Enhancing Development through Diaspora Engagement in Armenia

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Executive Summary

This report has been initiated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Mission in Armenia to analyze some practical opportunities for enhancing Armenia's development through an enhanced engagement with its diaspora. Three economic areas are of specific interest: agriculture, tourism, and science and education in the framework of economic development towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Assessing the current state of diaspora engagement, this report develops a set of inclusive and forward-looking policy recommendations geared for Armenia.

Recent economic development literature and policy efforts have been focusing on exploring the role of national diasporas and diaspora engagement initiatives as novel sustainable mechanisms for economic development across less-developed economies. The abundant literature on diaspora engagement case studies offers important lessons for new policy designs, as reviewed in the present report. Aiding this research has been a rise over past three decades of a range of diaspora engagement frameworks evolving across emerging markets and advanced economies (e.g., Greece, India, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Scotland, Spain, and others).

Analysis of diaspora literature and empirical evidence suggest that while diasporas are by definition a product of human migration, not all migration often leads to a formation of an active and home-country connected diaspora. It is important to account for the multilayering of diaspora's transnational identities over time and varieties of experience and other formative stages. This happens at both individual and group levels. Complicating rapprochement among individuals sharing similar ethnic, cultural, religious or other characteristics are the problems of mutual trust, which are also projected on relations with and expectations from the ancestral country. That in turn raises the demand for transparency and effectiveness on a state-led diaspora engagement infrastructure design. Hence, the triangular framework of identity, trust, and engagement infrastructure is argued to be at the foundation of a sustainable diaspora operational model, accounting for varying modalities in the case of Armenia's relations with its diaspora.

Despite Armenian diaspora being historically one of the oldest and active, as well as widely spread diasporas, its full potential in relation to Armenia's economy is yet to be fully realized. This conclusion became evident from the fact-finding mission conducted in 2022 as background research for this project. Lacking systemic framework of cooperation between Armenia and its diaspora has been one of the key hindering factors in enacting more robust diaspora engagement. This is in contrast to the abundant track-record of initiative- or individual-specific projects characterizing diaspora-Armenia engagement of the past three decades.

The analysis in this report relied on mixed methods approach. There is limited statistical data on the diaspora involvement in Armenia. The study relied on generally available data from national statistics and multilateral development agencies. Some data support came from various public and private entities based in Armenia and in the Armenian diaspora. The report offers a comprehensive review of diaspora literature and analysis of existing practices internationally and in Armenia. Much of the primary information on diaspora engagement on the ground was sourced through in person or electronic (virtual or email communications) interviews with key stakeholders from public and private sectors. The interviews offered a wide variety of perspectives, mainly confirming the thesis that Armenian diaspora's potential is yet to be fully utilized towards country's development. However, it is also important to understand the need for Armenia, as a nation-state, to support dispersed communities abroad through its active outreach campaigns, cultural, and more practical connections. Concerns over trust and effectiveness of engagement appeared throughout the interviews.

The proposed policy recommendations are grouped in four categories: general diaspora engagement and three sector specific outcomes – agriculture, tourism, science and education. While the general set of recommendations sets the overarching operational model, the sector-based proposals are designed to tackle specific questions in each sector. Organized in sector groups, each concrete proposed measure is linked to a corresponding SDG consistent with the development target of this study. Collectively, these proposals may have a broad positive institutional and capacity building impact for Armenia's economy, while helping diaspora connect within the expatriate groups and linking to the Republic of Armenia, which for a large share of the Armenia diaspora is not a historical homeland.

The burden rests upon Armenia in stimulating a productive diaspora-country relationship. It is expected that a more proactive and systematic development of diaspora-linking programs across all sectors, offering a transparent and stable framework for loosely connected diaspora is an essential step forward. Expanding functions and scope of the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs and developing a strategic diaspora

engagement plan would be the first initiatives towards creating more comprehensive systematic relationship. The proposed policy options should be viewed in a holistic context of macroeconomic development. Design and implementation of these proposals would also require undivided attention to the effects the policies may have on any types of inequalities in the society and across diaspora groups. For Armenia, as elsewhere, enthusiasm, commitment, sustained cultural connection, and funding in diaspora relations are essential building blocks.

Finally, the conceptual structuring and findings of this project, specifically the systematic view to diaspora relations, can be insightful for other small economies with large diasporas. Armenia's engagement experience with its diaspora may be quite instructive. And it is from this example of Armenia, that the international community may realize and anticipate in an informed way more subtle nuances of diaspora engagement.

1. Introduction

Armenia's connection with its diaspora in the nation's newest history since the 1991 independence has been a subject of an ongoing exploration across numerous recent policy and academic studies. Such interest is explained by two main facts: 1) Armenian diaspora is one of the oldest known, classical, diasporas in the world and, as such, 2) the stakes are high to launch a model of diaspora engagement in Armenia that could serve as a replicable example, benchmark, across other small developing nations seeking to leverage their growing expatriate communities. In that regard, this analysis of Armenia and its diaspora is well positioned in and contributes to the growing academic and policy literature on effective diaspora engagement and transnational communities.

This report carries an additional focus, as tasked by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Mission to Armenia, to review and identify some practical opportunities for enhancing Armenia's development through a more meaningful engagement with its diaspora. There are three target economic areas of the present analysis: agriculture, tourism, and science and education. These have been identified as the key priorities in the general framework of economic development in the context of Armenia's push towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on an IOM-supported fact-finding mission in the summer of 2022, the recommendations developed in this report, touch on the general aspects of diaspora engagement as well as more specific action items in each sector. In addition to macroeconomic policies, the report also presents novel financial instruments that may be implemented as part of the proposal package.

The report relies on mixed-methods approach, involving background literature analysis, desk research, statistical data collection and analysis, conversations with key-stakeholders from academic, business, policy-making communities, general public, as well as not for profit organizations involved in the diaspora field. Over 30 interviews with key stakeholders in the diaspora affairs and across the three primary sectors of this study were conducted during the period of June – October 2022. The interviewees came from public and private sector representatives from both Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. The interviews were conducted during in-person meetings, online, and by email. One of the critical benefits of the fact-finding mission were opportunities to learn first-hand about the state of diaspora engagement programs across Armenia from principal actors in the field. A key limitation has been the lack of precise data on diaspora involvement in Armenia's economy.

This report also contributes to the IOM's long-standing position on policy-oriented research on diaspora engagement across small developing economies (IOM, 2022).[1] A commonly recognized challenge is the problem of diaspora capacity utilization and organization of the expatriate communities towards humanitarian and development priorities of their homelands. Here, Armenia presents a unique case compared to countries only recently ascending into the diaspora engagement arena. The IOM-Armenia's office has previously conducted Armenian diaspora exercises (Savchik, 2021a) and advanced some of the initial proposals for diaspora engagement based on the global experience (Savchik, 2021b). In the context of Armenia's macroeconomic development, leveraging its diaspora's potential, one of the early systemic analyses is found in Gevorkyan and Grigorian (2003).

Building on those earlier efforts and adding to the policy space discussion, one must account for the nuanced historical and geographic complexities of the Armenian diaspora. Historically, today's diaspora hauls its ancestry from centuries of migration. Geographically, ethnic Armenians are found almost in every country across the world. Generations of ethnic Armenians, culturally or in business terms affiliating themselves with Armenia, have never lived nor, in most cases, even been born in the present-day Armenia.

In addition, across Armenian diaspora groups of various origins there may be a strong sense of self-identification as an Armenian in a historical continuum. However, such self-identification may not manifest itself in a tangible connection with the present-day country of Armenia. Instead, the reference is to the historical [Western] Armenia, now largely part of Eastern Turkey. Such somewhat unique idiosyncrasies of the Armenian diaspora call for analysis of a qualitatively different mix of explanatory and driving factors in the case of Armenia in contrast to the countries with recently formed diasporas, even from the same group of post-socialist transition economies (e.g., Bulgaria, Estonia, Moldova, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Poland, Romania, Tajikistan). For policy making purposes such examples suggest that diasporas are complex socially dynamic entities, which may or may not depend on recent migration flows.

Related to the question of identity, is a factor of trust with the diaspora as well as between diaspora and home country. For Armenia the latter rose in its critical urgency over the past few years and since the 44-day war in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in October 2020. Here, history may offer several lessons, as reviewed in the summary of global experiences below. In short, prior to connecting with the homeland, a diaspora, if one to assume a unified entity, must undergo through a self-search of its identity and develop trust mechanisms internally and towards the home-country.

At the same time, the historically ancestral country must be prepared to offer a clear engagement infrastructure for a fruitful and sustainable connection towards enhancing socio-economic

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[1] For example, see IOM's co-sponsored Global Diaspora Summit 2022 https://www.iom.int/global-diaspora-summit-2022 ;
 IOM Diaspora Mapping Toolkit https://publications.iom.int/books/diaspora-mapping-toolkit ; IOM's 2013 Diaspora Ministerial Conference https://www.iom.int/diaspora-ministerial-conference-2013 and other initiatives.

development. There certainly has been no lack of attempts to forge strong bonds with its diaspora since the 1990s (and, in fact, even during the Soviet times). Still, much of Armenia's attempts seem to be only scratching the surface of the perceived potential of its diaspora—a refrain often repeated in the interviews during the fact-finding mission. Ironically, it is the other, international, diaspora experiences, rather than its own, that may offer Armenia a range of pragmatic solutions towards establishing an effective engagement infrastructure.

Importantly, an objective and more nuanced understanding of the Armenian diaspora can be instructive to academic researchers and policy makers in the development and SDG achievement process. A necessary realization is that not all migration constitutes diaspora, and a diaspora, starting with migration, transforms into a new social complexity requiring a highly fine-tuned policy approach. In short, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to diaspora engagement policy.

This rest of this report is structured as follows. The next section develops a framework for diaspora analysis based on recent literature's focus on labor migration and comprehensive insights from diaspora studies. This section also reviews select international examples of different modalities of diaspora and ancestral country engagement. Section 3 touches on the multifaceted complexity of the Armenian diaspora. In Section 4, the study then advances to analyze some of the evolved practices of the Armenian diaspora's engagement with its ancestral home. Section 5 reviews the main outcomes from the fact-finding mission of this study and introduces some of the results of the Armenian Diaspora Online Survey, emphasizing the three pillar milestones in the diaspora-home country relationship: identity, trust, and engagement infrastructure. Section 6 then leads introduces specific policy recommendations organized by the focus sectors of this study. An attempt is made to connect policy recommendations with relevant SDGs. This connection helps construct an inclusive and structurally sound diaspora for development engagement framework. The report also includes a summary of key findings and an informational Appendix.

2. A conceptual framework of diaspora and development

Migration leads to diaspora, but not all migration constitutes a diaspora

Developing a diaspora engagement program requires a clear understanding of what diaspora represents. The IOM (2019, p.49) defines diaspora as "migrants or descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. They maintain links with their homelands, and to each other, based on a shared sense of history, identity, or mutual experiences in the destination country." Diasporas are also transnational with connections to more than one country and variety of cultural dimensions to individual migrant's identity.

The formal definition loosely relates to the origins of the term diaspora (in Greek) signifying a dispersion as pointed out by Tölölyan (1996, p.30) who argues that diaspora is "never merely an accident of birth, a clump of individuals living outside their ancestral homeland, each with a hybrid subjectivity, lacking collective practices that underscore (not just) their difference from others, but also their similarity to each other, and their links to the people on the homeland." Adding to such heterogeneous view, Gevorkyan and Gevorkyan (2012, p.10) refer to diaspora as "a network of culturally or nationally affiliated individuals with some common background, living outside of the borders of their perceived native land." Situating diasporas in modern societies with divisions across migration histories and other socio-economic factors (e.g., Safran, 1991; Tsagarousianou, 2004), then points to often contrasting complexities within seemingly homogenous diaspora.

There are at least three important conclusions from the above that guide this analysis. First, it is evident that migration (whether forced or voluntary, e.g., labor migration) is the foundational factor in forming a diaspora. Second, there is an embedded element of identity determination and establishment of trust within and across diaspora networks. Third, the emphasis on "perceived native land" is not accidental but instead suggests that success of diaspora-country connections depends on a comprehensive system of engagement infrastructure.

This triangular view of diaspora networks–identity, trust, and engagement infrastructure–is developed in Gevorkyan (2022a). Such construction runs in parallel with the social capital categories of bonds, bridges, and linkages. The connections among people (bonds) emerge out of some common experiences, interests, or identity. The latter is instrumental in shaping a diaspora network. The trust (bridges) helps sustain those relationships within the immediate group and offer the platform to connect with outside groups. Finally, the linkages are the mechanisms embedded within the engagement infrastructure that help sustain (in this case) diaspora networks in cooperation with the ancestral home country.

It is important to remember that while diaspora is created by way of migration, not all migration immediately translates into a unified diaspora. In this realization lies the often-misaligned attempt to generalize the potential of the structurally diverse and socially dynamic diasporas. A diaspora is not a consistent monolithic entity. Because of its dynamic social network nature, diaspora is inherently more self-contradicting and complex, requiring a fine-tuned approach in terms of engagement policy.

Still, almost in its entirety today's academic and policy thinking about diaspora in relation to engagement with the ancestral home country's development is motivated by the recent trends in global migration. Indeed, the latter have been on the rise over the past four decades. According to the IOM, a migrant is any person crossing an international border or moving within the country from away from their habitual residence irrespective of the person's legal status, length of stay, or nature and causes of migration. In 1980 the number of international migrants was estimated to about 102 million, which is 2.3 per cent of the global population. In 2019 this number has increased to 272 million international migrants, which is 3.5 percent of the global population (IOM, 2020).

Labor migrants constitute most of the global migrant population, over two thirds according to the IOM (approximately, 69% of the world's international migrant population of working age).[2] An important sub-group in the labor migration cohort are the temporary (usually, seasonal) migrants who maintain tangible links with their communities in the home (usually, country of birth) country and the host (a destination) economy by way of regular monetary transfers (remittances) and frequent trips. Despite the geographic separation, such connection is often portrayed as the diaspora's potential, leveraging migrants' altruistic and patriotic moods, to promote innovative and sustainable development across small economies with large expatriate communities (e.g., UNDESA, 2020). This observation is important across developing economies and, especially, in the post-socialist realities of the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the former Soviet Union (FSU) with high outward migration since the 1990s and active labor migration process.

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[2]   Based on the data on Labor Migration from the IOM Migration Data Portal
https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/labour-migration

However, the expectations attached to the rising migration faced direct challenges in the immediate effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to an abrupt interruption in global migration patterns (WB, 2021). The decline in migration flows was largely due to the weakening new migration growth and increased return migration to home countries, as numbers of migrant workers consistently dropped through 2020-2021 due to lack of work in the host locations and newly imposed barriers to entry on foreign travelers in destination countries. Those migrants remaining in the host economies often ended up stranded—jobless and unable to travel home either due to lack of funds or risking losing their jobs. And though, labor migration trends are anticipated to recover (e.g., OECD, 2022) the rebound in foreign-born workers' employment across destination countries will be gradual at best.

The situation is further complicated by the rising economic protectionist measures in the host economies with subsequent preferential treatment of native over foreign workers and global geopolitical risks, further localizing the development process. Since the October 2020 war in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia has been facing a humanitarian crisis with swelling numbers of the displaced people. Stretching economy's absorption capacity, most recently there has also been a rise in migration to Armenia, primarily from Russian Federation. While most of such recent relocation is led by skilled professionals in the information technology and communication sector (ITC) with positive temporary externalities, the future impact of migration from the Russian Federation on Armenia's economy remains unclear.

Are remittances the common good?

Human migration may be seen as a fundamental capability (Sen, 1999) of human freedom to choose where to live. As such, an individual migrant's decision for the larger part is motivated by the decision to maximize individual well-being. To a certain degree, individual well-being maximization may involve the migrant's family or other members of the inner circle as well. However, in this case, migrant's motivation to engage with the home country is predicated by the need to materially support their kin back home and less so due to patriotic calling.

From a realistic policy perspective, the possibility for an altruistic engagement with the home country by an individual is minimal. Deneulin (2006) uncovers a dichotomy in the perceived benefits from migration by pointing to the need to assess the common good of the phenomenon. The common good argument may also be seen in the duality of development successes of both the origin and destination countries, where a (labor) migrant is the integral economic actor maximizing individual benefit.

Figure 1. **Average remittances flow to the CEE/FSU as share of GDP**
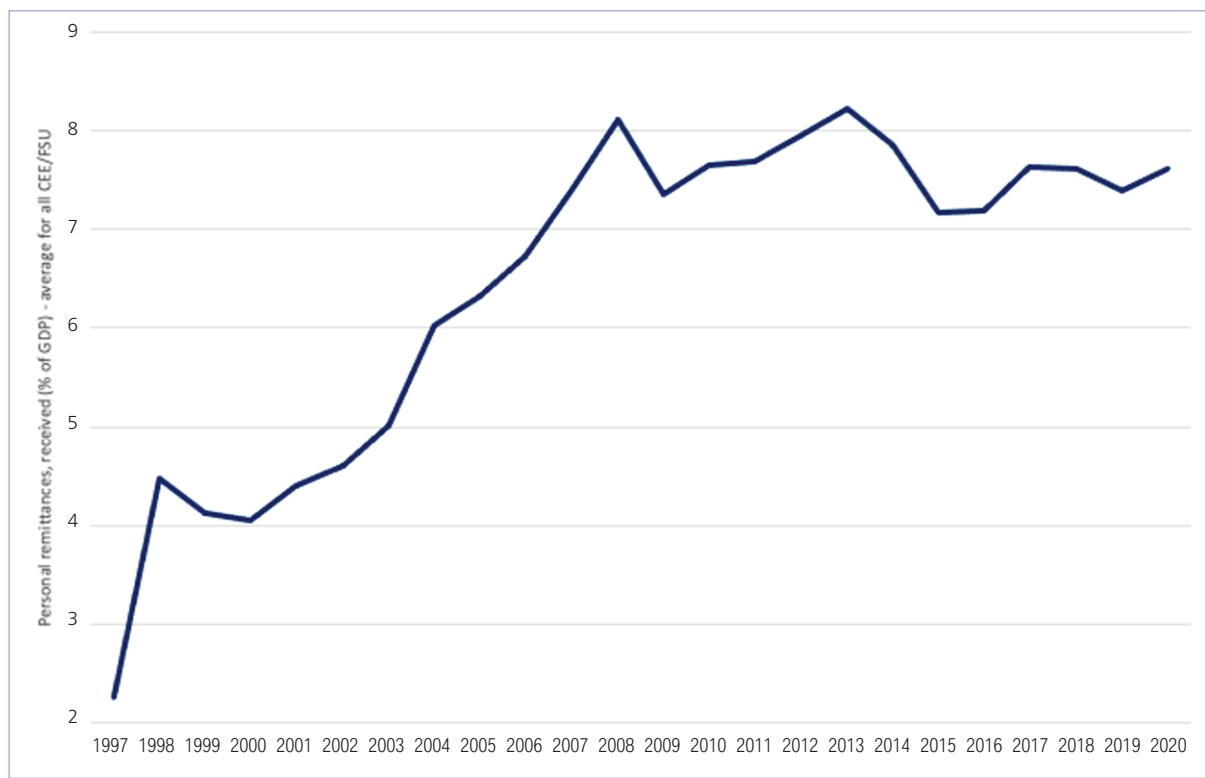
Source: author's calculations based on WDI (2022)

Figure 1 depicts average remittances trends in the CEE/FSU region as a share of gross domestic product (GDP). The data capture information on official transactions registered by way of local banking and money transfer systems. As outmigration strengthened in the late 1990s-2000s and financial markets across the post-socialist countries began to assume more formal structure, remittances transfers skyrocketed up until the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC). Following the immediate decline due to interruption of work and income (a situation like the COVID-19 pandemic, though the latter seems to be leading to monumental ruptures in the global economy), monetary transfers on average resumed across the CEE/FSU.

Yet, it is a telling factor, confirming the points raised, that the post-GFC remittances flows have largely stabilized, averaging between seven and eight percent of GDP without signs of strong growth as before. At best, remittances offer an unsteady source of foreign exchange to developing economies, which, despite its individual poverty alleviation impact, is inadequate to jumpstart a macroeconomy without a more systemic approach.

Echoing the above concerns, Chami *et al* (2018) find that individual remittances do not offer a viable mechanism to finance sustainable economic development. In a study applied to CEE/FSU, Gevorkyan and Gevorkyan (2012) note that remittances lack the stability of larger industrial policies in small

economies. This is due to the idiosyncratic nature of remittances (individual migrant-family based and as such lacking the necessary macroeconomic scale), procyclical character of flows (dependence on the host-economy's business cycle), pattern of use of received funds (often money goes towards consumption needs instead of longer-term investments in business or education spending), uneven effects on the home country's exchange rate. The latter is particularly detrimental for countries like Armenia that is import-dependent on consumer goods and is export dependent on primary commodities (e.g., metals) and, more recently, ICT sector services.

Figure 2.   **Average remittances received, by country as share of GDP**
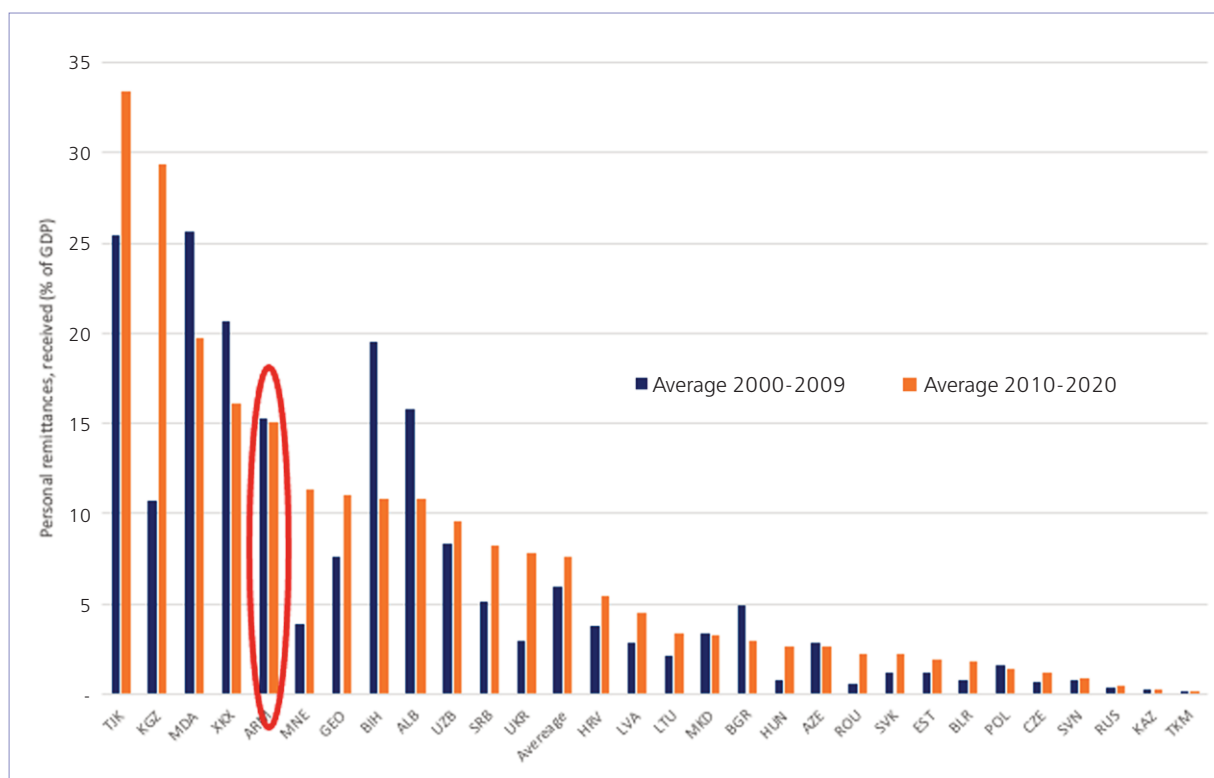
Source: author's calculations based on WDI (2022)

Looking at the CEE/FSU country data (Figure 2) show that remittances seem to be a significant source of external capital flows in just a handful of countries. The top five receivers of migrant remittances, expressed in terms of percentage shares of GDP, are Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Kosovo[3] and Armenia. These also happen to the countries with some of the higher shares of population in poverty in CEE/FSU, according to WDI (2022) and the higher role of remittances in the recipient's household income suggests relative weakness of the domestic economy and labor

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[3]   References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

markets. Therefore, as remittances edge above 10 percent share of GDP for the post-GFC period, the structural macroeconomic vulnerabilities of the top five and few other countries, including Armenia's neighbor, Georgia, become more evident.

Development beyond remittances and diaspora engagement models

The evident structural fragilities of remittances as sources of development funding, have led to early and ongoing reconsideration of diaspora potential. Taking a high-level view, researchers have also explored possibilities for "beyond remittances" (e.g., Gevorkyan, 2022b; Newland and Patrick, 2004; Aguinas and Newland, 2011; or Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011). Here, diasporas (comprised of recent migrants) may be carrying a potential for various types of portfolio investment, foreign direct investment (FDI), and more of significant knowledge and technological transfers to their homelands. By virtue of being exposed to global business and civic practices, leveraging their host-country professional networks, diasporas may aid in significant institutional changes and inclusive developments back home. Supporting these views is a growing volume of empirical evidence of successful case studies of home country-diaspora engagement (e.g., ICMPD, 2019), some of which are mentioned through this report (see Box 1 for some representative examples).

The growing interconnectedness across migration, financial flows, supply chains—the forces of globalization—have strengthened the paradigm of transnational identities, contextualizing the diaspora phenomenon (e.g., Esteban-Guitart, and Vila. 2017; Elo and Hieta, 2017). Ascending from the conceptual struggles with defining diaspora networks in business, researchers largely discuss diasporas from the point of view unified activities contributing to economic growth, socio-cultural influences on business, entrepreneurship, and governance. In a recent study on Armenia, Aleksanyan (2022) rationalizes through a diverse set of diaspora engaging policy options.

Reflecting on the growing interest in the diaspora promise and diversity of approaches, Larner (2007) introduces the notion of 'discovery' of diasporas by the national economies speculatively hoping to capitalize on the untapped diaspora potential. But the discovery is neither new nor unique to any specific country as Kunz (2012) argues. The trend has intensified since the late 1980s, especially since the successes of business networks of non-resident Indians in India and expatriate Chinese communities in China, in both cases stimulating rapid economic uptake in the ancestral countries (e.g., Gevorkyan, 2022a, Pande, 2014).

In their broad analysis by Panibratov and Rysakova (2020) find that there appears to be no perfect replicable recipe for diaspora engagement from case study to another. There is one exception and that is the role of the state in coordinating (Larner's "discovery") of the individual diaspora networks' potentials, which is also evident from the evidence in Box 1 and is reflected in the results of the fact-finding mission for this project. Overall, researchers point to a need to engage with diaspora net-

works whether that might be for political, cultural, or economic development reasons (e.g., Gamlen et al., 2019). But what type of transactional value of diaspora engagement model is appropriate is yet to be formulated, though there is no lack of early and more recent analysis of the question (Kuznetsov, 2006, 2008), including IOM's initiated search for diaspora assessment methodologies (e.g., Ionescu, 2006).

One of the reasons for the lack of a uniform model for diaspora engagement is the dynamic social multilayering of a diaspora (in particularly in tune with the circumstances of the Armenian diaspora). One common thread running through diaspora business networks literature based on detailed analysis of specific communities, is the problem of contrasting perceptions of social and economic policies set by the home country (e.g., Larner, 2007 and Kunz, 2012). Examples from New Zealand, Mexico, India, and false starts with diaspora bond issuances among Ethiopia, Greece, and others suggest the urgent need to shift from a "one-fits-all" view approach to diaspora to more fine-tuned steps towards more transparent communications and transactions with each individual community.

Box 1.   **Select home country and diaspora engagement examples**

Croatia – since 2007 has been operating a Unity through Knowledge Fund (UKF) aimed at facilitating cooperation between the Croatian scientists abroad and those in Croatia. The UKF has funded close to 100 scientific projects, also connecting with international research institutions and supporting young researchers' development. Croatia's expatriate network has actively supported the UKF, in addition to helping establishing connections with specialists in the industry and academia.

http://www.ukf.hr/default.aspx?id=4

Estonia – one of the most digitized economies in the CEE/FSU, offers a Global Estonian online solution that helps "friends of Estonians" globally connect with business networks in the country, leading the government to research into the opportunities for growing the economic contributions of Estonians living abroad.

https://globalestonian.com/en

Greece – since 2016 the Greek Diaspora Fellowship Program (GDFP) has been connecting universities in Greece with Greek (and Cypriot) scholars in the diaspora based in the U.S. and Canada. The fellowship (partially funded by the Fulbright Foundation in Greece) is akin to online academic and employment matching initiatives. Here a host signals a project request with diaspora scholars submitting their responses. The aim of the initiative is to support professional

development of the diaspora scholars of Greek ancestry and educational institutions in Greece through research collaboration, curriculum development, academic training, and other.

https://www.iie.org/programs/greek-diasporafellowship-program

Ireland – has a long history of connecting with its diaspora by way of cultural connections, citizenship policy, attracting foreign direct investments, educational initiatives, and more. Since 1976, The Ireland Funds has operated as a funding network in 12 countries, aiding over 3,000 organizations and raising over $600 million (Aikins and White, 2011). The fund has been successful in engaging with young professionals, leveraging the government's efforts on the continuity of the Irish identity in the diaspora and strengthening trust and engagement with the communities abroad. The Emigrant Support Program, established in 2004, has been instrumental in supporting a range of cultural projects in the global Irish diaspora, sustaining each successive diaspora generation's interest in the nation's culture, history, and economy.

For the Ireland Funds see https://irelandfunds.org/about-us/

For Emigrant Support Program see https://www.dfa.ie/global-irish/support-overseas/emigrant-support-programme/

The Philippines – example is instructive in active re-engagement policies with the country's diaspora, formed under pressures of labor migration. With an introduction of an online portal BaLinkBayan the country offered its diaspora an integrated platform for either personal finance and government services needs or entrepreneurial development opportunities as part of the state-led development program of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas. The platform allows users to start a business remotely or contribute (and volunteer in) to a charitable cause or to local community.

https://balinkbayan.gov.ph/about-balinkbayan/

continued

Box 1.   **Continued**

Israel – over the decades the country has built deep and strong connections with its diaspora engaging in a vast diversity of programs. Equally active are the organizations and communities in the Jewish diaspora, across all areas of interests, including business growth, cultural, defense, economic cooperation, educational, financial markets, healthcare, new technology, and numerous other

linkages. Launched in late 1999 by Jewish diaspora philanthropists and supported by several organizations including the state of Israel, Birthright Israel has been funding educational trips to Israel for young diasporans counting to date over 800,000 participants from almost 70 countries. The organization's mission is to offer life-changing experiences that would motivate young people to learn more about their identity and support Israel, while maintaining meaningful connections with Israelis they meet on the way. There is an active global alumni network and it is estimated that the program has contributed over $1.5 billion to the Israeli economy.

https://www.birthrightisrael.com/about-us

Elsewhere, since 1950s Israel has been successful in consistently raising funds from its diaspora and friends of Israel by way of diaspora bond program. The program has been instrumental in securing the country's early access into the international capital markets and channeling large-scale funding into Israel's infrastructure development. While most recently, the share of the Israel Bonds in the total debt portfolio has been declining giving way to more conventional bonds, the program remains to be popular in the diaspora communities. Adding to the stability of the Israel Bonds program are the focused efforts of the Israeli state to achieve high transparency of funds use prioritizing economic development, active diaspora outreach, relatively improving fundamentals of the Israeli macroeconomy, and the long-lasting U.S. government's loan guarantee initiative (Gevorkyan, 2021).

Moldova – is a newcomer to the diaspora scene realizing the potential of its post-1990s formed diaspora by developing one of the most forward-looking engagement strategies in the CEE/FSU space. Moldova's Diaspora Relations Bureau (DRB) has been effective in linking with the diaspora through Hometown Associations (HTA), which bring together individual migrants across informal networks abroad, providing financial and tangible infrastructure for economic change in the specific regions of migrants' origins in Moldova. A designated point of contact for diaspora in each region has helped maintain meaningful cultural and professional connections between migrants abroad and their families, ensuring transparent information exchange as well as steady targeted funding for small and medium business either by maximizing remittances' potential (e.g., by way of a Program for Attracting Remittances into the Economy, PARE 1 + 1) or additional financial contributions (e.g,, UNDP supported Migration and Local Development (MiDL) project, Diaspora Succeeds at Home "DAR 1 1 3").

The DRB has also been actively engaging with its diaspora across research and academic centers in Europe as well as in high-skilled professional occupations by encouraging temporary scientists visits to the country connecting with scholars in Moldova (a program led by the IOM and the Academy of Sciences of Moldova), organizing Diaspora Excellence Groups to draw diaspora's expertise in policymaking, governance, and innovation, Diaspora Engagement Hub with a range of thematic grants supporting a broad range of socio-economic development and scientific initiatives, and others. Moldova has also been actively developing a system for skills recognition of the returning labor migrants, while maintaining strong cultural and tangible contacts across the diaspora communities (Gevorkyan, 2022c; Martinez et al., 2015)

In conceptual terms, the above contrasts are visible in the characteristic distinctions between the "old" and the "new" diaspora groups (Gevorkyan, 2022a, 2022b) and relevant to Armenia as discussed in the next section. Generally, the "old" are the diaspora communities that have evolved over generations of living in the adopted host countries and fully integrated in the new mode of life. The "new" communities are comprised of new arrivals of historic homeland. Similarly, adding to the "new" group are those that may be migrating from one "old" community to another and are compelled now to adjust to the new community's institutional norms. Finally, a diaspora, Armenian or not, is a subject of influence of assimilation pressures as new definitions of national, ethnic, religious, or cultural identities stack up daily. Such dynamic set-up leads to a rise of multiple disconnects along cultural, political, economic, and even homeland perception categories derived from one's self-identity.

More generally, diaspora networks are the product of history and, to be more specific, history of human migration, a dispersion. As with all history, the search for a diaspora engagement policy for socio-economic development at home must account for the accumulated tendencies of the phenomenon before its transplantation from theory to practice. For the global diversity of ethnic, religious, cultural, and other diasporic groups, the centuries of identity preservation have shaped evolution of unique attitudes and mechanisms towards engaging with their ancestral lands. The dispersion approach contrasts with the simplified appeal to recent migration flows of lump sum unification of expatriates in an assumed altruistic union in relation to the (perceived) homeland. As such, this study of Armenian diaspora and its connection with the Republic of Armenia adds to an impressive body of academic and policy research on diaspora engagement and models of sustainable development towards SDGs achievement and inclusive innovative growth.

3. Armenian diaspora and its engagement with Armenia

The migration waves of diaspora formation

One of the world's most ancient (or as Brubaker (2005) states, classical) diasporas along with the Jewish and the Greek, the Armenian diaspora has been long in the history's making. The migration from the historic Armenian homeland across centuries has almost exceptionally been a forced exodus due to either external aggression or internal crises. An extensive analysis of the particular nature and history of the Armenian diaspora is found across numerous fundamental contributions by Khachig Tölölyan (e.g., Tölölyan, 2005).

With tentative consensus, the ballpark figure for the global ethnic Armenian population that is often repeated is between 8 and 10 million people, of which about two thirds live in the diaspora (for an extended estimates assessment see e.g., Mikaelian, 2022; Tölölyan, 2005). However, this estimate does not include those individuals with partial Armenian background, which in recent years has become a prominent factor in diaspora engagement. The individuals from this latter group, as experience of diaspora-based organizations in Armenia and the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs have observed, are often among most active participants of various diaspora engaging programs in Armenia and in their home communities abroad. From the discussions with some of the diaspora-facing groups in Armenia during the fact-finding mission for this project, it appears that such activism derives from the individual's own interest in their identity and family history background. Often, the subsequent engagement is driven from a need to stand out from a more homogenous environment of a particular diasporic community's host environment.

As far as the geographic spread, the Armenian diaspora's scattering follows the historical pattern with significant cluster across the FSU, with Russian Federation being the main center, reinforced with post 1990s labor migration flows. In the West, the United States, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom are the main countries with established Armenian communities. Smaller groups are found across Australia, Iran, Latin America, Turkey, other countries in Europe, and elsewhere. Overall, it is possible to outline four migration waves contributing to the formation of the contemporary Armenian diaspora.

Before the late 19th century, Armenian communities outside of the historic homeland were generally short-lived with assimilating migration into the ancient world and pre-industrial Europe, Russia, Asia, and the Americas. The medieval Armenian kingdom of Cilicia enabled knowledge and technology transfers from East to West. Later, successive generations of the Armenian Julfan merchants, maintained their flexible business networks relying on unique system of contract enforcement and trust, trading across all major geographic markets of the time until the violent dissolution of their central operational node in the 18th century Persia (Aslanian, 2014; Gevorkyan, 2022a). The echoes of once viable Armenian life can these days be found in the remaining architecture, urban layout, tombstones, language, and through other manifestations across the Silk Road of the Middle East, Central Asia, India, up to Hong Kong, and Singapore.

But some of that early presence remains. The Armenian Quarter of the Old City in Jerusalem (since 4 CE) and the Mekhitarists monastery on the island of *San Lazzaro degli* Armeni in the Venetian lagoon (since 1717) are still active as important centers of the nation's spirituality, history, culture, and scholarship. Along the river Don, in the south of the Russian Federation, the descendants of the Armenian communities relocated from Crimea in the mid 18th century, are fully integrated in the local life, while maintaining their unique identity and living across several towns founded and built by their ancestors (e.g., Ter-Sarkisyants, 1998).

During the second migration wave, starting in the late 19th century, the Armenian diaspora's engagement with its adopted home countries went through two phases: 1) survival by way of assimilation and 2) integration to preserve their unique cultural identity, as the connection with the historic home was abruptly cut in the early 20th century. Following the Armenian Genocide, survivors scattered across the globe establishing new and, in some cases, adding to the fragile centers of Armenian life. The new settlements were established in the Caucasus, along the Russian Federation Black Sea coast, Central Asia, Middle East (Lebanon and Syria), Africa (Ethiopia), United States, Canada, and Latin America. Those large migrations led to the creation of today's Western Armenian diaspora.[4] Manifested in its predominant use of the Western Armenian dialect and emotional connection with the Western Armenia region, the shaping and the consistency of the Western Armenian diasporic identity would become an important factor in the establishment and crystallization of the energetic diaspora communities and their perceptions of themselves, other Armenians, and the present-day Republic of Armenia.

Recently, a novel research project (Hadjian, 2018) uncovered, what it has termed as, a "secret nation"—a sizable community of ethnic Armenians living on its historic lands in eastern Turkey as fully integrated and mostly assimilated residents yet retaining to varying degrees their Armenian identities. Whether through use of the Armenian language, dialect, preserving the knowledge of their (often

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[4]   For example, see Mirak (1983) on the late 19th early 20th century communities in the U.S.A.

partial) Armenian background (often stemming from one grandmother–a survivor of the 1915 genocide) or retaining some elements of the Armenian religious tradition, Hadjian (2018) argues, those communities tell the stories of survival and their identity discovery.

The third migration wave covered the period from after World War II and up until Armenia's 1991 independence. The volumes of people movements were smaller, yet, still, important for the Armenian identity. In the late 1940s the Soviet Union organized repatriation campaigns inviting Armenians from across the world. For many of those who followed the call this was their second relocation in just few decades, but now into a political entity called Soviet Armenia. The campaign itself came in waves, ranging from initial enthusiasm to immediate disappointments due to difficulties of adjusting to a new way of living, though uniting the Western and Eastern Armenian contingents of the nation. Later, moving away from all out-repatriation, connections with the Soviet Armenia and diaspora assumed a more focused approach motivating strong professional, educational, and cultural contacts. As political conflicts of the 1970s Middle East spread, by then already established generations of the local Armenian diaspora set themselves on the move, primarily towards Western Europe and the Americas. This phenomenon would repeat again, in the present-day Republic of Armenia as an additional destination, about half a century later in the 2010s and, sadly, for the same reasons.

The final, at this time, wave of Armenian migration adding to the diaspora came following Armenia's 1991 independence. Those early 1990s movements were due to yet another humanitarian crisis of devastating earthquake, economic collapse, and first war in Nagorno-Karabakh. Since, the late 1990s (up until recently), the main character of migration was economic. New Armenian migrants joined the ranks of global temporary labor migrants trekking to the adopted regions of Russian Federation, the U.S.A, and Europe usually with already established Armenian communities. While in many cases, new arrivals re-energized existing communities, especially where the sense of nationhood is hinged on the notion of survival after the genocide, there is also evidence of the sustained splits in the communities across a range of identifying factors (from origin, language, political questions, to economic background and, even, the degree of connection with Armenia). It remains to be seen how the dual challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and the October 2020 war in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, both resulting in large-scale humanitarian crisis in Armenia, will transform the Armenian diaspora in the long run.

Forging a diasporic identity

It is in this complexity of "a constant negotiation, a constant dialectic between the past and the present" as Tonoyan (2017) puts it, that the Armenian identity is forged and survives. And it is at this juncture that the multifaceted complexity of the Armenian diaspora phenomenon unveils itself. There is no stereotypical profile of an Armenian migrant. Instead, in the case of Armenian diaspora one must account for the generational layering of the cultural and socio-economic identity determining factors.

Recall the split between the "old" and the "new" diaspora mentioned in the previous section. In the Armenian case, a typical representative of the "old" diaspora is a relatively established and integrated citizen of the host country (hence, the phenomena of American Armenian, French Armenian, Russian Armenian, etc.). These diasporic identities were molded under the pressures of the first three migration waves introduced above. Today's descendants of those early communities then make up the established, "old", diaspora. Large in size, this group is likely to be more financially secure with greater share of representatives engaged in higher-skilled professional activities compared to the "new" diaspora member. The "new" diaspora is comprised primarily of new arrivals from the historic homeland. In addition to skilled professionals and Armenians relocating from elsewhere in the FSU to the communities in the West, the other larger sub-group in the "new" diaspora are recent labor migrants who are less financially stable, still adapting culturally and in economic terms to the new host country environment.

At the same time, given their recent memory and in many cases direct connection with the ancestral land, the "new" diaspora might appear to be more in tune with the immediate needs of the compatriots in Armenia. But with objective pressures of adapting to a new host country, the "new" might lack the motivation for active engagement in humanitarian or development projects whether those be aimed at the local diaspora community preservation (e.g., Sunday church schools) or with broad goals for socio-economic improvements in Armenia. The "old" are often more willing to follow an already established institutional pattern, which for many is informed by shared family experiences. It is the latter that shapes a diaspora from dispersion as observed in Tölölyan (2005), where duration and preservation of a distinct entity for several generations shapes the more contemporary views and perceptions about one's identity, cooperation within/outside the group, and ancestral lands.

Aside from the old and new diaspora duration defined contrasts, a range of geographical and institutional factors have influenced evolving patterns of diaspora engagement with Armenia. Differences in historical origins, language and culture (Western and Eastern Armenian), varying responses to common assimilation pressure, and numerous other nuanced factors rupture diaspora communities across myriads of social sub-groups, often overlapping but most commonly in some type of opposition with each other. And while for Armenia significant success in poverty alleviation and macroeconomic improvement is undoubtedly due to diaspora involvement, this scattering, *dispersion* effect, becomes a more appropriate term.

For Armenia, such differences have also found their way in the diaspora structure across countries of the diaspora's scattering. For instance, self-organization of the western Armenian diaspora, until recently, was more diverse and autonomous, built along the ancestral legacies and political divisions. On the other hand, communities in the FSU comprised of the descendants of the migrants from before the 1991 USSR breakup lack the same motivation and have historically engaged with Armenia on more individual basis, either by way of family or business ties.

Traditionally, significant humanitarian and infrastructure development projects have mainly been funded by the "old", Western, diaspora groups (e.g., the H. Hovnanian Family Foundation, Izmirlian Foundation, Tufenkian Foundation, United Armenian Fund, and others) and individual benefactors. The latter have recently also been partnering with benefactors from the "new" diaspora. One of such productive partnerships has been the over two decades cooperation between Noubar Afeyan of Flagship Pioneering (and Moderna) with Ruben Vardanyan (e.g., Armenia 2020 and a more recent The Future Armenian initiative) and both with Vartan Gregorian (the Carnegie Foundation) co-founding the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, as well as supporting a range of development initiatives in Armenia. At the same time, the Armenian diaspora across the FSU countries has been instrumental in absorbing the post-1990s Armenian labor migrants, primarily in the Russian Federation. But the trend began to change following the 2008 GFC, as the FSU diaspora began its larger engagement with Armenia's economic development more actively across all sectors and primarily in finance, trade, agriculture, as well as in educational developments.

4. Engagement with the country

Moving into more practical space one finds no lack of active involvement of the representatives of the Armenian diaspora with Armenia across all sectors of modern life. The modern history of diaspora-Armenia connection starts primarily after the 1990s breakup of the Soviet Union. The connection is particularly strong across wide-ranging dimensions in culture, education, economics, and politics. However, what comes through from attempts to assess diaspora's links with Armenia is a disparate and contradictory pattern of specific project-based engagement. Broadly, much depends on the individual, or groups, spearheading each particular action. To date, despite numerous attempts a more systematic involvement pattern is yet to evolve.

Internally, the Western diaspora's pre-1990s operations were directed primarily towards self-preservation and development of the communities across the host countries. Such pattern, evolving over the decades, led to a rise of grass-roots organizations and deeply embedded within specific diaspora groups cultural, educational, political, and other institutions. Preservation of identity was the core unifying value around such entities with trust primarily shared among the members of a particular institution, with visible skepticism in relations between groups from different political or cultural nodes.

It would be those foundational structures that would allow the Western Armenian diaspora organizations to quickly move into independent Armenia providing immense humanitarian and development assistance as living standards collapsed and the post-socialist economy was in crisis, overburdened by the impacts of the devastating 1988 earthquake and the first Nagorno-Karabakh war. From all corners of the world prominent artists, musicians, athletes, politicians, and businesspeople all sharing Armenian background expressed their moral and material support through charities, fundraising activities, and mobilizing local communities across the diaspora's host countries. In fact, a large share (about 30%) of the presently functioning in Armenia organizations with diaspora links are at least 20 years old (see Appendix Table A-1) with an overwhelming majority of the organization being over ten years old.

As engagement progressed from humanitarian to cultural and to economic development phases, new politically non-affiliated diaspora groups came to the scene. By the early 2000s and with overall macroeconomic stabilization (e.g., Gevorkyan, 2018; WB, 2015), a new trend emerged with more long-term investments going into expanding business opportunities in Armenia, beyond immediate infrastructure needs. Most characteristic of the latter were the sustained activities of the United Armenian Fund (UAF)—a result of collaborative efforts of several diaspora-based charitable and religious groups—in the humanitarian relief and medical supplies provisions, which closed after almost three decades in operations since the 1988 earthquake (e.g., Gevorkyan and Grigorian, 2003). During its operations the UAF transported a $720 million worth of humanitarian supplies by way of 159 airlifts and 2,260 sea containers (Mediamax, 2015). The Lincy Foundation (linked to the UAF by its key figures from the Armenian - American diaspora, Kirk Kerkorian and Harout Sassounian) until its closure in 2011 had contributed to the vitality of Armenian communities across the world and in Armenia. Similarly, activities of the Fund for Armenian Relief and numerous other groups (some mentioned earlier and listed in the Appendix Table A-1) focusing on education, child protection, economic development, healthcare, civic society, culture, tourism, and social services, independently of each other have been active in Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and across communities for almost three decades now.

Diaspora-led groups such as Birthright Armenia, Armenian Volunteer Corps, Teach for Armenia and others offer cultural and educational immersion as well as work opportunities for diasporans of practically all ages with ranging time commitments, there has also been a rise in individual households repatriation. One of the organizations, Repat Armenia has been at the forefront leading the effort in helping the relocating diasporans to adjust to the new life and conditions in Armenia (see Box 2). For many, the process is not that of repatriation but one of immigration, since most of the new arrivals have never lived (and many were not even born) in Armenia for an extended period of time.

It is to a greater extent due to the newly arriving professionals of all diasporic dimensions pairing with strong human capital capacity in Armenia that the country's ICT sector began its transformation. Digital Pomegranate is one such example of a tech company with diaspora participation that started as a contractor outgrowing into one of the major employers in Gyumri, Armenia's second largest city. Synopsys, with its Armenia-based operations driven by professionals from the diaspora, is among the leading employers in Armenia's ICT sector. According to the EIF (2019), pre-pandemic the ICT sector steadily grew at double-digit rates (approximately 20% average annual growth between 2010-2018), with up to 1000 new startups in software development and outsourcing companies rapidly adding to the sector's strength. In 2015, Forbes (2015) named Armenia's PicsArt as number five in their annual Top 10 Hottest Startups.

According to some earlier studies, up to 80% of offerings developed in the Armenia's economy are new to the local economy with three percent being new propositions to the global economy, which

is a comparatively stronger outcome than in the neighboring Georgia (Gevorkyan, 2015). Armenia's blossoming ICT scene attracted the 2019 World Congress on Information Technology, a consortium of leading firms in the ICT sector, and in early 2022 one of the leading technology companies, NVIDIA Corporation, opening an office in Armenia, among others. And though the sector manifests strong potential for a multidimension growth (e.g., WB, 2020), one concern has been with the scalability of the recent growth and its transplantation for the domestic market as opposed to currently mainly exports focus.

In agriculture, the diaspora-capital-led Intelinair has been active in helping growers and agronomists providing the stakeholders with timely digital crop intelligence in Armenia. Intelinair collects information on weather patterns, aerial images, temperature readings, humidity measurements, rainfall, soil samples, terrain type, equipment utilized, planting rates, applications, and more gathered with the help of specialized drone technology. Partnering with the Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) the data is analyzed and used to inform partnering farmers on the harvest conditions. The company has developed a range of educational and informational initiatives for the local rural communities, as well as by engaging the ANAU students.

Another example of growth over the past two decades has been the wine-making sector, which has resurrected ancient traditions, establishing a world-class Armenian-wine brand recognition, positively impacting domestic agriculture and tourism sectors. Armenia's Zorah Karasi–founded by Zorik Gharibian a diasporan from Italy–was featured on Bloomberg's Top 10 wines of 2012 list. As in ventures across other sectors, this project was one of passion rooted in the founder's Armenian identity but also recognizing a significant business growth opportunity at the right time. A wine incubator, WineWorks, started as a wine consulting firm by Vahe Keushguerian in 2011. Today WineWorks helps local growers with planning and planting vineyards, wine production equipment installation, marketing, sales and distribution. The company's processing facility accommodates both small- and large-scale client grape growers and wine makers (for additional insights on diasporan winemakers in Armenia see Hovsepian, 2019).

It is hardly possible to enumerate all the success cases on these pages (see Box 2) that have resulted in important transformation across Armenia's economy over the past three decades. The rise in the wine culture has also spurred the rise in tourism with visits to the vineyards, with improvements in the hospitality sector, numerous new hotels and restaurant business opened with the help of diaspora capital (e.g., Tufenkian hotel and Tufenkian Areni Wine Resort or the Dargett brewpub reviewed by Vann, 2017). Aided by the arrivals of Armenians from the diaspora who introduced new tastes and operational models (including Yerevan Food Festivals started in 2018, by yet, another repatriating Armenian) the services industry of Armenia continues on its path of sophistication (e.g, Gevorkyan, 2015 for more systemic trends review). Wings of Tatev, a tourism and socio-economic development project led by the IDea Foundation and commitment to build world-class access to a difficult to access

mountainous national landmark of the monastery of Tatev, is another example of diaspora's visible positive impact, resulting in a steady increase in visitors discovering Armenia's rich heritage.

Box 2.   ***Select highlights of diaspora-led engagements***

Aran wines – Talar and Alex Sarafian (from New Jersey, USA) planted their first vineyard in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2005, at the forefront of viticulture in the region. The winemakers embarked on the business with personal passion for wine, seeing a business opportunity and scalable local development effects by contracting local rural grape growers. Using the indigenous Armenian grape variety Sireni, in 2018 Aran wines embarked on creating a new estate-grown Red, Rosé and Reserve Red varietals. The grapes used in the production are indigenous to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The winery employed local workers (35 local families) not only at their vineyard but also at their hotel Shushi Grand Hotel. The initial wine production run in 2018 was 13,000 bottles. Most recently, with relocation of some of the facilities following the October 2020 war, production scale has gone up reaching approximately 40,000 bottles.

https://www.aranwines.com

Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST) – started in 2017 joining a group of benefactors from the Eastern and Western old and new Armenian diaspora segments the foundation aims to channel a mix of technological and financial resources of the Armenian diaspora towards scientific and innovative ventures in Armenia. FAST's partners are encouraged to work on high-quality ICT solutions competitive in the global markets across automation, emerging technologies, biotechnology, as well as industrial and consumer manufacturing. FAST actively connects with professionals from the academic, public, and commercial sectors, promoting joint diaspora-Armenia based ventures.

https://fast.foundation/en/about-us

Repat Armenia is one of the leading Armenia-based groups working with the global Armenian diaspora across multiple issues related to long-term or permanent relocation to the country. Repat Armenia itself was established by repatriated diaspora members from the Russian Federation in 2012. Recognizing that "repatriation" for many, especially from the old diaspora really means new immigration, Repat has developed a complex re-integration process. The

organization has been successful in helping in the integration of the Syrian Armenian diaspora's move to Armenia. More broadly, Repat Armenia offers the soft-landing support and opportunities to network to all who wish to engage with Armenia.

https://repatarmenia.org

Entrepreneurs and philanthropists from diaspora have also been active in engaging with Armenia's educational sector. Such groups as the Children of Armenia Fund, Tumo Center for Creative Technologies, educational and culture development programs offered by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and numerous other engagements are testaments to a very vibrant and diverse value proposition of diaspora connection with the ancestral homeland. Moreover, members of the diaspora have sponsored the first international board school in Armenia, the United World Colleges-Dilijan College, hosting almost 250 international students with direct immersion into Armenian culture and life's realities. Diaspora academics and practitioners participate in regular conferences (e.g., Armenian Economic Association) or visit local universities with lectures.

A popular Armenian-Russian educational platform, Lsaran, active in organizing thematic seminars and gatherings previously exclusively only in the Russian Federation-based communities, in 2022 conducted its first meetings in Armenia. The Armenian Society of Fellows (ASOF), a newly formed science and education development pan-Armenian group, has united scholars of ethnic Armenian origin scattered across the world with aims for promoting world-class development of Armenia's educational and scientific facilities and capabilities. The organization also offers opportunities to network. Numerous other field and sector specific groups have increasingly been choosing Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh for their regular meetings finding new modes of engagement with the ancestral lands.

For example, medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other diaspora professionals iterate between pro-bono assignments in Armenia's rural areas and their demanding jobs elsewhere (e.g., the Armenian American Health Professional Organization missions to Medical Center or the Armenian Bar Association and its affiliates). One could list a great many other examples of successful diaspora collaboration within itself and with Armenia, especially through online social media networks—a trend that intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is no lack of examples of diaspora-led entities opening operations in Armenia or contracting in some way of cooperation local Armenian counterparties for possible joint ventures. The trend has been on the rise since the 1990s. In fact, it was largely due to Armenian diaspora members with access to some multinational enterprises' corporate boards that such heavyweights as Marriott, HSBC, Microsoft, and other established their presence early on in Armenia.

The data on actual FDI flows attribute do diaspora investors is very scant and directional at best. In the background research for this report, no consistent dataset was discovered despite broad search. Most of the references lead to an analysis by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). According to GIZ (2011), up to 90 percent of all foreign-capital companies across all sectors had some type of Armenian diaspora capital participation. As far as the FDI, the same report finds that on average up to 60 percent of net FDI inflows were diaspora driven.

The earlier findings are further corroborated by more recent data in Figure 3, which shows a blended measure of diaspora engagement across a group of post-socialist CEE/FSU economies. The new measure is the per capita sum of net FDI net inflows and remittances. Used as a proxy for diaspora financial investment, this approach offers a relatively consistent estimate in the absence of better captured data. The blended measure is the compared to the GDP per capita, expressed in constant purchasing power parity dollars. The time-period covered in Figure 3 is the 2010-2020 ten-year average for each indicator.

Figure 3. **Combined FDI and Remittances per capita, USD and GDP per capita, PPP by country**
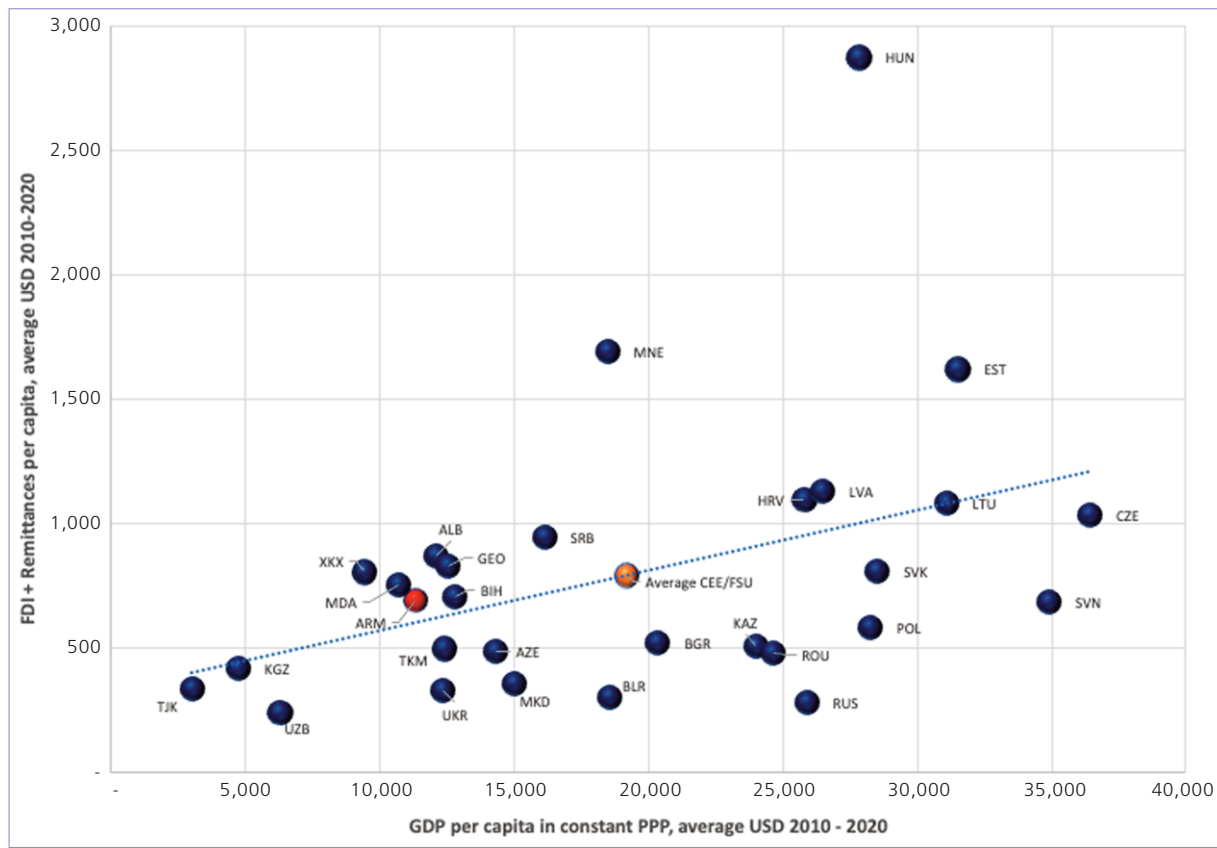
Source: author's calculations based on WDI (2022)

The conclusion from Figure 3 is that quite a few countries with sizable diasporas (whether old or new or mix of both, as in Armenia) are underperforming below the CEE/FSU Average figure. This means that even with the current levels labor migrants' remittances flows and the diaspora's critical role of attracting much needed foreign exchange FDI into the country, the overall volume of funding expressed in per capita terms remains low. Tourism sector in Armenia stands out as one of the most in need of FDI (e.g., WB, 2019), a difficult realization for a history-filled country.

Box 3. A lesson from the IndUS Entrepreneur (TiE) and India

In India, the entrepreneurial diaspora members play an essential reputational enhancement role for the home economy. Successful ventures in the country's ICT sector nurtured confidence for some to move back and those in India to strive to join the growing sector spearheading a structural change in the economy and attracting multinational corporations. But the ascent to any semblance of successful diaspora model even in the case of India took decades of join diaspora business groups and, primarily, the official state (e.g., Pande, 2014; Kapur, 2001).

Established in 1992 by the Indian professionals living abroad, the **IndUS Entrepreneur (TiE)** has become a leading organization promoting global networking, mentoring, education opportunities, access to funding, entrepreneurial and venture capital incubation to its members in the Indian diaspora and in India. Through its efforts and involvement of the TiE members across globally leading multinational technological companies, the TiE has helped elevate India's profile in the global value chains. Such early recognition has resulted in a structurally transformative influence on the Indian economy, benefiting from the scale effect of large professional diaspora. Indeed, the example of TiE is that of going "beyond remittances" with diaspora's involvement contributing to skills and technological transfers, tapping into impressive human and financial capital.

But the diaspora effort was only a necessary condition in India's emergence to the global ICT scene and eventual structural change. Much of the success has been due to the [sufficient condition of] government's early reorientation in its policies towards more inclusive treatment of non-resident Indians, new cultural and social connections, as well as simplification of the business and financial conditions soliciting the diaspora capital and capacity. While India's example would be difficult to replicate for other countries due to the scale of the diaspora engagement, size of local ICT (or other sectors) in proportion to the rest of the economy, diaspora's reach through global value

chains, and other, four factors of successful diaspora engagement policy stand out as noted by Kapur (2011).

First, there is a factor of diaspora's significance in terms of its members relative educational achievements and professional backgrounds. Second, it is the host country's relevance in the global economy (political stability included, a lesson learned by the Armenian communities of Iran, Lebanon, and most recently Syria). The third factor pertains to the degree of informality diaspora networks in contrast to established institutional pattern of operations and effect on innovation. Finally, the fourth factor depends on the home country's attitudes towards its diaspora. In this case, a strategic inclusion of diaspora in the economic development program may be a lesson to pick up from the experience of India.

Objectively, Armenia is the "beyond remittances" case, as reviewed in the earlier sections of this report (Newland and Patrick, 2004). The multiplier effects of diaspora-led FDI, technology transfers, philanthropy, tourism, political contributions, cultural influences plan an important role. Yet, as evidenced from the cases reviewed for this study much of the engagement remains idiosyncratic and largely dependent on a specific project or diaspora individual's emotional attachment to the country (a repeated refrain in the fact-finding mission). Such isolated diaspora-led efforts have also contributed to the evolving closed network operations (an insight gleaned from the interviews, as well) by which members of a particular group interact only with other members from the same group, rarely crossing the inter-group and inter-network social boundaries.

This section closes with Box 3 summarizing a case study from India. The case study discusses the success of a pan-Indian professional network the IndUS Entrepreneur and an impressive transformation of the country's ICT sector. However, the four critical factors derived in Kapur (2011) should offer some guidance for any diaspora policy designs, especially in the presence of network boundaries of the Armenian case. The role of the state emerges as essential in designing and streamlining a robust diaspora engagement infrastructure. We continue with some additional insights from the fact-finding mission.

5. Review of the fact-finding mission and high-level inputs from a survey data

Results from the fact-finding mission leading up to this study have already been mentioned few times. This section adds with a concise summary. Over 30 interviews with key stakeholders in the diaspora affairs and across the three primary sectors of this study were conducted during the period of June – October 2022, as part of the background work on this project. The interviewees came from the public and private sector with representatives from both Armenia and the Armenian diaspora. The interviews were conducted during in-person meetings, online, and by email.
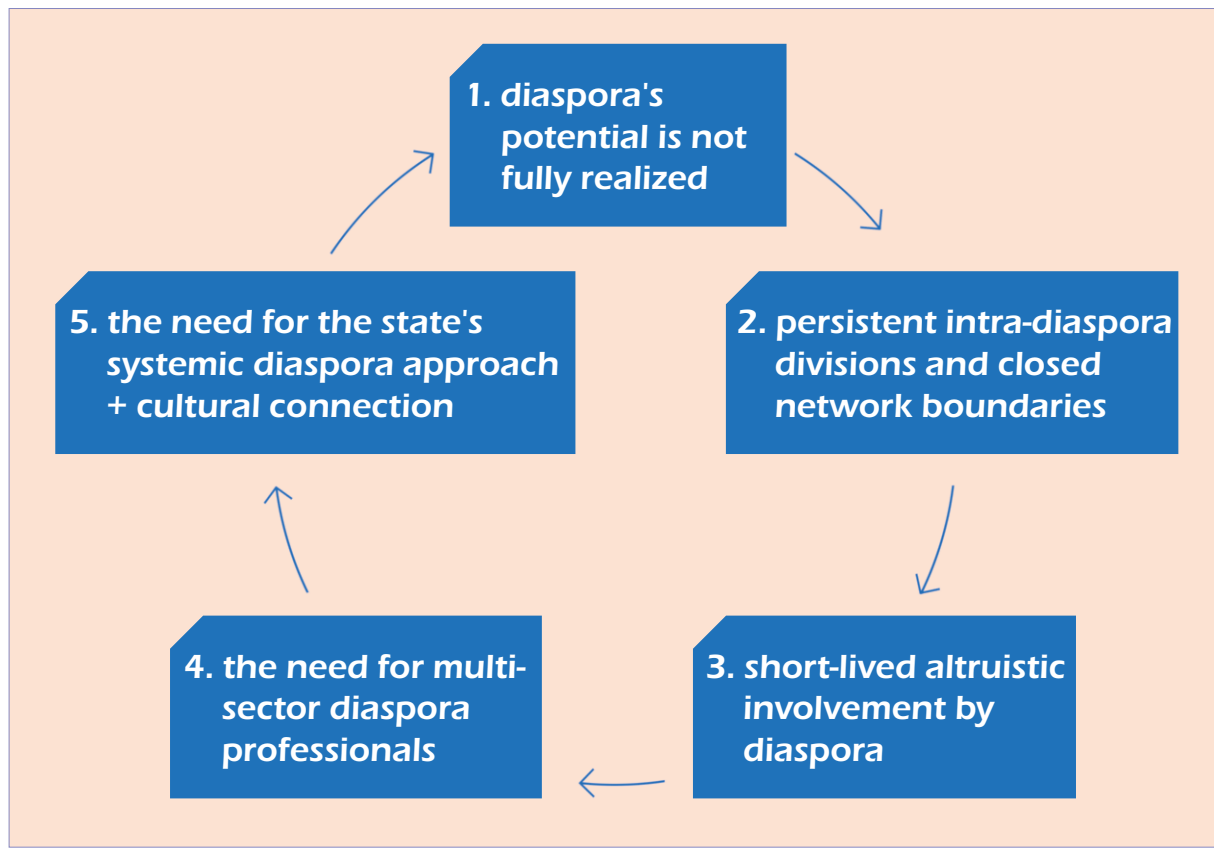
Key vulnerabilities in the Armenia-diaspora relationship

Based on the interviews, Figure 4 attempts to summarize key issues of concern unveiling vulnerabilities in the Armenia-diaspora relationship. Each interview began with an assessment question, asking if in the respondent's opinion the Armenian diaspora's potential was fully realized at the moment of the conversation. With varying degrees, an overwhelming majority of respondents stated that diaspora's potential was not fully realized in Armenia (item number 1 in Figure 4). This led to another line of questioning focusing on some of the common concern areas.

Moving clockwise on Figure 4, one comes to the second commonly observed concern (item 2) that about closed-network boundaries prevalent among diaspora groups and individuals in Armenia. Often diaspora representatives engaging with Armenia through familiar to them community social groups. Such affiliation with a diaspora-based cultural or political entity, often determined by the individual's family background, becomes the initial connection with Armenia.

However, such introduction also limits the individual to staying within the comfort of the familiar network, rarely crossing into events or projects organized by other (also, diaspora) networks. This concern expresses the core of the earlier mentioned points on identity and trust within and across diaspora groups and with the country. It appears that one's background continues to shape their experience even when in Armenia, in their ancestral homeland.

Figure 4.   **Summary of main concerns about diaspora engagement in and with Armenia**

1. diaspora's potential is not fully realized

5. the need for the state's systemic diaspora approach + cultural connection

2. persistent intra-diaspora divisions and closed network boundaries

4. the need for multi-sector diaspora professionals

3. short-lived altruistic involvement by diaspora

Source: author's extrapolation from the fact-finding mission interviews

Resulting from the second factor of closed diaspora networks, was a common observation that much of the diaspora capital in Armenia was mainly altruistically motivated and as such short-lived (item 3 in Figure 4). While, at a higher level, the altruistic model supports a long-held view that diaspora entrepreneurs are willing to take on the risks and invest into the home country ahead of international investors, the fact that three decades since the macroeconomic reforms it is altruism that continues to be the major motivating investment factor in Armenia, points to a structural vulnerability in the economy. Related, the interviews raised questions about efforts on limiting the "brain-drain." An optimal solution would be a wider-scale initiative to attract a larger-scale participation of diaspora professionals across all sectors of Armenia's economy (item 4 in Figure 4).

In this mix, another general topic of fact-finding discussions touched on financial system transformations. Here, reforms in Armenia's banking and capital markets, streamlining and digitizing the interactions with diaspora members located abroad and simplifying the regulatory burden were common points addressed by the interviewees. During the conversations, there was some evident confusion in terms of possible innovative financial alternatives that may facilitate larger inflows of diaspora investment.

Diaspora bond

The most frequently mentioned financial instrument was a diaspora bond—a government issued debt security targeted to diaspora investors. A brief note is needed to clarify that despite the appeal of this type of debt instrument as a somewhat unique financial security, the track record of diaspora bonds issuance by developing countries in recent decades has not been too successful (e.g., Gevorkyan, 2021). To date, quite a few countries have either tried or declared their intentions for launching a diaspora bond as a means of raising funds from their expatriate communities for either general revenue or infrastructure funding purposes.

For example, despite the initial success with diaspora bonds, Kenya (in 2009) and Nigeria (in 2017), both countries with large diasporas, were unable to sustain the track record. Others, Ethiopia, Greece, Kosovo, Sri Lanka had to either postpone, cancel, or restructure their debt offerings.[5] The disappointing outcomes were mainly due to lack of demand for the country's debt from their diaspora. Part of the reason was the lack of retail option for funds-constrained largely labor migrant diaspora. Another reason were the contingent liabilities arising from a bond registered under the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission rules, on top of a currency and exchange rate risk for the issuing nation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly (e.g., as in the case of Greece), there was lack of trust from the diaspora to the home country.

India, despite its three attempts to raise funds by issuing diaspora bond markets in the 1990s, realized the risks facing an emerging market and subsequently reorganized its diaspora financial policy prioritizing transactions through domestic banking system and funding (Chander, 2001; Gevorkyan, 2021). However, even if once such a hypothetical bond is issued and faces low or limited demand from the diaspora, a ripple effect runs through the capital markets and already lower graded emerging markets debt stands at risk of further damaging the sovereign borrower's reputation. Such action may inadvertently lead to a downgrade in credit ratings, which in turn might block the economy's access into international capital markets or punish it by raising cost of borrowing and international investors curtailing the volumes invested (e.g., on credit rating effects, Griffith-Jones and Kraemer, 2021).

The international capital markets are very much susceptible to perception. Israel with its diaspora bond program was able to generate a default-free track record from the very start, which contributed to the country's ability to continue to tap its diaspora on a consistent basis. There are couple of explanations to Israel's diaspora bond program's success, which are not relevant elsewhere. The program started in the 1950 when access to international capital markets for developing economies was constrained and tapping diaspora was a calculated risk by Israel. Today, majority of developing economies (including Armenia) have some presence and recognition in the capital markets.

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5   References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

The reputational risk of a misaligned program may quickly translate into real macroeconomic costs to the development process and internal stability. Another factor that played to Israel's benefit has been the U.S. offered loan guarantee, which by the market participants may be interpreted as a signal of implicit support of Israel's borrowing plans. Finally, the key factor has been Israel untiring and unyielding proactive effort of connecting with its diaspora, staying in tune with the diaspora community needs, their evolution overtime, transparency in the funds management and prioritization of the development needs linking with the diaspora's altruistic moods, and finally developing flexible financial applications for the bondholders (e.g, contributions to endowments, gifts, etc.). The conclusion is that for a country (e.g., Armenia) that is already present in the international capital markets without diaspora's help, it may be worthwhile to continue on this path while building up the momentum within the diaspora for a possible special bond program launch in the future, should a diaspora bond become a macroeconomic priority.

State-led efforts

Going back to Figure 4, the last component (item 5 in Figure 4) refers to the state's policy towards the diaspora. Before relaying some of the concerns, it is important to note that aside from the diverse palette of individual interaction mentioned in the preceding section, successive administrations in the Armenian government have been putting wide ranging active efforts towards diaspora engagement. For the larger part of the first two decades in the 2000s the Armenian Development Agency (ADA), along with the "open doors" investment policy of the Ministry of Economy, acted on attracting the FDI leveraging free economic zones and tax benefits among some policy examples. A major shift factor was the 2007 relaxation of the nationality law, accepting dual citizenship and easing up diaspora's participating in the country's life.

More recently, the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs has launched a series of initiatives on building stronger meaningful connections with the diaspora (see text Box 4). The efforts have been successful to some extent in energizing new generation of professional diasporas, some who remain in Armenia after their volunteer or internship positions end.

In addition, the government through the ministries and other agencies, such as Enterprise Armenia, has been actively marketing Armenia to potential diaspora investors. As part of the support package for large scale projects, the state offers some guarantees to build all necessary infrastructure (including, roads, energy, and water access) etc. It was also pointed out that one of the challenges for Armenia accessing international capital markets was to generate project uniqueness by way of investment forums and often relying on diaspora representatives in cooperation with the Armenian government's entities.

However, the concerns about the official state's role in the diaspora policy were of two types, as was mentioned during the fact-finding interviews. The first type was a conceptual concern about the trust

factor and uncertainty about the state's policy towards the diaspora. The second type of concerns was more sector specific.

For example, in education and science, it may be possible, it was suggested, to increase funding and streamline the skills (degrees) equivalency certifications [according to information received at the time of writing, some initial work in this direction is being done]. In agriculture, diaspora businesses working with smaller Armenia-based farmers pointed to the vulnerabilities that rural communities are facing in the events of adverse weather or fluctuations in crops. Finally, in tourism the common observation was that of lacking scale and limited infrastructure, which deters private investors from accessing the sector on a large scale.

Box 4.   **Selected diaspora engagement programs in Armenia coordinated by the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs**

iGorts – a government funded program that places diaspora professionals to work in Armenia's public sector and the government for one year. The selection is competitive, with only 50 finalists out of approximately 300 applicants from the diaspora, prioritizing professional experience in public administration, sociology, psychology, education, legal studies, and other fields. The initial appointment is for one year with the government covering a round-trip ticket, monthly stipend, emergency medical insurance, and work permit paperwork fees. In several instances, some of the participants have assumed full-time positions in their official posts, effectively relocating to the country.

Diaspora Youth Ambassador – a competitive program engaging with diaspora youth (22-35 years old) as a means of helping participants to learn about the socio-economic and cultural realities of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, while developing new connections across the diaspora networks and in the homeland. The program, initially launched in 2021, runs for a year with at least two weeks spent by participants in Armenia. Participants are to actively engage their diaspora communities and contribute to expanding knowledge about Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh through publications and informational seminars. Part of the program is funded by the government of Armenia and Jinishian Memorial Foundation.

Step Toward Home – is a two-week educational and cultural program for the diaspora youth, filled with visits to historical sites and museums, Armenian language classes, meetings with public officials and dignitaries in the arts and sports areas

of the country. The government covers all in-country costs and the program is open to participants who did not participate in the similar program, "Ari Tun", organized by the Ministry of Diaspora before its dissolution. The intent of the program is to offer young people 13 – 18 years old an opportunity for cultural immersion while spending some of their summer vacation in Armenia.

NerUzh – is a state-funded diaspora technological startup competition, with awards of up to $30,000 for the winning project. The initiative aims at strengthening the startup ecosystem of the country by promoting inflow of innovative and scalable diaspora-led technological startups with hopes for eventual business relocation to Armenia. Company registration in Armenia, business plan, local corporate bank account, as well as potential for matching global technologies are used as evaluation criteria for companies in the idea stage and in the market launch stage during the competition.

The OHC maintains active social media and outreach campaigns as well as cooperates with Armenia-based organizations working with the diaspora such as Repat, Birthright Armenia, and other traditional diaspora-based NGOs. Most recently, the OHC has been focusing on promoting and facilitating repatriation from diaspora to Armenia with plans for developing a multifunctional integration center.

Source: OHC website http://diaspora.gov.am/en/programs

As far as the overall trust and diaspora policy concern, there appears to be a need for a reassessment of the state – diaspora relationship. A meaningful engagement would require some type of balance in sharing economic and political powers. In addition, there was a comment on institutional transparency. Evidently, traditional state-diaspora and within diaspora-only institutions are becoming outdated and either administratively or conceptually burdened. Such lack of flexibility has been pushing community members in the diaspora and Armenia more into informal networks, limiting engagement to within familiar social and economic networks.

Armenian Diaspora Online Survey

The findings of this study also run in parallel with the results from the Armenian Diaspora Online Survey (ADOS) conducted between 2015 and 2018.[6] The ADOS project attempted to evaluate

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6   This work did not receive any financial or other support from any organizations and should not be confused with another Armenian Diaspora Survey supported by the Gulbenkian Foundation. For more in-depth discussion of the ADOS, including original survey and data, see Gevorkyan (2022b) or visit http://agevorkyan.com/diaspora-survey/

Armenian diaspora's willingness for involvement in the country's economy. The details of the survey are discussed in Gevorkyan (2022b, 2019). From over 500 responses the split between the "old" and the "new" diasporas was quite tangible, with 57.3 percent marking Western Armenian as their first language.

Majority of the respondents (73.3%) had been to Armenia at least once (42% within a year of taking the survey). At the same time almost 59 percent of respondents stated they had no immediate family ties in Armenia. Most of the visits were short-term for both tourism, research, and business reasons. For 31 percent of respondents Armenia represented a historical and cultural homeland with majority following the news on a regular basis. One of the surprising results was that most enthusiastic was the younger cohort born between 1990-1999.

Close to 60 percent of the surveyed diaspora members donated to Armenian organizations on a regular basis. Further responses indicated a relatively strong degree of humanitarian attachment to Armenia. A sizable majority of skilled professionals expressed interest in contributing to Armenia's development by way of educational and cultural programs, including those conducted through virtual presentations mode. The willingness to leverage their educational and professional background was offered by the Armenian diaspora members at "free of charge" across both the "old" and the "new" groups of the diaspora.

As such, a respondent's identity played a defining role in the decision to engage (supporting the third point in Figure 4 on altruistic involvement). However, weakening the trust aspect of this connection was the lack of a transparent general way of engagement. In some way, this reveals the institutional obstacles across diaspora communities, leading to the closed network boundary effect. Lastly, the lack of transparency in the existing organizational structure of the diaspora communities only exacerbated the sense of helplessness and cultural detachment, leading to mistrust, among some groups in the "old" and the "new" diaspora categories and towards the country.

As a possible solution, initial analysis (Gevorkyan, 2019) suggested development of an open digital portal that would help diaspora and Armenia based professionals and interest group to easily connect and cooperate on joint project. Such mechanism would have allowed emergence of stronger professional and business ties, as well as helping educators connecting with their local peers and within the diaspora network. However, as the international examples suggest, an altruistic diaspora is just a necessary condition and a structured, consistent, and strategic state policy towards its diaspora is needed to steer the process toward sustainable and meaningful results. In the next section we derive some policy proposals based on the above discussion.

6. Policy recommendations

The triangularity of the diaspora-home country operational model

Based on the above analysis, this project advances several actionable policy recommendations for consideration for Armenia's SDGs achievement as well as sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. The proposals carry a strong potential for mutual synergies across the focus sectors and beyond. As recognized throughout this study, there already is a pattern of comprehensive interaction between Armenia and its diaspora. However, as evidenced from the review and fact-finding interviews, much relies on specific projects or initiatives rather than a systematic operational model. As such, these recommendations take on a more proactive orderly step to solidify existing experience and build upon it into the future. The analysis of the global practice coupled with survey work and fact-finding mission suggest that a fruitful connection would require from Armenia an approach of both enthusiasm, commitment, and funding.

From a methodological standpoint, in deriving the policy solutions the emphasis was given to the triangular vision of diaspora-country symbiosis: identity, trust, and engagement infrastructure. Consistent with the discussion above, the first two elements are foundational to what follows as engagement infrastructure. Collectively, the three elements (Figure 5) add up to a triangularity of the diaspora – home country operational model. In this high-level representation, Armenia's experience, while unique in its many manifestations, offers an opportunity for other diaspora-active countries to develop, or fine-tune, meaningful and sustainable operational models.

Figure 5.   **The triangularity of the diaspora–home country operational model**

The logic of Figure 5 is now applied to more practical policy questions. Organized in four groups, the proposals presented here are intended for implementation by the respective agencies in Armenia with a significant degree of public-private cooperation, including diaspora-based entities. The four groups are the following: general diaspora policy recommendations to the country and a separate set of proposals for each of the target sectors (agriculture, tourism, science and education). The proposals are organized in Tables 1 through 4 with brief descriptions, priority (1 being the highest and 3 lowest), timeframe (immediate, medium term, long term), assignment of respective agency roles, and corresponding SDGs designations.

Another common thread across all recommendations based on the conversations with the key stake-holders from each sector, was the reduction of the administrative burden on diaspora-led businesses and economic activity in general. This was less of a preference for subsidy or beneficial taxation mechanisms, and, instead, more of an expression of concern about the actual bureaucratic paperwork obstacles. For many altruistically motivated members of both Eastern and Western and new and old Armenian diaspora communities accustomed to different institutional and corporate management environment, some of the realities faced in Armenia may be difficult to adapt to or, sometimes, discouraging. Therefore, a continued attention to the matters of governance and streamlining regulation and implementation of administrative improvements should remain high on the country's agenda for diaspora integration policy.

Importantly, all interventions should take into consideration factors such as gender, disability, age and certain vulnerabilities. While interviewees offered limited specific suggestions on most appropriate policy designs in this sense, the unanimously shared view was to ensure equality across all groups. Examples of related actions that may fit within the scope of some policy recommendations discussed below, may include organizational board representations, joint ventures, targeted support through public-private partnerships, and other initiatives. The overarching focus of any policy design should be cognizant of and avoid any unintended effects contributing towards any inequality. It is clear that additional analysis would be required and these questions require serious consideration at the initial stages of more applied policy design.

General policy recommendations

Table 1.   **Summary of general policy recommendations for diaspora engagement**

Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Roles	SDG
1.1 **Expand functions and scope of the OHC to operate as a semi-public** (with diaspora participation) entity that would be central in ensuring stable and meaningful connection with the broader diaspora and liaison with other similar agencies across the world. The revamped OHC would have policy setting representation, budget, and specialized staff capacity.	1	Immediate	Government of Armenia (GoA) and diaspora-based organizations	8, 9, 17
1.2 **Develop strategic diaspora engagement plan** to meaningfully engage with diaspora, help sustain diaspora communities, and foster positive input to Armenia's development and growth.	1	Immediate	GoA, OHC, supported by the UN agencies e.g., IOM, UNECE	8, 9, 16
1.3 **Establish a voluntary e-registry of diaspora and a connection portal** recognizing the multifaceted nature of the diaspora and its broad and diverse expertise and geographic span.	1	Immediate	OHC, host country consulates, Armenian church, ITC sector, supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP, IOM	8, 9
1.4 **Maintain the cultural connection** with the diaspora as an essential and critical step in the strategic partnership with the diaspora.	1	Immediate	OHC, MESCS	8, 9, 11
1.5 **Simplify mechanisms for returning labor migrants and establish skills equivalency recognition process** to foster meaningful integration of repatriating diaspora members and those considering temporary (or distance-based) engagements into Armenian society and economy.	2	Medium-term	OHC, supported by the UN agencies e.g., IOM, UNDP	4, 5, 10, 11
1.6 **Maintain minimal requirements on immigration of (or obtaining Armenian citizenship by) Armenians from abroad** – assigning a contact person, a case handler for at least six months or longer period to assist with the transition as part of the OHC's Repatriation/Integration center in cooperation with other groups, e.g., RepatArmenia.	2	Long-term	OHC, Migration and Citizenship Service, supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP, IOM	5, 10
1.7 **Maintain financial sector regulatory flexibility** to better leverage introduction of new more efficient financial instruments in diaspora financing, e.g., pooled investment funds, educational endowments, etc.	2	Medium-term	OHC, CBA, IMF, ME, MF, supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNECE	8, 9, 10

Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Roles	SDG
1.8 **Establish a Diaspora Regulatory Mechanism** as part of labor migration flows streamlining process.	3	Long-term	OHC, Migration and Citizenship Service, supported by the UN agencies e.g., IOM, WB	8, 10
1.9 **Establish a Migration Development Bank (Fund)** channeling the strength of remittances and diaspora capital towards infrastructure and essential development projects.	3	Long-term	OHC, MF, ME, CBA	8, 10

Proposals appearing in Table 1 are intended to tackle overarching broad questions of diaspora engagement infrastructure development policy. As such, recommendations appearing in Table 1 are foundational, setting the stage for more sector specific suggestions in the subsequent tables. All abbreviations of the responsible implementation agents follow consistent interpretation as in the Appendix Table A-2. Because of a broad network of active Armenian diaspora organizations, it is likely that relevant diaspora-based groups will be consulted in cooperation over implementation of some or all the proposals presented here. A brief description of each proposal is provided below.

Starting with the general policy recommendations in Table 1, there appears to be a need to strengthen the role, responsibility and capacity of the OHC. A one-stop source, the revamped OHC would have the capacity to offer a wide-scope and well-structured framework for a more transparent engagement with and of diaspora organizations and non-affiliated individuals. As a central autonomous coordinating center, the OHC, co-managed with representatives from the diaspora, would provide an opportunity for the diaspora-based groups to meaningfully connect on a sustainable (as opposed to project-based) level with the Republic of Armenia. Increased specialized staff capacity will help the enhanced OHC to optimally operate across a range of thematic and geographic focus areas.

An integral part of the OHC enhancement and activities would be the development and implementation of a **strategic diaspora engagement plan** (Recommendation 1.2). The key challenge here is to create a transparent and sustainable environment for a diversified inclusive participation based on common identity and trust. Finally, governed by a joint diaspora-Armenia board the strengthened OHC will maintain nominal autonomy with its budget approved by the National Assembly, voluntary supported in part through expertise and funding from the diaspora partners. Regularly scheduled public reviews of the agency's activities. Appointment and confirmation of the enhanced OHC executive management would overlap electoral terms to maintain institutional consistency and independence from political cycles. Such set-up would appear to be most responsive to the diaspora-voiced demands and needs for transparency in diaspora engagement infrastructure, as outlined above.

At the moment there is no accurate census of the Armenian diaspora. Much of the information on Armenian communities worldwide is collected by indirect means and sociological extrapolations and

surveys, which offer approximate information at best. Following examples of some countries, it may be prudent to consider establishment of a voluntary electronic registry of diaspora (Recommendation 1.3). This would allow individual diaspora members to register and, in economic terms, reveal their professional preference for engagement with Armenia.

In addition, **a digital connection portal** (as in Gevorkyan, 2019) would allow for peer-to-peer links between diaspora and Armenian professionals across a wide range of economic sectors, as well as in cultural and social matters. This recommendation is partially motivated by the comments from the fact-finding interviews and is partially drawn from experiences of other countries. Consider, for example, Nigeria's Diaspora Registry an outgrowth of the country's National Diaspora Policy. Another relevant unifying platform is Scotland's Global Scot business network, which connects professionals and entrepreneurs not just based on shared identity but also on the basis of the trust element expressed in the interest and familiarity with Scotland (discussed in Gevorkyan, 2022c). Promoting and leveraging established connections within and across diaspora networks has been found to help develop trust among the diaspora member, contributing to new joint business opportunities growth (e.g., Leblang, 2010).

The enhanced OHC would be also uniquely positioned to **maintain a strong cultural connection** (Recommendation 1.4) with the diaspora connections across the world. This step goes further to strengthen the most critical link between the country and its diaspora, which is the intangible connection that has significant long-term economies of scale. Some of the relevant policy items also appear in the recommendations on the tourism and science and education sector. At a high-level, maintaining cultural connection would imply a consistent regular communication and support outreach to diaspora communities in both Armenian and local languages. Introducing and promoting a common holiday around history of Armenian culture might be a specific small step toward such connection. Other examples, may include regular and larger scale engagements with diaspora youth, summer camps, jazz festivals, etc. Cultural celebrations of the Armenian identity (e.g., like the St. Patrick's Day celebrated by the global Irish or recent calls for a Greek Diaspora Day by Greece) may send positive signals promoting Armenian cultural recognition more actively in the diaspora and communities that come in touch with the Armenian diaspora.

As it relates to the process of migration (Recommendations 1.5 and 1.6), it may be helpful to consider **adopting a skills-equivalency model** and effective return and reintegration policies, which would allow diaspora-living Armenians and repatriating former residents to integrate into the local economy with ease (e.g., similar program in Moldova, see Box 1). Similarly, equivalency in educational attainment for pedagogical activities may also be considered. Maintaining simplified path to permanent residency and/or citizenship in the Republic of Armenia for diasporans and their family members may provide further boost in entrepreneurially active additions to the local economy. In general, as the field work results suggests, minimizing bureaucratic obstacles (in addition to reducing

the number of required steps, by also providing digital multi-language solutions) seems to go long way in generating sustained country engagement interest in the diaspora.

Recommendation 1.7 connects with the need for the **financial sector's continued flexibility and adaptability** as macroeconomic conditions and technological improvements change to allow a larger volume and diverse capital inflows to the Armenian economy and specific sectors. Based on this general position, more specific policy solutions and financial instruments may be launched. As relevant examples, the cases of Ireland, Israel, and the Philippines mentioned above come to mind in this connection. Recently a specific-to-Armenia proposal has been introduced by Khrimian (2023) on creation of pooled (revolving) funds as part of the Framework for Diaspora Investment Instruments. If launched, the pooled fund option would provide below-market interest rate loans to small businesses in the Armenian drams, shifting the currency risk to a diaspora investor.

The **Diaspora Regulatory Mechanism (DRM)** and **Migration Development Bank (Fund) (MDBf)** are specific policy options (Recommendations 1.8 and 1.9) tailored for the post-socialist development space, where relevant bilateral agreements and active circular migration trends are characteristic. Both proposals were first developed in Gevorkyan and Gevorkyan (2012) referencing post-socialist experiences, and the Armenian case specifically. The potential DRM is adaptable to the current focus on innovative cooperation. Diaspora networks play a central role in coordinating potential migrant's assignment (often, within the "old" diaspora group), adjustment to the new country, and return home. Bilateral agreements set the legal framework for exchange and coordination of the host-country diaspora nodes and consulates with the migrant and home-based recruiting agency help new migrant to integrate in the host economy. Conversely, a diaspora-based professional (e.g., scholar or engineer) is able to navigate through temporary employment opportunities and everyday essentials of living in Armenia, with assistance of the dedicated agencies and contact persons, while maintaining consistent employment record back home.

The Migration Development Bank (or Fund) may serve as a financial conduit for channeling remittances towards impactful infrastructure projects in the regions of the labor-migrants' origin in Armenia (as discussed, Moldova has recently launched similar initiatives running in parallel with this proposal). Recall that individual transfers (including those in the form of FDI) tend to be highly localized, often with limited spillover into the macroeconomy (e.g., Piras et al, 2011 finding in Moldova), which reinforced the network effect mentioned earlier. Because diaspora's familiarity with the project or connection with the geographic location often determines how the funds are used, establishing trust between a new financial entity, sender, and recipient in the home country becomes a priority task.

As a fund, the MDB would offer opportunities to large- and small-scale diaspora investors for targeted investments across a portfolio of economic development and business growth initiatives in the country. With government's participation as well as other stakeholders and multilateral partners in Armenia's development, this financial mechanism would appear to be more robust and responsive

to the immediate needs in the economy than some other large-scale proposals.

Majority of the proposals in this first, general, block of recommendations touches on SDGs 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry innovation and infrastructure), and 10 (reduced inequalities). In addition, given the broad scope of potential action SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), and 11 (sustainable cities and communities) may be positively impacted as development assumes wider-reaching scale, especially in the remote regions of the country.

Agricultural sector policy recommendations

We next turn to policy recommendations that are more specific to each sector, starting in Table 2 with agriculture.

Table 2.   Summary of policy recommendations on leveraging the diaspora in the agricultural sector

Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Roles	SDG
2.1 Leverage diaspora skills and contacts to **promote Armenian agricultural products' certification and availability** in the Armenia diaspora centers across the world.	1	Immediate	OHC, ME	8, 9
2.2 Continue the **policy of funding and expanding opportunities for agricultural workers** in Armenia by way of diaspora-led partnerships and crowdfunding campaigns.	2	Medium-term	OHC, supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP, UNECE	5, 8, 11
2.3 Develop **innovative funding opportunities in farm credit** (e.g., peer-to-peer) open to diaspora participation from abroad.	3	Long-term	OHC, CBA supported by the UN agencies e.g., IOM, FAO	5, 8, 9
2.4 Introduce **crop insurance** for local growers as both revenue protection option and damage-based or yield-based options, leveraging diaspora financial diversification trends.	2	Medium-term	ME, MF, CBA, WB, IFC	8, 9, 10, 11
2.5 Continue to sustain and improve **operational environment for venture funds**, draw on diaspora (census and) expertise.	3	Long-term	OHC, ME, CBA	4, 8, 9
2.6 Develop **capacity for local initial public offering (IPOs)** for large agriculture sector entities, draw on diaspora (census and) expertise.	3	Long-term	ME, CBA	11, 12, 16, 17

Table 2 offers some of the applied policy proposals towards deepening diaspora engagement in the agricultural sector. **Recommendations 2.1** and **2.2** pair well together. Both aim to meet SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) as their primary objective. The main motivation for these proposals, resulting from the insights from the agriculture sector participants, is to expand market access for Armenian agricultural goods producers to the global and regional markets. This may be accomplished by way of country trade fairs at larger international gatherings. An important role would be allocated towards the governments (Ministry of Economy or designated group) working on bilateral certification agreements with foreign partners. It is foreseeable that the largest partners would be markets with compact and sizeable Armenian diaspora communities. Therefore, it would be rational to consider strengthening and supporting already existing and maintain competitiveness by promoting new diaspora-led partnerships, such as for example in the wine sector, as follows from the fact-finding research. The regulatory variable becomes relevant here.

The **innovative funding opportunities in farm credit** (recommendation 2.3) are in many ways in parallel with similar recommendations in the tourism and science and education sector (Table 3 and Table 4 respectively). Recommendations 3.2, 3.3., 3.4 and 4.5 can be viewed within one framework defined by an umbrella recommendation 1.7 discussed above. In addition, the UNDP (2022) report on innovative financial instruments for SDGs is a helpful guide of the already ongoing initiatives in Armenia on the subject. Importantly, with its intended openness and accessibility, recommendation 2.3 adds to the effort to overcome categorical inequalities as well, e.g., based on gender, age, disability or any other factor. To add more substance, however, consider international experience in farm credit, which may also be integrated with the proposal for MDBf above.

The Financing Rural Youth from Mali program (ICMPD, 2019) may be a relevant case as well. A partnership across several financial and diaspora groups in France, this program channels loans to micro entrepreneurs in Mali by raising funds on a crowdfunding platform with diaspora participation. A multi-step digital and manual verification process vets the project and disburses the funds for a specific project to a youth entrepreneur promoting job creation in Mali, stemming outward migration, and offering a diaspora an opportunity to contribute back to the country's development.

Recommendation 2.4 – **crop insurance** links up with the expressions of concern from the respondents to this project's fact-finding mission from the agricultural sector. Viewed within overall financial transformation and growing capital markets, a crop insurance program, perhaps funded by a group of stakeholders, including the diaspora capital, would appear to be a possible way to achieve sustainable development outcomes in the remote rural areas. The program would help farmers diversify their risks and build up some security by protecting again changing weather impacts, hail, or revenue losses due to commodity prices changes or other reasons (e.g., on crop insurance in developing economies Roberts, 2005).

Recommendations 2.5 and 2.6, improving **operational environment for venture funds and developing capacity for local IPOs** respectively, are both long-term projects that also fit into the broader framework of the growing financial maturity. Here, diaspora capital may be playing an increasingly important role (as is visible in the case of the wine industry), spreading into other niche sub-sectors. A similar initiative, The European Mobilisation for Entrepreneurship in Africa, elsewhere has helped attract funding, creating jobs, and new enterprises across vulnerable communities in Africa (ICMPD, 2019).

Similar to the general proposals in Table 1, the agricultural sector proposals cover a broad range of SDG targets. In addition to the immediate goals identified in Table 2, there may be indirect spillovers positively impacting other related SDG targets. Such effects can be discovered and assessed during practical implementation stages, given the significance of the agricultural sector in Armenia's economy.

Tourism sector recommendations

Table 3.   **Summary of policy recommendations on leveraging the diaspora in the tourism sector**

Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Roles	SDG
3.1 **Develop conditions of business trust to motivate diaspora investors to fund small ventures**, e.g., bed and breakfast; guided tours; pilgrimage tours; small-scale infrastructure initiatives, etc.	1	Immediate	OHC, ME, TC, supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP	8, 9
3.2 Learning from diaspora's motivation, create incentives to create **pooled funds** for initiatives in a discovery and archaeological tourism.	2	Medium-term	OHC, TC supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP	8, 9, 10
3.3 By way of **capital funding (e.g., green bonds) attract funds towards large-scale infrastructure projects** with an expectation of delayed returns and leveraging diaspora's "first mover" advantage.	2	Medium-term	OHC, CBA, MF, ME, TC, UNECE supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP, IFC	9, 13, 15, 16
3.4 Leverage **diaspora's micro-capital to support local initiatives in the hospitality sector** (e.g., micro-rest stops; scenic areas; small scale reconstruction).	3	Medium-term	OHC, CBA, TC supported by the UN agencies e.g., IOM, UNDP	4, 11
3.5 Active **promotion and informational campaigns** about cultural heritage, with an option of inviting diaspora sponsors to help with archaeological research or renovation of the relevant sights.	3	Long-term	OHC, supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP, UNESCO	1, 4, 5, 11, 16

Table 3 focuses on some targeted solutions in the Armenia's tourism sector. As has been noted (WB, 2019), the sector is underfunded and new FDI inflows would help break the circular pattern of limited infrastructure and limited interest from tourists and as such underdevelopment. Importantly, until recently, majority of tourists to Armenia were from the diaspora. Because of these types of tourists' familiarity with Armenia's realities, the altruistic (or emotional) motive, mentioned in the fact-finding interviews leads many to not prioritize some of the obvious infrastructure omissions. In other words, a diaspora-tourist (sometimes, a one-time in a decade visitor to Armenia) is more lenient towards accepting the existing limitations of Armenia's tourism infrastructure compared to a more selective global tourist, who in turn lacks the altruistic motives but is driven more by conventional selective factors and economic behavior patterns.

However, to build a sustainable tourism industry as one of the leading sectors, a substantial investment is needed across a wide range of projects. This includes **smaller scale ventures (recommendation 3.1)**. A possible model that Armenia may draw some inspiration from is The Israel-United States Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation, or the BIRD model. Operating between two American and Israeli companies, the BIRD foundation provides capital for joint industrial research and development project. A similar set up may be adopted in the case of tourism sector development. The emphasis on small scale enterprises in the tourism sector seems to be justified and demanded by the market (e.g., Dermoyan, 2022).

Recommendations 3.2, 3.3, and **3.4** have already been mentioned. It may be added that the pooled funds for archaeological tourism (3.2) option may interest some in the diaspora with curiosity about Armenian history and own identity, hence inviting possible co-funding participation. Recommendation 3.3 depends directly on the course of development of Armenia's capital markets scene. It may be worth to consider piloting a green bond instead of a diaspora bond. Recommendation 3.4 may follow the blueprint of recommendation 2.3 discussed above, only with specific designated areas. Similarly, the current model of donations and funding adopted by the Armenian Tree Project, may work here. The role of the state in these scenarios is that of the initiator of the change, regulatory consistency, financial infrastructure, and monitoring of the process.

Recommendation 3.5 on **promotion and informational campaigns** is one of the crucial proposals. Dealing with diaspora, any positive intangible transaction generates disproportionally greater goodwill than the effort required. From Ghana, to Morocco, to Ireland and Israel the countries with diasporas have been actively funding tourism promotion and development in the communities, even despite possible already established knowledge about some of the sites. This is done as part of the large-scale outreach strategy to connect with national diasporas worldwide. To Armenia's advantage, there is yet more to be discovered in the country's history, museums, and archaeological sites.

Science and education sector recommendations

Table 4.   **Summary of policy recommendations on leveraging the diaspora in science and education**

Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Roles	SDG
4.1 **Engage diaspora in the academic process** at all levels by way of teacher / student / administrator programs (exchange, workshops, research cooperation, school/university visits, summer camps, etc.).	1	Immediate	OHC supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP, UNECE	3, 4, 5
4.2 **Connect with diaspora** schools and cultural / educational groups by sharing materials from Armenia school curriculum and jointly developing new instructional resources.	2	Immediate	OHC, MESCS supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNDP	9, 12
4.3 Establish **diaspora-Armenia educational portal** for ease of direct communication between scholars.	2	Medium-term	OHC, MESCS	4, 9
4.4 Develop **mentorship and fellowship programs between diaspora educational groups** and a special entity (e.g., "diaspora science group") in Armenia.	3	Long-term	OHC, MESCS	4, 5, 8
4.5 Leverage diaspora potential to create **several endowment funds** for education and scientific research activities in Armenia across all levels and in the countries where diaspora researchers primarily live and work.	1	Medium-term	OHC, MESCS, MF supported by the UN agencies e.g., IOM, UNDP	4, 8, 9
4.6 Establish dedicated infrastructure / resources (full-time, highly trained, professional) for **assistance with young diasporans (re-) integration into Armenia's educational system**.	2	Medium-term	OHC, MESCS, supported by the UN agencies e.g., IOM, UNDP	4, 5, 11
4.7 Working with diaspora groups and experts, **develop skills and education equivalency certification process** to allow students transfer to Armenia's educational organizations and for qualifying instructors to teach at all levels (schools and higher education).	2	Medium-term	OHC, MESCS supported by the UN agencies e.g., IOM, UNDP	4, 8, 10, 11
4.8 **Engage and connect with diaspora-based academic and research organizations** more actively in Armenia's science and education sector.	2	Medium-term	OHC, MESCS, supported by the UN agencies e.g., UNECE	4, 5, 9

Table 4 provides a collection of some of the diaspora engagement policy proposals in the science and education sector. Recommendation 4.1 calls for **an expanded engagement** with the diaspora students, faculty, and researchers in the academic processes in Armenia. In addition to the current opportunities to study in Armenia offered by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MESCS), this proposal calls for establishment of more targeted programs with diaspora communities worldwide. Examples of such initiatives may include, but are not limited to, bilateral exchange program agreements between universities, scholarship support to diaspora scholars' short research visits to Armenia, joint workshops, summer camps, etc. co-funded with diaspora members and on a larger than today's scale and consistently growing.

It is equally important to **connect with the science and education diaspora communities** (4.2). Few interviews of the fact-finding mission pointed to the positive historical experience of the Soviet Armenia providing education support to the Armenian communities across the world. The practice of providing books on Armenian culture, history, and literature, music records, and other pedagogical material to some extent helped sustain diaspora's Armenian identity outside of Armenia. Today, again, there appears to be a need for such Armenia-to-diaspora educational engagement. Such efforts are seen as also long-term trust building programs essential with diaspora reconnection, as the example of Ireland's cultural activities worldwide suggest as well as Ireland's Emigrant Support Programme (see Box 1 above).

One of the simpler ways of connecting with the diaspora and responding to the comments from the stakeholders, would also be to establish a permanent and engaging online presence by way of **diaspora-Armenia educational portal (4.3)**. While various organizations offer their solutions, it would appear to be important to maintain a nonaffiliated (given the closed network realities), perhaps led by the enhanced OHC, with any diaspora group stand-alone portal. This online resource may be used for a range of research, educational, and communication purposes.

Derived from the above discussions, **recommendation 4.4** is a two-step proposal. First, a special diaspora science group is created in Armenia. The group would be comprised of the researchers and faculty from universities in Armenia as a pan-university union of scholars. The second step would be for this group to proactively communicate and engage diaspora professional and academic groups (e.g., Armenian Economic Association, Armenian Bar Association, Armenian Society of Fellows, etc.). The institutional governance of the groups would help to minimize any individual bias ensuring a transparent and effective two-way communication. The main goal is to engage diaspora science groups with the Armenia-based educators and researchers in longer term funded mentorship and research fellowship programs.

Dedicated endowment funds (4.5) may be created and supported with the donor and diaspora participation. The intention is to offer material support, especially to low-income students in Armenia during their university education. These funds would also encourage activities motivating young

people completing their schooling to consider continuing to college. With sufficient funding, incentives may be worked out. In terms of contributions to the funds there may be some options. Aside from direct donations from diaspora benefactors and crowdfunding excepting, it may be possible to implement a donation collection system in Armenian churches across the world. This way, the average diaspora communities could be directly involved in the science and educational processes in the ancestral land.

In addition, the endowment funds may help support the work of diaspora-based researchers during their short academic stays in Armenia. This process may be an ad hoc small grant-based arrangement or organized as a longer-term funded project. In either case, an endowment fund would allow for maximum flexibility in terms of the beneficiary's timing of the visit, schedule of activities, research theme focus, and final results presentation. Additional assistance from such endowment fund may go to support academic publication, survey work, and other research needs.

Another application of the endowment fund (and any related derivative financial support mechanisms) may be in establishing endowed professor positions financially supporting diaspora academics across the academic departments in the universities across the world. The practice is well-established in the universitates across North America and the E.U. among other large diaspora groups. Such a partnership between Armenia and large philanthropic diaspora groups would help further strengthen and grow sustained scientific potential connection with the country.

It is equally important to **provide dedicated support (4.6)** to school pupils, young students and scholars during their integration into the Armenia's society after the family's move. The adjustment to new curriculum process may often be challenging requiring supportive guidance and additional explanations.

Related is the **recommendation 4.7**, which suggests that continued work on skills and certificate / degree equivalency should continue. This program would allow qualified diaspora teachers to easily take up teaching responsibilities across Armenia's schools. At the same time a reverse equivalency through special agreements with counterparties abroad may be worked out. At each stage diaspora funded (supplemented with donor support, lobbied for by the Armenian state), may be necessary.

Finally, recommendation 4.8 calls for a broad-scope connection with **diaspora-based academic and research organizations**. Providing such organizations with basic infrastructure, for example during their annual conferences in Armenia, or involving the groups in compensated research efforts, and other development initiatives may be some examples of stronger diaspora engagement. In addition, echoing some of the points in recommendation 4.5, an operational connection between Armenia and the diaspora science groups and external financial sponsors may help provide funding for Armenian students to study abroad and researchers to spend some time abroad. The functional cooperation would come through connection with the diaspora research organizations and aided by other stakeholders in Armenia. A possible example model could be the Greek Diaspora Fellowship

Program described in Box 1 above, only with direction of travel in both ways: to Armenia and to a diaspora-linked host research institution abroad.

As has been stated, there are strong synergies across all of these proposals. Guided by the international experience and realities of the Armenian world, these proposals are designed within the triangular diaspora operational model of identity, trust, and engagement infrastructure for achieving sustainable socio-economic development outcomes. Integral to the success of each engagement are the efforts of Armenia's enhanced OHC with a broader reach across focus fields and geographic scope. On a system-wide scale integration of the general governance mechanisms of the GoA, involving individual ministries and state agencies, is an essential pre-condition towards the common goal of pragmatic and productive engagement with the Armenian diaspora.

7. Conclusion

This report has assessed the current state of and proposed some forward-looking policy recommendations on diaspora-home country engagement trends in Armenia. Tackling individual questions in the development of three focus sectors (agriculture, tourism, science and education), the primary motivation in designing proposals was to support Armenia's achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals through enhanced diaspora engagement. This study also concludes that a more systematic approach to diaspora relations is needed to ensure full potential engagement with significant spillovers across all sectors of the economy. This conclusion stands in contrast to a group or initiative-specific connection that has characterized diaspora-Armenian engagement over the past three decades. Overall, based on the expert input and comparative analysis, the study concludes that diaspora's engagement with Armenia still has much potential and capacity for broader growth and stronger mutual involvement.

Methodologically, and supported by the results of the fact-finding mission leading up to this project, the analysis rests on a triangular diaspora – home country operational model. The two foundational elements are the diasporic identity and trust within and across diaspora and towards the perceived homeland. The relative influence of institutionalized stereotypes that may have led to a diaspora community's preservation is one of the most difficult challenges for a country in building and sustaining productive relations with its diaspora. For Armenia, the challenge is compounded by a historical multilayering of the diaspora identity and more recent concerns over trust and effectiveness of engagement voiced during the interviews and in other sources.

The third element of the triangular model is the engagement infrastructure. For Armenia this means a more proactive and systematic development of diaspora-linking programs across all sectors, offering a transparent and stable framework for risk-averse diaspora group or individual. Earning and then sustaining diaspora's trust is a crucial building block in developing and sustaining an effective engagement infrastructure. The analysis of the global practice coupled with survey work and fact-finding mission suggest that a fruitful connection would require from Armenia an approach of both enthusiasm, commitment, and funding.

While the circumstances and proposals presented in this project are Armenia specific, the general approach and systematic view of diaspora relations can be insightful for other small economies that

are diaspora dependent or aim to leverage their diaspora potential. Recent years have shown that the latter applies increasingly to both developing and advanced economies. It is from Armenia's example the international community may realize that not all human migration necessarily leads to an anticipated monolithically positive diaspora effect in development.

Finally, it is equally instructive to draw lessons from the above analysis about the multilayering of diasporic transnational identities, challenges of trust across social groups and with the ancestral home, and, also, about the effectiveness of or lack of a diaspora engagement infrastructure. Collectively then identity, trust, and engagement infrastructure are the essential parts of a larger diaspora operational model, manifesting their varying modalities, most clearly, in the case of Armenia's relations with its diaspora.

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Appendix

Table A-1   **List of select active in Armenia organizations based in diaspora or engaging diaspora** (as of August 2022)

Organization	Sector or activity	Website
Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)	Education/Humanitarian/ Development	https://agbu.org https://www.agbu.am/en
Aid Beyond Borders	Humanitarian	https://www.aidbeyondborders.org
All for Armenia	Humanitarian	https://allforarmenia.org
Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA)	Public awareness and Lobbying	https://anca.org
Armenia Fund	Humanitarian	https://www.armeniafund.org
Armenia School Foundation USA	Education	https://www.armeniaschoolfoundation.org
Armenia Tree Project	Environmental/Education	https://www.armeniatree.org
Armenian American Medical Association	Healthcare	https://aamsc.org
Armenian American Sports Medicine Coalition (AASMC)	Medical/Education	https://www.linkedin.com/company/aasm-corg/
Armenian Assembly of America	Advocacy	https://www.armenian-assembly.org/
Armenian Bar Association	Advocacy/Education	https://armenianbar.org
Armenian Canadian Medical Association of Ontario (ACMAO)	Medical/Education	https://www.acmao.ca

Organization	Sector or activity	Website
Armenian Caritas BNGO	Humanitarian/Development	https://caritas.am
Armenian Cultural Association of America	Culture/Education	https://acaainc.org
Armenian Eagles Foundation	Development	https://www.armenianeagles.org
Armenian Economic Association	Education	http://aea.am
Armenian Educational Foundation	Education	http://aefweb.org
Armenian Eye Care Project	Medical/Education	https://eyecareproject.com
Armenian Hero Project	Humanitarian	https://armenianhero.org
Armenian Missionary Association of America	Humanitarian/Education	https://amaa.org
Armenian Orphans Fund	Education	http://aof.am
Armenian Relief Society	Humanitarian/Education/ Healthcare	https://ars1910.org
Armenian Society of Fellows	Education	https://asof.am
Armenian Volunteer Corps	Volunteer Placement and Support	https://armenianvolunteer.org
Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund	Healthcare	https://armenianwoundedheroes.com
Armenian Youth Federation (AYF)	Political advocacy/Educationa/ Social/Athletic/Cultural	https://ayf.org
Aurora Humanitarian Initiative	Humanitarian	https://auroraprize.com
Aznavour Foundation	Humanitarian/Culture/ Education	https://en.aznavourfoundation.org
Birthright Armenia	Development/education	https://www.birthrightarmenia.org
Children of Armenia Fund (COAF)	Development/Humanitarian	https://www.coaf.org/en

Organization	Sector or activity	Website
Creative Armenia	Culture and arts	https://www.creativearmenia.org
Digital Pomegranate	Information Communications and Technology sector	https://digitalpomegranate.com
Eternal Nation Foundation	Healthcare	https://eternalnation.com
Focus on Children Now (FCN)	Humanitarian/Education/ Healthcare	https://www.focusonchildrennow.org
Fund for Armenian Relief	Humanitarian/Education/ Development/Healthcare	https://www.farusa.org
Hidden Road Initiative	Education	https://www.hiddenroadinitiative.org
Homeland Development Initiative Foundation (HDIF)	Development	https://www.hdif.org
H. Hovnanian Family Foundation	Education/Healthcare/ Development	https://hovnanianfoundation.org/en
Hyer United	Healthcare	https://hyerunited.org
IDea Foundation	Development	https://www.idea.am
Izmirlian Foundation	Humanitarian/Education/ Development/Medical	http://www.izmirlianfoundation.am
Jinishian Memorial Foundation	Humanitarian/ Development/Medical	https://www.jinishian.org
Karagheuzian Foundation	Humanitarian	https://www.facebook.com/TheHKCC
Kooyrigs	Humannitarian	https://kooyrigs.org
Miaseen	Humanitarian	https://www.miaseen.org
ONEArmenia	Development	https://onearmenia.org
Orran	Humanitarian	http://www.orran.am
Paros Foundation	Humanitarian/Educational/ Cultural/Development	https://parosfoundation.org

Organization	Sector or activity	Website
Qele Lao Foundation	Veteran Support	https://qelelao.com
Repat Armenia Foundation	Repatriation Support	https://repatarmenia.org
Sahman NGO	Border Community Support	https://sahman.am/en
SPFA Arménie	Humanitarian/Cultural/ Development	http://spfa-armenie.com
Teach for Armenia	Education	https://www.teachforarmenia.org
Tufenkian Foundation	Humanitarian/Education/ Development	https://www.tufenkian.org
Tumo Center for Creative Technologies	Education	http://www.tumo.org

Table A-2 **List of abbreviations mentioned in the policy proposals section**

Abbreviation	Full name	Website (if applicable)
CBA	Central Bank of Armenia	https://www.cba.am
GoA	The Government of the Republic of Armenia	https://www.gov.am/en
IFC	International Finance Corporation	https://www.ifc.org
IMF	International Monetary Fund	https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/ResRep/ARM
IOM	International Organization for Armenia	https://www.iom.int/countries/armenia
Migration Service	Migration Service of Armenia	https://migration.am/?lang=en
MESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	https://www.gov.am/en/structure/275
ME	Ministry of Economy	https://www.gov.am/en/structure/278
MF	Ministry of Finance	https://www.gov.am/en/structure/12
OHC	The Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs	http://diaspora.gov.am/en
TC	Tourism Committee	https://armenia.travel/en
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	https://www.undp.org/armenia
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe	https://unece.org/armenia-2
WB	World Bank	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/armenia