

Friends of Armenia - London

Humanitarian Aid offered by Friends of Armenia (FoA)

REPORT No.9 – Major projects from end June 2022 to June 2023

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Here is a concise report of the activities of Friends of Armenia in Armenia during the past 12 months, which you probably have missed.

During the past year our urgent projects have diminished and our activities have been concentrated on certain fixed projects, for which reason I have not prepared lengthy reports, as in the past two years.

Most of the disabled youngsters have either fully or mainly recovered. Some of them have begun normal life (within their abilities) but there are others, who still need physiotherapy in order to return to normal life, as much as possible, each according to their disabilities.

A few others and families need the occasional additional treatment and attention.

CURRENT PROJECTS.

Main activities that are current and repetitive are the following:

a. Paying the physiotherapist to visit their homes and affect the required treatment weekly.

b. One of the young heroes, Hrayr Simonyan, had very serious internal injuries suffered last September. He has been in hospital for a long time and lost 40 kg in weight. The family lives in Goris and he has an autistic child, therefore it is not possible for him to rest and recuperate after each surgery. We have decided to rent a room for him in Yerevan, where he can undergo the surgeries and relax at home.



Therapist Vartuhi with Hrayr.

c. Another one David has a psychological problem, although drugs are available, but the Government list does not include this rather expensive drug. Armen Mirzoyan lost his leg from near the pelvis, whose prosthesis has been difficult to fit and has needed several surgeries on the stump. He lives in Gyumri and has to travel to Yerevan and stay locally for some days, therefore we assist him in his travels to and from Yerevan. Every month the odd family needs a one-off help, which we make sure it is necessary and provide it.

The above monthly expenses add up to about 500,000 AMD per month.

- d. As far as the students go this year in cooperation with the BeeOnCode company, who train and hire IT specialists, we have taken three students. They have reduced their charges to half and FoA pays the other half (125,000 AMD for the course). The company trainers brought to our attention that these three are very good at IT and they will hire them after they complete their courses.

- e. One of them did not have a computer, which we provided. As we go, there may be more students introduced by BeeOnCode, which we feel we should take, particularly that they are promised employment as well. According to experts, the Armenia market needs about 8000 more IT specialists.



Three of the IT students supported by FoA in 2023.

- f - In the early stages of the Humanitarian Aid project, INTRA Mental Health Centre in Yerevan (established by Diana and Panikos Katsouris of London) also raised funds for this FoA project. These funds were earmarked to be spent on the treatment of ex-soldiers who had suffered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Some of the worst-case patients were taken to mental health centres in Tsaghkadzor and Dilijan, some less serious cases were found mainly in Vanadzor. With the help of INTRA and other specialists, FoA organised field visits of the therapists, in order to take up the cases of those who suffered from PTSD. Between June 2022 and June 2023, twenty field visits of specialists were organised at the cost of over \$5000.

Four of the PTSD patients during performance.



g. Friends of Armenia will be paying the education fees for two youngsters, one son has been a soldier and wounded in the war of 2020.

Friends of Armenia bought almost 700 pairs of boots and winter warm clothing last Autumn, all were taken to the town of Jambarak, north of Lake Sevan.

The goods were taken to the Town Hall and a few locals were very active in calling villages to come and also helped greatly in the proper distribution of the items. One of them was a man of about 40, Gegham Minasyan, who was of exceptional assistance.

Since his son, Arthur, had been wounded in the 2020 war, friends of Armenia get in touch whenever they are in the area. It has been reported that Gegham has two children, who both study in college and university, however, his salary such that he is now unable to pay their tuition fee.

Friends of Armenia will be paying the education fees for these two youngsters, especially , that the son has been a soldier and wounded in the war of 2020.

h. Friends of Armenia has just taken on the case of a hero soldier, who has had shrapnel all over his body. These are removed gradually by the government run centre free of charge.

He is a third year student in the university and has been given a 50% discount on his fees, as a served soldier.

His friends informed us about his financial problems and after consideration of his grades Friends Of Armenia decided he meets the criteria of assistance.

POSSIBLE FUTURE PROJECTS.

A –STUDENTS

As you are aware we have about 25 students, most of whom we support partially (half or one third of their fees). Donors for the students are very few therefore we try to split the donations to help as many students as possible. If FoA did have the extra funding we could support the students fully.

The annual assistance to the students is in the order of \$17,000 - \$18,000. If we were to pay full fees, the total sum required would be around \$28,000. Since these are the future of Armenia, FoA is willing and planning to try increasing assistance in the education of the youth.

Only last year we met the Assistant Manager of the Museum of the History of Armenia, who had been one of FoA sponsored students of Archaeology.

B – RECUPERATED PTSD PATIENTS

In the past we had sent you reports on our work with the youth in Vanadzor, who are mainly ex-soldiers, having served together. They organised concerts and social meeting, in various centres, which were kindly provided for them by various charities but only temporarily. Due to the lack of a dedicated social centre they are unable to work and meet in an organized manner.

Our friend, Dr Khachatur Gasparyan helps them as much as possible as far as therapy and organization of events are concerned. But the need for a small social centre is apparent. However FoA does not possess that sort of funds to be able to take care of this need.