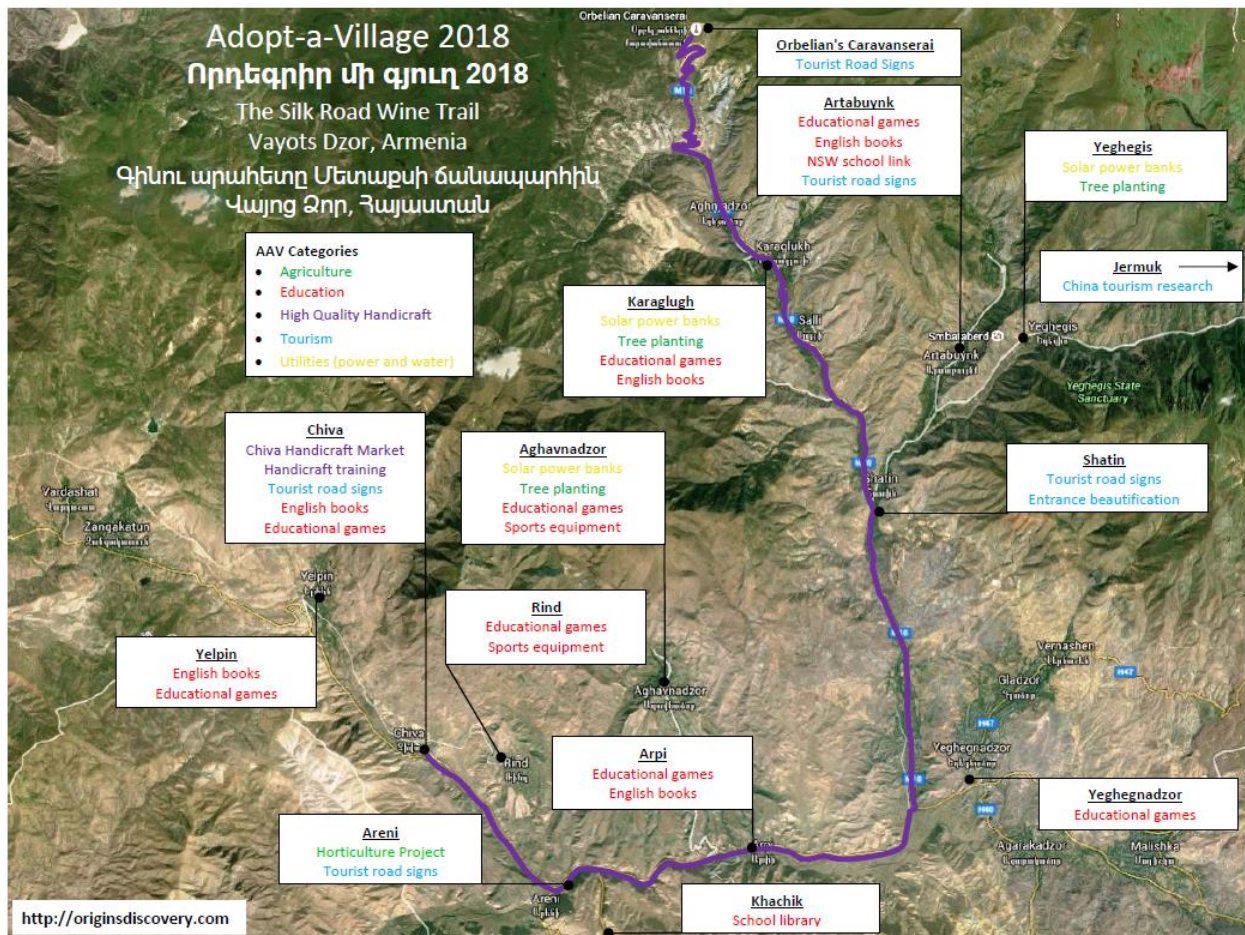


## Adopt-a-Village: Strengthening Vayots Dzor Villages

Could Armenia be lost one day? Many worry that the nation is vulnerable, especially with weak rural economies that rely on subsistence farming and any resultant village depopulation.

Three years ago the Adopt-a-Village (AAV) initiative first launched. AAV aims to reconnect the Armenian diaspora with the homeland, so that every Armenian village has a mentor to advise them (<http://originsdiscovery.com/Adopt-a-Village.html>).

Demonstrating the growth of the programme, 32 micro-projects in 14 different sites across Vayots Dzor Province are about to be implemented during 5 – 7 April 2018. The micro-projects are in five different areas: agriculture, education, high-quality handicraft, tourism and utilities.



2018 AAV Project Sites

AAV isn't about big money projects, but micro-projects, some not involving cash. Corruption is minimised through a direct relationship between the diaspora and villages. Projects are decided by the Armenian diaspora in consultation with villages. However, while the diaspora normally coordinate, both Armenians and 'Friends of Armenia' are encouraged to participate. More than half the funds for the 2018 projects came from non-Armenians!

Some of the key projects in 2018 include:

- a high quality handicraft industry based in Chiva, thanks to Singaporean Samuel Seow;
- a research tour by a senior Chinese travel agent’s association representative, to consider the potential of Chinese tourists and business people visiting Armenia, and even direct flights between China and Armenia – this is funded by the Thailand-based author of the novel *Origins: Discovery* (<http://originsdiscovery.com/>);
- renovation of the library in Khachik school supported by New Zealander Ara Kassabian; and
- tourist road signs to encourage tourists to explore the Silk Road Wine Trail, which was established in 2016.



In Australia, AAV is kindly endorsed by [His Grace Bishop Haigazoun Najarian](#) and the [Premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian](#). These visionary leaders know that simple frameworks like AAV can transform the entire nation with support from diaspora around the world, and allow Armenia to reach its ultimate potential – the ‘Switzerland of the Caucasus’.

For more information on AAV, please go to: <http://originsdiscovery.com/Adopt-a-Village.html> (all expressions of support from the diaspora and Friends of Armenia are very welcome).

Len Wicks  
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