

**For a Viable Future:
The Five-Year Programming Plan of the
Armenian Communities Department at
the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation,
Lisbon**

December 2013

Foreword

Martin Essayan, Trustee of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Foundations have the luxury of being able to plan for the long term – by contrast with Governments who are subject to regular elections, companies who are burdened by quarterly earnings requirements, and charities who need to regularly raise funds from the public whose preferences and moods change. For similar reasons they are also able to take risks, to encourage new ways of working, and – especially if they have an international orientation as we do – to link the local with the global. When we set about devising a new strategy for the Armenian Communities Department we sought to build off these strengths as well as the other ones we felt we had: being a department with deep Armenian roots which is in turn part of a leading European non-Armenian foundation; having a long history of educational and cultural activity undertaken apolitically; and having a great brand partly inherited from our distinguished founder.

This playing to our strengths then was our first guiding principle. The second was to be inspired by the example of our founder and to think systematically about the Armenian situation and aim to act where we can have the most impact. It is clear that our mission "to create a viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued" is ambitious and that success is dependent on many uncertainties which we could influence but not control. Could Armenia make the transition to a stable democracy in which the youth wanted to stay and build the future? Is there a viable future for the Christian communities of the Middle East? Could Western Armenian defy the track record of other languages and survive beyond the third generation without a sizeable, concentrated community? Would the next generation of diasporans see the Armenian community as a route to self-realisation? Would Armenians and Turks build a new relationship based on an appreciation of how much they had given to, and shaped, each other? We therefore realised that we had to place a number of bets on different leverage points; the result is the four priorities described here.

The last guiding principle was the need to bring the department in line with best philanthropic practices, with clear objectives and measures, a focus on impact, systematic evaluation, and an inclination towards partnership as the default – both with other Armenian and non-Armenian organisations and with other parts of the parent organisation.

The Five Year Plan is based on an extensive tour of Armenian communities around the globe, undertaken by the newly appointed Director. The feedback was clear: the emerging direction of the Department is fine but we needed to modernise. We also realised that Western Armenian is at a tipping point as a living language – hence our emphasis on it during the programme period.

We have already received considerable feedback on the draft version of this Plan. We hope this process continues so that we can refine it further as we begin to implement it in 2014. Please tell us what you think.

Preface: in lieu of an executive summary

Razmik Panossian, Director of the Armenian Communities Department

Developing a programming plan for the global Armenian community is a challenging task, but one that is also a rewarding task. It is a rare privilege to be able to be in a position where one can take stock of needs, devise solutions, and have the opportunity to implement programmes that address specific issues. We at the Armenian Communities Department have been in this privileged position for the past several months as we have developed our five-year programming plan for 2014-2018.

The Plan is the “road map” of where we want to go over the next several years. It lays out the foundation of our activities and funding priorities. Based on our mission to create a viable future for the Armenian people, it is structured around four priority areas: the preservation and development of Armenian language and culture through education, supporting Armenia by investing in its youth and civil society, improving Armenian-Turkish relations, and preserving Armenian literary heritage. We believe that these four “pillars” of our work reflect the current realities and needs of the Armenian world.

More specifically, we will focus on the following core areas:

Our first priority area is to **promote the preservation of the Armenian language and culture, and the development of the diaspora by linking its different parts and by investing in education**. Over half of our resources, i.e. two million US Dollars out of an annual budget of 3.5 million, will be devoted to this field since two of our signature programmes – scholarships and school support – fall under its rubric. Our programmes will include strengthening the Western Armenian language through various means such as support to Armenian schools (but in a more targeted manner), the creation of a teacher education centre, support to certain academic centres, and funding the use of new technologies in innovative language teaching methods. University scholarships will remain, reorganised in five principal categories: Global Excellence Scholarships for Armenian Students; Armenian Studies Scholarships; Western Armenian Teacher Education Scholarships; Short Term Conference and Travel Grants to Students in Armenia; and Undergraduate Studies Scholarships for Armenian students in developing countries.

Our second priority area is to **develop a viable Armenia through investing in its youth and their commitment to civil society**. Our focus on youth and civil society is meant to privilege support to sectors that have traditionally been neglected by diasporan donors. We will provide grants to civil society organisations, particularly those that encourage civic education and participation; support initiatives that link young intellectuals in Armenia – especially in the social sciences and the humanities – with their peers in developed countries so that they are exposed to the latest innovations and academic approaches; and collaborate with certain government agencies, notably in the enhancement of Western Armenian.

Our third priority area, which is a new realm of engagement, is to **improve Armenian-Turkish relations by sponsoring projects that encourage a common understanding of their long**

shared history. The resilience of the Armenian community in Turkey, namely in Istanbul, has been remarkable. It has not only survived in very difficult circumstances since 1915, but has continued to produce Western Armenian culture and literature, kept scores of schools and churches open and, more recently, certain brave elements of it have contributed to the democratic development of Turkey. Our engagement in this domain will be threefold: reinforcing Armenian community structures and institutions; supporting initiatives of dialogue between Armenians and Turks, and Armenians and Kurds, including translation and publication projects, conferences and other similar initiatives; and sponsoring research and training in Ottoman studies. We fully appreciate the fact that Armenian-Turkish relations is a controversial issue in both societies and we are cognisant of the risks, but the potential rewards of an improved relationship are worth it.

Our fourth priority area is to **preserve and make available the Armenian literary heritage.** While we will continue supporting the publication of some of the “classic” Armenian texts, we will redirect our focus from the ancient to the current, establishing a new publication series under the rubric of “The Calouste Gulbenkian Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues and Culture.” Moreover, we will move away from the almost exclusive sponsorship of printed texts to more electronic publications. The digital footprint of the Armenian language and culture must be increased if it is to resonate with younger readers, if it is to be globally accessible and if it is to be made more viable in the 21st Century. Hence, we will support newspapers and journals to go online, support the production of electronic and interactive books, fund the digitisation of important archives and texts, help to develop Armenian-related smart phone applications, on line dictionaries and lexicons, etc. A two-way translation programme of important cultural and academic texts (into and from Armenian) will also be developed. Finally, to help with the production of a contemporary literary culture in Western Armenian, we will either institute or support an international prize for best new fiction and non-fiction Armenian texts.

In addition to these four priority areas, we are also aiming to turn the Department into a centre of strategic thinking and long term planning by bringing together diasporan organisations, experts and noted leaders on a periodic basis to discuss issues and problems facing the Armenian people. Internally, within the Foundation, we will collaborate with other Departments and Programmes to organise events of mutual interest that are related to Armenian culture and history, bringing the rich Armenian heritage into the Foundation’s home country.

“Plan your work, work your plan” is perhaps a tired expression, but it contains an essential truth: to be effective, focussed and systematic we need to set distinct priorities and have a sense of clear direction regarding the future. This plan lays out where the Armenian Communities Department wishes to go over the next five years. Our style of working will change too – much more open, communicative, partnership-driven, results-based and motivated by a culture of evaluation.

Thanks to my predecessors who have managed this Department, we have a rich tradition of philanthropy within the Armenian world. We will continue with that tradition, modernise it, and put it on solid foundations so that the Department, as an integral part of a perpetual

Foundation, continues to serve through its mandate for a very, very long time. We want to ensure that future generations look at the Department and realise that it rose to the occasion to save and advance Armenian education, culture and language, particularly Western Armenian. To do this, we must go beyond conservative approaches, take risks, and embrace new ways of contributing to Armenian society. In short, through this Plan we seek to turn the Department into a transformative agent within the global Armenian community so that its future is more viable.

**For a Viable Future:
The Five-Year Programming Plan of the Armenian Communities
Department at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon**

Mission

To create a viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued.

Priorities

1. Promote the preservation of the **Armenian language and culture**, and the development of the diaspora by linking its different parts and by investing in **education**.
2. Develop a viable Armenia through investing in its **youth** and their commitment to **civil society**.
3. Improve **Armenian-Turkish relations** by sponsoring projects that encourage a common understanding of their long shared history.
4. Preserve and make available the **Armenian literary heritage**.

Introduction

The Armenian Communities Department at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has embarked on a process of renewal and strategic redirection. This Programming Plan is the “road map” for where it seeks to go over the next several years. It is based on an extensive consultative process that included travel to eight countries by the new Director (Armenia, Lebanon, Turkey, France, United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Israel/Palestinian Territories), as well as hundreds of meetings with community leaders, civil society activists, government ministers, heads of churches, teachers, academics and various intellectuals. Armenians around the world are looking to the Foundation and its Armenian Communities Department to assume a leadership role in supporting Armenian education, culture and the arts, particularly in the diaspora.

This Programming Plan lays out the foundation of our activities and funding priorities for the next five years (2014-2018), based on our mission “*to create a viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued.*” The Plan is structured around the four priority areas which we believe are crucial in fulfilling our mission: promoting the preservation of Armenian language and culture through education, supporting Armenia by investing in its youth and civil society, improving Armenian-Turkish relations and preserving Armenian literary heritage.

These priorities – or the four “pillars” of our work – are based on our philosophy that the Armenian Communities Department must reflect the current realities of the Armenian world, which is constituted by many diasporan communities and the Republic of Armenia. Hence, we strive to be “representative” in our approach:

incorporating both Armenia and the diaspora, while keeping a fair balance between the various elements within the diaspora. However, being fair, representative and balanced does not mean being everything to everyone or distributing funds equally to all. We present below some clearly laid out priorities which we will support. Most of our funds will continue to go to Armenian education and culture in the diaspora, with a significant contribution to Armenia, notably to civil society and higher education.

We treat the diaspora as an intertwined living and transforming entity that not only preserves culture and identity but also creates new culture and new ways of being Armenian. Despite its fragmentation, geographic distribution and ideological divides, the Armenian diaspora has historically been an “organic” entity where multiple centres are interconnected, influence each other and provide support to one another. Throughout centuries, diasporan communities have arisen and declined (New Julfa, India, Eastern Europe, Egypt, to name but four), but have always maintained links with one another and with institutions in the homeland. This process continues to this day. We are, for example, witnessing right before our eyes the violent destruction of one of the centres of Western Armenian culture: Aleppo in Syria. Or the slow and steady decline of the number of Armenians (and other Christians) in the Middle East as a whole, from Iraq to Lebanon, as Armenians migrate to Western countries and to Armenia. What is remarkable, however, is the resilience of communities affected by war and hardship, and the willingness of other diasporan communities to assist them on an ongoing basis.

Armenia itself faces many of the difficulties of a post-Soviet country. Independent since 1991, it is currently grappling with democratisation challenges, an oligarchic economy, corruption, weak civil society, massive out-migration, unemployment (particularly in youth) and weak academic institutions. And yet, it is a country that has emerged from war and is generally peaceful, has established some strong state institutions, holds periodic elections and has a more or less functional economy, albeit tightly controlled by a few individuals. It attracts some diasporan aid and considerable affection, and reaches out to the diaspora, principally through its Ministry of the Diaspora.

It is in this complex global dynamic that the Armenian Communities Department must act: a multi-local nation with deep historical roots, a wide network of connections between diasporan communities as well as with Armenia. It is a context in which ideas and resources circulate, people and money move about and culture and identity are shaped and reshaped.

How to have impact on this ever-changing Armenian world, and in which domains? The answers to this core question lie in the activities of the Armenian Communities Department. The questions themselves are indicative of a change of approach. We must be able to show the impact of our programming choices on Armenian culture and education through significant results.

As a non-partisan Foundation, above the political fray of the Armenian world, we are in a unique position to influence through our funding priorities culture, education and learning in ways that enhance the Armenian nation globally. We are best placed to achieve such transformative change, particularly in the diaspora, because of our financial and political

independence and track-record of philanthropic work over many decades. We do not seek change for the sake of change, of course, but to address some specific challenges and issues faced by Armenians.

Over the coming several years we will move away from multiple small grants to many recipients to larger results oriented contributions to fewer initiatives. We will institute a competitive process of project selection with clear granting policies and parameters. Moreover, we will play an important role in the Armenian diaspora as a convening and strategizing centre with a long term perspective.

Such an approach is in line with larger trends in the philanthropic world of which the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is a leading member. Our shift reflects a move away from “loyal philanthropy” (modest grants year after year to the same trusted partners) to “impact philanthropy” or “catalytic philanthropy” whereby significant assistance is given to achieve common goals or to institute social change. The shift also means moving away from mostly reactive grants to more proactive engagement with partners and initiatives. We will put emphasis on innovation, problem solving and partnership development, be they in the public, educational, private or community and civil society sectors. Accountability, evaluation, communications and project management that is results-based will be an integral part of our programming methodology.

The priority areas which we will support – or continue to support – are outlined below. Our consultative process affirmed many of these needs. On the whole, we will continue to provide university scholarships, support Armenian studies as well as schools and cultural production. But we will put more emphasis on modern and contemporary issues and topics in the research and publications we fund. We will support initiatives that link technological innovation with Armenian culture so that the Armenian footprint in the global digital space increases. We will also encourage translations into and from Armenian. In Armenia, our work with civil society and with academics will continue, including our grants to publish important books. And in Turkey we will contribute to initiatives that support Armenian-Turkish dialogue, led by brave individuals and organisations at the forefront of the ongoing democratisation process in that country.

However, the most important issue that we identified during the consultative process that requires urgent attention is the loss of Western Armenian as a living language. We will develop significant programming around this issue, to reinforce the language and give it a viable chance to survive. In fact, strengthening Western Armenian – the language that Calouste Gulbenkian spoke – frames much of this Programming Plan.

Below we outline in greater detail our programming priorities, grouped around the four “pillars” of the Armenian Communities Department as well as some further related initiatives.

1

Promote the preservation of the Armenian language and culture, and the development of the diaspora by linking its different parts and by investing in education

This priority area constitutes the largest segment of our programming as it brings together two elements that are at the heart of our mission: cultural preservation/production and education.

Loss of the Western Armenian Language

Western Armenian is an “Endangered Language” according to UNESCO, under the threat of disappearing if serious initiatives are not undertaken to reinforce it. The current generation is probably the last generation that can arrest or possibly reverse this process of not-so-gradual loss of a language that was a vibrant source of Armenian culture only half a century ago. This was the language of generations of intellectuals, writers and community leaders. The 1915 Genocide gave it a major blow, and subsequent assimilation in the diaspora led to its erosion which has recently accelerated to an alarming degree. There are many reasons why Western Armenian, one of the two branches of the vernacular language, is under serious threat (the other branch is Eastern Armenian spoken in Armenia and Iran). These include: demographic changes in the Middle East (dwindling communities), lack of state institutions that support it, ability to interact with new technologies, weak intergenerational transmission, the lack of serious initiatives and strategies to prepare a new cadre of intellectuals and community leaders that master the use of Western Armenian.

Of course, it is beyond the ability of the Foundation to influence regional demographic trends or to create state institutions to support a language, but there are a number of things that we can do to provide assistance – particularly through schools and other educational initiatives – to communities where the language has a chance of survival and further development. We can, moreover, contribute to the training of teachers and young intellectuals who are capable of teaching Western Armenian and producing contemporary culture in the language. Importantly, we can be the catalyst to introduce innovative and modern approaches to language learning in the diasporan context.

In our “post-national” age the discourse Armenian educators and community leaders often employ to encourage students to learn Armenian is still framed by traditional approaches. These do not resonate with the youth of the 21st century more wedded to their iPads than to their ancestral roots. Commanding the young to “Speak Armenian!” can no longer be justified only on national arguments. To encourage them to learn Armenian, quality schools are needed, the targeted use of modern technologies, qualified teachers who not only teach the “golden age” of literature but inspire students to produce their own contemporary culture borrowing freely from other cultures in which they are immersed.

In this context, the following initiatives will be undertaken to strengthen Western Armenian:

A. Support to Armenian Schools and Other Educational Initiatives in the Diaspora

We will continue supporting Armenian day schools. We will focus on developing countries where the Armenian community faces significant material limitations, and where there also is a critical mass of Armenian speakers (or the potential of having such a critical mass). While Armenian schools exist in many countries, our emphasis will be on places where there are no or limited resources available to the community from the local state or philanthropic organisations and individuals, and where parents have difficulty in paying tuition fees. Countries such as Lebanon will be at the forefront of our consideration. We will also support the rebuilding of Armenian schools in Syria when the civil war is over. Schools in other developing countries or where the Armenian community is facing exceptional financial difficulties will also be considered.

We are particularly concerned with the ongoing difficulties faced by the Armenian schools in Lebanon and the political instability in that country. We will work with these schools and its administrators to develop a ten year plan to make them as self-sufficient as possible and more resilient to external crises.

We will also continue to provide some assistance to the most vulnerable students within Armenian communities: orphanages that undertake the education of children without families and specialised schools for students with special needs. We see this as a moral obligation to help the most disadvantaged sector of the community reach its potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

This approach – focussing on developing countries with large Armenian communities – needs to be balanced with long term strategic considerations and demographic trends. We should not be putting all of our resources into countries that are prone to conflict (and therefore further depletion of Armenians) and where the overall demographic trends are not favourable to Armenians. Hence, over the next several years we will explore additional avenues of supporting diasporan schools in a manner that mitigates risk (particularly in the Middle East) while not spreading our resources thinly. Multiple sources of preserving and learning the language will minimise its chances of disappearing.

In certain cases where there is demographic growth in a community, we will consider supporting the set up of new schools or the strengthening of existing ones – be they day schools or Saturday or Sunday schools – if there is a critical mass of students and committed parents that will make the school viable. These can be anywhere in the diaspora, but must demonstrate that they can succeed in preserving the language and that they are not working in isolation from other similar initiatives. In such cases, we will insist that matching funds, at the very least, be found within the community.

To date, our school support philosophy has been to support as many schools as possible with small grants. These often constitute a miniscule percentage of the overall school budget, being mostly used to “plug” holes. We will gradually move away from this approach and instead

provide fewer grants but in greater amounts. These will be awarded based on a project-based selection process meant to realise a significant goal within a fixed period of time – i.e. one to three years. For example, we can give 50,000 or 100,000 USD grants to three or four schools for specific projects, to help with their modernisation, teacher development or any other education related need. Based on the project, these can be renewable for up to three years.

As important as Armenian schools are, we must nevertheless ensure that we support other student-related initiatives in the preservation of the language. We will therefore consider funding innovative initiatives targeted at youth, particularly in Western countries, that encourage young Armenians to speak Armenian and to produce culture in Armenian. Emphasis will be put on extra-curricular activities related to culture and initiatives that are led by young people speaking to *their* interests as defined by *them* rather than defined by traditional community leaders.

B. Support the Creation of a Teacher Education Centre for Western Armenian

Producing a critical mass of Western Armenian speakers through educational establishments and related initiatives is half of the equation in terms of making the language viable. The other half is producing an intellectual elite that can teach the language in schools, edit the newspapers and websites of tomorrow, produce culture and manage community affairs in Armenian. Unfortunately, the diaspora is failing to produce enough Western Armenian speaking intellectuals who are up to this task, particularly qualified teachers capable of teaching in Armenian.

To help with this task, we will provide a significant grant over the next two years to establish somewhere in the diaspora an Armenian Teacher Education Centre or Programme. This would have to be based in a strategically important community, with links with other communities and with Armenia. Its task will be to prepare teachers capable of teaching in Western Armenian, producing modern teaching resources, and providing enhanced language training to future community leaders and intellectuals. We will seek major partnerships in the realisation of this scheme.

As part of the initiative, we will also support the establishment of an International Western Armenian Teachers Association (and related activities). There is a real lack of global fora through which Armenian educators can exchange information and best practices, network and in general discuss issues pertinent to their profession.

C. Academic Centres and University-Based Initiatives that Teach Western Armenian and Culture, Research the Use of Western Armenian or Contribute to Armenian Studies

Throughout the diaspora there are several academic centres or initiatives where Western Armenian is taught to students who specialise in Armenian studies or to students who wish to learn the language for personal reasons. There are also research projects on the use and reinforcement of Western Armenian, including the development of on-line dictionaries and lexicons, as well as a standardised Armenian keyboard. The Armenian Communities

Department will support such initiatives, particularly where there also is some support from the host institution/university.

While most of our Armenian studies funding will go to scholarships as per below, we will also consider supporting in modest amounts academic initiatives such as conferences and lecture series meant to enhance Armenian presence in academic and cultural milieus. Half of these will be in Europe, and the other half earmarked for the rest of the world.

We have a special commitment to the Gulbenkian Library within the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem (as enshrined in the Will of our Founder). We will strive to make the Library a centre for Armenian studies and learning. There is a rich trove of original research material in Jerusalem and we can help to make it accessible to the broader Armenian studies academic community.

D. Use of New Technologies

Historically Armenians have been at the forefront of new technologies and have adapted these to the needs of Armenian culture. We must continue this tradition and encourage the use of modern technologies in teaching the language, producing culture and, crucially, making Armenian part of the “technological world” of youth. As such, web courses and other electronic learning opportunities, innovative apps for culture and language, interactive electronic publications (including audio, video and other new media technologies), on line networks and similar initiatives will be seriously considered for support. Our emphasis will be on initiatives that reach out to Armenian youth around the world electronically, linking them, bringing Armenian culture to them and encouraging them to *produce* culture.

In short, we want to increase Armenian presence in the digital space as we believe this is vital to the preservation of the language. It will encourage young Armenians to associate Armenian culture with innovation and technology instead of just associating it with the “old,” the “ancient” and the “past.” Armenian needs to be associated with the current, the new and the innovative if it is to resonate with the next generation of its users.

To sum up, if we succeed through our grants in producing over the next several years some twenty Western Armenian speaking intellectuals (and facilitate their gainful employment), as well as thousands of individuals who can live their daily lives in Armenian in the diaspora, then we would have made a significant contribution in the preservation of the language. Our mission is to make Armenian culture and language viable. The above initiatives will contribute to achieving that goal. What follows are further programming areas that constitute other elements in realising our mission.

The total anticipated budget for the above programming areas is approximately one million US Dollars per year, at least two-thirds of which earmarked for schools.

Scholarships

Providing university scholarships to Armenian students around the world has been our signature programme. We will continue with these scholarships but once again, instead of giving hundreds of small grants that constitute small part of a student's overall budget, we will give fewer scholarships but in greater amounts. We will also indicate subject areas which we would like to encourage with some of the scholarships. Our student scholarships will be exclusively merit based, but with some scholarships earmarked for Armenian students in developing countries. The scholarship programme is divided into seven categories:

- i) *“The Calouste Gulbenkian Global Excellence Scholarship for Armenian Students”*
This is a new category of scholarship we are creating. It will be granted to exceptionally talented Armenian students, based on a global competition. Four fully funded scholarships will be given to students studying in internationally recognised “top” universities anywhere in the world. It will be granted for post-graduate studies (PhD), renewable for a maximum of four years. The successful candidates will be chosen by an international jury. The subject area will be open, but the humanities and social sciences (excluding Armenian studies) will be privileged. Innovative subjects of contemporary concern will be given priority. The total amount will be the equivalent of full tuition fees paid plus a stipend for living expenses (to a combined maximum of 50,000 USD per student).
- ii) *“The Calouste Gulbenkian Armenian Studies Scholarship”*
This is a continuation of our existing Armenian studies scholarships. It will be open to all students studying Armenian studies, broadly defined (including history, language, fine arts, social sciences, etc.). Six full and several partial scholarships will be provided to students studying in recognised universities around the world. It will be open to Masters and PhD students, as well as post-docs. It will be renewable for up to four years for the PhDs, and two years for the MAs and post-docs. The successful candidates will be chosen by a jury of academics in the field of Armenian studies. The disciplinary areas are open, but we will privilege students studying the modern and contemporary periods, the 20th and 21st centuries, including current issues facing Armenia and the diaspora. We will fund at least one post-doc during the next three years for a research project that studies the Armenian diaspora in Russia. The total amount will be the equivalent of full tuition fees paid plus a stipend for living expenses (to a combined maximum of 50,000 USD per student).
- iii) *“Western Armenian Teacher Education Scholarships”*
The aim of this new category of scholarships is to help prepare – or further train – educators teaching in Western Armenian anywhere in the world. Scholarships will be given to: a) individuals who master Western Armenian who wish to pursue a career in teaching within Armenian schools at pre-university level (or teaching the Armenian language at other schools); three such scholarships will be provided of varying sums and durations based on the location of the student. And b) to

individuals who are already pursuing a teaching career, or have their teaching degree, but wish to master Western Armenian at a recognised university or language teaching centre to be able to teach in Armenian; three scholarships of varying sums will be provided in this category, generally for one year. A jury of Armenian educators will select the successful candidates.

iv) *“Short Term Conference and Travel Grants to Students in Armenia”*

This will be an extension of a current programme for Yerevan State University students and faculty. We would like to expand the programme to include all qualified students and young researchers in Armenia, to enable them to attend conferences and workshops abroad. Conversely, we will also give scholarships to a very limited number of students and academics from abroad who wish to attend conferences and workshops in Armenia. The principal objective of these scholarships is to encourage academic interaction and exchange of ideas, knowledge and original research. A short term grant by definition will not exceed more than three months (e.g. in the case of an exchange programme). Scholarships will be given to graduate students (Masters and PhD) and to young faculty (less than 40 years old), including post-docs, within a recognised university who wish to travel abroad to *present their research*. The field of research is open to all areas: humanities, social sciences and the hard sciences, but emphasis is put on presenting original research. Applicants will receive a maximum of two grants. The funding decision will be taken internally by the relevant staff of the Armenian Communities Department, in consultation with partners within the university system in Armenia. The maximum award will be 2,500 USD. It is anticipated that a maximum of 40 such awards will be given per year. The overwhelming majority of these awards will be for students and young faculty in Armenia, while a few will be given to young scholars abroad wishing to attend academic gatherings in Armenia.

v) *“The Calouste Gulbenkian Undergraduate Studies Scholarships”*

This will be a revamped version of our existing scholarship programme for Armenian students around the world. The intention of the grants is to encourage young Armenians to obtain higher education. We are, however, redefining the scholarships in two respects: first, making them merit-based rather than need-based, and second, focusing them on developing countries where there are no (or very limited) state-sponsored student support systems such as Lebanon or where there is a grave economic crisis. Some forty such scholarships will be given exclusively for undergraduate studies, in any field, within a recognised university. They will be renewable for a maximum of three years. The successful candidates will be chosen by the Armenian Communities Department. The maximum award will be 5,000 USD.

vi) *Support to Armenian University Students Studying in Portugal*

A very limited number of Armenian students study in Portuguese universities, or come to Portugal on exchange programmes. We will consider supporting such students as they are contributing to the Armenian presence in Portugal and

enhancing mutual understanding. We can provide some support to some of these students, of whatever level, on an ad hoc basis. The funds given and the duration of the grant will be determined as per situation. We anticipate this to be a very modest element of our overall scholarship programme.

vii) *Emergency Scholarships*

From time to time we face an emergency situation whereby Armenian students face severe crisis. The Armenian Communities Department must be able to respond to such situations in order to enable students (e.g. refugees or internally displaced persons) to continue with their education as much as possible. The parameters of such scholarships would have to be defined as per need, based on an analysis of the crisis students are facing. Currently, Armenian university students in Syria or from Syria are facing such a crisis. The Department has already put in place an initiative to support Syrian-Armenian students in Armenia and elsewhere.

The above seven categories of scholarships will reinvigorate our university scholarship programme and provide new impetus for Armenian students around the world to pursue higher education. Through the scholarships we will support the best and brightest young Armenians. We will also contribute to Armenian studies as we encourage it to focus more on contemporary issues that are relevant to the survival *and development* of Armenian cultural, academic and linguistic heritage globally. Armenians have a very rich and deep history; it ought to be studied. But they must also be Janus-faced – looking back *and* forward simultaneously. By emphasising the modern and the contemporary, and underscoring the Western Armenian language, we hope that five years down the road, when we look back on this Programming Plan, we can show some real results. Armenian culture and language must be made relevant to younger generations who have to live within the social, cultural and technological realities of the 21st century.

Finally, we will explore two other ideas over the next two years to enhance our scholarships programmes: first, the creation of a Calouste Gulbenkian Armenian Communities Department “Alumni Association;” and second, the establishment of an “internship programme” for young Armenians – particularly recipients of Gulbenkian scholarships – who can go to Armenia on internships, go from Armenia to elsewhere, or go from one Armenian community to another within the diaspora to do internships (including the possibility of doing internships at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation).

The total anticipated budget for the scholarship programmes is approximately one million US Dollars per year.

2

Develop a viable Armenia through investing in its youth and their commitment to civil society

The Republic of Armenia has been independent for over 20 years. It is very much a developing country, faced with many challenges common to other post-Soviet states. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has been active in independent Armenia for several years now. We will continue this engagement as we believe that the Foundation must support the Armenian homeland, a crucial centre of cultural and academic production and a hub of global networks that bind Armenians together.

The financial needs of Armenia are many, but there is a functional state and a class of very wealthy Armenians who can – and ought to – support social and philanthropic causes. We will, therefore, focus our support on the civil society sector, particularly the youth of the country.

It is perhaps a cliché to say that the future of the country depends on a committed youth who will eventually assume leadership positions. And yet, we find that in Armenia there is a crisis of youth due to unemployment (especially in rural areas), civic disengagement and, most importantly, the out-migration of talented and educated young men and women seeking opportunities elsewhere. They cannot be blamed, but this trend, and the brain drain it entails, is detrimental to the survival of the country in the long run. Hence, to support the development of a viable and democratic society, we must encourage Armenia's youth to remain in the country and be actively engaged as citizens.

We will therefore provide grants to civil society organisations that encourage civic education, engagement and mobilisation among the youth, providing them employment opportunities while being socially active citizens. We will select projects that balance engagement in Yerevan with activities and initiatives outside of the capital city, including training programmes, education in human rights, innovative use of new technologies and development of national networks.

Another element of our work in Armenia will be to link young intellectuals in the country with their professional peers in Europe, North America and other developed countries. Through a series of exchange programmes, study tours and similar short-term initiatives we seek to expose younger members of Armenia's scientific and cultural community to innovations and trends elsewhere. We will also sponsor an intensive two week summer course in Armenian for a selected group of post-graduate students and young academics on subjects related to the latest trends in social theory and research methodology. The course will be given in Yerevan by recognised academics engaged in critical theoretical debates. The specific topic and discipline will be determined on a yearly basis, addressing needs within Armenian academia. Through such initiatives we would be helping to erode further the lingering isolation that was imposed on Armenia due to the Iron Curtain and the lack of resources since 1991. Two decades after independence, old mentalities continue—especially in the social sciences and humanities. Such an initiative would be part of a “leadership preparation” programme.

Approximately three-quarters of our funding in Armenia will go to the above initiatives, with the majority earmarked for civil society programming and youth related programming. For the leadership preparation programme, we can explore the possibility of obtaining matching funds from local sources.

We will also collaborate with appropriate government agencies, principally the Ministry of the Diaspora, on certain initiatives that are meant to strengthen the Western Armenian language and culture. Projects will be developed mutually, to be executed within Armenia or elsewhere.

Finally, within our Armenia “envelope” of funding, we include possible initiatives from Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).

The total anticipated budget for the above initiatives in Armenia is approximately half a million US Dollars per year. This is in addition to the two other Armenia-related initiatives: the scholarship programme for university students and young scholars in Armenia mentioned in the preceding section, and the publication programmes mentioned below. We are projecting to spend nearly 700,000 US Dollars in Armenia per year.

3

Improve Armenian-Turkish relations by sponsoring projects that encourage a common understanding of their long shared history

Turkey is in the process of undergoing a significant transformation which has enabled the discussion of hitherto taboo subjects, including the Armenian Genocide. We welcome this transformation and are keen to contribute to it. We know we will be criticised by some Armenians for “engaging with the enemy” and we will be criticised by some Turks for referring to the Genocide as a historical fact. Our intention is not to engage in polemical debates but to encourage dialogue between progressive elements in both societies in their understanding of the past while charting a shared and just future.

The resilience of the Armenian community in Turkey, namely in Istanbul, has been remarkable. It has not only survived in very difficult circumstances since 1915, but has continued to produce Western Armenian culture and literature, kept scores of schools and churches open and, more recently, certain brave elements of it have contributed to the democratic development of Turkey.

While support for Armenian schools in Turkey (Istanbul) will be provided from our school support envelope, as outlined above, we will also support two other types of activities in Turkey: first, we will support the reinforcement of Armenian community structures and institutions in the country, particularly if they contribute to the preservation of Western Armenian language, culture and traditions.

Second, we will support initiatives of dialogue between Armenians on the one hand, and Turks and Kurds on the other. As such, we hope to contribute to the bridging of the wide schism between them, particularly in the domain of culture and academic research. This would

include projects of translation from Armenian into Turkish and Kurdish (and vice versa), various types of publications, the preservation and dissemination of the Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, films and art installations, academic and civil society conferences, research support for issues of mutual concern, exhibitions and other similar initiatives.

As Armenian-Turkish relations is an evolving domain, we are keeping our areas of engagement fairly wide so that we can seize innovative opportunities as they arise. There are some remarkable individuals and civil society organisations with whom we will partner in our activities in Turkey.

We will also sponsor research and training in Ottoman studies to encourage original research on the Armenian presence in pre-Republican Turkey. The parameters of this initiative will be flexible to allow for subtlety.

Armenian-Turkish relations will remain a central element within the Armenian world – for both Armenia and the diaspora – in the foreseeable future. For us, working with the Armenian community in Turkey is an important element in the preservation of Western Armenian language and identity. Ironically, a century after the Genocide, Istanbul might once again emerge as a centre of Western Armenian culture.

We fully appreciate the fact that Armenian-Turkish relations is a controversial issue in both societies and cognisant of the risks. The Armenian Communities Department will engage with Turkey in a nuanced, respectful and strategic manner that focuses on culture and language, shunning political partisanship and nationalist rhetoric. Without some risk-taking, it will be impossible to engage in this domain.

The total anticipated budget for Armenian-Turkish programming is approximately three-hundred thousand US Dollars per year, excluding school grants that might be given to Istanbul schools.

4

Preserve and make available the Armenian literary heritage

Another signature programme of the Armenian Communities Department has been its publication support for various Armenian and Armenian-related books, journals and newspapers. We will continue this support, but will once again modernise it in two important respects.

First, while maintaining some support for the “classics” – notably publishing the ancient literary heritage held by the Madenataran Manuscript Library in Yerevan, the Jerusalem Patriarchate and elsewhere – we will put much more emphasis on supporting publications on contemporary and modern topics. We will particularly encourage subjects based on original research in Armenian studies, studies of current problems facing Armenians in the Republic and the diaspora, contemporary literature, social and cultural issues of interest to younger

readers. Such subject matters tend to be published less in the Armenian world and yet are more relevant to making sense of current realities. Hence, we will fund a new publication series under the rubric of, “The Calouste Gulbenkian Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues and Culture.”

Second, print publishing is important and we will continue to back it; we do not believe that computers, iPads, electronic magazines and the like spell the end of the printed text. However, we will balance this by electronic publishing, in line with our above-mentioned commitment to the increased use of new technologies. The digital footprint of the Armenian language and culture must be increased if it is to resonate with younger readers, if it is to be globally accessible and if it is to be made more viable in the 21st Century. Hence, we will privilege electronic publications in many cases, support newspapers and journals to go on line, support the production of electronic and interactive books, help to develop Armenian-related smart phone applications, on line dictionaries and lexicons, and so forth. We anticipate that by 2020 the majority of our publication assistance will go to electronic means.

Digitisation is also an important way of preserving and making the content of ancient manuscripts, archival documents and other rare texts available. We will therefore make funds available for such initiatives, provided that they are systematic and in line with the most current methods of digitising, cataloguing, researching and disseminating such material. In this light, we will also seriously consider proposals to help with the modernisation of significant research libraries (in the diaspora or Armenia) if, for instance, they wish to make their catalogue and collections available on-line.

While our focus is mostly on Western Armenian, our publication support will also go to important texts in Eastern and Classical Armenian. It should also be noted that we will not privilege any specific publisher in our funding but will determine support based on each publication initiative (book, journal, report, e-book, etc.).

We will develop a two-way translation programme. On the one hand, we will support initiatives to make important Armenian texts available in other significant languages. This will not only help to connect young Armenians who do not know the language to their ancestral culture and literary heritage, but to also further integrate Armenian cultural traditions into global culture.

On the other hand, we will sponsor the translation into Armenian (Eastern and Western) of important foreign language texts, especially in the social sciences and humanities. There is a real dearth of knowledge of the latest Western academic approaches in Armenia. This must be overcome if academics in Armenia are to benefit from the latest global debates and cutting edge research. We hope to encourage Armenian-speaking scholars to engage with their international peers in a fruitful manner. As noted above, twenty years after independence, social scientists in Armenia (with some notable exceptions) have generally fallen behind their hard science colleagues in building bridges with Western approaches to history, politics, cultural studies, philosophy, political science, education and similar fields.

While the majority of our funding in this category will go to publications, be it print or electronic, we will set aside some funds to explicitly encourage the writing of new literature and production of new culture – be it in Western Armenian or related to Western Armenian (e.g. literature written in English, French and Spanish but reflecting Armenian culture).

For instance, we will sponsor initiatives such as creative writing workshops that will encourage Armenians to engage in cultural production that is innovative and participatory. We challenge the mentality that literature is a canon to be passed on from the older generation to the new. Accordingly, we want to encourage sites of cultural production that are outside of the traditional parameters of the “classics.”

Finally, to help with the production of a contemporary literary culture in Western Armenian, we will either institute or support an international prize for best new fiction and non-fiction Armenian texts (i.e. two prizes, one in each category), including children’s literature. The competition will be open to younger authors, writing in Western Armenian, anywhere in the world. The selected works can also be published and disseminated electronically and in print. The recipients will be chosen by an international jury. The prize will be a significant amount – in the range of 10,000 USD per category – to seriously encourage young people to write in Armenian.

The total anticipated budget for initiatives related to the Armenian literary heritage is approximately three-hundred and fifty thousand US Dollars per year.

5

Turning the Department into a hub of connections and strategic thinking, and collaborating with other departments within the Foundation

In addition to our role as a funding source, the Armenian Communities Department can have further value-added in the Armenian world as a catalyst and facilitator of strategic thinking and long term planning. There have been no such milieus in the Armenian diaspora where forward-looking strategic discussions could take place on a pan-diasporan level on a regular basis. Being above partisan community politics and strictly neutral in our engagements, we will strive to convene organisations, experts and noted leaders on a periodic basis to discuss issues of mutual concern and to strategise collectively to find solutions. The meetings would have to focus on common interests and concrete goals and eschew rhetorical notions of “unity” (which tend to be useful only for political posturing and community mobilisation). Our approach will be one of substantive discussions, linking various components of the Armenian world which usually do not come together, and establishing meaningful and goal oriented networks. In this respect, Lisbon, with the Foundation’s extensive premises, is ideally suited to host such conversations, workshops, conferences and meetings. The fact that there is no Armenian community in Portugal is actually an asset in this respect.

In this light, we will commit to organising one such gathering per year. The topic will change from year to year, reflecting current issues facing the Armenian world. The first meeting will take place during the first half of 2014 on a broader “inaugural” theme: Armenians in 2115. As

we approach the centenary of the Genocide in 2015, all focus is on 1915 and its international recognition. And yet we must ask, what about 2016-17-18 and beyond? Where is the Armenian nation heading *after* 2015? Of course, this in no way minimises the significance of the centennial commemoration, but Armenian leaders and intellectuals need to have opportunities to discuss what is to be done on 25 April 2015 onwards – that is, the day *after* the Remembrance Day.

Internally, within the Foundation, we will collaborate with other Departments and Programmes to organise events of mutual interest that are related to Armenian culture and history. We are already in the process of planning an “Armenian Week” in October 2014, working with relevant colleagues to stage Armenian music, host an academic conference, display modern art (Arshile Gorky) and exhibit items from the archives of Calouste Gulbenkian. We are also exploring future events, beyond 2014, particularly with the Gulbenkian Museum. Our intention is to hold one Armenian-related cultural activity per year at the Foundation so that Calouste Gulbenkian’s cultural heritage is more broadly known in Portugal. While such “internal” activities do not directly assist the Armenian community, they do nevertheless constitute an important element of our efforts to make Armenian culture and heritage known globally, in this case within the Foundation’s home country of Portugal.

The total anticipated budget for initiatives in this category is approximately two hundred thousand US Dollars per year.

6

Unforeseen circumstances and humanitarian needs (Urgent Action fund)

From time to time we find ourselves facing an unforeseen situation, such as a humanitarian crisis, or an important opportunity that is outside our regular programming priorities and yet significant enough to merit some support. To deal with such situations, we will earmark a modest fund to be able to cope with such demands when they arise.

For example, the impact of the Syrian crisis on the Armenian community has been one such instance where we were called upon to make a humanitarian contribution (which we did) and to help refugees rebuild their lives and communities elsewhere.

On occasion, we have to deal with Armenian families in Portugal who are confronted with extraordinary circumstances. While our mandate is not one of social support, we find that ad hoc assistance in some very modest amounts enables these families to integrate within Portuguese society. This will amount to no more than a few thousand dollars in total per year. It will be granted on an exceptional basis, and in general will target the educational needs of children and young adults.

Supporting important opportunities in line with the Department’s mission and priorities but not part of its planned programming will be assessed on a case by case basis. Seed money for interesting “outside the box” initiatives that could have great impact, specific cultural events,

conferences on relevant topics, travel grants to individuals to attend important meetings are examples of important opportunities that can be considered.

The total anticipated budget for unforeseen circumstances and important opportunities is approximately two hundred thousand US Dollars per year.

7

Partnerships

To realise our objectives, we need to work with excellent partners around the world, be they organisations or individuals. The first group of partners are the grantees who receive funds from us. It is they who will do the actual work, with our support, and it is they who will be at the forefront of creating a viable future for the Armenian people. Our success is contingent upon their ability to realise many of the goals outlined above. Hence, we will be working much more closely with our partners from now on. This will be a major change for our Department and a challenge we embark on eagerly. We will not just be distributing funds to various organisations and individuals, but working with them on an ongoing basis.

Second, we will further explore partnership opportunities between our Department and other similar funding organisations that have an interest in supporting Armenia and Armenian initiatives. We will endeavour to develop joint programmes with such organisations whereby the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation will be one funder among several others. While the Foundation is unique in its structure and independence within the Armenian world, we do nevertheless have common goals and share objectives with other diasporan institutions. Hence, we ought to be working not in isolation but in partnership with such organisations.

8

Administrative structure and evaluation

Delivering the above mentioned programmes in an effective manner requires the necessary staff and management structure. We are currently going in the direction of programme-based management within Armenian Communities Department whereby programme development, implementation and follow-up are undertaken by programme and project officers. Results-based management is more effective but only if it can be done by trained staff who can actually follow up on activities and plans with partners regularly. Sending funds is easy. But it is much more difficult – and labour intensive – to follow up on how the funds are used and to measure impact: projects need to be solicited, partners selected (and at times trained), activities followed up on, evaluations done, new networks developed, missions undertaken to countries of engagement and routine project-related decisions taken on an ongoing basis. It is also imperative for staff to be knowledgeable of new trends and innovations in their respective fields within the philanthropic world. In short, proper programme management cannot be done “on the cheap” when it comes to human resource requirements.

Hence, we will encourage our current staff to train on the latest programme and project management methods (“skilling-up”), and we will hire new team members who have expertise in these domains.

As part of our commitment to do our work better, to be more responsive to the needs of the Armenian community, we will encourage a culture of evaluation. First, we will evaluate some of our more important initiatives, be they projects or programmes, to draw “lessons learned” so that we can be more efficient and secure greater impact. Second, to ensure that the Department is meeting its overall potential and delivering results, we will monitor its progress on a yearly basis, undertaking a more substantive evaluation of the Five Year Plan itself mid-way through its implementation – i.e. in 2016. Based on the findings, we will make adjustments and necessary modifications if need be.

Moreover, we will also develop a culture of communication to inform our partners and the broader Armenian community of our activities, decisions, achievements and challenges on an ongoing basis. Our Department’s website will be turned into a major interactive space for us to keep in touch with the Armenian world, and for Armenians throughout the world to be in touch with us, to apply for grants and to share their concerns. Our website will be populated with relevant texts, applications, photos, videos and other media, and updated frequently.

Finally, in addition to the specific external scholarship juries and advisory bodies mentioned above, the Director will also create an international Advisory Committee as a means to seek input from Armenian experts on specific issues, and to interact and communicate with the global Armenian leadership. The committee will be representative of the Armenian world, with fixed term appointments. It will mostly meet virtually.

Conclusion

This is a fairly ambitious Programming Plan. It will be rolled out over a one year period so that by the end of 2014 the Department will operate fully based on the priorities outlined. New operating procedures, policies, guidelines and selection criteria have to be put in place, partners informed of the changes taking place, scholarship and advisory committees constituted. We fully recognise that institutional change is a difficult and slow process, but we believe that within a short period of time our Department will be much stronger, much more responsive to the needs of the Armenian communities around the world, focussed on critical issues, and much more in-line with the latest trends of philanthropic grant-making.

Our focus in this Programming Plan is mostly on the Western and Middle Eastern Armenian diaspora. During the next several years we will begin exploring the needs of the “new” Armenian diaspora in Russia, Ukraine and other formerly Soviet countries, to see if our Department should engage with these newly emerged communities. It is beyond our current capacity to consider such commitment, and yet these numerically very significant communities of émigrés from Armenia are losing their language (Eastern Armenian) and identity at an alarming rate. We will not be programming funds in these communities during the next five

years, but we will be commissioning studies and other exploratory initiatives to better understand this new post-Soviet diaspora.

The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has a very rich tradition of philanthropy within the Armenian world. We will continue with that tradition, modernise it, and put it on solid foundations so that the Department, as an integral part of a perpetual Foundation, continues to serve through its mandate for a very, very long time. We want to ensure that future generations look at the Department and realise that it rose to the occasion to save and advance Armenian education, culture and language, particularly Western Armenian. To do this, we must go beyond old conservative approaches, take risks, and embrace new ways of contributing to Armenian society.

Through this Plan we seek to turn the Department into a transformative agent within the global Armenian community. In this sense, we are breaking from our past tradition of supporting many worthy initiatives within the existing realities of the Armenian world to endeavouring to *change* those realities. By specifying particular and vital needs, and programming in a targeted manner to achieve well-defined goals, we strive to have a lasting impact.

The Plan is developed as a five year strategy, in place until the end of 2018. The Armenian world of the early 2020s that we envision – its attainment being the overall purpose of this Plan – will be a world in which Western Armenian is more secure as a living language, sustained through a network of young qualified teachers and intellectuals using innovative teaching and communicating methods, a youthful generation in diaspora that continues to speak it and create in it, as well as community institutions that function in it. It will be a world in which Armenian schools collectively work on common problems, seeking lasting solutions instead of short term grants to meet chronic shortfalls.

In the 2020s, we hope that Armenians reap the rewards of our scholarship programmes, as hundreds of university educated men and women assume leadership positions in their respective fields, and that Armenian Studies, as an academic field, will have a number of new graduates not only researching issues and problems currently facing the Armenian nation but also offering evidence-based solutions. It will be a source of pride for the Department to see at the end of the Five Year Plan a younger generation using scores of IT-based applications, books, journals, newspapers and other electronic initiatives that either use Western Armenian or enhance Armenian culture and learning in the digital world.

We desire to see a much stronger civil society in Armenia, with an engaged youth that contributes to the country's democratic development, and an academic community that is globally connected and participating in international debates using the latest theoretical approaches in the social sciences. In our "ideal" Armenian world of 2020, we hope to see the engagement between Armenians and Turks advance to such a degree that the dialogue between the two peoples – and the issues it deals with – becomes part of the mainstream of the two societies instead of being confined to the sidelines. And finally, looking internally within the Foundation, we hope to create a vibrant forward looking and results-oriented

Department that facilitates connections and serves as a global centre for strategic thinking in the Armenian diaspora, while also acting as a hub that brings Armenian culture to Portugal.

In short, through the activities of this Plan, we strive to create a more viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued. That is, after all, our mission.