

HONOR THE PAST • EMPOWER THE PRESENT • ENSURE THE FUTURE



FAR'S history

On a cold December day in 1988, the earth in northern Armenia began to shake. When it was over, the city of Spitak was gone and Gyumri, Armenia's second largest city, lay in ruins. Twenty five thousand were killed, and hundreds of thousands were injured, orphaned and left homeless. It was in that darkness that the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) was born.

Almost immediately following news of the earthquake, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, then primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church, pulled together some of the Diaspora's leaders - physicians, academics, builders - to deliver emergency aid to those whose lives were destroyed by the earthquake.

The Archbishop traveled to the devastated region with Kevork Hovnanian, one of America's leading home builders, and Dr. Edgar Housepian, a leading neurosurgeon. Surrounded by the suffering, the three were immediately compelled to act. Upon their return to New York they began an all-out effort to mobilize the resources of the diocese to aid the Armenian people.

FAR's earliest programs dealt with matters of life or death: medical missions, delivery of relief supplies, shipping of food and vitamins, and rehabilitation of decimated infrastructure. To countless thousands, FAR became a necessary lifeline.

FAR has since then become one of the most respected independent organizations to have supported Armenia through its transition from a totalitarian state to a market democracy. FAR has built a strong base of support within the diocese and the entire Armenian-American community, among non-Armenians, the government and other grant-making organizations.

FAR continues to shape its programs to meet Armenia's evolving needs. The organization's mission has grown from one with a focus on immediate rescue efforts to one that aims to bring long-term development and prosperity to Armenia.

FAR is a trusted partner for individual and institutional donors who want to help Armenia, Karabagh and Javakhk in the most effective, efficient and powerful way.

who we are

FAR is the collective community of thousands of supporters and benefactors. FAR is you and FAR is us. Together, in a partnership built upon trust and loyalty, we are investing in the future of Armenia.

FAR was born from the Armenian community's unwavering determination to pull its people out of a tragedy. More than 20 years later, this commitment has made us one of the most effective relief and development organizations in Armenia. Our focus is still strong, despite the inevitable challenges. We are giving the Armenian people the tools they need to build a free, independent and prosperous nation.

FAR's programs are carried out by a cohort of highly skilled individuals in Armenia and our New York headquarters - all of whom are committed to using their skills and knowledge to make their homeland a better place.

Our work has not gone unnoticed. Charity Navigator has awarded us multiple four star ratings - the highest rating given for fiscal transparency and efficient services. FAR is also continually awarded multi-million dollar grants from organizations like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF and others.

FAR's programs are as diverse as the needs of Armenia, with each one designed to honor the past, empower the present, and ensure the future of this great nation.

FAR'S mission

DIGNITY, TRUST, SERVICE

FAR partners with members of the Armenian Diaspora and other donors worldwide to provide Armenians the tools, resources and guidance they need. Always focused on our goals to "Honor the Past, Empower the Present, Ensure the Future," FAR is dedicated to bringing the dream of a free, democratic, prosperous and culturally rich Armenia to reality. This means creating opportunity, through which even the most underprivileged of our brothers and sisters can have a better quality of life, greater dignity and a brighter future. We do so by meeting the country's evolving needs through short-term relief and long-term programs and strategies, which strengthen Armenia's economic growth and social development.

FAR's programs address the following areas: child protection, economic development, education, health care and social services. Each of our programs has the capacity to touch our fellow Armenians in deeply personal ways.

history of FAR





FAR's Values

FAR, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, is the preeminent relief and development agency working to secure the needs of vulnerable populations in Armenia, Karabagh and Javakhk. Since its inception in 1988, FAR has served hundreds of thousands of Armenians through more than 220 programs, and has channeled more than \$285 million in humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable segments of the population.

FAR's Excellence

FAR's achievements are far-reaching and lasting. For example, FAR's Homeless Children's Center (HCC) is considered the first safe haven for children in Armenia. Since its launch in 2000, the center has gone from providing crisis intervention to being a full-service, round-the-clock facility. Partnering with UNICEF, Every Child UK and the civil community in Armenia, FAR has incorporated a unique multi-disciplinary approach to help and rehabilitate troubled children. The center has family outreach services, a foster care program and training and educational sessions for social and civil workers. To increase its scope, the center also has branch locations around the country and a national hotline. More than 4,500 high-risk children and families have been helped through the HCC.

FAR's work in the Nagorno-Karabagh region has impacted more than 30,000 lives. FAR, in 2002, was awarded a multi-year contract from USAID to help those victimized by the conflict in Karabagh. This was the first major U.S. government agency contract for the region. The Humanitarian Assistance Program

to Nagorno-Karabagh (HAPNK) helped to build shelters, potable and irrigation water systems and health facilities in the area. In addition, FAR and its HAPNK healthcare partner, the American University of Armenia (AUA), have conducted public health training programs for 120 doctors and health practitioners. Training programs have also provided medical equipment and supplies to 30 health facilities.

The Continuing Medical Education (CME) program has helped enhance the skills of Armenia's healthcare workers by giving them access to further training. CME's tremendous success has been the impetus for other programs of its kind in Armenia. CME, which began in 2005, gives health care professionals access to training in the latest medical methods and techniques. In only four years, the program has earned widespread support from Armenia and the United States. Yerevan State Medical University has also replicated the CME program model for its post-graduate education program.

FAR's Gyumri Information Technology Center (GTech), established in 2005, has already helped the economy to grow. GTech's program offers students information technology training from some of the most respected experts in the field. Due to the program's success, the city of Gyumri is being transformed; graduates continue to find competitive local jobs, IT businesses are opening new branches in the area, and government investment is increasing.

FAR's Efficiency

Headquartered in New York City, FAR also maintains local offices in Armenia and Karabagh. 95 percent of FAR employees are Armenian nationals. Staff thoroughly research critical needs and develop strategic projects that have a long-term impact on the lives of Armenians. Working closely with its local offices in Armenia, FAR monitors, evaluates and ensures each program is executed efficiently. All contributions are directly applied to FAR's programs and only 13.5 percent of FAR's total revenue is used for overhead and fundraising expenses.

FAR's Reputation

FAR has earned a trusted reputation. Committed to building thriving communities, FAR has effectively engaged a growing network of partners in the United States, Armenia and around the world.

Backed by a distinguished board of directors which is comprised of prominent Armenian-American leaders, and the loyal FAR family of benefactors, donors and contributors, FAR has successfully completed every project it has undertaken. The organization is widely recognized for accomplishing goals on time and within budget. FAR's fiscal transparency, accountability and reliability position the organization as a sustainable engine for contribution and investment in the Armenian people.



CHILD PROTECTION: hope for a new life

Kostas and Nadya were first abandoned by their abusive father. Later their mother, who struggled with mental problems, also became physically abusive. The two children then went to live with their grandparents who eventually grew too sick to care for them.

Eventually, specialists from FAR's Homeless Children's Center (HCC) worked with the overwhelmed grandparents and decided that a foster family could offer the children a better life. Living with a couple and their 10-year-old adopted son proved to be the best situation for Nadya and Kostas. Surrounded by the love and support they so desperately needed, Kostas and Nadya were finally able to enjoy the pleasures of a carefree childhood. Now, Kostas excels at football and Nadya is perfecting her sewing skills. Most importantly, these two young Armenians have something they would not have had otherwise: hope.



child protection

DEVELOPING FOSTER CARE: securing kostas' and nadia's future

FAR partnered with government officials and the civil community to develop Armenia's foster care program in 2005. The move was a response to the alarming increase in the number of children who were being abandoned or placed in one of the nation's 13 orphanages or 65 boarding schools.

The FAR-run foster program is a community-based alternative with a trained and energized network of families who provide children with safe, loving and nurturing environments. The program offers support and stability to children in need of care during what can otherwise be a traumatic and painful period in their lives. The program is sponsored by UNICEF and is run by the HCC staff in Yerevan.

Another component of the program focuses on prevention. Center staff work with parents who are struggling to properly care for their children. By providing moral and material support, the staff helps parents overcome problems which otherwise might lead them to eventually abandon their children.

CHILD PROTECTION: key programs

Homeless Children's Center (HCC)

Since its founding in 2000, this center has transformed the way Armenia cares for its neglected and abandoned youth. Initially providing basic crisis intervention and temporary shelter, the center is now a full-service facility for at-risk youth. It helps children by providing temporary housing, rehabilitation, counseling and foster care, and also by linking children and families to proper services through a Child Protection Network.

Foster Care

FAR took the lead in partnering with the government and other non-profit organizations to develop a family-centered alternative to institutionalization. Since the foster care system was started in 2005, 67 children have been placed in loving foster families.

Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP)

In 2007, the Women's Guild Central Council of Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) selected FAR to operate this program, which connects donors in the Armenian Diaspora to Armenian children who are in critical need of financial support. Through FAR, donors provide direct support to 1,300 young Armenians, most of whom are orphans.



FAR Child Protection

CAPACITY STATEMENT

For FAR, children's health, welfare and safety have always been top priorities. With so many factors at play – poverty, familial conflict and the lack of a strong welfare system – child abandonment, abuse and neglect are major problems in Armenia.

Just as in other former Soviet countries, in Armenia it is common for parents to place neglected children in orphanages as opposed to addressing problems or meeting needs in other ways. And when Armenian orphans turn 18, they must leave these orphanages, which often means they are forced to confront a life on the streets where begging, drug addiction and prostitution are rampant.

For years, FAR has worked in cooperation with state structures, local and international organizations including UNICEF, every Child UK and Yerevan State University, to address the complex needs of at-risk children. The organization has done groundbreaking work on this issue – establishing the nation's foster care system, and offering programs that provide not only emotional, financial and physical support, but also hope and joy to the children who need it most.

Protecting The Future of Armenia's Children

Established in 1999 with the help of significant funding generously donated by caring Armenian-American visionaries, the Homeless Children's Center (HCC), located in Yerevan, is the only safe haven for at-risk children in Armenia and Karabagh. It is the only institution in Armenia that performs crisis intervention and rehabilitation for children between the ages of three and 18. HCC has helped more than 4,500 children since it opened.

Through a multifaceted approach, the center offers physical, emotional and psychological assistance to children living on the streets or to those who are victims of abuse and neglect. An on-site doctor and other part-time health care professionals provide medical and psychological therapy. Shelter and legal assistance are available 24 hours a day at branches throughout Armenia or via a national telephone hotline. The center is also a leader of the national Child Protection Network, a collective agreement with the state protection system and other organizations. Together, these agencies utilize all available resources to assist children in need and they lobby to improve the government's existing child protection system.

A major expansion of FAR's child protection programs was announced in 2008 with the generous gift of \$1 million from The Edward and Helen Mardigian Foundation. The donation helped to establish The Helen and Edward Mardigian Family Protection Foundation, which is helping to enhance all services at the Homeless Children's Center, including medical care and educational programming.

FAR also helped develop Armenia's foster care program by first partnering with the government in 2005. Today, FAR works with UNICEF and the government to ensure that children in need are taken out of unstable environments and placed into supportive homes.

FAR is also attracting more and more advocates for child welfare through the HCC's Circle of Friends, a group of distinguished child advocates. Established in 2007, the group was created to unite and attract new support and resources for abandoned children.

Giving Armenia's Vulnerable Children Opportunity

Through FAR's Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP), many children have opportunities they might ordinarily never know. FAR partners with the Women's Guild Central Council of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and works in cooperation with local parishes in Armenia to implement CASP. The program directly delivers aid from CASP's donors in the Diaspora to sponsored children in Armenia. The money supplies the children, who are orphaned or missing one parent, with food, clean water, medical care, clothing, education materials and recreational equipment.

FAR has done groundbreaking work on the issue of child protection – establishing the nation's foster care system, and offering programs that provide not only emotional, financial and physical support, but also hope and joy to the children who need it most.

With the support of CASP donors, FAR also renovated and furnished a guest house in the Gavar Orphanage to create a safe haven for older female orphans (ages 18 and above), helping to smooth their the transition into adulthood. In addition, the generous support of the Women's Guild has enabled FAR to install a new heating system at a kindergarten for disabled children and organize Christmas parties at orphanages and specialized boarding schools.

Caring for Child Development

FAR's summer camps provide a healthy outlet for many children who often have few options for recreation outside of school. This initiative is especially important due to the high unemployment that has burdened Armenia since its independence. With fewer job opportunities, many parents can no longer afford to spend on recreation for their children – and some turn to the streets for distraction. To prevent this, FAR began organizing summer camps throughout Armenia.

Supported by CASP USA and Friends of FAR USA, FAR's summer camps give underprivileged, parentless or disabled

children a chance to spend a carefree summer filled with friends, sports, arts and cultural events. The camps also provide food, travel expenses, and medical care. In 1998, FAR reopened a camp in the village of Kaps, near the earthquake-stricken city of Gyumri. Originally founded in 1828, the camp was shut down during Armenia's transition to independence. Since it reopened, however, the summer camp has welcomed about 140 children between the ages of 10 and 14 to the month-long program every year.

FAR also renovated the village's kindergarten building, where the camp is housed, and installed water lines and a sewer system in the area. Kaps summer camp also offers seasonal employment for some of the local residents.

Caring for Children's Health

Located in the Lori Province of Armenia, the Dilijan Children's Health Center serves as a sanatorium for up to 175 underprivileged children with tuberculosis. Some children even live at the center year-round. With the help of a generous donation from a group of FAR friends headed by Ms. Lucine Harvey, FAR renovated the dormitory and classrooms of the Dilijan Health Center and upgraded its basic facilities in 2005.

Caring for Armenian Heritage, Culture and Identity

Since 2002, FAR has been implementing a project benefiting the children of Javakhk – a region of southern Georgia populated largely by Armenians. The educational program is supported by Friends of Javakhk, which is headed by Carl and Linda Bazarian. It focuses on teaching Armenian culture, history, language and religion.

FAR also sponsors and organizes numerous art exhibitions, musical concerts and contests, and cultural exchanges, to encourage Armenia's youth to preserve traditional Armenian music and art. This work includes sponsoring the Datev Children's Choir, which FAR has done since 1993. This group gives the children a greater sense of pride and confidence, as they have performed not only for communities throughout Armenia, but also internationally.

Through the generosity of Sahan Arzruni and Arsen Sayan, FAR also supports the talented students of Yerevan State Conservatory.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: the youth will shape the future

While still a child, Kristina Zayimtsyan's family fled to Moscow for several years following the devastating earthquake that left her hometown of Gyumri in rubble. To this day, she still remembers the morning when she barely managed to flee the crumbling walls of her first grade classroom. She was one of the few lucky ones who escaped, scarred but alive.

When Kristina returned to her hometown in 2005 she heard about FAR's Gyumri Information Technology Center (GTech) from friends who had completed the program. An aspiring fashion designer, Kristina didn't think GTech was a place for her unique skill set. But she soon saw how developing computer skills would enhance her progress in her own field.

"I believed they specialized in hardware and software, which is not for a creative person," she said. "But then I learned about, and applied to, the department of web design as soon as it was opened in 2006."

Today, Kristina knows she has a bright future ahead of her. She has seen her peers graduate and find well-paying and creative jobs in the burgeoning information technology sector of Gyumri, because of the skills they've honed at GTech.

"Our city has future and I believe in it," Kristina said. "We, the youth, will shape the future of Gyumri."

economic
development



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: tools to empower armenians like kristina

GTech was founded in 2005 in partnership with Armenian-American computer experts who wanted to not just train young Armenians, but also expand opportunity in Gyumri by creating a wealth of intellectual capital.

Through GTech, FAR offers a multidisciplinary, market-driven, comprehensive two-year training program at a nominal fee to students. Selected through a competitive application process, students can study electrical engineering, computer chip design and development, and web technologies. The rigorous curriculum, taught by leaders in Armenia's IT field, as well as instructors from the United States, prepares students to compete in a cutting edge global IT market.

GTech has proved to be a success and it is quickly transforming the region by promoting economic growth and investment, and by helping to build a growing middle class. Attracted by the growing pool of skilled graduates, more IT companies are opening branches in Gyumri. The Armenian government has also begun investing in the region's IT infrastructure. As a result, more graduates obtain well-paying jobs and choose to stay in the area. Those who stay see the benefits of working and investing in their community as a way to rebuild their city and make a brighter future for their nation. A support group for GTech was even initiated by one of its founders, Patrick Sarkisian, to promote the program. With FAR's support, today's young Armenian students will become the nation's educated, engaged and empowered leaders of tomorrow.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: key programs

Gyumri Information Technology Center (GTech)

Partnering with technology companies, FAR created GTech in 2005 to enhance the skills of young Armenians and broaden opportunity in an economically depressed region. The growth of the qualified labor force has revitalized the economy, spurring partner companies to open branches in Gyumri. The Armenian government has also invested in IT infrastructure.

Karabagh Development

In 2002, FAR was awarded a \$15 million, five-year contract from USAID to rebuild infrastructure, develop health care and reinvigorate the agricultural community of Karabagh, which was devastated by an eight year war with Azerbaijan. FAR was able to rebuild or repair more than 450 sites throughout Karabagh. The impacts of these projects touch the lives of at least 30,000 people and bring economic growth to the region.

Career Development and Job Placement Program

In 1999, FAR launched the Gulamerian Vocational Training Program. The program places older orphans into short-term internships where they gain real-life work experience. Since its inception in 1998, older orphans have found employment through this effort.



FAR Economic Development CAPACITY STATEMENT

Since the republic's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, FAR has offered Armenians a wealth of financial, educational and marketing opportunities. This was – and still is – especially important for a country that was still recovering from a major 1988 earthquake at the time of separation. The earthquake destroyed most of the industrial enterprises in the northern provinces, including the Metsamor nuclear power plant, a major electricity producer.

When Armenia broke away in 1991, its economy came to a halt. Land-locked and with limited natural resources, the nation inherited an economic system and infrastructure that could not effectively compete in the world market. By 1993, border blockades and the military conflict over Karabagh compounded the drastic hardship and contributed to widespread unemployment. This ultimately caused the emigration of Armenians to other countries in search of work and a better life. Through its programs, FAR has combated these problems by rebuilding infrastructure, creating employment and giving more Armenians the chance to receive an education. All are steps toward the development of a self-sustainable Armenia.

Developing Infrastructure

Through strategic need-based programs, FAR has helped stimulate Armenia's economy by building and renovating community, educational and government facilities. Some of these structures include: The Simonian Cultural Center (Ashnak), Children's Rehabilitation Center (Yerevan), Constitutional Court (Yerevan), Nork and Haghtanak Old Age Homes (Yerevan), Khengo Aper Children's Building (Yerevan), Veteran's Association Building (Yerevan), St. Vartan American-Armenian Village (Stepanavan), High schools in Vanadzor and Gyumri and the Bridge in Ashtarak.

Caring for our Brothers and Sisters in Nagorno-Karabagh

Eight years of conflict and warfare resulted in tremendous destruction, the disruption of normal economic activities and the breakdown of social service mechanisms in the Nagorno-Karabagh region. In 2002, USAID awarded FAR a \$15-million, five-year contract to assess the devastation and implement the Humanitarian Assistance Program for Nagorno-Karabagh (HAPNK). Goals of the project included reconstruction of the region's infrastructure, rehabilitation of healthcare facilities and reinvigoration of agriculture.

More than 30,000 people ultimately benefited from the HAPNK work. Those who lost their homes or were living in dilapidated shelters due to the conflict, saw their homes refurbished and rebuilt. Drinking water and irrigation pipelines were installed and employment opportunities opened up in the region.

More than 50 health centers were restored and refurbished, and new pipelines for drinking water and irrigation installed. Another component of HAPNK, in partnership with the American University of Armenia (AUA), helped to further educate all healthcare workers in three provinces of Karabagh. AUA specialists trained these medical personnel on how to use all the new medical equipment and supplies provided to rehabilitated hospitals and clinics.

Developing Leadership and Corporate Partnerships

FAR has helped the younger generation gain marketable skills and acquire new jobs through a variety of innovative educational and vocational programs, scholarships and strategic partnerships. Since its inception in 2005,

45 young adults have graduated from GTech, FAR's competitive post-graduate information technology institution, and have found jobs in the expanding IT sector. In exchange for free training, students commit to remain in the Gyumri region for two years following graduation. GTech is the only organization in northern Armenia that has consistently placed graduates in full-time jobs.

To support programs like GTech, FAR proactively seeks strategic corporate partners. A partnership between Sarkissian Mason, Enterprise Incubator Foundation, Ananya Solutions and Shirak Technologies helped creating the the program in 2005. Today this strategic network not only provides financial support but also technical and organizational guidance.

FAR has offered Armenians a wealth of financial, educational and marketing opportunities, which support the development of a more self-sustainable economy.

In addition to developing a highly skilled workforce, GTech is helping to rebuild the region's economy by attracting global IT firms to establish offices and create more jobs in the area. FAR plans to expand GTech and eventually build a permanent, self-sustainable school, from which thousands of Armenians can benefit.

Building a Workforce

Through its Gulamerian Vocational Training Program, FAR helps older orphans who have graduated school by placing them into short-term internships to gain real-life work experience. Since it started, hundreds of older orphans have found work through this effort, pursuing enriching careers in law, medicine and education, and trades like plumbing and carpentry.

Caring for Rural Communities

In 2007, FAR was awarded a new two-year, \$3.1 million contract from USAID to rehabilitate the water treatment facility in the Garni area, which provides water to Artashat and neighboring communities. Now, residents have a continuous, uninterrupted supply of safe drinking water.

FAR also undertook efforts to reduce energy consumption by increasing the volume of water delivered by gravity flow systems, rather than pumps. FAR is also working to improve the quality the water and the water system infrastructure in Garni.

Developing Agriculture

FAR has poured resources into cultivating Armenia's agriculture sector by collaborating with partners like Volunteers for Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA), the U.S. Peace Corps and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Extensions Service.

In the early and mid 90s, FAR was contracted by the USDA to provide U.S. Government humanitarian assistance to hundreds of thousands of rural households. As part of the implementation of the program, FAR was allowed to allocate resources to a variety of agricultural development projects.

Projects like FAR's AgroCenter (1995-98) used leased equipment, fertilizer and seeds to assist farmers with crop production, enabling them to increase their yields. In addition, FAR's mobile mill, with a capacity to grind up to 1,100 pounds of wheat per hour, was provided to farmers so that they could convert their wheat into flour below market rates.

Developing Tourism

FAR provides opportunities for the Armenian Diaspora to discover more about their heritage. The FAR Young Professionals Trip is an annual program that promotes tourism in Armenia. Participants tour the entire country for two weeks. They visit FAR project sites as well as historical and religious landmarks. Participants not only have the chance to meet with religious, political, cultural and business leaders, but also to experience Armenia's vibrant growing economy first hand.

This trip is an eye-opening way for young Armenian Americans to learn about their historical, economic, political and religious roots. Alumni often return to Armenia to donate their time, talents and financial resources to support FAR programs.

EDUCATION: investing in armenia's future

Gohar was born in May 1988, in the small northern Armenian town of Idjevan. Her mother Valentina, worked for a local carpet manufacturer and struggled to care for her. Eventually, Valentina took them back to her hometown of Mets Ayrum in the Lori Region. When Gohar was in fifth grade, her mother was no longer able to care for her. She walked her to the Vanadzor Orphanage, where she left Gohar in its care. Shortly afterwards, Valentina died.

Gohar still remembers the look on her mother's face as she left her only daughter in the care of the state. "It was the greatest pain for me. I felt deep affection towards her. At that time, I could not imagine how I would go on living," Gohar said.

Art became her emotional outlet and Gohar quickly developed her painting skills. Today, through the help of FAR's Gulamerian Vocational Training and Education Program, which provides funding for vocational training and higher education for older orphans, Gohar is able to attend the Vanadzor State Technical College where she studies design, art and fashion.

Today Gohar is full of hope for the future. "My goal is to develop my professional skills to open my own fashion agency," she said.

education



GULAMERIAN TRAINING PROGRAM: an investment in gohar's future

Launched in 1998, the Gulamerian Vocational Training and Education Program sponsors vocational training and higher education opportunities for orphans from the Gavar, Vanadzor and Zatic orphanages. Support is also provided to young orphans who are helped by FAR's Homeless Children's Center. FAR partners with The Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Foundation to operate the program, which covers university tuition, and provides housing and monthly living stipends. Recipients are also required to volunteer for their communities and other FAR projects.

The Gulamerian Program has helped hundreds of orphans attend the best universities and trade schools in Armenia. By working with them to discover their aspirations and abilities, the program staff forms relationships with orphans years before they transition out of their institutions. FAR sets them on a path to make their transition equipped with the tools to advance their lives in the best way possible and to make a valuable contribution to Armenian society.

EDUCATION: key programs

Educational Scholarship Programs

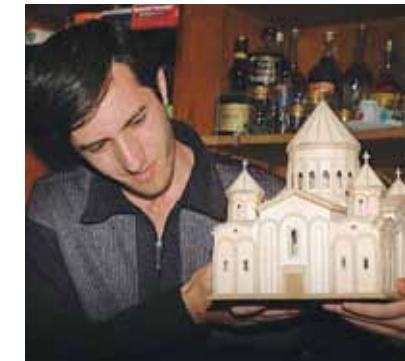
Carving out educational opportunities for Armenia's youth is an integral part of FAR's mission. FAR's educational scholarship programs support talented students from underprivileged families throughout Armenia. Recipients are required to maintain outstanding academic records, work in Armenia for five years after graduation, and give back by volunteering for their communities and for FAR programs.

Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF)

Since 2001, ANSEF has brought Armenian scientists to the cutting edge of their fields. More than 200 scientific research teams have received grants through a rigorous competitive peer review process. ANSEF gives them the opportunity to launch the first major steps of a large research project and bridge the path to greater scientific achievements.

School Rehabilitation

Over the past several years FAR has rebuilt, refurbished and renovated over 10 primary and secondary schools throughout the nation, providing students with modern tools and safe surroundings to expand their minds.



FAR Education

CAPACITY STATEMENT

In Armenia, education has always been prized as a key to maintaining cultural identity and heritage. For a nation like Armenia – land-locked with few natural resources – intellectual capital is also key to making it a major competitor in the global economy. Despite all of this, education still is unattainable to many Armenians.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia's education system was plagued with budget shortfalls and lack of public funding. Schools, particularly those in rural regions and disadvantaged communities, lacked proper materials and teachers. Many children were unable to afford any education. This is still a problem today.

About 80 percent of pre-school age children do not attend school due to poverty or the lack of a facility. Almost 25 percent of students do not reach high school and children with disabilities have limited access to basic education. These problems have called FAR to action. By investing in several major educational programs throughout the country, FAR provides not only opportunity for individuals to enrich their lives, but also strengthens Armenian society as a whole.

Investing in Scholars

Poverty often prevents students from obtaining a higher education, which ultimately denies them a better future. FAR, along with the Armenian Diaspora, has helped to lift economic barriers by offering specialized scholarships to students throughout the country. They include:

- The Mathevosian Scholarship Program, which provides annual tuition for 50 undergraduate and graduate students;
- the Jerar Nishanian Scholarship Program, which provides tuition to about 50 undergraduate and graduate students at Gavar State University;
- the Azad Shishian Octet Music School Scholarships, which enable students to attend this music school in Gyumri;
- the Maestro Arsen Sayan Scholarships, which are awarded to art students at the Komitas Conservatory; and
- the Antranik Berberian Scholarship Program, which provides tuition to five students at Yerevan Universities.

Investing in Scientific Research

Beginning in the early 1990s, government-supported funding for research dissolved, forcing many distinguished Armenian scientists and scholars to seek work in Russia, Europe and the United States. FAR established the Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF) in 2000 to combat this lack of support.

Between 15 and 25 research groups are awarded \$5,000 grants every year through ANSEF. Such support fuels cutting-edge research in physics, natural sciences and the humanities – restoring and strengthening Armenia's tradition of excellence in these areas.

Proposals are evaluated through a highly competitive application process, coordinated by Dr. Yervant Terzian, a world-renowned astrophysicist at Cornell University. Since the program's implementation, 208 scientific research groups have been awarded ANSEF grants.

By building a solid research and development environment, and by attracting global investments, ANSEF bolsters Armenia's economic growth and independence. Researchers have published over 600 articles in international journals and participants share their findings at national and international

conferences. Many ANSEF researchers have been recognized as pioneers in their fields. And in 2007, FAR was even recognized for its contributions to the advancement of scientific, technological and scholarly research when it was awarded a \$50,000 grant from The Carnegie Foundation.

Investing in the Education and Vocational Training of Orphans

The majority of children in Armenia without parental care live in institutions until they are forced out at the age of 18. Vulnerable and alone, they typically lack the skills and education needed to find jobs to support themselves.

FAR's major educational programs provide not only opportunity for individuals to enrich their lives, but also strengthen Armenian society as a whole.

Since 1999, the Gulamerian Program has sponsored vocational training and university education for these older orphans. The program also provides support through a monthly stipend for housing, transportation, books and supplies. FAR is the only organization that provides orphans access to education and the training needed to compete in the local labor market. Through this program Armenians have pursued enriching careers in law, medicine and education, and have excelled at trades like plumbing and carpentry.

Investing in Schools

The Soviet collapse also led to the deterioration of many schools throughout Armenia, particularly in the Gyumri region. With the help of private funding, FAR reconstructed and rehabilitated more than ten schools in Armenia. FAR also provided students with necessities like daily lunches and heat. Some of the schools improved by FAR's work include:

- The Yeghisapet Ounjian School in Gyumri, which was reopened in 2000. It was re-built with the support of Dr. John Ounjian, in memory of his parents Armenag and Yeghisabet.

- The Catholicos Vasken I School in Gyumri, which was leveled in the 1988 earthquake, was completely renovated and refurbished in 1997. FAR benefactors and CASP USA funded the construction of a new heating system and a state-of-the-art computer lab.

- The Mathevosian School was housed in tin shelters without basic amenities from 1988 until 2002, when it was relocated to a three-story building, newly built by FAR. Formerly known as Public School #8, it was named after FAR benefactor Ms. Anoosh Mathevosian, who funded the construction.

- Since 2003, FAR scholarships have made it possible for disadvantaged students to receive a top-quality musical education at the Azad Shishian Octet School of Music in Gyumri. The school's building was destroyed during the earthquake and classes are held in temporary tin shelters. These conditions, however, do not prevent students from learning a host of music styles, including classic, jazz, modern and Armenian folk..

Investing in Culture and Art

Every year, FAR sponsors four trips for members of the Armenian Painters Association, in order to help develop and nurture their creative skills and abilities. The program provides artists with supplies as well as transportation to majestic sites throughout Armenia. FAR has also hosted exhibitions, exchanges and concerts to promote Armenian culture in Armenia and the United States.

HEALTH CARE: training to save lives

Dr. Armenuhi Rstakyan has always been devoted to her hometown community of Akhalkalaki, in the Javakhk region of Georgia. As a gynecologist, Armenuhi provides necessary medical care at the Maternity Welfare Center in the town's regional hospital – which serves both Armenians and Georgians.

Living in such a remote region has allowed her to develop close relationships with her patients. She provides this much needed care despite the difficulties – no light, no water and very little equipment. But because she is somewhat isolated, Armenuhi had been out of touch with the advancements in her field. She has had no opportunity to refresh her medical training or learn about the latest methodologies and advancements in gynecology since attending medical school in Russia. FAR's Continuing Medical Education (CME) program changed that.

Through the program, Armenuhi spent a month training with leading specialists at the Maternal and Child Health Protection Research Center in Yerevan. There, she learned about the latest technologies and modern operating techniques in the field of gynecology. She networked with leading specialists, and participated in English language lessons and in computer literacy courses.

Armenuhi returned home better equipped to serve her patients. And by imparting her knowledge to her colleagues, the entire community will benefit from one woman's training.

health care



CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION: helping healers like armenuhi

FAR launched its Continuing Medical Education (CME) Program in 2005 to help doctors from Armenia's rural provinces enhance their modern medical knowledge and practices.

The program was created jointly by FAR and the FAR Fellowship Alumni Association (FARFAA) with the support of the Jinishian Memorial Foundation. Since May 2005, CME has trained more than 160 provincial doctors from Armenia, Karabagh and Javakhk.

Along with practicing new skills, participants are also trained on how to use computers to enhance their medical research, particularly how to use Internet-based medical library resources at the National Medical Library of Armenia. CME candidates also get tutored in English medical terminology to help them stay up-to-date on new developments published in medical journals.

Learning continues after the month-long program is over. Participants are partnered with mentors in Yerevan with whom they continually communicate about the latest medical advances. CME participants also disseminate the life saving impact of training by sharing what they've learned with their colleagues at home.

HEALTH CARE: key programs

Continuing Medical Education (CME)

Through the CME program, FAR trains provincial doctors on the latest medical techniques. The program also gives doctors the resources with which they can stay aware of changes in the field once they return, ultimately improving the state of healthcare in their own regions.

National Medical Library

FAR supports the National Medical Library (NML) in Yerevan, so that students can gain access to the latest technology and medical publications, as well as have access to English classes to ensure that the nation's medical professionals are kept up to date with advances in the medical field. FAR also subsidizes the production of the *Armenian Medical Review Journal*, an annual publication of the NML.



FAR Medical and Health Care

CAPACITY STATEMENT

Since FAR was founded, it has been committed to creating and supporting the expansion of excellent medical care, in order to provide Armenians with a better quality of life.

During the Soviet Era, Armenia boasted one of the most highly developed health care systems in the Soviet Union; the entire population was guaranteed free medical assistance regardless of social status. Since independence in 1991, however, a large portion of Armenia's population is now poor and lacks these essential services. In addition, medical education and training are expensive and opportunities are no longer widely available. As a result, most doctors in remote and rural areas lack training in the latest methodologies and equipment usage.

While some progress has been made over the years, the quality and accessibility of health services, especially the rural areas, remains poor. Infant mortality is on the rise. Just 42 percent of the population is properly immunized and many children are still malnourished and underweight.

FAR has steadily developed programs to combat such problems, primarily providing access to better medical training for healthcare workers, ultimately making healthcare accessible for more Armenians.

Enabling More Armenian Doctors to Save Lives

FAR first provided support to the medical field with the establishment of its Medical Fellowship Program in 1990s. Over the next decade, 90 young Armenian physicians attended three-month training programs at leading North American medical schools. Armed with the latest methods in Western medicine, these physicians returned to Armenia able to provide advanced treatments to patients in their clinics and hospitals. FAR fellows helped establish advanced treatment centers in Armenia. They also organized regular symposiums and conferences about the latest achievements in medicine.

In 2000, the group founded the FAR Fellowship Alumni Association (FARFAA) with the goal of improving the health care system and further advancing medical sciences in Armenia. In 2005, FAR, in cooperation with FARFAA, and with the support of the Jinishian Memorial Foundation, launched the comprehensive Continuing Medical Education (CME) program. The first of its kind in Armenia, CME gives provincial physicians and healthcare workers the opportunity to further enhance their skills and provide better medical treatments to their patients.

The first of its kind in Armenia, CME gives provincial physicians and healthcare workers the opportunity to further enhance their skills and provide better medical treatments to their patients.

Admission to the FAR CME Program is highly competitive. Through this program, physicians are totally immersed in training with experts at leading hospitals in Yerevan who volunteer their time. Since the start of the program, 160 physicians from Armenia's provinces have been trained through the program.

During the month of training, physicians shadow mentors during hospital rounds and they assist in patient care, while acquiring theoretical and practical knowledge about new methods of treatment. In addition, they learn how to access medical literature on the computer. They also build their

English-speaking skills with which they can stay abreast of English medical publications. They attend lectures from FARFAA members and medical experts visiting from the United States, Canada and Europe, and they establish personal contacts with other experts in their field. CME also teaches the participants how to prepare and present lectures and plan conferences.

Since 2005, 160 physicians from Armenia's provinces have been trained through FAR's Continuing Education Program.

To combat the lack of physicians in Armenia's provinces, the CME program also offers two scholarships every year for medical residents in training to provide medical services outside of Yerevan. U.S. supporters also donate medical supplies to provincial hospitals served by these trained doctors.

The tremendous success of the program has been a driving force for stronger continuing medical education programs in Armenia. In fact, Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) replicated the CME program model for its postgraduate education program. FAR and YSMU have partnered to develop a framework for an accreditation and licensing system for physicians. The program's expansion includes elevating the level of medical practice to international standards and eventually ensuring that all provincial doctors are trained.

Further Transforming Armenia's Health Care

FAR's stellar reputation for creating and implementing effective medical programs has steadily grown. In 2008, FAR, in partnership with Cafesjian Family Foundation, initiated a project to provide reconstructive surgery for children with lip and cleft palate defects. Fifty children received corrective surgery free of cost during the first year. In addition, FAR helped to raise awareness, educating the public about the treatment of this condition. FAR is continuing with the project so that even more children will receive assistance in the future.

In cooperation with the National Center for Oncology of the Ministry of Health, FAR is also developing a Nuclear Medicine Program to train specialists in modern treatment protocols, as well as diagnostic approaches and the use of specific equipment.

Providing Access to Medical Information

In 1990, FAR collaborated with the National Medical Library (NML), which enabled Armenian physicians to start using computers in their research. This library is particularly well utilized through the CME program. Through the library, students can learn about the latest technologies and news in their specific fields.

The success of CME has been a driving force for stronger continuing medical education programs throughout Armenia.

FAR has also developed a resource collection of biomedical literature and a national network of health sciences libraries accessible to health professionals throughout Armenia. In addition, FAR supports the publication of the *Armenian Medical Review Journal*.

SOCIAL SERVICES: finding peace

Ashot Sargisov has no happy childhood memories. Most of life has been a struggle. Born in 1933, in Baku, Azerbaijan, Ashot was one of six children who grew up hungry, scared and sick under the looming clouds of World War II. When he was 12, he and his siblings became orphans when their parents died.

“In 1941, a piece of bread became more and more difficult to find,” he recalled. “In 1945, nothing was available for sale any more. Like many others, we had to dig in the garbage for potato peels. I was so hungry. All my life was a fight for a piece of bread.”

At age 14, Ashot began to study at the Baku Vocational School. He continued on to college, where he earned an engineering degree. In 1989, his family barely escaped a massacre in Baku and ended up in the Armenian town of Spitak.

Ashot’s wife passed away in 2002 and he finally found solace at FAR’s Vanadzor Old Age Home. Now warm and safe, Ashot is surrounded by friends. He has developed and cultivated hobbies and is able to spend his time and energy playing with his grandchildren.

“I am very pleased,” he said. “I enjoy my old age.”

social services



VANADZOR OLD AGE HOME: honoring ashot’s achievements

In 2002, the Aznavour pour l’Arménie Foundation transferred the operation of the Vanadzor Old Age Home to FAR. With long-term commitment from the Kevork and Sirvart Karamanuk Foundation, FAR expanded the home’s services so that it could take in even more people and provide better services. Today, it provides care for nearly 60 residents and serves dozens of homebound seniors.

The home truly is a welcome change for those whose lives have been filled with trauma and hardship. VOAHH has about 30 professionally trained staff, including a full-time nurse and part-time doctor. Newly renovated, the facility is comfortable and modern. It allows FAR to honor the lives of the nation’s elderly by providing care, comfort and loving warmth to the older generation.

Continuing to cultivate a volunteer culture in Armenia, FAR has established a community of volunteers who are willing to give of their time to visit with the seniors, entertain them and help maintain the facility on a regular basis. One group of volunteers is comprised of doctors trained through FAR’s Continuing Medical Education Program, who also provide medical attention to residents.

SOCIAL SERVICES: key programs

Vanadzor Old Age Home (VOAH)

Operated by FAR since 2002, this home provides direct care for poverty-stricken residents and services homebound seniors in the area. VOAHH is also an outlet for volunteers, including doctors and students who spend time at the home, building relationships with residents and supporting them.

Soup Kitchens and Senior Centers

FAR operates six soup kitchens throughout Armenia, including the Nishan & Margrit Atinizian Senior Center in Gyumri. Each year, 1,000 seniors receive one hot and nutritious meal every day thanks to FAR. Soup kitchens also offer more than just a place to eat. FAR is developing them into full-service senior centers, where elderly Armenians can socialize, access medical care and receive help from social workers.



FAR Social Services

CAPACITY STATEMENT

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, FAR has addressed critical issues and worked to meet the needs of the most destitute by offering nutritious meals, housing and medical care.

These social services are especially necessary in a nation where at least half of the population lives below the poverty line, suffering from malnutrition and sickness. Many of those suffering are at least 60 years old. This poverty has a particularly harsh effect on the elderly. It strains traditionally strong intra-family ties and it often prevents thousands from caring for their relatives. As a result, many elderly are forced to survive alone.

In the early 1990s, USAID awarded FAR with a grant to develop a complete inventory of temporary shelters in the Gyumri earthquake zone and also initiate a massive social welfare reform program for the needs of 730,000 households. This has enabled FAR to provide assistance where it is most needed. In addition, the PAROS vulnerability index, established by FAR during the course of this program, is now the central component of the new welfare and social security system of Armenia.

Caring for the Elderly

FAR established the Vanadzor Old Age Home (VOAH) to help restore basic human dignity to neglected, lonely and helpless elderly in Lori Marz and other regions. VOAH caters to senior citizens who are in dire need of financial assistance and to those who lack other means of care, or a place to live. In 2003, FAR extended these benefits to homebound seniors, too. About 60 elderly reside at VOAH, and dozens receive homebound services.

With the generous long-term support of The Kevork and Sirvart Karamanuk Foundation, VOAH was completely renovated in 2007. As a way to further promote self-sufficiency, the home has gardens and a pond where seniors can cultivate fish.

VOAH nourishes the spirit and the soul of its residents. They eat hearty nutritious meals every day and they have access to health care and psychological assistance. They can enjoy entertainment and cultural events. Staff also assists them with managing their personal affairs, such as their pension funds, and with obtaining other social services.

The Vanadzor Old Age Home nourishes not only the spirit and the soul of its residents but guarantees access to health care and entertainment.

Located in Gyumri, the Nishan & Margrit Atinizian Senior Center has provided healthy meals and a secure, warm social environment to the elderly since 2001. The senior center doors remain open throughout the day – an invitation for friends to socialize and feast on hot meals. Many of the city's elderly who frequent the Atinizian Senior Center were once the region's leading scientists, teachers and doctors. The senior center was opened with the help of Mr. Hagop S. Touloukian. It now operates because of the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Atinizian who have pledged to increase the number of beneficiaries and expand the facilities.

Caring for the Hungry

Supported by Bay Area Friends of Armenia (BAFA), FAR manages five soup kitchens in Armenia. These locations serve hot meals to more than 1,000 elderly, refugees, veterans, and orphans in and around Yerevan.

The Bay Area Friends of Armenia and FAR manage five soup kitchens in Armenia, serving 1,000 meals a day.

Visitors can also come to the soup kitchens if they are in need of medical care. And special holidays, such as St. Vartanantz Day, are marked with celebrations. Beneficiaries are also given warm clothes, heating oil, additional food and certain household supplies, generously supplied through an extensive network of FAR friends in the U.S. and Europe.

Caring for Suffering in Emergency Areas

Over the years, FAR has expanded its humanitarian scope by bringing international emergency assistance to countries in need.

For example, in 1999, FAR was the first Armenian organization to respond to the earthquake that damaged western Turkey. FAR, in cooperation with the Eastern Diocese and various Armenian groups, provided relief assistance to victims.

In another unprecedented project, under the guidance of K. Hovnanian Enterprises, FAR constructed homes for 4,000 residents in the earthquake-damaged city of Stepanavan. The apartments are earthquake-resistant and are fully equipped with furniture, appliances and utilities. The St. Vartan American-Armenian Village includes a medical/dental clinic, schools from nursery school through grade 12, a library, retail shops, amphitheater, community centers and beautiful landscaping.

FAR also reconstructed and renovated five of the neediest nursing homes, orphanages and handicapped boarding schools in Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor. The work, which was completed in 2006, was made possible through a \$1.5 million grant from USAID.



NEW YORK

630 Second Avenue | New York, NY 10016 | **PH** +1.212.889.5150 | **FAX** +1.212.889.4849

YEREVAN

Khorenatsi Street 22 | Yerevan, Armenia 0010 | **PH** +374.10.52.66.60 | **FAX** +374.10.58.98.17

WWW.FARUSA.ORG

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