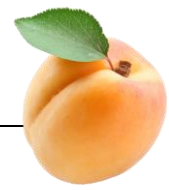




Adopt-a-Village Project



Adopt a Village

Background

There is a pressing need for more funding and investment in Armenian rural villages. Road infrastructure is poor, as are many basic services, and the unemployment rate is high in many areas, leaving a feeling of neglect and even depression in many Armenians. The low morale of villagers would tend to explain the untidiness of many villages, with rusty vehicles and rubbish strewn across what should be attractive landscapes. Very few villagers have a high opinion of the local or central government – a common theme being that they feel abandoned and insignificant, while Yerevan takes all the attention.

It is quite noticeable as people drive around the rural areas that there has been a ‘population drift’ to Yerevan and overseas. The declining population has inevitably resulted in low agricultural productivity. The vast majority of agricultural practices appear to be based on subsistence farming, with almost nomadic lifestyles of people tending animals and poor collective marketing practices.

The low rural populations also mean there is a potential strategic danger to the nation. In a century where wars will be fought over basic food and water supplies on a planet crowded with people, Armenia’s green lands may well be a tempting target, especially as Armenia is surrounded by arid and densely populated lands in Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan.

Potential

It is obvious that Armenia’s best potential for economic and population growth lies in the areas of agriculture and mining, and tourism; yet there is little evidence of programmes that support development in these areas, presumably because there are fundamental problems that need to be addressed, or that there is no structured means to provide such support.

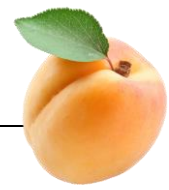
One of the best potential areas of funding and investment in Armenia is from the Armenian Diaspora, but they are cautious about being involved in large scale projects because of the lessons learnt in the 1990s about corruption. According to many Armenians interviewed, this is still a problem, so development is largely left to Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), most of them from the West.

Adopt-a-Village Programme

We believe that a government ministry should lead a significant programme to change the current declining situation in the rural areas. We submit that the Diaspora and rural Armenia alike need to be energised with a new programme governed by the Ministry which seeks to directly connect nations with a significant diaspora and a selected village and its surroundings. An example might be that if New Zealand is allocated Areni, the NZ Diaspora can administer initiatives that directly benefit this area (large nations like the USA should be allocated more than one village).

The village representatives would sign a document that requires them to:

- agree to the programme and its conditions;
- organise the villagers to remove all rubbish and ‘beautify’ the village and surrounding area;
- prepare a place for representatives and visitors from the donor nation to stay in the village;
- organise a means of translation for the donor nation’s representatives and visitors; and
- educate villagers about the programme, to prepare and conduct such activities as welcoming of donor nation representatives.

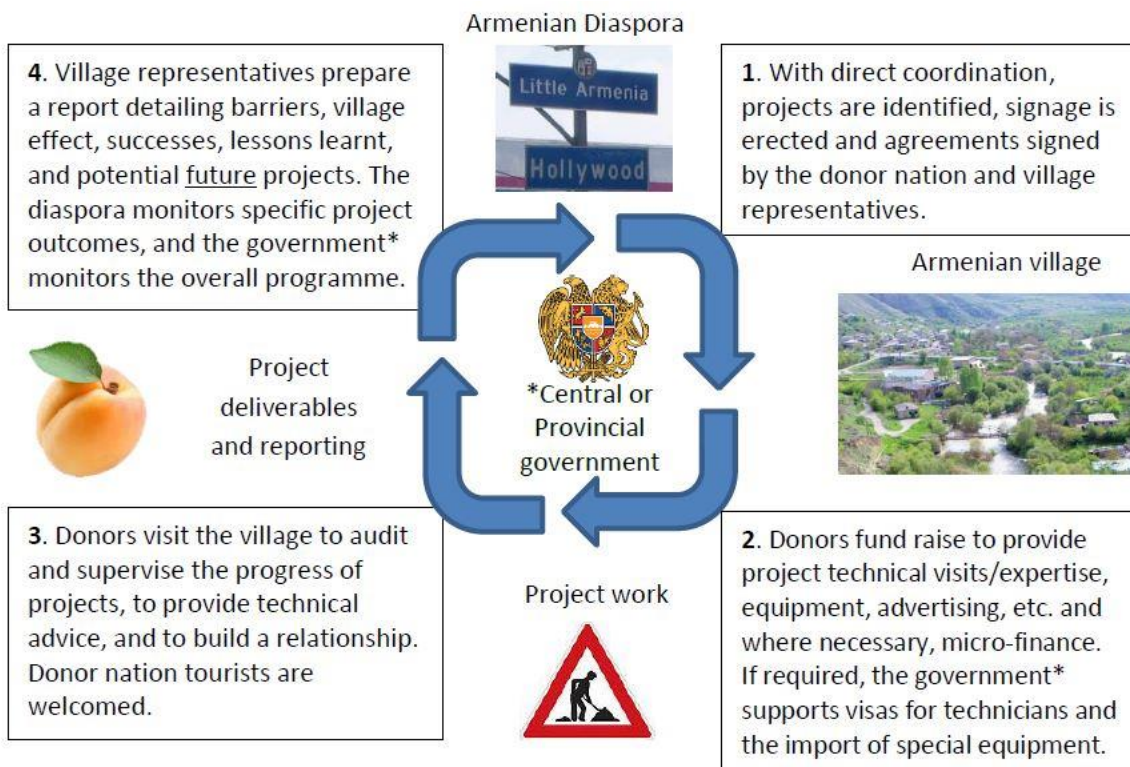


A government ministry would:

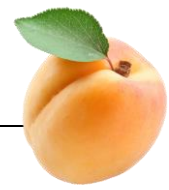
- create a small 'Adopt a Village' unit to administer the programme in consultation with provincial governors;
- develop the programme detail and templates of agreements for villages;
- monitor the progress of the village projects agreed between the village and diaspora representatives on an annual basis;
- provide prominent signs to be erected at the villages selected about the programme (especially to acknowledge and welcome the donor nation);

Donor nation Diaspora representatives would:

- nominate an 'Adopt a Village' coordinator;
- coordinate with the village representatives directly to identify projects that will assist the village (examples: agricultural diversification such as horticulture, farm equipment, agricultural training, product marketing, mining technical assistance, information and computer technology projects, tourism enhancement – erecting signage, rest stops, etc.);
- advertising to the donor nation about the village and the Adopt-a-Village projects, including the promotion of relationships between donor nation schools and the village schools; and
- fund-raise and identify expertise such as university students, volunteers, and professional experts that can support the selected adopted village and its surrounding area.



We endorse Wikimedia initiatives benefiting Armenia's youth for consideration by Diaspora representatives as Adopt-a-Village micro-projects, which include trained educators resident in villages and [Wikicamps](#).



Following is an example of actions that might be taken by the Armenian Diaspora representatives (DR) and village representatives (VR) in sequence:

Step	Diaspora	Villagers
1.	DR advises ¹ consent to sponsor	Erection of an AAV sign ² at the village
2.	Development of an AAV web page	VR consents to abide by AAV Agreement
3.	Advertising about the village	Drafting of projects using the Template
4.	Assessment of projects	Creation of Diaspora accommodation
5.	DR advises VR of project consents	VR informs villagers
6.	Diaspora responds ³ to projects	Village spreads word about AAV
7.	DR directs assistance to VR	VR reports on project progress
8.	Possible DR village visit	VR reports on project completion to DR
9.	DR reports to Diaspora and donors	VR creates new projects
10.	DR assesses new projects	VR makes annual report to the Governor

¹ During the AAV trial period to [us](#); but after the trials, to the Regional Governor

² [Argentina Template](#), [Canada Template](#), [France Template](#), Georgia Template, Germany Template, [Russia Template](#), [USA Template](#)

³ It is recommended that each micro-project is managed by a member of the Diaspora, and one member of the Diaspora oversees the progress of all the projects

Transparency

Every project's budget and any monies spent during the projects should be published at least once every three months for all the relevant villagers and Diaspora to review. This is in accordance with current Armenian law for regular village budgets.

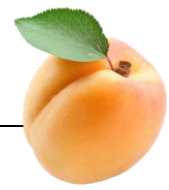
The Diaspora should note the following:

- it is better to start with just a few of the smaller micro-projects, to build trust;
- insist on photographic/Skype evidence of project progress;
- villages all have published budgets in accordance with Armenian law for their regular business, so insist on the publishing of information on the AAV projects and their budget in the same manner (see the AAV Agreement at the Appendix); and
- schedule a visit to the village by a Diaspora representative or someone trusted in Armenia.

Programme Deliverables

The key to the programme is that it would be transparent and project-based, delivering specific projects that benefit the village using templates developed by the Ministry. The first project priorities should be:

1. erecting of signage about the 'Adopt a Village' programme, so travellers could be invited to become involved and be aware of the programme;
2. micro projects that do not necessarily involve money transfers to build trust, such as sending books for schools;



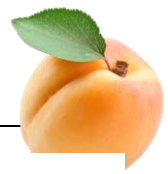
3. construction of a village hall/lodging where donor representatives and experts (such as teachers, engineers, etc.) could stay – if the village already has a suitable facility, then the emphasis should be on renovating this to a satisfactory standard (the Ministry would detail the standard required);
4. improvement of access roads to the village and area concerned (if it is a main road then this should be a matter for the provincial government); then projects in order of priority agreed between the village and the donor nation representatives such as:
 - a. alternative power sources;
 - b. education (particularly regarding agricultural practices);
 - c. tourism promotion; and
 - d. information and computer technology projects.

Each year the government would provide a report to the donor nation that specifies the project achievements, barriers, and future planning. All reports and programme details should be made freely available on the ministry website.

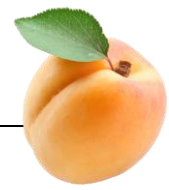
Matching Armenian Provinces and the Armenian Diaspora

The Adopt-a-Village (AAV) concept suggests a systematic approach to ultimately provide all villages, large and small, with Diaspora support. It is intended that the village heads of larger villages should coordinate the AAV communications with the smaller villages in their vicinity, to reduce the workload of the Diaspora. Thus the AAV sign placed in a prominent position near the larger village states that the village and 'its surroundings' have been adopted.

Province	Matched Diaspora Nations	Diaspora
Syunik (102 villages)	Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): Russia, Belarus, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan	1,625,000
Shirak (116) Aragatsotn (111) Lori (105)	United States	1,000,000
Armavir (94)	France	300,000
Ararat (93)	Western Europe (except France): Spain, Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark	131,000
Gegharkunik (87)	Eastern Europe (except CIS): Georgia, Ukraine, Greece, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus	300,000
Kotayk (60)	South America: Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Venezuela, Chile	120,000
Tavush (57)	North America (except for the USA): Canada (60,000), Mexico, Cuba	60,000
Vayots Dzor (41)	Asia/Pacific: Australia (50,000), New Zealand, Lebanon (50,000), India, Singapore, China, Japan, Thailand, Israel (3,000), Iran (50,000), Turkey (50,000)	200,000



Click on the Provinces for an enlargement



Trials

After a trial, the intention is to upscale the Adopt-a-Village Project across the Armenia, so that every settlement under 5,000 people has a Diaspora that will support and mentor it. The leading States where the main populations of Armenian Diaspora reside will be paired in a proportional way with either a province or part of a province, dependent on the size of the Diaspora and the number of villages. At this stage, oversight monitoring of the Adopt-a-Village Projects will transfer to provincial or central government, as appropriate.

We are proud to announce the first trials to test the Adopt-a-Village concept on single villages with small micro-projects, to build trust and identify any problems with a safe, low risk experiment. If the trials are successful, then we may be able to upscale the tests to benefit all rural Armenian villages, so that the regions are divided and matched with a nation or continent.

After a satisfactory trial between the Diaspora and the primary village (the largest village with a population less than 5,000), the Adopt-a-Village programme should then expand to the other smaller villages in the area concerned.

Conclusion

The Adopt a Village concept could theoretically revolutionise the relationship between the Diaspora and ordinary Armenians, and promote a high degree of trust with central and local government. It could rapidly increase external investment in areas that need it most, and promote many job opportunities where none exist today. Above all, the initiative could be a 'virtuous circle' as more investment comes from an increasing trust and visibility of real progress.

Appendixes

- AAV Agreement for the village representatives to sign
- AAV sign template (example only, other templates are at <http://originsdiscovery.com/Adopt-a-Village.html>)

Որդեգրի մի գյուղ համաձայնագիր Adopt-a-Village Agreement

Ես/Մենք I/We,
գյուղի/village ներկայացուցիչ(ներս)/representative(s), սրանով համաձայնում եմ (ենք)
ենթարկվել ներքոնշյալ սկզբունքներին և պահանջներին/do hereby agree to abide by the
following principles and requirements. Ես/մենք պարտավորվում ենք` /I/We will:

1. ապահովել, որ ցանկացած անձի կողմից չի լինի ոչ մի կոռուպցիա և կեղծ գործունեություն «Որդեգրի մի գյուղ» նախագծերի առաջարկման, նախապատրաստման, անցկացման և հաշվետվության ընթացքում, հետևաբար, նախագծի բյուջեն և ծրագրերի իրականացման ժամանակ ծախսված որևէ գումար կիրառարակվի առնվազն երեք ամիսը մեկ անգամ յուրաքանչյուր առնչվող գյուղացու և սփյուռքահայության վերանայման համար./ensure that there will be no corruption and fraudulent activity by any person during the proposal, preparation, conduct and reporting of Adopt-a-Village projects; therefore the project's budget and any monies spent during the projects will be published at least once every three months for all the relevant villagers and Diaspora to review;
2. նշանակել առնվազն երկու կոնտակտային անձ կանոնավոր կերպով սփյուռքահայության ներկայացուցիչների հետ հաղորդակցվելու և ժամանակին ու հավաստի կերպով սփյուռքահայ ներկայացուցչի բոլոր հարցումներին արձագանքելու համար./establish a minimum of two contact points to communicate to the Diaspora Representatives on a regular basis and respond in a timely and truthful manner to all Diaspora Representative enquiries;
3. կազմակերպել «Որդեգրի մի գյուղ» ցուցանակի մոնտաժում ակնառու վայրում կամ գյուղի մոտակայքում (ցուցանակի ծախսը կրում են Սփյուռքահայության կամ «Ծագումը» ծրագրի ներկայացուցիչները)/arrange for the erection of an Adopt-a-Village sign in a prominent location in or near the village (cost of the sign to be borne by the Diaspora or representatives of the *Origins* Project);
4. կազմակերպել ազատ, հարմարավետ և մաքուր բնակավայր Սփյուռքահայության ներկայացուցիչների այցելությունների կամ դոնոր երկրից զբոսաշրջիկների այցելությունների համար, նման զբոսաշրջիկների համար ցածր գնով./arrange for free, comfortable and clean accommodation for Diaspora representative visits, or for visits by tourists from the donor nation at a low cost to such tourists;
5. ձեռնարկել քայլեր «Որդեգրի մի գյուղ» նախագծի մասին տեղեկատվությունը տարածելու համար./take actions to spread information about the Adopt-a-Village Project; and
6. ապահովել, որպեսզի առնվազն տարեկան մեկ անգամ մարզպետարանին ներկայացվի «Որդեգրի մի գյուղ» նախագծի առաջընթացի ընդհանուր հաշվետվությունը./ensure that a report on overall Adopt-a-Village project progress to the Regional Governor's office is made at least annually.

Ստորագրված է/Signed.....

(Գյուղի ներկայացուցիչ(ներ)/Village representative(s)) (Ամիս, ամսաթիվ Date)

Աջակցվում է «Ծագումը: Բացահայտում»-ի կողմից (<http://originsdiscovery.com>)

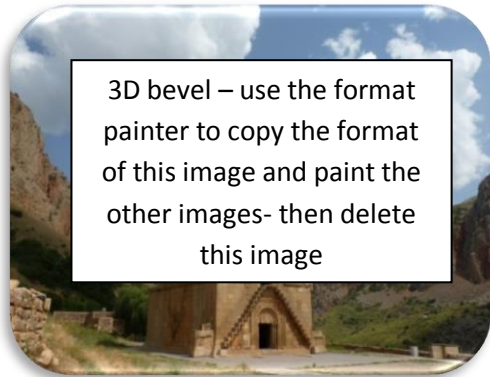
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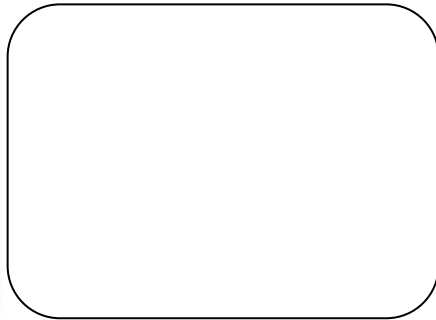
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Welcome to xx, Special Village Feature

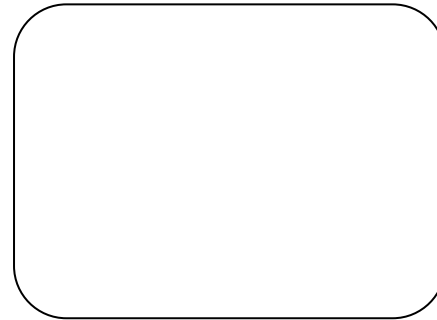
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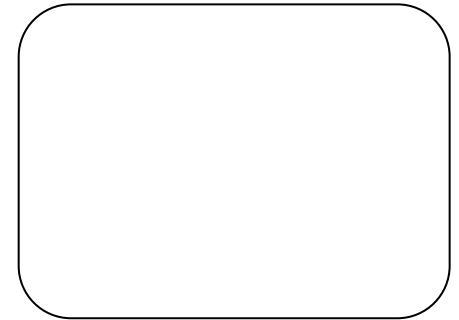
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Հայերեն English Русский



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Որդեգրիր մի գյուղ



xx և նրա հարակից տարածքները «որդեգրվել են» Ամերիկայի Միացյալ Նահանգների հայ համայնքի կողմից:

«Որդեգրիր մի գյուղ» ծրագրի (խորհրդանիշը՝ ծիրան) նպատակն է զբոսաշրջության զարգացման նպատակով գեղեցկացնել գյուղերը և աջակցության ուղղակի ծրագրերի միջոցով օգնել հայ գյուղացիներին:

«Ծագումը» ծրագրի (խորհրդանիշը՝ նուռ) նպատակն է բացել աշխարհի աչքերը Հայաստանի գեղեցկության և նրա հնագույն մշակույթի առջև:

Միասին այս երկու ծրագրերը նպատակ ունեն նպաստելու զբոսաշրջության և գործարարության զարգացմանը և Հայոց ցեղասպանության ճանաչմանը:



Adopt-a-Village



xx and its surroundings have been 'adopted' by the Armenian Diaspora in the United States.

The Adopt-a-Village Project (symbolised by the apricot) aims to beautify villages for tourism, and help rural Armenians with direct support projects.

The objective of the *Origins* Project (symbolised by the pomegranate) is to open the world's eyes to the beauty of Armenia and its ancient culture.

Together, the two projects are intended to encourage tourism and business, and recognition of the Armenian Genocide.



Усынови село



xx и его окрестности "усыновлены" армянской диаспорой в Соединенных Штатах Америки.

Проект "Усынови село" (символ: абрикос) стремится украсить села для туризма и поддержать армянским крестьянам с проектами прямой поддержки.

Цель проекта "Происхождение" (символ: гранат) открыть глаза мира на красоту и древнюю культуру Армении.

Вместе эти два проекта призваны поощрять туризм и бизнес, и признание Геноцида армян.

