



2018

# ANNUAL REPORT



Building the Future, **Together**  
for 30 Years





***Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR)***  
*is a nonprofit organization dedicated  
to building a promising future for  
the people of Armenia, the Republic  
of Artsakh and Javakhk.*

## about FAR



Founded by the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) in response to the devastating 1988 earthquake, FAR was reorganized into a not-for-profit charitable voluntary organization and received its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit status by the IRS in March 1993.

Since then, FAR has implemented more than 290 relief, social, educational and cultural projects valued at over \$350 million.

“

### A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN

*Dear Friends,*

*By now, the story is too familiar to all of us. For several horrific moments in December 1988, the ground shook and life in Armenia changed.*

The earthquake that struck Gyumri and Spitak brought three special members of the Armenian Diaspora—Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Kevork Hovnanian and Dr. Edgar M. Housepian—together to mobilize emergency humanitarian assistance for victims of the disaster. At the time they did not realize what would be born from this effort. Their work transporting emergency supplies to the then-Soviet Republic of Armenia would be Fund for Armenian Relief’s first mission. This assistance helped thousands survive an unbelievable tragedy.

As a burgeoning player in the humanitarian and development field, FAR spent the next 10 years bringing humanitarian assistance to those in need. Throughout the uncertainty that followed the fall of the Soviet Union, the Nagorno-Karabakh War, and the energy crisis, FAR forged onward, focused on its mission of helping Armenians to survive.

Now, 30 years since that first mission was carried out in January 1989, FAR has moved from an organization solely concerned with immediate need to a true global contributor to Armenia’s transformation. We remain dedicated to helping the most vulnerable with critical needs, but we have also branched out to develop long-term sustainable programs and projects aimed at fortifying and bolstering many facets of society. Through better access to education, improved healthcare and economic conditions, and protection for the next generation, FAR has become a dedicated partner who has assisted Armenia in the process of settling into and embracing its independence.

With the help of our committed supporters and partners like you, our programs grow so that they continually address the country’s most crucial and evolving needs, while still focusing on the long-term issues that matter.

You have grown with us, and your commitment and direction have been essential to helping FAR lead the way in Armenia’s development over these past 30 years. It has been a truly transformational journey.

The following sections of this report detail how the pillars of our work continue to impact the fabric of Armenia’s society. There is still more to accomplish in the decades to come. We look forward to doing so, together.

*Thank you.*

*Fr. Daniel*

**Archbishop Daniel Findikyan**, President

*Randy Sapah-Gulian*

**Randy Sapah-Gulian**, Chairman

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# PARTNERS IN CHANGE

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AmeriCares  
Antranig Berberian Educational Fund  
Ararat & Sonya Hacet Family Foundation  
Armenia Artsakh Fund (AAF)  
Armenia Tree Project  
Armenian American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham)  
Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO)  
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Nishan & Margrit Atinizian Family Foundation  
Positive Planet Foundation  
Renaissance of Children, USA  
Repat Armenia

Rebirth Armenia  
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Women's Guild Central Council-CASP  
World Food Program  
World Vision  
YerazArt  
Yerevan State University  
Yerevan State Pedagogical University  
Young Scientists Youth Foundation, Armenia





# CHILD PROTECTION

*FAR is one of the most powerful forces of positive change for children in Armenia. Since our early years, we have moved to advocate for the nation's most vulnerable children.*

Since the creation of the FAR Children's Center in 2000, our child-focused programs continue to expand and evolve, and the betterment of children and youth is woven into the objectives of nearly all of our projects, regardless of their focus. FAR also played a major part in transforming the landscape of child protection in the country by working with the government to create child-focused laws and policy which were nearly non-existent 30 years ago.

The **FAR Children's Center** continued to transform young lives through crisis intervention, critical short-term rehabilitation, and stabilization to victims of some of the most horrible predicaments, including abuse, abandonment and neglect. This full-service facility provides shelter, medical care, counseling and legal assistance. It also offers children sources of educational and psychosocial

support, mentoring to family members to promote safe reunification, and continued monitoring after they leave the Center. Those who cannot be reunited with family are given guidance on how to live independently through budgeting and other life skills training. The Center has helped more than 11,000 children since it opened in 2000, handling 1,320 children's cases and assisting 876 adults during 2018 alone.

The Center continued to be a key player in the government's quest to strengthen its child protection services through preventative intervention, capacity building initiatives for specialists and service providers, policy development, and the development of the national foster care system, which has placed more than 85 children in the care of loving foster families since 2005. A leader of the Child Protection Network, the Center coordinates 42 NGOs who lobby and develop governmental policy in child protection. This year, the Center launched an effort to better identify and provide more support for asylum seekers, refugees and displaced children in coordination with other service providers and government agencies.

In 2018, the Center established a group home in Vanadzor to provide child care services for up to eight children aged 10-18 who are without guardians or at-risk, so they may have an opportunity to grow in a supportive environment.

The **Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP)** celebrated 20 years of providing supplemental financial support to orphans and children of low-income single-mothers. CASP financial stipends enable families to afford food, fuel and clothing. In 2018, distributions were given to 540 children in the regions of Shirak, Tavush, Syunik, and Javakhk, Georgia, and 62 children whose fathers were killed in the Four-Day War received CASP support.

**FAR Aragats Summer Camp** in Kotayq Province gave 200 orphaned kids from low-income single-parent households and Syrian-Armenian refugees, who already benefit from a FAR project, the chance to enjoy three weeks of activities, music, dancing, sports and hiking. The experience allowed children to immerse themselves in a new environment, to connect with learning opportunities, and forge new friendships.

## BY THE NUMBERS

 11,901  
**referral cases handled\***  
(Children's Center)

 662  
**children received therapy** (Children's Center)

 64  
**truant children returned to school**  
(Children's Center)

 70  
**families united**  
(Children's Center)

 12  
**families trained to become foster parents**  
(Children's Center)

 213  
**child care specialists trained** (Children's Center)

 200  
**low-income children attended summer camp**

\*Since the Center opened in 2000



## BENEFICIARY STORY

Once or twice a month, Arsen, 7, Nora, 6, Narek, 4, and Nane, 3, would eagerly wait at the front door of the FAR Children's Center for their father, Artak. Each time he arrived they would rush to hug him. The siblings found a temporary home at the Center in early 2018 after their mother abandoned them. "It's very hard for a parent to leave his or her children. I can't live without them; every time I visit them, I am heartbroken [that I can't bring them with me]; however, I have no other choice," said Artak.

Artak is away from home at least 15 days a month serving at a military border post in the Berd Region. He also works part-time in construction and sanitation. In late 2017, his wife left the house to buy school supplies and never came back, never called or visited. Artak first left the children with his elderly, sick parents. He later brought them to the Center until he could find a way to be home more often. "It was the hardest day of my life," he said, recalling the day he dropped them off. "I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy."

Upon arrival, the stressed children isolated themselves, but with psychological, art and healthcare therapy sessions and support, they established their own routines and eventually socialized well with others. In just two months, Nane started walking, greeting her father with slow but steady steps.

Artak remarried and, in late 2018, was able to take his children home to Charentsavan where he rents a house. His new wife, Ovsanna, works as a farmer harvesting berries. Before marrying Artak she visited the children at the Center. "We became friends at once. Arsen called me 'mom' during my second visit."

"This is one of our success cases when we achieved our goal [of family reunification] and the children benefited from our services as well," said Social Worker Rima Harutyunyan.

## To Our Generous and Loyal Donors, *we thank you*

Ajemian Foundation

Alex & Marie Manoogian Foundation

Arpine & Arda Hovnanian Fund

Dadourian Foundation

Friends of FAR Children's Center,  
US & Armenia

Friends of Gavar Special School, NY

Knights & Daughters of Vartan

Hamparian Family Foundation

Levon & Claudia Nazarian Family  
Foundation

Mardigian Foundation

Mr. & Dr. Peter & Myrna Sarrafian Onanian

Mr. & Mrs. Gregory & Meline Toufayan

Mr. & Mrs. Jack & Eva Medzorian

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph & Kristine  
Toufayan Casali

Mr. & Mrs. Steven & Karen Nargizian

Mr. Andranik Appelian

Mr. Arsen Tashjian

Ms. Lisa Chobanian

Sapah-Gulian Foundation

SJS Charitable Trust

Sunday Schools of the Eastern Diocese

Womens Guild Central Council-CASP





# EDUCATION

*As one of the most essential components of upward mobility, FAR's work is largely centered around education. We focus on giving access to higher education and providing resources needed for supportive learning environments.*

Our scholarship programs have given hundreds of young people, many who grew up in poverty, a chance to achieve their dreams of acquiring a degree or a certification and a subsequent career. Education is truly the gift of opportunity, a way to provide an individual with a path toward a better life, and a tool that can push society forward through the growth of a more skilled, knowledgeable, ambitious and equipped population.

**FAR's scholarship programs** and the **Gulamerian Vocational Training Program** give young Armenians the potential to contribute to the growth and development of their country through opportunities made possible by education. For many, these scholarships are the key to realizing their dreams and bettering their lives.

FAR's 13 scholarship programs supported a total of 500 students attending university or pursuing vocational studies in the 2018-19 academic year. The 100 FAR scholarship program graduates had a 60% employment rate, while 30% of those who completed vocational studies found work in their field or started their own businesses. Many also chose to pursue further studies. Scholarship students spend time volunteering at FAR projects sites like VOA, Aragats Summer Camp, and helping to harvest apricots for donation to FAR soup kitchens and the FAR Children's Center. An additional 34 scholarships were given to Syrian-Armenian students as part of the **Syrian-Armenian Scholarship Program**.

FAR's support for **school rehabilitation** focuses on providing enhanced resources to diverse learning environments to enrich the quality of education. To bridge the gap in vocational training and higher education for those with special needs, FAR launched a major project in 2018 to establish a state-of-the-art vocational training center, and create a comfortable, accessible educational environment for children with special needs at the **Parakar School for Children with Disabilities** in Armavir Province.

Quality education gives students professional skills that enable them to live independent lives. The facility serves 199 students (ages 15-24), 145 of whom have physical or mental disabilities. Within five years, the complex's vocational education and public education buildings, dormitory and surrounding territory will be renovated to improve safety standards. A gym, rehabilitation center, and arts & crafts and therapy rooms will also be added.

FAR also improved the environment and care for children with disabilities at the **Gavar Special School** through continuous support from the dedicated Friends of Gavar Special School, New York.

The **Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF)** enables scientists and researchers to pursue their innovative work in Armenia, ultimately helping to promote social and economic growth by contributing to a knowledge-based economy. In 2018, FAR awarded ANSEF grants to 27 scientific research groups made up of 93 scientists. The program continued its effort to diversify the scientists it supports; 13 of the principle investigators were under age 35 and 14 of them women.

## BY THE NUMBERS

 500

**scholarships** given to disadvantaged youth during the 2018-19 academic year (scholarships)

 60%

**employment rate** for FAR scholarship program graduates\* (scholarships)

 3,000

children and teachers benefited from **school rehabilitations** (school rehabilitation)

 34

**scholarships** given to Syrian-Armenian students from disadvantaged families (scholarships)

 30%

**employment rate** for those who completed vocational training programs (scholarships)

 27

scientific groups received **support for their research** from ANSEF grants (ANSEF)

\*Those who studied at university



## BENEFICIARY STORY

Gohar Khachatryan, 22, is working toward a bachelor's degree in sociology at Yerevan State University (YSU). A FAR Gulamerian Scholarship student, Gohar has earned high grades since starting college in 2017. She studies hard to receive support for tuition and continuously volunteers for any cause connected to social work, her desired profession. "Because I love my profession I study it with great interest, which makes being an A student not so difficult," she said.

Each year, she visits the FAR's Vanadzor Old Age Home (VOAH) for its annual clean up. She has been a volunteer team leader at FAR's Aragats Summer Camp, and has volunteered with the NGO Mission Armenia and in the Elder Care Division of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Gohar also had the honor of being chosen to spend the day as YSU's vice-rector and as dean for a day for the Sociology Faculty.

"When I was in school I was actively involved in the activities of an NGO called Family and Community. In Armavir there was also a puppet theater called 'Palancho' and I worked there for seven years," she said. "We had two performances at VOA back then as well. We were performing in orphanages and social care institutions, and that's when I first became inspired by social workers, which was my reason for choosing this profession and I'm finding that it was the right decision."

Like all FAR's scholarship students, Gohar grew up in less than ideal conditions. While her life was never easy she is someone who has never let its difficulties stand in her way. As a student she spends at least two hours each day traveling the 50km to YSU. "It's complicated but if a person wants to achieve a goal, they must tell themselves that they can and they will get there," she said.





# HEALTHCARE

100 MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS  
TRAINED THROUGH CME

124 ARTSAKH NURSES  
TRAINED IN 2018

“

*I now feel that I have a more  
profound knowledge of  
first aid than I did before,  
and that I can handle any task*

## BENEFICIARY STORY

After attending FAR's Artsakh Nurses Training Program, Bagyum Avanesyan, 33, changed her approach to how she treats diabetic patients. "I had limited knowledge of nutritional guidelines for diabetes. But after the training I started emphasizing the importance of integrating herbs into patients' daily intakes—things like bay leaf and purple basil, which grow locally and which help to combat diabetes and high blood pressure," said the R.N. from Artsakh's Martakert Region. "I have seen improvements as many of my patients have minimized their use of insulin."

Bagyum claims the number of diabetics in Martakert rose after the Four-Day War of April 2016 when many had to escape their homes as clashes erupted in the dead of night—Bagyum and her family included. They, along with 13 other families, are living in a defunct military hospital temporarily until their homes can be rebuilt. Others set up temporary housing or *domiks* in the vicinity. Bagyum has become the de facto healthcare provider for everyone there—a total of 540 people. She frequently makes the rounds to her patients at the hospital and those in the domiks.

She will start working out of a new medical center in the region, expected to open in September 2019, and is looking forward to passing on new-found skills to her colleagues. "The Artsakh program was just 12 days however I became firm friends with many nurses and doctors in this short period. We keep in touch to discuss diseases and diagnoses. I would like such programs to be held more often," said Bagyum. "While more violence could erupt at any time in the region, I now feel that I have a more profound knowledge of first aid than I did before, and that I can handle any task."

## To Our Generous and Loyal Donors, *we thank you*

Armenian American Health  
Professionals (AAHPO)

Dadourian Foundation

Dr. & Mrs. Raffy & Vicki Hovanessian

Dr. Aram Cazazian

Dr. David Hovsepian

Dr. John Bilezikian,  
Columbia Presbyterian

Dr. John Ohannes Nercessian,  
Columbia Presbyterian

Dr. Richard Deckelbaum,  
Columbia Presbyterian

Mardigian Foundation

Nazarian Family Foundation

*As the first to institutionalize medical education and professional development in Armenia, FAR's work has since expanded to fit the changing health needs in Armenia today, tackling childhood malnutrition, child cognitive development, and maternal health, all critical to Armenia's progress and development.*

The **Continuing Medical Education Program (CME)**, one of FAR's pioneer health programs, aims to elevate the level of medical professionalism and care, and ultimately the national state of public health. Founded by FARFAA, CME provides primarily rural doctors with mentoring opportunities in Yerevan where they can hone their skills, learn the latest practices, and connect with a network of healthcare providers. FARFAA was created by a group of Armenian physicians who wanted to share their knowledge with the medical community in Armenia after being trained in the U.S. during the late 1990s to the early 2000s with FAR's full support.

CME has enabled 986 medical professionals to receive training since 2005. During 2018, 100 doctors from Armenia and Artsakh participated in CME. Artsakh's CME program is fully sponsored by the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO).

Licensed healthcare practitioners in Armenia are required to earn 220 professional development credits every five years. In 2018, FAR received approval to grant CME project trainers 17 professional development credits annually for their work. (CME participants were granted approval to receive 93 credits per year in 2017.)

The **Artsakh Nurses Training Program**, an exciting project that began in April 2018, provides an opportunity to reach the most prevalent, yet perhaps most undervalued, medical professionals. Nurses are often the only healthcare providers in rural communities and bear the burden of delivering primary medical care. Using theoretical and practical courses taught at the National Institute of Health in Yerevan and other medical centers, this Training of Trainers-style course gave each of the 124 participants the skills needed to transfer knowledge on the latest methods

to roughly 40 nurses in their villages. The project aims to empower more than 400 nurses from Artsakh over the course of three years.

Throughout 2018, FAR held **symposiums and trainings for regional doctors** on topics including urogynecology, pediatrics, cardiology and nutrition. FAR's malnutrition study results were published in the first article highlighting malnutrition in Armenia in *BioMed Central*, a preeminent UK-based medical journal. The Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative (SORTIT) launched in cooperation with the WHO to guide healthcare professionals conducting research who seek to publish in international journals, thus bringing more attention Armenia's healthcare field. FAR continued to support the National Medical Library (NML) in Yerevan, which offers CME participants and healthcare professionals access to the latest publications and literature in the field.

The **Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Program (BCPP)** helps improve children's health in Tavush Province through its health and malnutrition component. In 2018, sixteen kindergartens benefited from a food initiative

that provided nutritious school meals. The program was directly linked to a decrease in children's anemia levels and increased demand for healthier meals outside of school. Trainings in 22 villages raised parents' awareness on addressing their children's health issues and seeking regular medical care.

**Transforming Children's Health and Development**, which replicates BCPP's health and malnutrition component, brought healthy lunch options to 100 children in two kindergartens in Argatsotsn Province in the 2018-19 school year. Several school kitchens were renovated as part of the project, and parents, teachers and staff were trained on the importance of proper food choices, breastfeeding, care and nutrition, vaccinations, and causes of anemia and malnutrition. In addition, five children received medical and surgical assistance for ailments such as strabismus and club foot, changing the quality of life for the children and their families. Eight other vulnerable families received nutritional supplements including formula for two sets of newborn triplets.

FAR's 2018 support helped ten kids with health problems attend **Aparan Summer Camp**, increasing the camp's capacity to 130. Also, resources for activities that enhance logic, fine motor skills and cognitive development were contributed to the camp's "game store."

## BY THE NUMBERS



124

**nurses trained** to provide improved medical and psychological support (Artsakh Nurses Training Program)



986

**medical professionals provided** with Continuing Medical Education\* (CME)



613

**kids in 16 kindergartens** received nutritious school lunches (BCPP & Transforming Children's Health and Development)



5

**children treated** for longstanding medical procedures (Child Poverty Reduction Program)



Nearly 300

**doctors reached** through seminars, symposiums and trainings (CME)

\*Since the program started in 2005





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“  
My income is now even  
enough to allow us to save what  
my husband earns in Russia

## BENEFICIARY STORY

Astghik Tserunyan, 32, is a wife and mother of three in the tiny village of Aygedzor, a place with little opportunity for work. Her husband, Arthur, spends much of the year in Russia picking up construction jobs to send money home, leaving Astghik with the full responsibility of caring for the kids. But she has always dreamed of doing something else to earn more money. In 2018, the Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Program helped Astghik set up her own small business through its Social Component for Large Families which helps low-income families with at least three children improve their situations through individualized plans and microenterprise opportunities.

As someone who always enjoyed sewing, Astghik turned her interest into a business opportunity. FAR provided her with necessary tools and materials, like a sewing machine, along with connections to secure her first job of making bedsheets for several local kindergartens.

“At first I would sew bedspreads, tablecloths and kitchen towels, which I managed to sell thanks to the support of my mother-in-law who works at a school and helped me to market my products,” she said. She has since grown her client base and has become more in control of her family’s finances, even saving enough to be able to afford some home improvements and dental work for her children. “My income is now even enough to allow us to save what my husband earns in Russia,” she said.

To Our Generous  
and Loyal Donors,  
*we thank you*

Dr. Armen Kelikian

Mr. & Mrs. Gregory & Gigi Bazarian

Mr. & Mrs. Howard & Catherine Atesian

Mr. & Mrs. Michael & Sonya Ohanian

Mr. Oscar Tatosian

Ms. Anne Shirinian Orlando

Mr. & Mrs. Greg & Meline Toufayan

Mardigian Foundation

SJS Charitable Trust

*FAR’s economic development programs give people tools they need and contribute to empowerment on a huge scale. Initiatives such as GTech transformed the region hardest hit by disaster into a place of opportunity.*

Through the allocation of resources, tools, and ongoing support, we continued to help Armenians create better lives for themselves and their communities. This facet of our work creates hope for people to take their futures into their own hands, and the momentum needed to continue to build a stronger nation.

**Gyumri Information Technology Center (GTech)** started in 2005 when internet barely existed in Gyumri. Over the past 13 years, GTech has transformed the landscape. Today the city and region, still recovering from the earthquake, is Armenia’s tech enclave. Throughout the country there are more than 800 IT companies, 30 of which are located in the Shirak Region. In 2018, 330 people graduated from GTech’s various education courses—joining the more than 1,700 who have graduated from the school’s training and certification programs.

Boosting Technological Developments in Shirak Marz, a two-year project aimed to support skills enrichment for young and vulnerable populations, finished in late 2018. It helped 117 trainees complete the program; 82 of whom found employment at local and national IT companies.

A four-month course open specifically to females helped six women develop a specialization in IT programming, while the Returnees Program helped 24 young veterans gain the skills needed to enter the IT sector.

Long and short-term programming courses helped employers in different fields gain practical IT skills, and a collaboration between GTech and Shirak Regional College, now enables 30 Shirak students to intern at GTech and gain insight to IT careers.

**Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: Developing Thriving Communities (BCPP)**, completed five years of implementation and was renewed for another five-year cycle. BCPP aims to reduce the impact of poverty in the Berd Region of Tavush Province through a holistic and “global” approach in efforts to break the endemic cycle. BCPP strengthens economic activity, infrastructure, healthcare and education in Berd. Increasing the local

community’s capacity to transform their region is essential to this project. Support for alternative agriculture, land and infrastructure rehabilitation and cultivation, community engagement, health and education all contribute.

Through individually-tailored plans, families in Berd City and 16 surrounding villages were able to become more self-sufficient through improved housing, income generating activities, better nutrition, healthcare and psychosocial support. Another 38 families were selected to receive social assistance packages, 410 families were given humanitarian assistance, and parental training and counseling contributed to family stabilization efforts.

The completion of a 4,100-meter drinking water system in Vargavan brought potable water to the homes of 750 residents as construction commenced on a 3km waterpipe that will bring potable water to Verin Tsagkavan Village.

In 2018, 118 participated in a business training course in management, marketing and financial literacy to help them start their own companies; 38 of which launched businesses. Management training was given to entrepreneurs wishing to grow their enterprises, eight of 16 received a non-interest loan and grant. Crucial agriculture

machinery was given to two viticulture cooperatives in Varagavan and Artsvaberd villages to increase their production.

The Mardigian Children’s Center provided 174 children with counseling, art therapy and family assistance, and 13 families received humanitarian assistance.

BCPP funded the renovation of science labs in six schools along with practical training for teachers, allowing 1,500 children access to a practical hands-on science education. Learning environments in nine schools were enhanced. Cafeterias, tech classrooms and auditoriums at schools in Chinari, Aygepar, Paravaqar, Berd City, Artsvaberd and Tavush villages started to undergo renovations and Berd #4 School was reconstructed.


Hobby groups started in three villages, bringing the total to 18 groups and four Sunday schools that provide what is often the sole recreational outlet for 700 children. Events such as the Mardigian Olympics and


the My Universe Essay Competition offered opportunities to engage in special activities, and 40 children were able to spend three fun-filled weeks at FAR’s Aragats Summer Camp.


Thirty nine students continued or completed university studies in math, linguistics, journalism, social work, IT and political science through BCPP scholarships. Support was also given to teachers in need of further qualifications, and vocational training students were given assistance for school transportation costs.

**FAR’s Small Business Assistance Program (SBA)** launched in 2016 to help Syrian-Armenian startup entrepreneurs economically integrate and develop their businesses in Armenia. Businesses previously receiving support demonstrated sustainability and continued growth in 2018. Six new businesses were selected to receive FAR support, joining the 23 that continue to receive coaching on marketing and sustainability.

## BY THE NUMBERS

 **330**  
graduated from  
GTech courses (GTech)

 **1,700+**  
trained as IT specialists\*  
(GTech)

 **9**  
villages have access  
to potable water\* (BCPP)

 **9**  
schools renovated &  
6 science labs constructed

 **6**  
New Syrian-Armenian-owned  
businesses supported  
(Small Business Assistance Program)

\* Since the start of BCPP in 2012  
\* Since GTech opened in 2005





# SOCIAL SERVICES

*Our Social Service Program is the root of our work. FAR was born from a tragedy during which its victims needed urgent and immediate help. During those dark days, we provided food, medical supplies and shelter for those in need.*

Meeting such needs made emergency humanitarian relief the primary focus of our work for about ten years. As our mission expanded and we shifted our efforts to carrying out projects aimed at benefiting Armenia's long-term development, we didn't abandon our mission to help the most vulnerable of society with their critical needs. The everyday quest for survival is still very real for many Armenians and its importance for our work has not fallen to the wayside, even as we simultaneously push forward, offering hope and change by bolstering the long-term foundation of society. For many, this area of our work still provides a much-needed lifeline.

FAR's five **soup kitchens** meet the critical needs of the most destitute by providing nutritious daily meals and an outlet for social connection and care for more than 800 individuals in Yerevan, Nor Hajn, Berd, Gyumri and Byureghavan. Some of these places are among the hardest hit by economic decay, leading many soup kitchens to become a lifeline for residents in these areas. Often they are elderly and have nothing since losing their

pensions after the fall of the Soviet Union. Others have had to cope with the onset of health problems or disabilities which have prevented them from working or caring for their families; many beneficiaries are also children in need. Meals are served once a day, five days a week. Often they are the only meal of the day for many. The kitchens also offer a sense of community where visitors can find solace in the presence of others.

FAR also provides **supplemental support to those who seek help at the Atinizian Senior Center** through our Gyumri Soup Kitchen and by providing free access to public baths.

The **Vanadzor Old Age Home (VOAH)** provides 61 low-income elderly Armenians with a loving home, access to support for all of their physical and psychological needs, and medical care. Through the provision of a nurturing and loving environment, residents can easily find their niche in this community and make it their own.

*The everyday quest for survival is still very real for many Armenians*

## BY THE NUMBERS



800+

provided with **hot and nutritious meals\*** (Soup Kitchens)



200

senior citizens provided with **vouchers to use public bathing facilities** (Atinizian Senior Center & Gyumri Soup Kitchen)



61

senior citizens led a **comfortable, healthy life** (VOAH)

\*Five days a week, year-round at FAR's five soup kitchens



## To Our Generous and Loyal Donors, *we thank you*

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Ms. Anna Topalian Polizzi

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## BENEFICIARY STORY

Astghik Ayvazyan moved to Byureghavan when she got married at age 17 and hasn't left the small industrial town that's struggled with economic depression since the fall of the Soviet Union.

A former factory worker, Astghik became a mother of nine to six sons and three daughters. When her husband died in 1982, she needed to get a second job to support her family, something for which she had to seek special permission since it was forbidden by law to have two jobs at the time. Astghik then worked as a cleaner in a school and in a local shop until the end of the 1980s when political protests started in Armenia. After the system's collapse, Astghik found herself unemployed.

Now, 83, Astghik lives with her daughter Rima, 55, and son Hamlet, 51, both of whom are unemployed. The three survive on a collective monthly income of about \$80, which largely consists of Astghik's pension. The other children help to support them whenever they can. The three greatly rely on the FAR soup kitchen for a source of stability and nutrition. Astghik's youngest son, Eduard, who lives on his own with his four children in Byureghavan, is also a soup kitchen beneficiary.

"This is a great support for us as it helps us to not spend much during the work week. We come here so we can actually have a proper meal. I want to say thank you to those who support this soup kitchen," Astghik said.





# AYO!

*FAR's crowdfunding platform **Ayo!** emphasizes the power and agency of the Armenian people, particularly Armenia's younger generation, and their ability to create positive change in their society by providing a vehicle with which they can raise money for local development projects.*

Ayo! was designed to engage and empower young people who wish to take change into their own hands and give agency to those who seek to contribute. Each project, while diverse in its objective, has been initiated and introduced by Armenians in Armenia. Once funds are raised, FAR works with local partners to execute Ayo!'s projects transparently and to the highest standards.

Ayo! fully funded seven projects in 2018, raising \$98,402—the highest total in a calendar year since launching in 2013. These projects, implemented in four new regions of the country, positively impacted the lives of 8,749 people. Ayo!'s 2018 campaigns focused on issues related to education, women's empowerment, livelihoods and emigration, athletics and psychosocial support.

Partnering with World Vision Armenia, Ayo! launched **DreamCamp**, aimed to give 50 children from low-income families in the Shirak Region the chance to go to summer camp. The campaign was fully funded just 15 days after its launch, allowing Ayo! to extend it two more weeks. Ultimately, enough funding came in to send 183 children to camp.

**Adopt-A-Library** with a budget of \$37,537.29, the largest for Ayo! to date, was fully funded within two months of its launch. Ayo! and 17 Teach for Armenia fellows based at rural schools raised funds to update and refurbish school libraries in their communities, moving closer to the goal of sparking students' interest in and curiosity for reading. Fourteen libraries were completed in 2018 and three will reach completion in 2019.

**Fill the Gap. Build a Lab** collaborated with two teachers in Armavir and Aragatsotn provinces to build science labs in their schools and give students the opportunity to learn science through practical, hands-on experience.

**Revive the Soil** helped combat unemployment and emigration in Lori Berd where nearly 1,500 families have been unable to make their living through agriculture because they lacked the proper tools to cultivate the land. The project funded the purchase of a new tractor and drilling machine which are loaned to families so they can cultivate their land, harvest and sell their products.

Girls of Armenia Leadership Soccer (GOALS), which establishes safe spaces for young women to play soccer, partnered with Ayo! to launch **Game Changer** in an effort to start a female soccer league in the Kotayk Region. Recognizing the lack of facilities and opportunity for girls to be involved in sport and society, the league and corresponding soccer leadership summer camps empowered 60 girls through teamwork, leadership skills, tolerance and gender equality.

Ayo!'s annual **Chocolate Bank...and More** project brought a gift of 1,100kg of sweets to 353 needy children in the Gegharkunik Region over the holiday season.


**Tatik-Papik**, a planned 2018 campaign aimed to provide new bedding to residents at Vanadzor Old Age Home (VOAH), was unexpectedly funded prior to its launch by the DoubleTree by Hilton Yerevan.

Various creative and local fundraising events in 2018 also helped to further raise awareness about Ayo! in Armenia. Since 2013, Ayo! has raised more than \$250,000 for local development projects.

## BY THE NUMBERS

 **\$98,402**  
raised for 7 projects across Armenia

 **11,749**  
lives improved through Ayo! projects\*

 **1,552**  
students benefited from the 14 libraries and the 2 science labs built in their schools

 **1,500**  
families can start to make a living through farming with new agriculture equipment

 **60**  
girls benefited from safe soccer spaces for women

 **183**  
children from low-income families attended DreamCamp summer camp

 **14**  
libraries built to serve rural schools & 3 to be completed in 2019

 **1,100kg**  
of sweets to given to **353 needy children** over the holiday season

\*Since 2013

To Our Generous and Loyal Donor,  
*we thank you*

James & Marta Batmasian  
Family Foundation

## POTENTIAL SUPPORTERS

*Ayo!*  
Find all practical information and make an informed decision about how to donate through Ayo!'s website, **weareayo.org**

## BENEFICIARY STORY

Hayarpi Sahakyan is a philosophy lecturer at Yerevan State Medical University with a well-known passion for reading. She even has a shelf at the university filled with her own personal books that she encourages students to borrow and read.

When she heard about Ayo!'s Adopt-A-Library project, she decided to take her love of books and literacy one step further when she asked her students to collaborate with her to adopt and fund the renovation of one of the project's 17 libraries in need.

Despite her young age, the 31-year-old is one of the most beloved lecturers at the university. Hayarpi always aims to encourage her students to give back, to do good. "My students are future doctors and one of my goals is to teach them about the importance of human compassion. That's why I had the idea to get them involved in this amazing project," she said.

They were immediately on board.

"We read all day to become good professionals; we know the value of books," said Hovsep Grigoryan, a student. "We know that books can help us find answers to and arguments for nearly any question or problem. That's why we want everyone to have access to the amazing world of books."

"It is magical to see how a donated 1,000 dram (about \$2) can make a difference in someone's life. And it is important to understand that if 650 students give \$2 each, we can change our country," said medical student Asha Kyureghyan. "We need to realize the power of unity."





Empowered children through stabilization and support;



Sargis Ghumashyan's mother died when he was an infant. He never knew his father. As a baby he was taken in by his mother's friend but soon placed in Vanadzor Orphanage when it was discovered he was being used as a pawn for begging.

When Sargis was 12, the FAR Children's Center placed him with his foster parents, Ararat and Marine, who had no children of their own. With them Sargis stayed, and the health and emotional issues he'd had at the orphanage dissipated after he found himself in a stable, loving home. "I have always been surrounded by a special love and care that will never leave me," Sargis said.

Now 25, Sargis and his wife Armine have a little boy named Ararat, the namesake of Sargis' foster father. Being raised by foster parents enabled Sargis to find belonging and wholeness as part of a family, and the joy of expanding that family by creating one of his own.

Contributed to changing the face of healthcare;



Growing up in Artsakh, Dr. Vigen Khachatryan, 55, learned about the Yerevan surgeon named Vigen who saved his grandfather's life. "When I was born a year later my parents decided to call me Vigen, after the doctor," he said.

The story inspired him and he went on to complete his medical degree in 1988. Since 1993, he's been Director of Shushi Medical Center, where he and his staff serve about 10,000 patients a year. He's also a three-time participant in FAR's CME program where he focused on surgery and radiology.

Dr. Khachatryan speaks seriously of the knowledge gap in the rural medical community, which is why FAR's programs

and support are so crucial. "It's difficult to keep up with the medical news in this rapidly changing world, especially when you come from a 'war zone' or an underserved rural area," he said, recalling the shortage of medical supplies following the Nagorno-Karabakh War. During his first operation, his only light source was a box of matches.

He maintains strong ties with FAR, which donated medical equipment to Shushi Medical Center, and he has also helped to design the new training program for nurses in Artsakh. He regularly travels to conferences and workshops. "This is the way you can improve your skill set and keep up on the latest information and technology. FAR has been very productive in this regard," he said.

# 30 YEARS OF DEDICATION, SUPPORT AND ACTION HAS:

Armenak Minasyants runs the External Relations Department of the Constitutional Court of Armenia. He earned his bachelor's degree in international relations at Yerevan State University, but when he decided to pursue his master's he couldn't afford the \$1,350 annual tuition. His choices: ask his family to borrow the money, take out a loan, or drop the idea and complete two years of military service.

The same year, FAR announced applications for its Armine and Garabed Zambak Scholarship Program. Armenak was among those selected. "FAR's scholarship eased my family's financial burden. I don't know what would have happened to me if not for this scholarship," he said.

For Armenak, education has always been the catalyst for molding caring and responsible citizens who are genuinely concerned with and capable of contributing to a just, peaceful and sustainable country.

"What I like most about FAR is its clear commitment to its vision and mission. FAR has taught me that our country is too nice to leave or to think about leaving. On the contrary, we must invest in our country and in its human resources. We must multiply the bank of our success stories through our steps and actions," he said.



Opened up greater access to higher education;

Classical music was always on at home while Sona Israyelyan was growing up in Gyumri. After the 1988 earthquake when there was no electricity, her family's sing-alongs became their entertainment. Later, Sona spent six years running the Gyumri Octet Music School orchestra and raised funds to rebuild the school, which was still reeling from the earthquake. A major renovation in 2013 was made possible by FAR, the Mardigian Family, and musicians Ian Gillan and Tommy Iommi.

Despite her passion for music, Sona was eager to explore IT. She took a programming course at GTech and earned her PHP software and web developer certification in 2008. "GTech enabled me to think differently, to reach new milestones, and inspire others in knowing that everything is possible when you feel empowered through self-awareness, education and experience. GTech also taught me the benefits of teamwork," she said.

Sona now leads a team of four men at AVROMIC, a web development firm. Success in a heavily male-dominate field is all about giving women access to tools of empowerment. "Affirmation, education and guidance," said Sona, "these are the things youth, especially women, need in order to progress. If we can create a conducive environment with access to these things it can make all the difference in the world."



And created professional growth and development opportunities.



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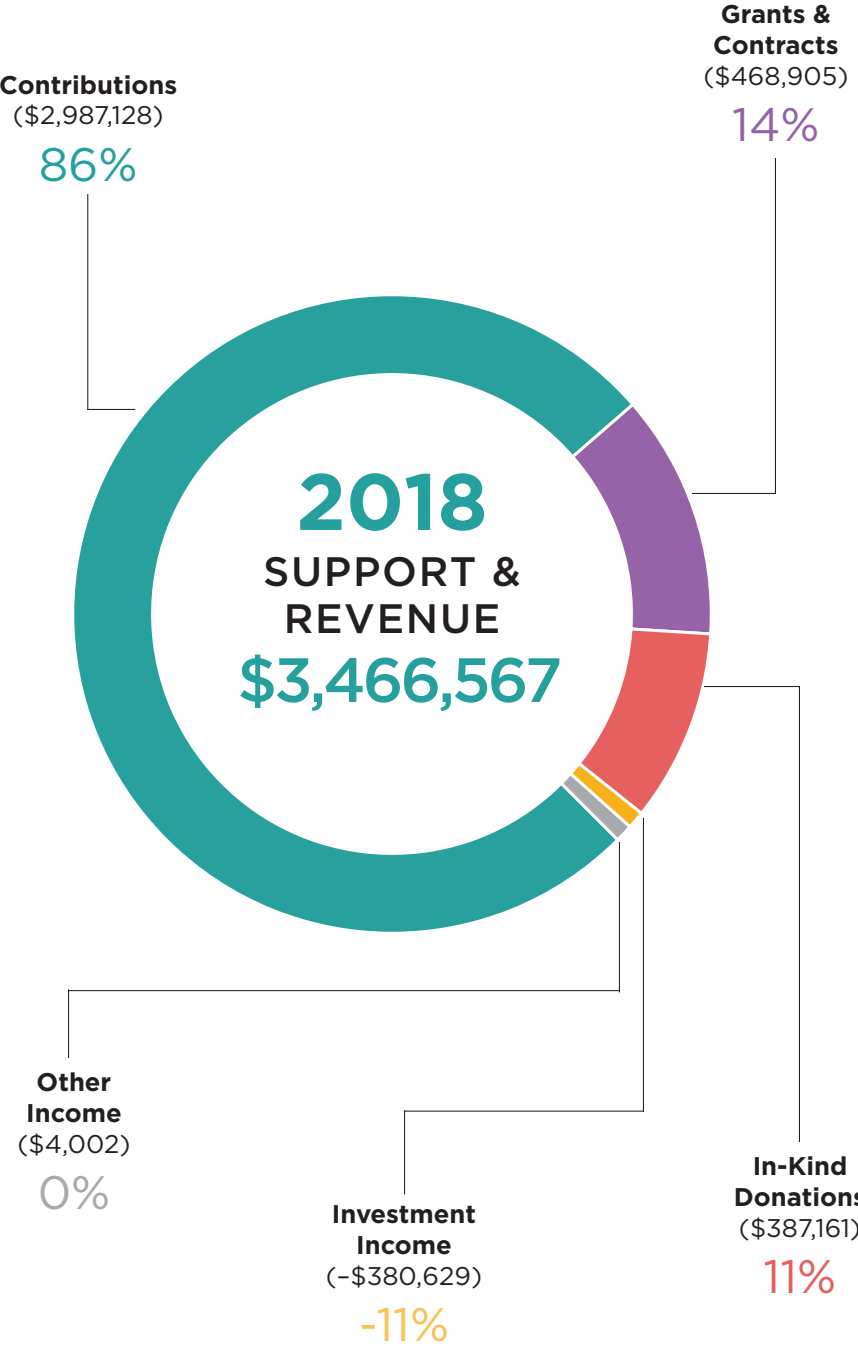
## FAR 2018 ASSET BASE

The financial statements of the Fund for Armenian Relief, Inc. for the year ending December 31, 2018, have been audited by the accounting firm of WithumSmith+Brown. The Independent Auditors issued an "unqualified opinion" that FAR statements conform to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and that "the financial statement...present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Fund for Armenian Relief, Inc." as of the given date. The audit report is available upon request.

## 2018 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

\$2,848,471	CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS
\$3,310,721	INVESTMENTS
\$5,000,479	CONTRIBUTIONS AND PLEDGES RECEIVABLE
\$1,420	PREPAID EXPENSES
\$387,824	INVENTORY OF SUPPLIES AND DONATED GOODS
\$1,379,758	PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET
\$1,666,023	BENEFICIAL INTEREST IN FUNDS HELD BY OTHERS
\$3,064,082	POOLED INVESTMENTS HELD BY ACEF

**\$17,658,778** TOTAL ASSETS







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