to take the lead in

the establishment of household packaging waste collection and recovery pilot project in Armenia.

We are proud not to do this alone, we need to partner to drive collective action towards more sustainable and cleaner future.

To conclude, our Company has always believed that education is a powerful force in improving the quality of life and creating opportunity for people and their families around the world, and this is what we pursue in our everyday agenda and believe in it.





united for our soldiers...

The Insurance Foundation for Servicemen (IFS) is a non-profit organization endowed with state functions.

It was founded in 2017 by the Central Bank of RA after the Four-Day War in April 2016 to provide stable and equal financial compensation and social welfare to the families of servicemen who fell, went missing or soldiers who received the 1st and 2nd group of military disability while defending the borders of our Homeland for the peace and security of future generations.

The Foundation's resources are generated from the following sources:

- Mandatory monthly stamp payments of taxpayers in Armenia and Artsakh (based on income level)
- Voluntary donations received from all over the world, as well as
- IFS asset management

IFS is a unique foundation in the region where every working citizen in Armenia and Artsakh is required to make mandatory contributions (based on income level). Diasporan Armenians also support the Foundation through voluntary contributions. In this way, the Foundation represents a pan-Armenian effort to provide for those who have sacrificed their lives for the security of Armenia.

Information regarding both mandatory payments and donations, as well as the compensation payments made to IFS beneficiaries can be found on the IFS website. The Foundation conducts an independent audit every year and the website reflects those reports, as well as IFS director's report.

As of 1 November 2022, IFS has provided compensation to 4,935 beneficiaries in the amount of 67.2 billion AMD (roughly \$168.2 million). IFS funds equal 91.6 billion AMD (roughly \$229.3 million) out

of which 13% come from donations. The numbers change regularly.

MISSION

Unite the nation to stand by the servicemen and their families to ensure financial stability and dignified life for them.

VISION

To be a socially responsible foundation for servicemen which incorporates mandatory and voluntary insurance components.

VALUES

TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, INTEGRITY

Today, it is our duty to stand by the families of the fallen, disabled, and missing soldiers...





Mr. Artur Martirosyan

Deputy Minister



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, SCIENCE AND SPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



Mr. Martirosyan, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself, your education, and your work experience? How did you decide to dedicate your career to public administration and education?

Thank you very much for inviting me to this interview. I was born and raised in Yerevan, Armenia, though I spent over seven years in the United States, in New York City right before the 2018 revolution. I have a Ph.D. in political science, so my educational background is in international relations and political science, and though I lectured, my career was mostly in development world with international civil society organizations. For the last three years, I have been holding the position of Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports in charge of international cooperation, youth affairs, planning, and Diaspora-related affairs. How did it happen? All my passion in life and my career goal are about making Armenia a democratic, safe, prosperous country described with a high human development index, making Armenia a place where we would all love to stay, prosper, and develop. For doing so, I eventually came up with the idea that there is a long pathway for transformation and that the pathway starts in education which is the place where you should invest. That's why and that's how it happened!

You have been holding the office of Deputy Minister since 2020, what are the skills required to successfully fulfill the day-to-day duties of the job and what are the challenges you face?

That's a beautiful question, like a million-worth question, honestly. There are a couple of general competencies and skills that I think every single Deputy Minister should have, regardless of which line of Ministry they represent, but there are also very specific ones for my position. Among general competencies you should be determined in what you are doing, you should be a team player, a motivator, and you should combine two types of roles: one is being a visionary leader, or, in other words, being a little bit of a

theorist with conceptual thinking, especially during this time period, when we are doing lots of reforms. You should believe in what you are doing, you should not be vulnerable or fragile to any criticism. There will always be people, who would not love even the best things you do. On the other hand, you should be a very practical manager, because success for most assignments demands teamwork and for successful teamwork, you should be a good manager, in the very practical sense of the word. It's very challenging of having both of these hats of a visionary leader and a practical manager. As competencies that are required for the profile of the office of the deputy minister that I represent I should admit that the log-frame programming experience, first-hand Diaspora experience, youth work experience from my university years, and background in International affairs and public policy are of enormous help for me to be successful in this particular position.

The top challenge is the shortage of time: I believe the time after independence was misused in many sectors and that is why it is hard to prioritize one sector or sub-sector for mid-term planning, instead, we should have and we do set ambitious plans and targets for the next 5 to 10 years (we have developed an educational strategy; we are in the process of developing separate strategies also for sport, culture, and science) to be in line with the constantly transforming global trends and regional environment and we should make everyday consistent efforts towards these targets. Success requires self-sacrifice and sometimes it may harm the work-life balance. But it is worth the effort of course if one has the passion and if one is a true patriot and if one truly believes that they are a part of the state building. I believe the time for "patriots in words" has passed and as it is well said in one of the Armenian national tales "The Mice Convention" (one of my favorites by the way) "we should post the bell" and I am happy to be part of this noble mission among the "collective we."

I love the work I do. One thing I truly enjoy is leveraging expertise, financial and other

resources for the successful development and implementation of our strategies and policy priorities. We are closely working with USAID and other development partners in this regard.

A strong educational system is one of the cornerstones of a developed state. What are the objectives and priorities of the Ministry?

I will list the three big objectives we have set in our educational strategy. The first one is ensuring access to quality education across Armenia. When we say accessibility, we also mean quality, as accessibility itself comes from quality.

The second objective is to internationalize our educational system to attract many foreign students and to have at least a couple of Armenian universities in the top 500 by 2030. We understand that Armenia does not exist in a vacuum, we are a part of the world and we might not reach the western standard of 2022 now, but our ambition is to be in line with the advanced standard of the world by 2030.

And, finally, our third objective is to drastically improve the education management system, that is to make the overall education management system more efficient.

What are some ongoing reforms and what are the steps undertaken to involve the youth in these projects?

There are lots of reforms ongoing, but I would like to prioritize the content of education. So now, unlike previously, on top of knowledge, we equally emphasize skills, attitudes, and values. In addition, new educational criteria are result-oriented. For example, if we want our kids to be social, we give flexibility to teachers to decide on their methods, techniques, tools, etc. to reach the desired outcome.

As for the involvement of the youth, we are absolutely keen on the principles of good governance in our policymaking. We have lots of formats for public participation, including the steering Student Council and Public Council next to the Minister, also for every single major document we do lots of consultation. The most recent one that comes to my mind is the UNESCO-initiated Transformational Educational Summit process when Armenia among many other countries of the world made a commitment to increase the accessibility to quality education till 2030.

In Armenia we have very vibrant youth organizations and the priority for us is to ensure that young people have better access to decision-making and not only to youth-specific issues but also the ones that are in the interest of the public at large as it is really hard to imagine any decision that does not affect the youth. Many people think that the reason for non-participation is the small number of respective platforms. But I personally believe that the main reason is

that people do not value their participation, they are not empowered and have the self-estimation as agents of change. Young people should feel that they can bring change, they should know their rights and duties, and the methods and tools for meaningful participation to practice active citizenship. Without all this empowerment the number of platforms does not make sense. A good example was the Education Strategy process for which we formed lots of public feedback platforms but the level of participation was below my expectations.

Another priority in youth affairs is the creation of youth centers for the regional youth. By youth centers, I assume an environment where young people will come together and enjoy quality time, and intellectual entertainment, a gracious space where their skills and competencies will be identified and developed, a resource center where they will be self-organized for practicing active citizenship.

With the budget of 2022, we are opening two youth centers: one in Ijevan in the Tavush region and one in Meghri in the Syunik region and the plan is that only through state funding we will open 25 such centers by 2026. Of course, there are many partners like USAID, the EU, UNICEF, and others, who, upon being provided with the vision and guidelines of youth centers, are very much expected to support the expansion of the network of youth centers.

Mr. Martirosyan, where do you see Armenia in five years?

That's a very good question.

I hope that if there are no major global catastrophes and everything goes as planned, in five years, we might not have the education or the science we want but we will have a very solid foundation and will be heading in the right direction with more optimism for the future. In education, changes cannot be quick and the new educational criteria that we are investing in will only give results in about twelve years. It takes quite a lot of time to make those changes, but in my understanding, in five years we'll be in a good shape and in the right place.

As any other small country, Armenia needs to find its right place in the world. Considering our rich cultural heritage and our passion for innovation I believe Armenia should be associated in people's minds with science, innovation, and culture. As you might have noticed, the Government of Armenia is trying to host at least one major landmark event per sector, e.g. in science, education, culture, sports, and high-tech/innovation. Some success stories include

the boxing championship (EUBC Men's European Boxing Championships), the Junior Eurovision Song Contest, STARMUS Festival. I won't open all the secrets but we are planning something super cool for 2026. I believe that in five years, if, for instance, we announce that we are hosting a big international event in Armenia, people won't be shocked because it'd have become our new "normal." We hope to turn Armenia into a warm, cozy, and welcoming place that will attract people from all corners of the world.

You have been one of the organizers of the STARMUS Festival. Could you, please, tell us about this experience?

I had the privilege to have an instrumental role in the organization of the STARMUS VI Festival in Armenia. It was a landmark event not only for our country but also for the entire Commonwealth of Independent States and the middle-east regions, as it was the first-ever STARMUS in the region.

As you know, STARMUS is one of the most popular festivals that combine art and science. We were pleased with the results and with the number of world-known scientists and musicians attending the festival and the number of the public engaged. As a representative of the Ministry, I'd say our biggest achievement, on top of scientific cooperation and many other positive outcomes, is the inspiration of the youth. It's called science popularization. And it doesn't matter how it is achieved. Some people might have initially come to listen to Brian May or other famous musicians, but eventually, got engaged and inspired by topics in astronomy, physics, other fields of science. For me, personally, one of the best things about the festival was seeing the happy faces of Armenian children, with eyes full of curiosity and inspiration.

What is your message to the AmCham Community?

To me, AmCham is the most visible chamber of commerce we have in Armenia and I really appreciate the fact that many AmCham member companies have strong and solid CSR projects. My message and suggestion to the community would be, as I mentioned in my public speech that I was privileged to deliver during a meeting with the representatives of AmCham member companies, for the private sector to get familiarized with Government priorities and the Government Action Plan and keep flexibility while choosing partners/implementors for CSR projects or for investment.

Mr. Hayk Stepanyan

CEO | Byblos Bank Armenia CJSC

EDITOR'S NOTE

Ahead of the 15th anniversary of Byblos Bank Armenia, CEO Hayk Stepanyan shares his views on responsible banking practices, the Bank's values and long-term development goals, as well as his vision for the future of the Armenian banking industry.

Mr. Stepanyan, this year Byblos Bank Armenia is celebrating its 15th anniversary. What's the story behind the establishment of the Bank, and what was its purpose?

Byblos Bank Armenia was established as a subsidiary of the international Byblos Bank Group. The main purpose was to provide quality banking services based on the best international standards to the local economy as well as to service and support economic ties between Armenia and countries with a large diaspora and Byblos Bank Group presence. Our shareholder believes that Armenia has a good business environment and is a forward-looking country with promising prospects.

The motto "Your Bank For Life" is at the heart of the Bank's philosophy. What are the Bank's values and vision, and what challenges do you face during that journey?

We as a bank are committed to the principles of responsible and conservative banking. We always prioritize long-term value over short term profits, and we believe that sustainable growth with prudent risk management practices is the key to long-term success. Within our team we cultivate a high level of integrity, teamwork, performance and customer focus. Obviously, conservative banking has its limitations, especially in a competitive market such as the one in Armenia. But I am glad to say that clients and the market overall are starting to gradually appreciate and understand the value of sound banking practices, the value of stability and the financial health of the bank.

How would you describe the role of Byblos Bank Armenia in the development of the banking sector in the country?

Our share in the Armenian market is quite modest in terms of the size of the Bank, and we don't pursue the goal of securing a large share in the market. I believe, however, that since 2008 Byblos Bank Armenia has been making significant contributions to the development of the industry by introducing new standards for customer service and product design. The international practices we brought to the market have had a positive impact on the overall banking competition and created new value for the economy. I would also like to mention the value of Byblos Bank Armenia as an employer. Right from the beginning, the Bank has been a responsible employer with a true quality culture within the team, which I believe is also an important contribution to the banking sector. We really cherish our culture and invest a lot not only in the provision of the best services

to our clients, but also in the development and well-being of our staff.

What is the Bank's current strategy in providing long-term banking services to the business community, which would help develop a coordinated innovative and entrepreneurial business culture in Armenia?

In general, our policy is to design banking products in a way that supports the financial health of the clients and contributes to the growth of personal wealth and the growth of companies. In this regard we are not inclined towards risky financing because not only does this have a negative impact on the bank itself, but it also poses additional risks for the client and can damage the financial health of the customer. Particularly at this stage our strategy is the harmonization of new IT solutions with traditional conservative banking policies. We seek to improve customer experiences through mobile technologies, without compromising our low-risk appetite and compliance standards. In terms of contributing to the business environment in Armenia, we are concentrating on two directions: firstly, our investments in universities and educational projects, and secondly, the continuous work with clients to ensure the development of corporate culture, financial discipline etc.

Mr. Stepanyan, what problems is the banking system of our country facing?

We are currently going through quite turbulent times in terms of geopolitical changes, rapid technological changes, shifting customer preferences, to name but a few. And I believe that the biggest challenge of the Armenian banking sector is to sustain risks arising from high levels of uncertainty and at the same time invest in technological development. This is very important since prudent risk management and the use of new technologies will allow us to navigate through the situation we have found ourselves in. Overall, we have to admit that the Armenian economy is a small economy, highly exposed to external shocks, with not much room for extensive growth, therefore the improvement of the internal efficiency is the main source of growth. We have to be faster, more technologically advanced, more knowledgeable and rely on clear values and high ethical standards. And by external shocks I mean not only negative shocks, but also positive ones, since only said factors can allow us to sustainably absorb positive shocks and convert them into long-term trends and long-term values.





What is Byblos Bank Armenia's biggest achievement in 15 years?

Without a doubt, I have to mention two things here. First of all, our loyal clientele. We really appreciate the loyalty of our clients, the quality of our clients. We really value our relationship which was built through continuous work. The second major achievement we have is our team. We have managed to build a team with very high ethical and professional standards, each member of which shares the values of the Bank.

The bank regularly unveils new offers for SMEs, large businesses and individuals. What principles are you guided by when developing such offers?

For commercial clients, whether big corporations or small businesses, we offer products that are designed for the financial needs, business strategy and current financial standing of that particular client. As I said earlier, our approach is to support the financial health of the company rather than gain short-term profits. In commercial lending the primary factor for us is the financial standing, financial discipline and internal culture of the company. The collateral is in the second place, although it is also a very important factor. In this regard I'd like to mention our newly-launched Small Business

Loan product which allows small companies with sound business practices and a good financial discipline to benefit from AMD 25mln credit lines without collateral.

Surely, Byblos Bank Armenia is celebrating its 15th anniversary with the joy of new victories and achievements. What developments can we expect in the next five years?

We are working on the introduction of new mobile solutions for our clients and the continuous improvement of our service quality. We believe that the next 5 years for Byblos Bank Armenia will be years of sustainable growth and a more active presence in the Armenian market.

Mr. Stepanyan, what is your message to the AmCham community?

AmCham community includes companies and organizations that represent the elite of the Armenian business community. And the only message I have is that we all need to spread the knowledge and culture throughout the entire economy. We should not get tired of upholding our values, best business practices and sharing them with our partners, clients, regulators, state authorities and other actors. My belief is that only values-based and responsible businesses can bring long-term development to our country.



Mr. Armen Baldryan

CEO | Unicomp CJSC

President | UEICT



UNICOMP

Mr. Baldryan, please tell us about yourself, your academic and professional background, and decision to dedicate your career to Technology and Innovation.

In 1984, I graduated from the radio-engineering department of the Polytechnic University with honour, and then I continued my education in postgraduate studies at the All-Union Scientific Research Institute, in parallel with my work in Moscow. The topic of my work, as well as my scientific thesis paper, was the design of radar systems for space satellites. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, I decided not to pursue postgraduate studies and continued working in the private sector, choosing the IT field as a rapidly growing field. In the beginning, together with my friends, we were engaged in software solutions for banks. The IT field is interesting to me because it requires constant education and development. It has to be on a daily and continuous basis, you have to constantly learn and self-educate, which I still do, and I think all IT professionals do, because otherwise in a very short time you will fall behind the pace of development and the trends of the industry, becoming non-competitive.

You are the President of the Union of Employers of Information and Communication. What are the leadership skills necessary to effectively manage the union?

It is difficult to list specific skills, but I can say that the Union is an organization aimed at protecting the interests of all organizations operating in the field. The most important quality here is the ability to maintain neutrality and put common interests above your own business interests. This is an important characteristic of the Union. Of course, it is difficult to keep the balance, but I think that the Union of Employers of ICT manages it. It is due to this that the members of the Union actively engage in our programs. In addition, the Union implements many programs, which are not aimed at the development of specific businesses, but at the overall development of the sector.

How was UEICT founded and what are its long-term goals?

Since UEICT is a sectoral and employers' union, a number of objectives have been set at the basis of the establishment of the Union. The first of the objectives is that the Union must not pursue business objectives. The main objectives include, of course, protecting the interests of the members of the Union, observing the correct course of legislative changes, cooperating with the state to ensure the further development of the sector.

In addition, since the biggest problem and obstacle to development in the IT sector is the training of qualified professionals, many of the Union's programs are aimed at the educational sector itself - professional, school, university educational programs and lifelong learning.

Since IT is a tool for all businesses, one of the most important objectives is also to spread awareness about the sector in other business sectors and of course in the wider circles of society. Our goal is to communicate the importance of ICT, especially today, in the era of the fourth industrial revolution, which is based on information and communication technologies, the digital smart economy.

As for the challenges, we are living in the Republic of Armenia, which is already facing many challenges. One of our challenges is the strengthening of Armenian statehood in terms of security, technological development, and economic development. The challenges faced by the state are one of the primary concerns for the Union, and overcoming them is one of the main goals.

Supporting professional and STEM educational development and introducing new educational programs is a UEICT priority. What are the upcoming projects of UEICT, in terms of the programs creating fusion between science and production?

We have several programs now. One of the first that we have launched is the high school programs, where the Union, Viva-Cell MTS, Synopsys, and of course Unicomp as a separate organization have been actively involved. We have created educational content for high schools, including fundamentals of information technology, telecommunications, and microelectronics. The program was implemented in 10 to 12 grades, in 10 schools participating in the program. It is considered a compulsory program for the students who have chosen the relevant stream of those schools. The main idea is as follows:

Having the opportunity to communicate with schoolchildren while working within the competition committee for the selection of the best student in IT sphere, we came to believe that many talented students, who have great abilities in natural sciences and can succeed in the field of information technology, continue their education by choosing professions in other fields. Few years later, they realize that they had made a wrong choice and try to re-profile themselves. The result is that they lose 4-5 years at the best age for learning. The main goal of the Union's program implemented in schools is to raise awareness among the

students that IT is a very promising field, to carry out vocational guidance programs, and, of course, to provide them the background knowledge that will help them in the further educational process.

The next program, in which the Union actively involves, is the International Microelectronics Olympiad. I am also the chairman of the organizing committee of the Olympiad. It is an international Olympiad, initiated by Synopsys, sponsored by Viva-Cell MTS, Unicom and IEEE. This is the only Olympiad in the world held in this subfield. More than 25 countries take part in the Olympiad. Specialists under 30 years old, mostly students from universities of different countries, take part. In the final stage, the finalists of all countries come to Armenia to participate in the final stage. The Olympiad has a great resonance and emphasizes Armenia's place as a centre of microelectronics and chip design. It is also very important as an international platform for connection and cooperation of young professionals in the field, especially considering that the largest supranational organizations in the field have quite large scientific research centres in Armenia, and the field is multinational, with a very high degree of cooperation.

One of the next most important programs of the Union is the Smart Solutions Center program implemented jointly with the National Polytechnic University of Armenia. The essence of the program is as follows: our studies and global trends show that nowadays professionals and companies with more comprehensive and multi-disciplinary knowledge are ever more valued in the ICT field than the professionals with one narrow focus. The Union sees the future of ICT development in Armenia in providing products and solutions based on this knowledge. In order to fill the gap of such professionals, in cooperation with Viva-MTS, Synopsys and Unicom, we created the Smart Solutions Center, the main purpose of which is to give the professionals of different fields and universities the opportunity to study ICT specialties in that center. For example, imagine if an agricultural specialist is good at information technology and can apply his knowledge to agriculture, or a programmer has knowledge of cybersecurity requirements and creates his programs based on those requirements. In that center, we are also actively engaged in the development of knowledge and skills related to the organization of start-ups, teamwork, and entrepreneurship for students and professionals. The program is quite ambitious, and we intend to actively pursue and expand it.

Among educational programs, we attach significant importance to cybersecurity programs, because there is a great demand and gap for cybersecurity specialists in Armenia. Cybersecurity is the most important strategic direction for Armenia. More than 100 professionals have already been trained in our educational center with the support and co-financing of the Ministry of High-Tech Industry.

How would you assess Armenia's educational growth in ICT field?

It is very difficult to say. Of course, there is growth, but not as fast as we would like. There is always a demand for specialists. There are many vacancies with quite high salaries. In other words, there is success, but there is still a gap that needs to be filled.

In that regard, I would like to talk about one of our events, Silicon Mountains Summit, which we have been holding for the 4th year already. The last one was in December, the year-end Tech Summit. One of the main goals of the event is to encourage wider use of information technologies in Armenia and, in particular, in Armenia's economy, government, public and private sector management systems, in all processes without exception. The labor productivity that exists today in Armenia, in the public sector and in various sectors of the economy, is not satisfactory. With that index, we rank rather low in the world rating. The event is aimed at increasing productivity through implementation of technological solutions, promoting Smart Governance, Smart Economy, Smart Banking and Smart Infrastructure. In other words, everything that is the backbone of the rapid development of the economy. In this regard, it is very important for the Union of Employers of ICT to cooperate with established business associations such as AmCham, the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen, etc. Here, the common goals and areas of cooperation are obvious: development of Armenia's economy, improvement of the legislative framework, improvement of the governance system, attraction of investments, formation of clusters, etc. I think the continuity of this cooperation between the unions is very important.

You have been the CEO of UNICOMP for more than 25 years now. What are the successes and challenges faced during this period?

It is an interesting question because what counts as a success or a failure is relative. The main challenge is that you have to change every day, and not only you, but the whole organization. It should develop every day, introduce new knowledge, work style, business models. Only then can the company be competitive in this field. I can be proud that Unicom is the initiator of "innovation" in its field and not only in Armenia, but also in the field in general. Unicom took many of the first steps and showed in what direction the organizations operating in our field should develop. Unicom is a system integrator, and it is one of the most complex areas of IT because it requires knowledge of all areas of IT field. Our engineers must be multi-disciplinary and demonstrate ideal teamwork in order to be able to design and implement a holistic solution accurately. This is one of the main challenges for us, and at the same time, one of the keys to the success.

Mr. Baldryan, what is your wish to the AmCham Community?

The unity of the AmCham community is very important. From this perspective, building a common strategic vision and having a united opinion, despite the short-term business interests of each of us, is the biggest challenge for AmCham leadership. AmCham is in a fairly balanced position in that respect. Unicom has been a member of AmCham for 21 years, and I am proud of that. I think now AmCham is able to implement many ambitious projects. I would like our community, the AmCham community, to continue its activities in the spirit of unity, partnership and mutual benefit.



MS. ARPI KARAPETYAN

GENERAL MANAGER OF CASCADE PEOPLE & BUSINESS
CHAIRMAN OF THE ARMENIAN HR ASSOCIATION

Cascade People & Business



cascade
PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOBBIT – THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SALARY SURVEY FOR COMPANIES

On September 7th Cascade People & Business launched jobbit – an innovative new tool that will become the ultimate guide to salary review for companies.

Throughout 14 years of extensive experience, Cascade People & Business proved that bringing change is not just a motto - bringing change is its core value and mindset, this time resulting in transformative change in the field of salary surveys.

jobbit provides real-time, detailed, and industry-specific information due to constant interaction with many companies. It is science-based, instant, targeted, visualized, flexible, simple, and affordable.

What is **jobbit** and why it is special?

Introducing the tool, the features and possibilities of its application, Arpi Karapetyan, the General Manager of Cascade People & Business and the Chairman of the Armenian HR Association, indicated:

“The tool will provide opportunities for the companies to receive comprehensive

data on estimation of the level of salaries for different jobs. This will be done instantly, based on scientific statistical analysis and with application of various filters and without spending much time and, most importantly, without spending a lot of money to access the result of that research. Due to its instant information generation in combination with its affordable price, jobbit will stand out from other salary surveys through engaging numerous participant companies”.

Why is **jobbit** unique?

With the product being specifically affordable (the price per job is 21,000 AMD) unlike in cases of other salary surveys - a large number of companies will engage in **jobbit** platform to provide comprehensive data and information for determining compensation packages and development optimal systems of bonuses.

What makes it stand out from its competitors?

jobbit is totally real-time with detailed and industry-specific information due to its constant interaction with a large number of

companies, allowing you to narrow down the job you need due to its numerous filters with relevant visualized data.

One of the explicit features of **jobbit** is that it is science-based ensuring high accuracy of the results.

Inputted data is fully protected and confidential.

The report includes the list of the participating companies. However, no specific company unique details are visible in the report.

Companies are more than welcome to participate in the questionnaire as long as they have an employee working in the respective position. Information provided by the authorized representative of the company will contribute to the report and make it rich and much detailed for the partner companies accessing the report.

Feel free to access **jobbit** here: www.jobbit.online



Jobbit

new dimension to salary surveys



MR. RUBEN MELKONYAN
HEAD OF MARKETS & SECURITIES SERVICES



HSBC Bank Armenia CJSC

**CURRENCY RISKS:
 FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED**

Recent sharp moves in foreign currency exchange rates vs the Armenian dram (hereafter AMD) have brought exchange-rate risk to the forefront for companies working with suppliers, customers or production in different currencies.

The benefits of international trade for the businesses are clear, both in terms of growth opportunities as well as from product/supplier/customer diversification perspectives. Nonetheless, trading in international markets means bringing currency risk into the business. Exchange rates are volatile and, at least in the short to medium term, can have a marked impact on business profits and risks – currency matters. So the key to superior performance is the effective management of this currency risk.

Most people think only of spot transactions when they think of the foreign exchange market, while in fact the spot market accounts for less than 40% of the average daily turnover in currencies worldwide as

opposed to the local FX market which is totally dominated by spot. A spot transaction assumes settlement on the second business day after the trade date, referred to as T + 2 settlement.

There are a variety of approaches to currency risk management: some businesses try to hedge all currency risk, some leave their flows unhedged, and others see currency risk a potential source of incremental return and will actively trade foreign exchange.

Historically, the most popular instrument used for exchange rate risk management is the forward contract. A forward contract is an agreement to exchange one currency for another on a future date at an exchange rate agreed on today - a binding obligation for both the buyer and the seller. So a forward contract is any exchange rate transaction that occurs with settlement longer than the usual T+2 settlement for spot delivery. The pricing of an FX forward is based upon the FX spot

rate at the time of trading, together with an adjustment that reflects the interest rate differential between the two currencies involved. Examples of more complicated hedging tools include:

- FX swap transactions that consist of offsetting simultaneous spot and forward transactions, in which one currency is being bought (sold) spot and sold (bought) forward;
- and currency option contracts that give the buyer the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell a certain currency at a specified exchange rate on or before a specified date. For this right, a premium is paid to the seller.

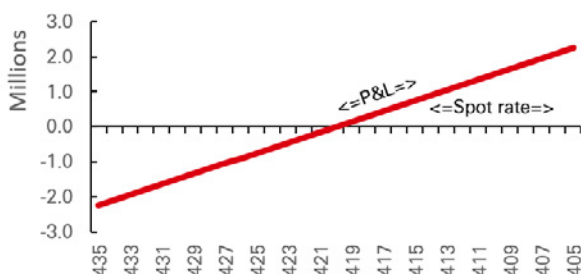
With the local FX market still in its development stage, FX forwards are the starting point of your FX risk management journey and we at HSBC remain at your disposal should you need us to guide you throughout.

Forward. Example

An Armenia based software company sells its products and services to a customer based in the USA. The contract is denominated in US dollars, and assumes 30% prepayment upon signing and a 70% final payment in 6 months' time. The company wants to hedge the risk that AMD will appreciate against the USD over the next six months, thus making the final USD denominated payment worth less in AMD terms. The company therefore chooses to enter into an FX forward in order to lock in the USDAMD rate six months ahead, agreeing to sell USD150k at a forward rate of 420, so on the settlement day the company will pay USD150k and receive AMD63m.

At the end of the six months, the USDAMD rate has fallen to 405, so by taking out the forward rate agreement the company has a gain of $(420-405) * 150000 = \text{AMD}2.25\text{m}$ by hedging.

Payoff profile for USDAMD forward contract



↑ Benefits

- ♦ Certainty of exchange rate for a future purchase/receipt;
- ♦ No upfront cost

↓ Risks

- ♦ The exchange rate is locked, so the company cannot benefit from favorable movements in exchange rates;
- ♦ Contractual obligation to exchange the currencies on the settlement date even if the exchange rates move against the company;
- ♦ Cancelling the contract early may incur significant additional charges.



MS. RUZANNA ALEKSANYAN

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

BDO Armenia



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP FOR DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL CLIENT SERVICE

Thought Leadership for Delivering Exceptional Client Service

In the realm of business-to-business (B2B), a company's potential to succeed economically depends on the quality of the connections it forges with its stakeholders, which makes the B2B environment significantly more complex.

It is common knowledge that the business-to-business industry is characterized by the following:

- Longer, commonly more challenging sales cycles,
- Service levels that are often contractually set,
- Often, significantly higher investment of time, money, and resources,
- Magnified complexity due to the number of stakeholders involved, each with individual goals and expectations that need to be understood.

That said, offering a genuinely robust value proposition to the clients, thus retaining their business, becomes more than essential. As a clear statement of the benefits a firm promises to deliver to client companies, value proposition communicates the number one reason a service is best suited for a customer segment.

The world of Management Science knows various methods of developing a company's value proposition. Several guides are available about creating a value proposition and what factors should be considered. This may mean

achieving an excellent price-quality ratio for one company, while for another, it may mean providing quick responses to aroused issues. But a key ingredient in any professional services firm's value proposition is **"Trust"**.

Trust has always played a critical role in the purchasing decisions of consulting buyers. Clients often share their most business-critical problems with their professional advisers, which points to the need for a profound level of trust between client and consultant.

Yet, the question is: **"How to achieve that trust?"**

If answered briefly, becoming a trustworthy advisor can be done by putting the imperative of delivering **Exceptional Client Service on the very essence of the brand's philosophy and vision**.

Yet, this brief answer generates more questions: "What kind of client service is considered exceptional? "How should a company monitor it?" let alone "How to achieve it?".

Thought Leadership is proven to play a vital role in achieving this agenda. Sharing practical knowledge and gained expertise with the company's clients and a wider community can help to initiate an efficient dialogue.

Thought leadership is a crucial part of the brand-building strategy of the modern professional services firm. And over the past two years, it's taken on a new level of importance; for many clients by playing a vital role in helping them successfully overcome the economic challenges of the pandemic, war, and uncertainty and creating opportunities for level-up.

The key to unlocking thought leadership's potential is working to deliver on the "interesting" imperative by providing content based on clients' real needs.

First, it should tell the audience something useful they didn't already know. The content that only covers ground that media have already trodden would not bring too much attention as long as it has nothing new or different to tell them.

Secondly, it also needs to be relevant, and for the audience to understand that a piece is relevant to them, a firm needs to be clear about the topic covered, whom it is aimed at, and just how it will reward the reader for their time investment.

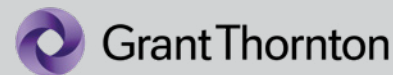
It is widely believed that the Business-to-Business industry often provides solutions rather than just a specific product or service.

With a global vision **"to be the leader for exceptional client service"**, at BDO, we give an important place to Thought Leadership, whether in the form of regulatory changes digests, industry reports, or, better yet, the workshops and conferences dedicated to diving deep into a specific topic. In partnership with industry experts and policymakers, we treated topics like "how to reward and retain talents in Armenia's high-tech sector" and "Alternative investments in Armenia" (a conference recently co-organized with another AmCham member Orion Worldwide Innovations).



**MS. ANI
HAKOBYAN**
CHIEF MARKETING
OFFICER

Grant Thornton Armenia



VALUE-ADD EDUCATION: UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Value-add Education: University-Industry Partnerships

While the role of education is unquestionable, there are many questions nowadays on its purpose, duration, and organization. To some education is only a formal tick in the box, others are struggling with hard decisions on choice of profession, specialization, and educational institutions and some others see education as a lifelong learning and development process and do not believe in formal structures.

The pace, at which transformation across different industries accelerates, is putting a lot of pressure on traditional educational institutions for meeting the growing curiosity of young people with unlimited access to information, motivating them to engage with the educational process and shape the professionals of tomorrow. In addition, educational institutions are facing the challenge of remaining competitive within the ever-changing environment and being relevant in the present day.

Partnering with industry

The good-old, tested methods have the maximum capacity of delivering good-old results, that lack dynamism, and agility and are often non-sustainable. Fixing this situation will require huge investments for any organization. For educational institutions, in particular, one of the feasible solutions is to turn to the most efficient and practical mechanism – widen collaboration and establish partnerships with the industry. Despite the difference in goals and structures of educational institutions and the industry, numerous common stones allow for building mutually beneficial partnerships.

Along with the natural reputational benefit for both parties, education–business collaboration creates value along the following dimensions:

- **Talent pipeline:** The industry, now more than ever, is facing huge challenges in terms of finding, attracting, and retaining the talent that will drive their business. The competition for human capital is so fierce that businesses are constantly looking for new ways of making themselves visible and attractive to young talent. These partnerships enable targeted matching of the supply and demand at the grassroots of students' career aspirations and ensure wide exposure as an employer brand.
- **Practical experience:** The more diverse the spectrum of partnerships with the industry is, the more opportunities the educational institution will have for providing practical and relevant knowledge to their students, creating opportunities for them to gain new skills, and bringing the accumulated wealth into life. This involves a whole range of activities, such as short or long-term internships, guest lectures, and master classes.
- **Funding opportunities:** Education–industry partnerships create numerous opportunities for funding mainly the extra-curricular activities of students, including but not limited to the commercialization of their research, funding for research, and various projects.

Grant Thornton Academy

Grant Thornton's Academy is a living story demonstrating the success of university-industry partnerships. Established in 2021 in response to the unprecedented turbulence of the labor market in the post-Covid-19 reality, it is called to complete the employee lifecycle with the addition of a foundational piece. People are the cornerstone element of Grant Thornton's strategy and it is the people combining the right technical and behavioral

competencies, as well as carrying the firm's culture, that drive this strategy.

Grant Thornton's Academy brings together bright students who are interested in pursuing a career within the audit and advisory industry. Through established solid partnerships with five leading educational institutions, Grant Thornton engages students in an intensive practical experience, allowing them to learn from the industry's best experts, exposing them to a global network and helping them make grounded career choices. Annually at least two cohorts attend a 5-week study course providing them with technical and soft skills, followed by a 3-month internship program and an invitation to join Grant Thornton for those that qualify. As a result of two cohorts in year one of the Academy, 5 students are currently employed by Grant Thornton, with 11 new joiners undergoing an internship.





MS. SATENIK SHAHBAZYAN

ATTORNEY AT LAW

Aratta Consulting LLC

PERCEPTION OF CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION IN ARMENIA AND THE USA

Perception of continuing legal education in Armenia and the USA.

Continuing legal education (CLE) is understood differently in common law and civil law countries. In this article, we will consider the issue of how CLE is interpreted in the USA and Armenia.

CLE in the USA

In the USA (CLE) is also known as mandatory or minimum continuing legal education (MCLE). This continuing legal education is sometimes done by law schools or private companies but it's more often done by bar associations. A CLE program is usually focused on a specific topic and level of skill (such as an introductory program for a new lawyer or an advanced seminar for an expert). Materials written for these CLE programs often contain useful citations to cases, statutes, and other secondary sources. The materials are likely to be practice-focused rather than scholarly. An example of such CLE is Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education (IICLE). IICLE is now an independent not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the professional development of Illinois attorneys. IICLE was created to assume the responsibility for the development and operation of a full-time program of continuing legal education in Illinois. Originally, IICLE also had a role to encourage, counsel, and cooperate with the Illinois State Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association, local bar associations, and the law schools of the State of Illinois in their continuing legal education programs. IICLE continues to serve as the premier provider of continuing legal education in the State of Illinois, and its initiatives have often served as a model for other continuing education providers across the nation. IICLE accomplishes its mission through (1) the presentation of continuing

legal education programs designed by and for Illinois attorneys; (2) the publication of comprehensive practice handbooks designed by and for Illinois attorneys; and (3) the continued development and maintenance of additional legal resources designed to enhance Illinois law practice.

Thus, CLE in the United States is considered an electronic database that contains the necessary information for legal professionals. Meanwhile, in Armenia, CLE is perceived differently.

CLE in Armenia

In Armenia, CLE refers to the continuity of lifelong learning within and outside of formal education, which means that there are many common ways of learning. Just like children and adolescents who have developmental and learning needs, adults also have this need. Today, the need to continue legal education and acquire the necessary skills to adapt to an ever-changing world is becoming increasingly relevant. CLE leads to skills, academic and personal development. CLE is a tool for reforming and modernizing national systems of legal education and training. An example of CLE in Armenia is a Master's program at the Faculty of Law. One of the objectives of the Master's Program at the Faculty of Law is continuous education, including opportunities for advanced legal training for practicing lawyers. A Master's program creates a qualitative basis for meeting modern trends in lifelong education or continuing education.

Another perception of CLE is the training of legal professionals in various fields, for example, judges. A high level of legal education and its continuity are certainly necessary for judges. There may be a connection between competent judges and the speed of consideration of cases.

A promising way to overcome legal



nihilism, legal infantilism, and legal idealism is the organization of continuous legal education. It requires the formation of legal values and the legal behavior of both citizens and officials. It should be noted that today there are practically no strictly defined competencies in this area of specific state bodies. In this regard, it seems appropriate to provide a coordinating role in working on the legal education of the population and the operational publication of the necessary literature to the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia. At the same time, work on legal education should be carried out both with citizens and with officials. This will effectively implement the introduction of both administrative-legal and special regimes, and increase the level of interaction between the state and civil society.

So, in Armenia CLE is considered continuity of lifelong learning within and outside of formal education and a way of overcoming legal nihilism, legal infantilism, and legal idealism.



MS. ANNA OHANJANYAN

RESEARCHER

Teach For Armenia



TEACHER LEADERSHIP THROUGH CENTURIES: PAVING BRIDGES BETWEEN PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Leadership is the empowerment of creative individuals to set goals and follow them. Teacher Leadership empowers students to gradually change the world, gearing towards educational equity, community-building, and intellectual exchange. Sounds modern and progressive? Please make no mistake: the idea is as old as the world, or in this case, Armenia, as it has always provided teachers empowering others with knowledge and skills to push things forward.

Teach For Armenia started a Master's Program for Teacher-leaders hosted by the Yerevan State University Center of Pedagogy, and the Program curricula was enriched with a new subject which would have to root the Teach For Armenia's philosophy in the history and culture of Armenia via exploring the patterns of the past, historicizing the models of the present, and projecting the outcome in the future. In a nutshell — paving bridges between then, now, and hereafter.

The initial idea was to re-visit and re-evaluate the history of learning and schooling in Armenia through a new analytical lens. After brainstorming and lengthy discussions with the team, we undertook research to design an academic

subject that would take the students through chronological and cultural “abodes” where schooling featured as part of the pan-Armenian projects conceived and run by prominent Armenian teachers in the face of global changes and challenges. That is how the subject “Historical Models of Teacher Leadership in Armenia” was born and worked out.

The subject is designed for distance learning with six topics to explore. It will be taught as a brief cultural expedition throughout six historical periods when teachers stepped in as decision-makers, if not to stop the wheel of history, at least to face challenges and educate a generation of leaders. The goal is to reveal role-model teachers of the past acting as leaders, carrying out strategic educational projects, and empowering others toward change.

As a point of departure, we take Mesrop Mashtots' massive project —the invention of the alphabet, translation, and school establishment. Then we continue into the fifteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth centuries up to post-Soviet Armenia to look into how the patterns of teacher leadership evolved and to what extent they remain relevant today.

The MA group of students will have a chance to delve into Mashtots' “big idea” fulfilled with the aid of the king and pontiff to analyze the process of collecting and

educating children from all over Armenia to shape future teachers acting as leaders and bringing real change. Further, our group will travel to the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries Syunik and Nakhijevan to explore school-founding and community-building activities of Maghaka Ggrimetsi and Sargis Aprakunetsi as well as the patterns of such high-type schools as Gladzor, Aprakunis, and Tatev. Then, we will move to seventeenth-century Edessa to witness how Srapion Edessatsi founded a school in devastated Armenia whose students acquired key positions acting as go-betweens for Armenian communities worldwide. After exploring culture-preservation projects of Mekhitarist teachers in Europe, and Khacahtur Abovyan's equity-based inclusive “people's school,” our expedition will finally repose in post-Soviet Armenia. At this phase, students will reflect on the historical models of teacher leadership in Armenia to grasp inspiration from and draw upon to create a better tomorrow through TFA's teacher-leaders endeavor.

As the reader can assume, this will be a genuinely insightful journey. If you are interested in being a part of it, do not hesitate to get on board!



Ani Hakobyan

Kotayk marz
Arzakan village



Anahit Hovsepyan

Kotayk marz
Fantan village

My Starmus story

There are people whose heart lives in the mountains, and those whose heart lives in Space.

Among those people are Brian May, Chris Hadfield, Jim Baghian, Nadine Cox, Charles Duke, and others. During those seven days, science and culture were united and Armenia was cosmic. In short, what we experienced was other-worldly.

For me, it was particularly important that the speakers didn't only talk about the universe in general, but also about the ways of reaching it. Standing on the stage, not only did they give us important information, but also a motivation to never give up, keep fighting and continue having dreams. After all, in our infinite universe, they have all the ability to come true.

Chris Hadfield told us about his approach to dreams. He said, "Giving up is always an option, but I think it's really important to continue having dreams."

I also got inspired and it seemed as if my dreams just woke up. Especially when I was watching all the guests deliver their speeches on the stage. It was magical. I had the impression that they were talking to us from Mars. In the main hall, it was like a time machine that immediately transported us to the Scientific Camps in the backyard of the Opera House. It was an ocean of new information. I was mostly impressed by the Armat Laboratory and Warming Artsakh booths. A wonderful initiative that aims to keep Artsakh warm. And I, just like the co-founder of the event, astrophysicist Garik Israelyan, want the Republic Square to be full of tents that represent the achievements of science, technology, and art, and not tents that gather people who are striking. Science is developing in Armenia and it is pretty thrilling.

There is always so much to learn.

I sincerely hope that my dreams and the dreams of my peers, despite the discouraging and saddening events taking place in Armenia, became stronger and gained cosmic power thanks to Starmus.

Two parallel worlds

I thought there was only one reality in our world, and it's the one we live in. It turns out there is another reality parallel to ours. It is like the universe: infinite, interesting, and starry. It is the universe itself. On September 8, with Teach For Armenia and my teacher Comrade Azaryan, I got to discover this parallel reality (I think it wasn't too late of a discovery).

I can describe what I saw in words, but what I felt cannot be expressed through words.

We started our day at the Sports and Concert Complex named after Karen Demirchyan. The outside of the complex was very motivating and beautiful, but the beauty multiplied when we went inside. Upon our arrival, we were welcomed by the giant "Mars" and once we entered the hall, we met world-renowned scientists and astronauts. I was filled with pride when I saw Jim Baghyan among many others, an Armenian cosmonaut whom we got to meet in our country, in the heart of Yerevan.

We listened to their stories and discovered their vision of the future. We built an understanding of what it feels like to travel and land in Space.

The booths in the courtyard of the Opera House were appealing and interesting; here the students were displaying the materials and devices they had created.

With this, I would like to sum up the day and thank the organizers for making it unforgettable. Maybe this was the day and those were the people that will have a life-long impact on all of us.



Mr. Arsen Atayan

*Student, American University of Armenia (AUA) BA in Business
Intern, AmCham Armenia*

GLOBALIZATION AND THE EXPANSION OF BUSINESSES

Globalization is undoubtedly one of the most discussed topics in the world today. If you are thinking about expanding your business to foreign countries, you need to know the very basics of globalization. Currently, three types of globalization are distinguished: political, cultural, and economic. “We live in an age of globalization”, says Harvard Business School professor Forest Reinhardt, who teaches global business. “That is national economies are more tightly connected than ever before”. What is actually globalization and what are its effects on today’s economies and businesses?

In order to understand it, one needs to first comprehend the idea of international business. An international business is any company that operates and produces or sells goods and services between two or more countries. There are three basic ways to distinguish an international business:

- It produces goods domestically and sells domestically and internationally.
- It produces goods in a foreign country but

sells domestically.

- It produces goods in a foreign country but sells domestically and internationally.

The connection of different parts of the world resulting in the expansion of business and economic activities is what we call globalization. It also includes factors that affect doing business internationally, such as cultural differences, legal challenges, geopolitical instability, and purchasing power. If your business operates only domestically, globalization can still affect the way you run it. Who actually benefits as a result of globalization?

To answer the question above, we need to understand the spheres of the economy which are affected by globalization the most. Undoubtedly, the exchange of culture, talent, R&D, new markets, and the spread of technology affect both the price and the quality of the products which are going to be produced. This results in competition which is beneficial for consumers, as they will have access to a wider variety of products with

varying prices.

Other than that, we can’t but consider the fact that outsourcing labor overseas is a natural result of the globalization of markets. This helps manufacturing companies to cut costs and maximize their net profit. If workers in countries such as India and China can do the same job for the fraction of the price that domestic labor demands, those jobs will be sent abroad. As a result, manufacturing companies can take advantage and offer a lower price.

To sum up, in the case of business and economy, globalization has many advantages, as it results in the spread of technology and innovation throughout the world. This will eventually result in the cheaper price and higher quality of the final product. Also, globalization leads to outsourcing, which helps companies to cut their costs in labor, resulting in higher profits and sometimes lower prices of products. In both cases consumer and producer surplus increases.



Ms. Maria Mkhitarian

*Student, French University in Armenia (UFAR), Marketing Department
Intern, AmCham Armenia*

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: SHOULD WE CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO?

During our educational process, we keep our minds busy with the following questions: Is

education worth it? Or, do we need to be educated for career development? To get answers to these questions, we, first of all, need to find the differences between education and experience.

Education and experience both provide a platform for you to learn and gain some exposure to the field you choose to pursue. “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,” said Nelson Mandela. Firstly, it helps a person make better and more informed decisions by putting their knowledge to use. This increases the success rate of a person’s life. In addition, by giving everyone equal opportunities to improve themselves both personally and professionally, education contributes to the elimination of poverty and unemployment. So, the higher the level of education in a country, the better the chances of development are.

“Experience takes dreadfully high school wages, but he teaches like no other,” said Thomas Carlyle, a British writer of the 18th century. In the contemporary business world, career life has become very competitive, as the number of people having attended college and acquired degrees has increased. However, to survive in the competitive business environment, skills, and especially, experience are required for the career growth of an individual. You can look for opportunities that will help you develop skills for that career. In most cases, this could be through internships. Being in an internship equips a student with some experience in operating in the real world. Besides, internships can provide involved students with a myriad of soft skills, which may turn out to be more useful than technical skills.

Another crucial aspect of internships is the prospect of developing networks. Not only do internships provide a chance to acquire

first-hand knowledge, but they also connect you with people from different spheres. This is not the case with education, as in an academic environment, people are usually quite homogeneous in terms of their career paths and interests.

Moreover, education follows a predefined structure, whereas, in the case of experience, there is space for maneuvering and experimentation.

Additionally, contrary to education, getting experience either through a job or an internship, provides monetary benefits that help people become financially independent over time and manage their budget.

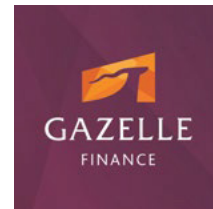
To sum up, there are both differences and similarities between education and experience, and an individual needs to maintain a balance between these two, acquiring both hard skills through education and soft skills through experience.

GOLD MEMBERS

GOLD MEMBERS



GOLD MEMBERS



GOLD MEMBERS

SILVER MEMBERS

AMBER
CAPITAL



Antares

AUA
American University of Armenia

AMX Armenia Securities Exchange

AMERICAN COUNCILS
FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Armbrok



Berlitz[®]

DIANAR CJSC



CISCO

Coca-Cola

ConverseBank

Deloitte.

SILVER MEMBERS

SILVER MEMBERS



SILVER MEMBERS

SILVER MEMBERS

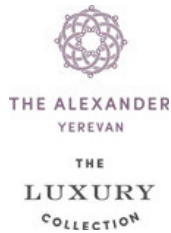


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HOLDING



Eternal Nation

Fine Cars of
Armenia



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HOTEL

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ACADEMY OF
BUSINESS



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BRONZE MEMBERS



GRANT THORNTON

THE LAUNCH OF GRANT THORNTON'S VIRTUAL OFFICE

Grant Thornton Armenia is one of the pioneers in the region to propagate and embrace digitalization and digital transformation. Our strategic priorities focus on taking advantage of digitalization and innovative technologies for both internal and external processes.

Grant Thornton Armenia declared 2022 a year of innovation and technology. Being faithful to its all announced commitments, in spring 2022, Grant Thornton Armenia became the first Tableau partner in the region and, in summer 2022, Grant Thornton launched its Virtual Office.

The World of Virtual Reality

Grant Thornton's Virtual Office is an innovative platform that completely changes the existing model of delivering services to the business of



clients.

The Virtual Office offers clients:

- Shared virtual working space, where they can have smooth collaboration, communicate through live chat, and save their time and resources.
- Document exchange function, with help of which they can exchange, archive, and easily search for documents.
- Task management system, where they can create, control the task process and keep an eye on all the tasks.
- Data analytics and visual dashboards, where they can analyze high volumes of data, visualize with Tableau, and forecast through BI.
- Cyber-secured platform, where they can manage all their data safely in a secured space.

Official presentation: Opening the door to the Virtual Office

The official presentation of Grant Thornton's Virtual Office took place in Yerevan on July 7 with the attendance of representatives of the business community.



"The opening of the Virtual Office is very exciting for me both in terms of the development of our company and the development of the professional services sector in our country and in our region," said Gurgen Hakobyan, Regional Head for Member Firm Development - CIS and Mongolia.

Gevorg Nersisyan, senior manager of Grant Thornton Armenia's Tax advisory department spoke about the development history of Grant Thornton's Virtual Office and offered the participants of the event to take a small tour to it.

The presentation of the platform was followed by a panel discussion on "Digitalization and Innovation in Consulting."





ACBA BANK CJSC

MORE THAN AMD 226 BILLION ALLOCATED TO THE ECONOMY IN 2022

Investments in all the spheres of the economy

During the first 10 months of 2022, Acba Bank actively continued investing in the economy of Armenia. Within this period, the volume of loans provided by the bank in all the branches of the economy comprised more than AMD 226 billion, which has increased by 29% compared to the same period of the past year.

At the same time, Acba remains the absolute leader in financing one of the main directions of Armenia's economy - the agricultural sector. During this period, the funds provided by Acba in the agricultural sector comprised more than AMD 51 billion.

Small and medium enterprises, the main driving force of the economy, continue to be the focus of the Bank's attention. This year, the funds provided by the bank to SMEs amounted to more than AMD 98 billion. Moreover, the bank provided loans of around AMD 77 billion to households.

This year, the bank also actively participated in the state support agricultural subsidy program, the

processes of establishing new intensive gardens, the creation of greenhouse farms, and, in general, "green" and industrial agriculture, resource-saving projects.

Support in solving the key problems

This year also Acba remained consistent in the recovery of economic damages due to Covid and war. In order to "rehabilitate" the economy, Acba showed an individual approach to all partners - forgave loans, provided loan holidays.

From the beginning of 2020 until October 2022, Acba Bank has forgiven 5050 loans, with a total volume of AMD 2 billion, around 5000 fines and penalties, with a total volume of AMD 2 billion. The bank has forgiven around 436 loans with a total volume of AMD 250 million of the Defenders of the Motherland, soldiers who were killed or went missing in the war.

In addition, in total, Acba Bank, other members of Acba Financial Group - Acba Leasing and Amundi-Acba Asset Management, provided more than AMD 400 million to Hayastan Pan-Armenian Fund and the Insurance

Foundation for Servicemen, as well as for solving social problems caused by the war and overcoming Covid.

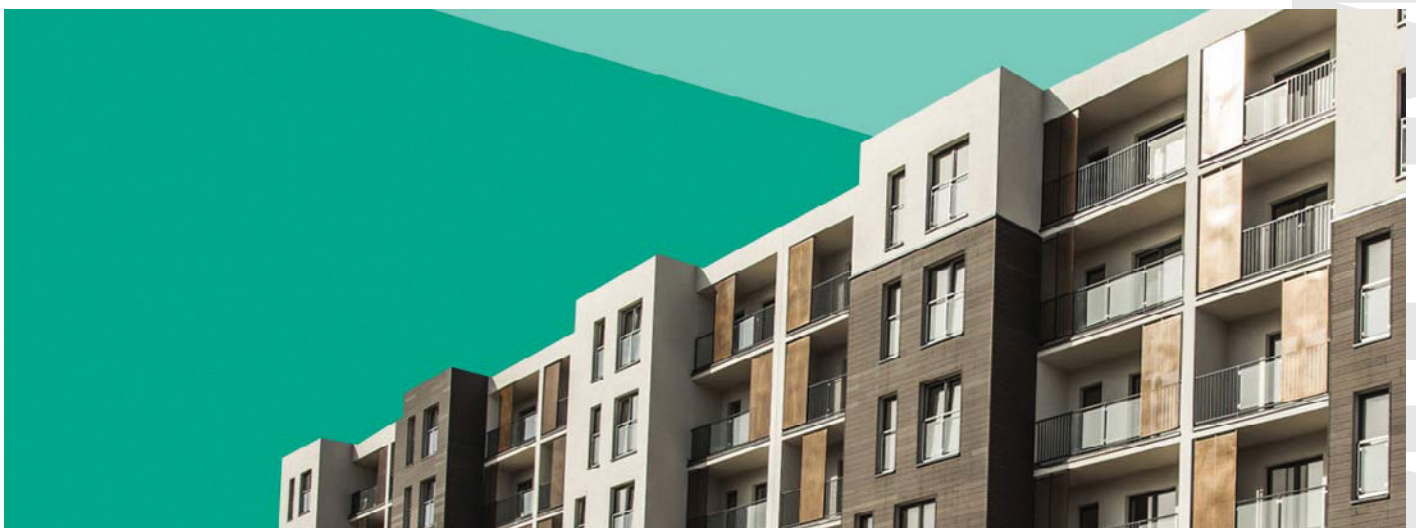
Acba Bank is also the largest donor of the Insurance Foundation for Servicemen providing more than AMD 190 million.

The year was historic

2022 was a historic year for Acba. In parallel to all the constant large-scale investments in all the spheres of the economy, Acba Bank's shares were listed in the fastest liquidating A platform of the Armenian Securities Exchange. The people interested in trading securities got the opportunity to buy/sell the shares of Acba Bank. At the same time, invest.acba.am website was created, thanks to which it became possible to receive daily updates on the bank's shares.

Through acba digital platform it is possible to buy/sell Acba Bank's listed shares. Moreover, acba digital platform allows buying and selling bonds and shares of other companies.

To learn more, visit the bank's official website at www.acba.am.





THE GURUS

THE GURUS - A BIOTECHNOLOGY COMPANY
ASSEMBLING HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS
IN THE INDUSTRY

The Gurus is a biometrics service provider company assembling highly qualified professionals in the industry. We deliver Clinical Statistical Programming, Clinical Data Management, and Biostatistics services to renowned companies which are included in the TOP 10 CROs and Pharmaceutical

companies operating across a broad range of therapeutic areas in FTE and PBS models.

The company has the biggest and most experienced Clinical SAS Programming Team with 7+

years of experience across Armenia.

Advantages of The Gurus expertise :

- Strong expertise in over 10+ therapeutic areas
- Domain knowledge (Statistical Programming, CDISC Data Standardization and Submission, PK/PD Analysis, Data Analytics & Visualization)
- Project Management support
- High-quality and efficient outcomes
- Streamlined communication

MISSION

- Become a brand associated with transparency, dependability, and safety
- Strive to offer high-quality services to all companies, regardless of size and location
- Educate, and prepare a new generation of experts through intensive training and coaching

BACKGROUND

The Biotechnology industry has experienced substantial growth in recent years and this has led to growth in global demand for Clinical Statistical programmers who has an essential role in clinical trials. Due

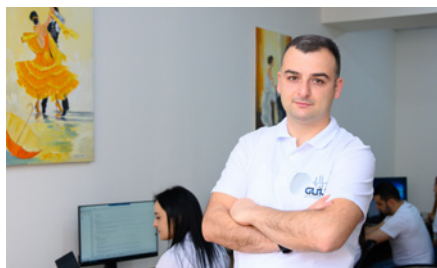
to the limited availability of suitably trained resources in this industry in Armenia, The Gurus have initiated

SAS Base training courses for the achievement of mixed results according to worldwide standards and international market concerns and requirements.

First time on 2022 Armenian biotechnology company in face of The Gurus Team has been represented in the International Platforms such as "Phuse EU Connect" and "Pharmasug" which are the biggest events worldwide in Biotechnology sphere.

SAS Institute's Silver Partner

Since 2021 The Gurus LLC became the Official and Sole Silver Partner in Armenia. SAS Software internationally sets the industry standards in clinical trial analysis. SAS Institute plays a major role in the success of analytics accelerating medical discoveries and not only. SAS technology solutions help meet the needs of organizations in practically every industry, regardless of size.



SAS BASE TRAININGS

Over 3 years The Gurus has conducted more than 30 SAS Base trainings across Armenia for more than 1500 participants. In terms of implementation, The Gurus is collaborating with the Ministry of High-Tech Industry of Armenia, the Armenian State University of Economics (the first Faculty of Statistics in Armenia has been



established in ASUE), the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, French University in Armenia, etc. and the best performed have been hired by The Gurus.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Resource Planning Department allocating post-Graduated trainees for the respective Client's Team as per request of the Client by identifying the strongest capabilities of the resource and requested assignments of the Client.
- Employee development Program including regular trainings on keeping the Team up to date with the latest technologies as well as leadership skills to continually advance the Capabilities of our Team (Current Topic R in SAS)
- Team is strictly following project timelines by setting internal deadlines and consistently achieving quality targets
- Committee of Team Leaders and Management authorized members are implementing quarterly check-ups on Junior and Mid-level Programmers
- Working with Teams across the globe The Gurus is adapting the QA process according to the Client's SOPs

The Gurus LLC is Headquartered in Yerevan and has 2 branches one in Vanadzor and one in Ijevan and planning to expand its frames to other cities in Armenia and other countries. For over 3 years we've been providing high-quality outsourced statistical programming and data management teams to Clients across the globe.



Past	Present	Future
Established in 2019 in a small room	Brand new 400 sqm office with the latest security systems	More is yet to come.....
With only one employee	Team of 70+ employees	
With 0\$ Investment	The title of the biggest and most experienced Team of Statistical Programmers in Armenia	





ERNST & YOUNG CJSC

EY LAUNCHED CONSULTING SERVICE LINE IN ARMENIA

In August 2022, EY officially launched Consulting Service Line in Armenia.

Since 2008, EY's fast-growing office in Yerevan has been providing assurance and advisory services to local and international clients working in the country. In 2010, EY launched tax and transaction advisory services, and in 2014, legal services in Armenia.

Currently, the EY office in Armenia employs close to 80 professionals providing solutions to a number of leading institutions operating in different industries in Armenia and helping them solve their challenges.

By placing humans at the center, leveraging technology at speed, and enabling innovation at scale, EY's consulting team of professionals helps clients transform to realize long-term value for people, businesses, and society as a whole. Specific fields of play include:

- **Strategy and Transformation:** Identifying the right strategy that generates value for the business
- **Finance:** Transforming the finance function to make it more agile, to support scalability, better decision-making, and enterprise-wide performance
- **Customer and growth:** Transforming customer-facing commercial functions, including sales, marketing, channels, pricing, digital product/services, and customer experiences
- **Risks:** Transforming risk and control functions, including enterprise risk, compliance, and internal audit
- **Cybersecurity:** Improving the approach to IT risk, cybersecurity, and data risk
- **Supply Chain and Operations:** Reinventing end-to-end supply chains, business processes, and services to achieve cost savings
- **Technology:** Transforming the IT function and IT-related outcomes to enable business strategy, including technology architecture, and digital and artificial intelligence strategies.
- **Organization and people:** Improving organization, people, and HR function to enable business strategy.
- **Sustainability:** Helping to meet the needs of the future without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

For more details, visit the website at ey.com/am or reach out through the official mailbox: yerevan@am.ey.com.





FINCA ARMENIA

FINCA ARMENIA EXPANDS ITS PRODUCT OFFERING

FINCA Armenia Expands Its Product Offering

In order to provide more competitive and convenient financial services, **FINCA** Armenia has designed and launched three new products. Keeping our customers at the heart of everything we do, we decided to create a wider selection of services to fulfill their financial needs.

When switching to fully cashless lending in July of this year, we created a co-branded debit card in cooperation with Evocabank. The cards are free of charge, have no annual service fee and enable our clients to receive their loan amounts the same day they receive the card. Since a portion of our client base has little to no experience using bank cards, we were also tasked with the job of training them on card usage and safety.

To create better opportunities for our clients involved in agriculture, we

launched an agricultural value chain loan in cooperation with the German Armenian Fund. The loan is designed for entrepreneurs operating in the field of agricultural production, processing of crop or livestock products, or providing related services and can be disbursed to any of the actors of the value chain.

Following customer demand, we also launched mortgage loans for the purposes of home renovation and the purchase and construction of residential real estate. With this offer, we plan to reach the relatively younger rural population and give them a chance to improve their living conditions.

Meanwhile, our plans for the coming year are much more ambitious. We plan to launch two more loan types – an energy efficiency loan and a women-focused loan. At the same time, we intend to further digitize our product offering by developing our online/mobile lending platform and

enhancing our digital field automation (tablets-based lending) to ensure start-to-end loan disbursement directly in the field. This will pave the way to our full transition into a touch-tech service delivery model that combines fintech innovation with a human-centered approach to delivering impactful financial services. As an institution with a double bottom line, we are committed to creating a positive social impact and offering financial services that matter.





INSURANCE FOUNDATION FOR SERVICEMEN (IFS) IN COOPERATION WITH MEGERIAN CARPET

JAZZICAL KOMITAS FOR GOOD FUNDRAISING EVENT 2022

The 20 October 2022 was an important and memorable day for the Insurance Foundation for Servicemen. The team was hosting its 1st fundraising event at Megerian Carpet.

This was a unique evening that gathered IFS beneficiaries, individual and corporate donors, partners, and friends under one roof providing the opportunity to socialize over a light refreshment, enjoy the magical Komitas performance by Joel Martin and participate in the charity fundraising event for IFS beneficiaries – servicemen of Armenia and Artsakh.

Mr. Joel A. Martin, the special guest of the event, a Norwalk pianist, producer, composer, and arranger kindly agreed to contribute to the event with his charity performance. He arrived from New York to join the event and delight the guests with his unparalleled pieces of Jazzical Komitas. He believes that MUSIC is the spirit that binds our collective humanity and stops us from destroying ourselves. For him, the best part of the evening was knowing that

we did a good thing for the soldiers who serve the nation and their families.

During the event, IFS recognized its top donors in several categories for 2020 and 2021 and extended its sincere gratitude to everyone for their support and unwavering faith in the mission of IFS. Among companies: HelpSystems, Haypost, OneArmenia, ID bank, FASF jointly with San Francisco Bay Area Artsakh Task Force and ACBA Bank among companies and communities.

The dynamic part of the event was the charity auction where 5 lots gifted to IFS by Arev Petrosyan, Adam Kablanian, Arame' Art Gallery, Noy Factory, and IFS beneficiary Benyamin Poghosyan were sold off and the generated income was directed to IFS.

Ms. Irina Seylanyan, Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees, IFS emphasized the paramount importance of IFS mission and existence. Ms. Seylanyan also mentioned that the 2020 Artsakh war proved how vital was the role of IFS for the servicemen and their families who gave life or limb to defend

our Homeland.

Ms. Karine Sarkissian, CEO of IFS, highlighted the work done in a short period and she, specifically, stressed that since 2017 IFS gave compensation of 66.5 billion AMD to the servicemen and their families. Ms. Sarkissian believes that the stories and experiences of our soldiers will seed strong values, beliefs, and attitudes, and IFS will serve as a unifying platform for Armenians worldwide.

The IFS event generated over 11.65 million AMD from ticket sales, individual and corporate donations, and charity auction revenue.

It was a stunning event that proved the importance of the Insurance Foundation of Servicemen and the trust and belief that our donors have in it.

The IFS Executive Team takes this opportunity to express its appreciation to each employee of Armenia for their mandatory contributions as well as to all voluntary donations from Armenia and the Diaspora.





MCCANN YEREVAN SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS COOPERATION

McCann Yerevan was honored to organize presentation of SAMSUNG Galaxy Z Fold4 and Galaxy Z Flip4 foldable new smartphones in Yerevan. Celebrities, influencers and the company's top managers attended the grand party at the Italiano Ristorante downtown. McCann Yerevan was trusted to provide the whole creative strategy and implementation of this event, which

included concept creation, production, design, event management and PR campaign. Simultaneously McCann team developed integrated TV, OOH and digital campaign for SAMSUNG Galaxy Z Fold4 and Galaxy Z Flip4 foldable new smartphones in Armenia. The Galaxy Z Fold4 and Galaxy Z Flip4 are Samsung's foldable devices of the

fourth generation. Being quite small when folded, the Galaxy Z Flip4 unfolds to the size of a regular smartphone. It is a perfect device for self-expression with many features aimed at content creation and customization. The event was hosted by actor Arman Margaryan, while Aram MP3 and DJ Mey provided the musical accompaniment.





SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ARMENIA

SINA - SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF SYRIAN-ARMENIAN FAMILIES IN YEREVAN

Supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and Araratbank

The project has the aim of improving the socio-economic integration of Syrian-Armenian families (fled from war in Syria) into Armenian society so that they are in a position to participate socially and economically through strengthened self-help structures and improved employability and have access to competent and functioning community-based state and non-state support structures. The beneficiaries of the project are 400 marginalized Syrian-Armenian families.

The project has the following components:

- **Improvement of the psychosocial situation of the Syrian-Armenian families;**
- **Improvement of employability/entrepreneurial skills of the Syrian-Armenian families;**
- **Improvement of the level of education and integration of the children of Syrian-Armenian families into the Armenian education system;**
- **Ensure effective representation of the Syrian Armenians' right to socio-economic participation**

and provision of integrated and coordinated support by the local organizations;

- **Strengthening the skills of the local government and civil society professionals in working with vulnerable groups.**

Improvement of the psychosocial situation of the Syrian-Armenian families

The psychosocial situation of the families participating in the project is strengthened through a series of trainings, workshops, individual and group counseling sessions according to their individual needs, particularly on access to social benefits, child's rights and child-friendly educational practices, self-esteem, peer support in coping with trauma.

Improvement of employability or entrepreneurial skills of the Syrian-Armenian families

Based on the labor market analysis, career counseling is organized for the project participants, as well as vocational training courses provided by certified vocational training providers, job placement, internships, and trainings. To promote entrepreneurial skills and contribute to the income generation of the families, small business trainings are organized

for the project participants. Those who successfully complete the trainings develop their own business plans and present them to the selection committee. The winners receive start-up capital to establish a new business or enlarge an existing one.

Improvement of the level of education and integration of the children of Syrian-Armenian families into the Armenian education system

In order to make it easier for project participants with children to take up economic activities and to support the integration of children through high-quality education and care, SOS Armenia has set up and operates a daycare center. Here, both underschool and school children receive different services. The activities for the group of 3-6 years old children support their cognitive and social development through learning games, fairy tales as well as their motor and creative abilities through singing, dancing, and painting. The focus for the school children is on promoting their school performance. The project staff maintains constant contact with the schools in order to monitor the development of the pupils. Additionally, excursions, summer camps, visits to the cinema/theatre, and celebrations of holidays are



organized in the daycare center.

Ensure effective representation of the Syrian Armenians' right to socio-economic participation and provision of integrated and coordinated support by the local organizations

Within the framework of the awareness-raising campaign on the problems of displaced Syrian-Armenian, a video has been produced which can be reached by the following link: <https://youtu.be/ydHmublPtM>. Also, an interactive play will be performed, followed by a panel discussion to inform about the specific problems of the target group and to strengthen the personal responsibility of decision-makers and professionals.

SOS Armenia elaborated a guide of social services relevant to the target group, published in Western and Eastern Armenian languages and disseminated among the project participants. The guide contains information on various government services and detailed instructions on how to access them.

Strengthening the skills of the local government and civil society professionals in working with vulnerable groups

The social security and child protection professionals are trained on supporting vulnerable families according to nationally defined standards. The training package particularly includes the

following topics:

- International and national documents on child protection and social security
- Working with children and child protection in practice
- Fundamentals and principles of social work, its methods, approaches, and case management



AmCham in Armenia Strategy and Priorities

VISION

AmCham has identified **Key Priorities** for advancing the vision of Armenia for better business environment and will be focusing on the following basic levels:

1. POLICY & LEGAL

2. OPERATIONAL - SHORT TERM IMPROVEMENTS

1. POLICY & LEGAL

Economic Policies need to be aligned with general economy development strategy (yet, to be prepared) and the main and fundamental changes in Tax Legislation should follow and support the implementation of this strategy.

General Economy Development Strategy should be prepared for the following period:

- Emergency Plan (for up to 1.5 – 2 years)
- Mid-Term economy development plan (for up to 5 – 7 years)
- Long-Term economy development strategy (for up to 30 years).

General Strategy Paper should be the consolidation of different sectors development strategies. Specific action plans (road maps) should be prepared both for sector players and regulators/government.

Economic Development Strategy Paper should be developed to focus on the priority sectors such as agriculture, ICT, industry, etc., as well as on the operational areas such as industrial policy, taxation, investment, export, etc., and be predictable, data driven and result oriented with Key Performance Indicators which cascades down through the Government all levels with a common vision.

International experience shows that existence of relatively large alternative tax systems result in ineffectiveness of tax evasion and tax administration. The companies should operate under the same legislation conditions and follow all tax rules.

There is a need to conceptually reinterpret the general tax policy: taxation for producers (profit tax, income tax) vs. taxation for consumers (VAT, excise tax). We need to have a tax policy, which will support producers (especially export oriented producers), thus, reducing taxes for production and increases taxes for consumption (e.g., land tax, property tax).

Legislative changes/reforms should be implemented to facilitate a smooth operation in the following areas:

- ✓ **Labor Code** - as it is out of date and does not reflect the current reality of rapid changes such as Internship, Disability, Child Birth Encouragement, Expats employment, etc.
- ✓ **Customs Administration - Authorized Trade Operators** system application, to facilitate the post-customs operations.
- ✓ **Justice Sector Reforms** - with the focus on arbitration and IPR, as well as anticorruption reforms. E-draft operational effectiveness should be considered.

2. OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

The following should be the main focus areas in **Operational Improvements**:

- ✓ **State Exclusion from the Business Sector/Services Monopolization** – State should not become a monopolist in the account of the private sector as the state cannot be as effective as the private sector and it is hard to track the performance of the state owned sectors. Competition Protection Commission should be able to track the state companies' share so they do not monopolize and abuse their dominance and avoid of possible corruption risks.
- ✓ **Regulatory Impact Assessment** - to do a data driven policy making. When a tax item changes, it must be explained why it changes and what is the impact on the government budget as well as the expected impact on the businesses, economy and society, as well as be predictable.
- ✓ **Private Public Dialogue mandatory platform** system establishment with the Government and the National Assembly for effective lobbying.
- ✓ **Fair Tax Privilege System** - Fundamental changes in tax legislation should not be made without public consent. Tax privileges need to be given not to the individual companies but the sectors as per the priority areas. The Tax reforms should be implemented by phases and a timing gap should be given for implementation.
- ✓ **Family Income Declarations Scheme** - should be introduced to be applied: instead of individual declarations, it should be differentiated by type of income, i.e. by business owners, high-salary, middle income, low income, etc. Tax deductions should be applied for healthcare, education, vulnerability, etc.
- ✓ **State Procurement** - should be transparent, simplified and digitalized, which has an actual working system.



for a better business environment



From October 5 to 8, 2022, the members of AmChams in Europe (ACE) gathered in Sofia, Bulgaria, at the AmChams in Europe Best Practice Conference. The conference welcomed over 40 representatives from 27 American Chambers in Europe and Eurasia.

From AmCham Armenia, the conference was attended by Ms. Lilit Gevorgyan, Executive Director, who also serves as a Board Member in ACE, and Ms. Armine Davtyan, Policy Advisor.



At the conference, AmChams discussed their development and perspectives, as well as further integration of the network. Throughout the conference, AmChams shared their good practices, looked at the ACE Benchmark Survey that provided the results of the comparative analysis between AmChams, and enjoyed plenty of social events and opportunities to get to know the Bulgarian business community. They also visited Sofia University and attended the special presentation of INSAIT Institute (Institute for Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and Technology). The Bulgarians were very hospitable and turned the conference program into a wonderful experience.

Also, AmChams awarded the **Creative Network Award** for the best project that inspires other AmChams. Among the three finalists, the winner was **AmCham Slovenia** with its **“I’m a Teacher!”** project, highlighting the vital importance of teachers, as they play an essential role in shaping young people and, thus, the future of tomorrow’s leaders.



2022 AMCHAMS IN EUROPE BEST PRACTICE CONFERENCE

Ajša Vodnik, Vice Chair of AmChams in Europe and CEO of AmCham Slovenia, said: “It was amazing meeting colleagues from all around Europe joined in a friendly and unifying spirit; these were moments for inspiration and shared values. Thank you to the exceptional AmCham Bulgaria team for hosting us and for their dedication and hospitality.”

At the conference, which was also very rich in content, the keynote speaker and **Chair of AmChams in Europe, Susan Danger**, in her address on Gala dinner, pointed out: We must not be complacent and take the Transatlantic relationship for granted!”. In the highlights of her speech, she pointed out that respect for human dignity, the rule of law, and democracy are the basis for a strong political and cultural partnership, for which Europe and the US have a closer relationship today than they’ve had in years. She continued that the world faces many other political, economic and environmental challenges and that only by working together can governments on both sides of the Atlantic create a stable economic environment. She stressed the thriving network of AmChams and companies as ideally positioned to be the bridgebuilders between governments and businesses on both sides of the Atlantic.

Best Practice Conference is traditionally hosted by an AmChams in Europe member and focuses on facilitating the exchange of best practices and discussing relevant issues impacting AmChams and their members. This platform also supports in building bridges between member companies in Europe.

AmChams in Europe serves as the umbrella organization for 46 American Chambers of Commerce from 44 countries throughout Europe and Eurasia. In Europe AmChams represent the interests of more than 17,000 American and European companies employing 20 million workers - accounting for more than USD 1.1 trillion in investment on both sides of the Atlantic.



AMCHAM EVENTS

Be My Guest with Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company



Be My Guest with Holiday Inn Yerevan - Republic Square



Be My Guest with Opera Suite Hotel



Breakfast Meeting with the Minister of Finance Mr. Tigran Khachatryan



Silicon Mountains Tech Summit 2022



Meeting with the Minister of Economy Mr. Vahan Kerobyan



Consultation on Franchise Development in Armenia



Meeting with USAID Expert Declan Murphy



Legal Committee Meetings



Meeting with the Representatives of the U.S. Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP)



Workforce Development Committee Meetings



TCUFP Committee Meetings



Digital Transformation Committee Meetings



ACE Best Practice Conference



Sustainable Development Committee Meetings





for a better business environment



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