

# **AGBU**

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## **AGBU Offers Young Adults an Enriching Array of Summer Programs**

### **The AGBU Summer Internship Program launches in London**

For students about to enter the professional world, AGBU offers an array of programs that not only allow them to prepare for their futures, but also learn about their Armenian heritage. This year, Armenian youth participated in internship, musical and community service programs that helped them solidify their career aspirations and strengthen their ties to Armenians around the globe.

### **The London Summer Internship Program (LSIP)**

2015 marked the first year of the London Summer Internship Program (LSIP), placing 13 students from Argentina, Belgium, Canada, France, Lebanon, the United Kingdom and the United States in internships at Amber Capital, Newscape Capital, White Cube Art Gallery, Wigmore Medical and other prestigious firms and companies.

“LSIP was the perfect catalyst to show the great potential London has as a European networking hub for Armenians. Thirteen students from seven different countries were able to make the most out of the city thanks to the generosity of our network of established professionals as well as the dedication of our Young Professionals (YP). To continue on that promising path, we aim to double the number of students for next year,” said LSIP organizer Camilio Azzouz.

In addition to their daily work schedules, the interns took trips to iconic British landmarks, visited the Google Headquarters in London and attended a gala dinner in honor of President of Nagorno-Karabakh Bako Sahakyan and Baroness Cox of Queensbury. They also met with Vartkess Knadjian, CEO of the diamond company Backes & Strauss, as well as other successful professionals who shared their expertise.

For Sarkis Petrosian, a recent graduate of the Université catholique de Louvain in Belgium, LSIP ended with a full-time job offer at his internship site, StoneHedge Partners. “The London Summer Internship Program was a tremendous opportunity for me to make my first professional steps in one of the biggest financial hubs in the world. My internship was at a British brokerage firm and I was in charge of helping the equities trading desk with its research. This experience helped me to consolidate my recently acquired theoretical knowledge with practical know-how. From a personal standpoint, I engaged in this experience trying to see if there was a place for someone like me in a highly competitive market like London. Eventually I got my answer in the form of a proposal from my manager to stay within the company. I feel extremely delighted and very grateful to all the people who organized the program.”

### **The New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP)**

The New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP) was comprised of 24 interns who spent the summer gaining professional experience and connecting with their Armenian heritage. As the first of the organization’s cadre of internship programs, NYSIP empowers young Armenians to achieve success by providing meaningful, purpose-driven professional opportunities and social activities.

This year, interns arrived from Armenia, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, the United Kingdom and across the United States to spend the summer contributing to their professional development and enhancing their involvement in the Armenian community. During the eight-week program, participants worked in various fields at prestigious companies and organizations, including Columbia Medical Center, the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations, AXA Advisors, Mirrorball, SnackBare.com and TheMedNet.org.

Artoun Festekjian, a student at Tufts University studying cognitive brain science and drama, spent the summer as a production intern at Locomotive Film, gaining insight into the inner-workings of a production studio: “On certain days, I got to read scripts and short stories, but by far, my favorite part of the internship has been going on set for a film that the company is currently working on. I got to meet the directors and actors and see the whole crew working, which was unbelievably exciting.”

### **The Yerevan Summer Internship Program (YSIP)**

The Yerevan Summer Internship Program (YSIP) welcomed 16 diasporan Armenians for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build their resumes, while immersing themselves in a full schedule of educational, cultural and social activities throughout Armenia. The program provides students with an edge in a new global market by offering them hands-on, international work experience in their field of study, while giving them the opportunity to develop closer ties to their heritage and a professional network of peers in the worldwide Armenian diaspora.

In its ninth year, YSIP gave participants from France, Lebanon, Russia and the United States exposure to an international setting that helped cultivate a cross-cultural perspective for interns, who worked in the fields of IT, communications, media, education

and business at the Civilitas Foundation, the Golden Apricot International Film Festival, National Assembly of Armenia, PicsArt, Vitamix Pharmaceuticals and the Women's Resource Center, among many others.

Talin Davidian, a student at the Western University of Health Sciences studying optometry, interned at the Malayan Ophthalmology Center where she directly applied what she has been learning in the classroom: "Working at Malayan was extremely beneficial and enjoyable. I got a lot of hands-on experience that would not have been possible in the States. I'm very glad that I had the opportunity to learn how to use different equipment, putting me at an advantage in my second year of ophthalmology school."

### **Arménie, Terre de Vie**

On July 31, 37 volunteers of Armenian and non-Armenian descent left for Armenia for one month as part of the third biennial Arménie, Terre de Vie, a humanitarian program organized by the UGAB Jeunes [AGBU Youth] division of AGBU France. The program aims to introduce diasporan youth to Armenia through participating in the reconstruction of the country and coming to the aid of the needy.

This summer, participants finished the renovation of three rooms—an art classroom, a gymnasium and a changing room—at the Malatya Children's Center in Yerevan, begun by program participants in 2013. They also held dental hygiene workshops for children at the center and at the Diramayr Hayastani Camp for Orphans in Tsaghkadzor, as well as distributed school supplies. "For us, seeing the kids smile and bringing them happiness is the best feeling. That is why we come and why we keep coming back," said one of 2015 Arménie, Terre de Vie group leaders Dikris Demir.

The volunteers also continued the program's mission by spending a week on a farm in the Tavush region and working alongside the farmers. By the end of their trip to Tavush, a special plaque was inaugurated, encouraging locals and tourists to keep the environment clean and giving them practical advice on how to reach this goal.

### **Discover Armenia Program**

For its twelfth year, the Discover Armenia Program brought 50 high school students to Armenia for a three-week program as both volunteers and visitors. The young adults from Armenia, Canada, the Dominican Republic, France, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States worked on projects that contributed to local development. Students also explored different corners of Armenia from the vibrant capital of Yerevan to the scenic countryside. Along the way, they took excursions to various historical landmarks and the country's natural wonders.

Discover Armenia participants spent three days building a house for a needy family in the village of Pokr Vedi near the Monastery of Khor Virap together with the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia. The participants also visited an orphanage in Vanadzor and spent the afternoon at the Diramayr Hayastani Camp for Orphans in Tsaghkadzor. One of the highlights of the program was a trip to Nagorno-Karabakh where the program renewed its commitment of providing the Foreign Language Book Pavilion of H. Tumanyan Republican Children's Library of Stepanakert with various books for children and youth. This pavilion was inaugurated by Discover Armenia in 2009.

“The AGBU Discover Armenia trip brought me closer to my heritage. In the States, I never had the motivation or opportunity to properly express my pride for my culture. Surrounded by Armenians my age, I travelled the beautiful land which I am proud to call Armenia. This once in a lifetime experience awoke a spirit that I never knew was in me and I am thankful to the AGBU program for this,” said Vasken Fereshetian from the United States.

### **Musical Armenia Program (MAP)**

For the past four years, the Musical Armenia Program (MAP) has been uniting talented musicians and music lovers alike in Yerevan, fostering the Armenian musical tradition in participants from diverse backgrounds. This year, 10 participants from Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Lebanon, Syria and the United States, ranging in age from 15 to 57, traveled to Armenia and were brought closer to the artistic heritage of the Armenian people.

The three-week program had a diverse array of activities. Musically, participants perfected their craft through one-on-one lessons with renowned professors from the Komitas State Music Conservatory, studied the repertoire of Armenian music on their own instruments and gave a final performance at the Aram Khatchaturyan Museum at the Gala Concert for the close of the session. Each year, MAP offers 14 lectures on the ancient Armenian notational system [khaz] in addition to Armenian musical history from medieval to contemporary. In addition to the final Gala Concert, participants performed regularly at various local venues and festivals, attended several auditions, master classes by renowned musicians and had meetings with local artists and celebrities, such as Anna Mayilyan and Maestro Tigran Mansurian.

Aramis Khorchidian, a 15-year-old aspiring violinist from France, notes how the program has inspired him musically and reconnected him to his love for Armenia: “MAP has been an experience of a lifetime for me. I have been enlightened by Armenian music and given a rare opportunity to uniquely expand my repertoire. Naturally, it has also exposed me to the incredible culture of Armenia, which will leave, forever after, a profound impact upon my spirit, mind and soul.”

*For more information of AGBU programs for young adults, please visit <http://agbu.org/programs/> (<http://agbu.org/programs/>).*

Established in 1906, AGBU ([www.agbu.org](http://www.agbu.org) (<http://www.agbu.org>)) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians around the world.

For more information about AGBU and its worldwide programs, please visit [www.agbu.org](http://www.agbu.org) (<http://www.agbu.org>)