

INTEGRATION PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED FOR
SYRIAN-ARMENIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ARMENIA
(2012 – 2018)*

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Abstract

During 2012–2018, the RA authorities, as a result of coordinated work with the Ministry of Diaspora (hereinafter: MD) and various international, Diaspora and local organizations, took care of and ensured the summer vacation of Armenian children who stayed in Armenia, as well as those who remained in Syria and experienced all the bitterness of war and the horrors of military clashes, in their native camps and rest homes, organized educational, rehabilitation and healing, New Year's, cultural, festive, sports and other events, as well as organized excursions to the sights of Armenia and other programs.

All that events, being directed at restoring the mental health, rehabilitation and healing of our compatriots in Armenia, aimed to popularize, develop and deepen the skills and abilities of Syrian–Armenians with Western Armenian roots, creating favorable conditions for their settlement in the Homeland and for the successful integration into Armenia's life.

Introduction

The Republic of Armenia Government, through the Ministry of Diaspora (2008–2018), has kept the issues of the Syrian–Armenian youth in the center of its attention. In turn, various Armenian, Diaspora and international organizations have also supported these programs of the RA Government. In Armenia, in general, in order to facilitate the integration of Syrian–Armenians, including children and youth, various programs for the rehabilitation and integration of children and youth have been implemented: organization of summer recreation, New Year and holiday celebrations, cultural events (concerts, exhibitions, exhibition–

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addition, many Armenian families have expressed a desire to host Syrian–Armenian children in their homes⁴.

On September 15–17, 2012, a summer vacation was organized for 150 Syrian–Armenian children, and in 2013, 69, and then about 120 Syrian–Armenian and Iraqi–Armenian teenagers at the MD’s “Ari Tun” Camp⁵.

In total, in 2013, about 600 Syrian–Armenian children spent their summer vacation in the “Aramyan”, “Tsitsernak” and other camps in the Lori region⁶.

According to the Head of the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD, Lusine Stepanyan, they have also provided a two-month program for 5–6 year old preschool children, preparing them for entering general education school. She said: “Some of the Syrian–Armenian children do not attend kindergartens and it will be a problem for them to go straight from home to an Armenian school on September 1, where subjects are taught in Eastern Armenian”⁷.

During 2012–2014, in cooperation with the “Center for Coordination of Syrian–Armenian Issues” NGO (hereinafter: CCSAI NGO), the United Nations Children’s Fund, Save the Children and World Vision, a two-month summer school was organized for 60 Syrian–Armenian children aged 5–6 within the framework of the “Psychosocial Well-Being Support Program for Syrian–Armenian Children”.

During the aforementioned period, a 7-day camp holiday was also organized for 70 children aged 11–14 in the Lori “Aramyan” Camp and for 75 children aged 9–14 in the “Tsitsernak” Camp of the Gugarats Diocese, as well as a 16-day holiday for 10 children aged 8–14 in the Tsaghkadzor Camp⁸.

Within the framework of the “Diaspora Armenian Integration Program”, a “Come Home” Camp was organized for 82 Syrian–Armenians, etc.

On June 25, 2014, the MD addressed the Director of the Armenian Office of the international organization “Save the Children” Irina Saghoyan. The letter reads: “As you are aware, the number of families moving to Armenia as a result of the Syrian civil war is increasing day by day. In the difficult psychological and socio-economic situation created, the Republic of Armenia is trying to provide

⁴ O v a n i s y a n. 2012, August 9. – <https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/21846/>;
O v a n i s y a n. 2012, August 3. – <https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/21782/>.

⁵ Ջ ա ք ա ղ յ ա ն. 2018, 574, Հայաստան – Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 72, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, գ. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, գ. 2, գ. 8, թ. 116, գ. 3, գ. 31, թ. 21, գ. 32, թ. 34:

⁶ <http://hayernaysor.am/archives/8022>.

⁷ <http://hayernaysor.am/archives/8022>.

⁸ Հայաստան–Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 73, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, գ. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1:

In addition, at the initiative of the MD and with the financial support of various benefactors, already in August 2015, 180 Syrian–Armenian children aged 8–15 spent their summer vacation together with children from Armenia in various camps in Armenia (“Gugark” Children’s Camp, “Our Lady of Armenia” center in Tsaghkadzor)¹³. In 2015 alone, about 120 boys and girls from Syria participated in the “Ari Tun” program camp of the MD¹⁴.

In total, about 300 participants of the “Ari Tun” program were treated to ice creams provided by “Ashtarak Kat” OJSC and “Tamara” OJSC, through which Diaspora Armenian children “tasted the taste of the Homeland”¹⁵.

During the 3 months of the summer, the Yerevan Municipality provided medical care for Diaspora Armenian children and youth aged 13–20 who arrived in the Republic of Armenia within the framework of the “Ari Tun” program¹⁶.

The Head of the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD, Levon Antonyan, emphasized the need for this program for children, who have experienced the horrors of war, both in terms of their moral and psychological recovery and their familiarization and acclimatization to life in Armenia. In 2015, July 31, he told about that: “Children who moved to Armenia as a result of the ongoing war in Syria continue to be the focus of the Ministry of Diaspora’s attention, especially in terms of the integration of children, who moved to Armenia from Syria in recent months. The main goal of organizing summer camps is to restore the mental state of Armenian children from Syria and [their] faster integration in Armenia as a result of contact with local children”¹⁷.

Already in 2016–2017, 12 Syrian–Armenian children have left for sanatorium camps in the first shift¹⁸.

In addition, in 2016, on August 8–15, in cooperation with the MD and the RA “Yerkrapah” Volunteers Union, Syrian–Armenian and Iraqi–Armenian children spent their summer vacation at the “Yerkrapah” training and recreation complex located in the Gegharkunik region¹⁹.

¹³ Հարյուր ութսուն սիրիահայ երեխաներ կհանգստանան Հայաստանի ճամբարներում. 2015, 31 հուլիսի. – <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/813916/haryurutsun-siria-hay-erekhaner-khangstanan-hayastani.html>.

¹⁴ Հարյուր ութսուն սիրիահայ երեխաներ կհանգստանան Հայաստանի ճամբարներում. 2015, 31 հուլիսի. – <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/813916/haryurutsun-siria-hay-erekhaner-khangstanan-hayastani.html>.

¹⁵ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 2, գ. 112, թ. 20:

¹⁶ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 2, գ. 78, թ. 47, գ. 111, թ. 23:

¹⁷ Հարյուր ութսուն սիրիահայ երեխաներ կհանգստանան Հայաստանի ճամբարներում. 2015, 31 հուլիսի. – <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/813916/haryurutsun-siria-hay-erekhaner-khangstanan-hayastani.html>.

¹⁸ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 45, թ. 5:

¹⁹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 172, թ. 100:

approval the list of names of these children in order to organize their recreation in the “Gugark” Children’s Camp²³.

In turn, the Chief of Staff of the MD, F. Zakaryan, on August 21, 2017, through the Director of the “Gugark” Children’s Camp, Seifulina Danielyan, expressed gratitude to the entire staff for “organizing the summer vacation of Syrian–Armenian children settled in Armenia as a result of the Syrian war in the beautiful nature of Lori, for the maternal care, care, love and warmth shown to the children, for giving the children joy, happiness and unforgettable happy days”. “Those ten days spent in the “Gugark” Children’s Camp also contributed to the strengthening of the mental and physical health of Syrian–Armenian children, as well as their intellectual and moral development”²⁴, the MD’s letter of gratitude states.

After the “Velvet Revolution” (2018, April), the organization of summer vacations for Syrian–Armenian children in Armenian camps continued for some time.

Thus, in 2018, on May 25, the director of the “Gugark” Camp, S. Danielyan, wrote to the newly appointed MD, Mkhitar Hayrapetyan, in a letter that children of Syrian–Armenian refugee families have been resting in the “Gugark” Camp located in the picturesque forests of Vahagnadzor, Lori, for about 5 years. The program was implemented by the head of the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD, Levon Antonyan. The children, parents, and organizers are all satisfied. That year, again, 80 Syrian–Armenian children aged 8–15 spent their 10-day summer vacation in the “Gugark” Children’s Camp in Vahagnadzor with the financial support of UNHCR. The camp management regularly receives letters regarding the continuity of the program²⁵.

On August 27, the Acting Secretary General of the MD, Yerem Simonyan, expressed gratitude to the director of the “Gugark” Children’s Camp for effective cooperation, “... for the support and maternal care shown in organizing the summer vacation of Syrian–Armenian children settled in Armenia as a result of the Syrian conflict”, which will contribute to strengthening the mental and physical health of Syrian–Armenian children and their social integration in Armenia²⁶.

The support of various international and diaspora organizations in organizing recreation for Syrian–Armenian children and youth in camps in Armenia

The MD has periodically appealed to the heads of various international and related Diaspora organizations operating in Armenia with a request to provide financial assistance for organizing the summer vacation of Syrian–Armenian

²³ ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 71, թ. 5:

²⁴ ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 71, թ. 72:

²⁵ ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 160, թ. 3, 5, զ. 175, թ. 47:

²⁶ ՀԱԱ, §. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 77, թ. 37:

children in the Homeland. Individual organizations responded by supporting the provision of summer vacation for Syrian–Armenian children.

In 2013, UNHCR, together with the Armenian Red Cross Society and the UN Armenian Association, jointly organized two summer camps with joint funding, for 12 days and 1 month, respectively, in which a total of 150 children participated, and the organizational cost amounted to 29,000 USD²⁷.

The UN International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) organized a 2-month summer school for 60 Syrian–Armenian children aged 5–6, which was implemented from July 9, 2013 under a specially developed preschool education program. In addition, it organized a 10-day camp holiday for a total of 235 Syrian–Armenian children in cooperation with a number of international organizations²⁸.

In September 2013, the Armenian Office of the UNHCR and the UN Armenian Association also organized a 10-day summer holiday for 50 Syrian–Armenian teenagers in Armenian holiday homes²⁹.

And on March 14, 2013, the abbess of the “Our Lady of Armenia Convent” of the Catholic Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Gyumri, Sister Arusyak Sajonyan, informed the MD that they could include 40 children from families, who had migrated to Armenia from Syria in their summer camp, exclusively those who were born between June 1, 1999 and June 1, 2005. The periods allocated for the rest of each of the four groups, each including 10 children, were: June 17 – July 3, July 4 – July 20, July 22 – August 6, August 7 – August 23. The camp agenda included various mandatory courses and obligations for all children³⁰.

On April 3, 2014, the head of the aforementioned religious organization in Gyumri again applied to the MD, informing that up to 30 children from families who had migrated from Syria, who were born only from June 1, 2000 to June 1, 2006, could be included in their summer camp.

On April 15, 2013, with the support of the Armenian National Union of Young Men’s Christian Associations (ANU YMCA) of the American YMCA and American–Armenian philanthropist Sue Aramyan, from June 15–30, 2013, a 7-day rehabilitation and recreation camp was held in two shifts for 70 Syrian–Armenian children aged 11–14. It was located in the Lori forests, 10 km from Vanadzor, in a camp belonging to the YMCA, and has all the necessary conditions for organizing such camps. The work will be carried out by the experienced camp leaders of the Armenian YMCA. It is planned to involve Syrian–Armenian youth as camp leaders. The Armenian director of the association has asked the MD for assistance in establishing contact with Syrian–Armenian families and recruiting children³¹.

In 2013, the MD, in cooperation with the Lori Regional Administration, the YMCA, the Armenian Catholic Church’s “Our Lady of Armenia” Monastery, the

²⁷ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 24, թ. 76, գ. 119, թ. 57:

²⁸ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 24, թ. 71:

²⁹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 24, թ. 70, գ. 44, թ. 13:

³⁰ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 87, թ. 29, գ. 175, թ. 47:

³¹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 85, թ. 18:

Center for Coordinating the Issues of Syrian–Armenians, as well as the Armenian branches of international organizations: the United Nations Children’s Fund, “Save the Children” and “World Vision”, have provided summer recreation for 650 Syrian–Armenian children and adolescents living in Armenia. At the same time, a summer school for preschool children was also organized, as well as teacher training. In 2013, 9 people from Syria attended the summer school³².

In the summer of 2013, as a result of the joint work of the CCSAI NGO and the Armenian office of “World Vision”, a two–week summer vacation was organized for about 60 Syrian–Armenian preschool children in Aghavnadzor, as well as courses were organized for them at the Yerevan “Ohanyan” Kindergarten³³.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America at its annual summer camp, organized in Artsakh, in 2013, also included Syrian–Armenian teenagers and young people, who rested in Shushi³⁴. In the same year, the Armenian Relief Society (ARS), in turn, organized a summer camp in Gandzasar, where Syrian–Armenians living in several settlements of Berdzor, Kovsakan and Kashatagh regions also rested³⁵.

On July 5–22, 2016, Syrian–Armenian children aged 9–14 spent their summer vacation at the “Aragats” Camp in Hankavan, with the support of the Armenian Red Cross³⁶.

The UNHCR Armenia Office and the Armenian representation of the international organization “Save the Children” organized a summer vacation for 29 Syrian–Armenian and 9 Iraqi–Armenian children on August 16–27 at the YMCA “Aramyan” Camp in Lori province³⁷, etc.

New Year’s events for Syrian–Armenian children

In the Homeland, Syrian–Armenian children have always participated in various New Year events, which took place in various organizations and institutions. The children also participated in the New Year celebration organized at the

³² Ձ ա ք ա ր յ ա ն. 2018, 574, Հայաստան–Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 80, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, ց. 3, գ. 31, թ. 21, գ. 32, թ. 34, ֆ. 1800, ց. 25, գ. 1110, թ. 40:

³³ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 9, թ. 27:

³⁴ Արցախի, Սյունիքի և սիրիահայ 8–25 տարեկան երեխաներն ու երիտասարդները կմասնակցեն Շուշիի ճամբարին, 2013, 12 հունիսի. – <https://www.panarmenian.net/arm/news/162009/>.

³⁵ Արցախի, Սյունիքի և սիրիահայ 8–25 տարեկան երեխաներն ու երիտասարդները կմասնակցեն Շուշիի ճամբարին, 2013, 12 հունիսի. – <https://www.panarmenian.net/arm/news/162009/>.

³⁶ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 172, թ. 100:

³⁷ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 172, թ. 101:

Presidential Palace of the Republic of Armenia, met with President and First Lady, and received gifts³⁸.

Yerevan Municipality included 2,500 Syrian–Armenian and risk-group children in New Year events and distributed gifts within the framework of its New Year charity programs in 2012. At the initiative of the Mayor of Yerevan, Taron Margaryan, more than 750 Syrian–Armenian children (including those with special needs) were hosted at the Mher Mkrtchyan Art Theater on the occasion of the New Year and Christmas³⁹.

On December 22–24, 2014, the three-stage “Give a Happy New Year” program was implemented, within the framework of which spiritual structures, pan-Armenian, international, non-governmental organizations, Armenian enterprises, beloved artists and various individuals prepared and presented gifts to Armenian children of endangered communities in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine⁴⁰.

And on December 23, at the initiative of the MD “Hayern Aysor” electronic magazine and in cooperation with the CCSAI NGO, the first stage of the “100 Celebrities for 100 Syrian–Armenian Children” program was held, in which the MD, Hranush Hakobyan, also participated⁴¹.

The staff of the “Save the Children” organization expressed a desire to join the aforementioned initiative and make a personal contribution to making the New Year of Syrian–Armenian children happier and more memorable. For this purpose, the organization expressed its willingness to appeal to international partner organizations and local NGOs operating in the Republic of Armenia, urging them to join the initiative to make Syrian–Armenian children happy⁴².

The UNHCR Armenia Office participated in the “Give a Happy New Year!” program, implemented on December 22–24, at the initiative of the RA Ministry of Diaspora, the “Hayern Aysor” electronic newspaper, and in cooperation with the Syrian–Armenian Children’s Association NGO, allocating 200,000 drams for the New Year’s hospitality events held on December 23 at the “Jumbo” exotic park-restaurant and on December 24 at the “Play-City” entertainment center⁴³.

In 2015, within the framework of the 100th memorable anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Syrian–Armenian children also attended the event organized

³⁸ Հայաստան–Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 72, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, ց. 3, գ. 175, թ. 47:

³⁹ Սիրիահայերին և կարիքավորներին Ամանորի շեմին օգնություն է տրվելու, 2012, 21 դեկտեմբերի. – <https://news.am/arm/news/133473.html>; Entrance to “Mher Mkrtchyan” Theatre was Free for Syrian–Armenian Kids. 2012, December 28. – <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/704173/entrance-to-mher-mkrtchyan-theatre-was-free-for-syrian-armenian-kids.html>.

⁴⁰ Չ ա ք ա ր յ ա ն. 2018, 575:

⁴¹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 59, թ. 89, գ. 111, թ. 53:

⁴² ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 111, թ. 53:

⁴³ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 44, թ. 11:

for them: “100 celebrities for 100 Syrian–Armenian children” and received New Year’s gifts from “celebrities”⁴⁴.

On December 29, 2015, the Yerevan Municipality provided the MD with 100 tickets for New Year’s holiday events to provide Syrian–Armenian children⁴⁵.

“One Armenia” organization raised funds by providing “Christmas packages” to 200 Syrian–Armenian children within the framework of the “Santa’s Wanted” initiative⁴⁶.

The RA Ministry of Diaspora, on the joint initiative of Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and “Rosneft-Armenia” CJSC and coordinated by the CCSAI NGO, on December 28, handed over New Year’s gifts to Syrian–Armenian families at the AGBU “Vahe Karapetyan” Center in Yerevan. Last year, on New Year’s Eve, AGBU provided gifts to 650 Syrian–Armenian children, and that year, on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the union, it was decided to symbolically present 110 Syrian–Armenian families with an artificial Christmas tree and Christmas tree toys. At the same time, Rosneft – Armenia CJSC provided 100 Syrian–Armenian children with winter boots. The UN International Children’s Fund also provided gifts to Syrian–Armenian children⁴⁷.

In general, in 2012–2013 and 2013–2014, 1,000 and, in 2015, about 450 Syrian–Armenian boys and girls participated in the New Year events. The children were given gifts, sweets, free tickets to various New Year events⁴⁸, etc.

Thus, the festive events also contributed to the improvement of the moral and psychological state of Syrian–Armenian children, gave them positive energy, once again supporting their integration into the Armenian environment and creating a favorable opportunity to communicate and get to know local compatriots better⁴⁹.

Cultural events

From the protocol compiled by the Head of the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD, Levon Antonyan, we learn that the issues related to supporting Syrian–Armenian children who arrived in Armenia, and children from needy families with many children in special institutions in Armenia, were also in the focus of the MD’s attention, which were implemented in cooperation with the “Center for Coordination of Syrian–

⁴⁴ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 35, թ. 61 շրջ.:

⁴⁵ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 132, թ. 15:

⁴⁶ Meet & Greet: Syrian Armenian Relief. This Campaign Will Be Allocated Through Repat Armenia, Mission Armenia, Aleppo Compatriotic Charitable Organization and AGBU, 2016, November 23. – <http://repatarmenia.org/en/engage/inspiration/a/meet-greet-syrian-armenian-relief>.

⁴⁷ 110 տոնածառ եւ 100 զոյգ ձմեռային կօշիկ՝ Սուրիահայ ընտանիքներուն, 2016, դեկտեմբեր 29. – http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2016/12/29/110_տոնածառ_եւ_100_զոյգ_ձմեռնային_կօշիկ%60_սուրիահայ_ընտանիքներուն:/hy-1282290:

⁴⁸ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 175, թ. 7:

⁴⁹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 175, թ. 47:

Armenian Issues” NGO, “Aleppo” NGO, ““Kessap” Compatriot Union” NGO, as well as various international and Diaspora structures. In addition, Syrian–Armenians have always been included in the cultural and social programs of the capital.

Thus, the Armenian branch of the “Arno Babajanyan International Memorial Foundation” organized a charity concert in October, 2012, for our Syrian–Armenian compatriots residing in Armenia⁵⁰.

In October, a concert was also organized by the “KrunK” choir (artistic director: Shahe Keshishyan), consisting of Syrian–Armenians. Later, in 2013, the choir participated in the “Komitas Vardapet” Pan-Armenian Festival of the MD (from September 26 to October 3). Within the framework of the festival, on September 28, in the park of the Komitas State Conservatory, near the Komitas statue, an open-air concert entitled “Komitas and Armenian Children” was held, in which choirs from Syria also participated⁵¹.

“Save the Children” organization sponsored the participation of Syrian–Armenian children in art groups⁵².

On October 23–30, the Fridtjof Nansen Foundation of Armenia hosted the Armenian tour of the Aleppo Komitas Chamber Orchestra⁵³.

The “American Armenian Orphans and Disabled Children’s Holy Christmas Foundation”, headed by Hovhannes Balayan, which in 2012 held its 13th New Year’s event both in the Republic of Armenia and in the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic (Shushi, Kolatak), organized a festive event for about 10,000 children from orphanages and other institutions in Armenia. About 1,500 Syrian–Armenian children also participated in the event⁵⁴.

Or, on October 25, 2012, Hakob from Aleppo approached an Armenian theater expert, Levon Mutafyan, with the idea of creating a “Diaspora Theater”, who in turn presented this program to the MD⁵⁵.

On November 13, Garnik Seyranyan, the director of the Yerevan Municipality Mher Mkrtchyan Art Theater, proposed to the RA Minister of Diaspora to form

⁵⁰ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 2, գ. 72, թ. 31, ց. 3, գ. 24, թ. 66:

⁵¹ Զ ա ք ա ը յ ա ն. 2018, 575, Հայաստան–Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 73, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, ց. 3, գ. 31, թ. 18, 21, գ. 32, թ. 34:

⁵² Հայաստան – Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 80, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1:

⁵³ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 2, գ. 74, թ. 29:

⁵⁴ Syrian–Armenian Children to Partake in Christmas Celebrations. 2012, December 20. – <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/703256/Syrian-Armenian-children-to-partake-in-christmas-celebrations.html>.

⁵⁵ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 2, գ. 74, թ. 39–40:

a theater group from Syrian–Armenians. At the same time, he suggested that the minister, if possible, assign a “minimum salary” for the actors, which could also be a certain assistance in solving the vital problems of Syrian–Armenians. If successful, it will also be possible to think about establishing a permanent theater. The author of the project’s idea and proposal, director G. Seyranyan, reached an agreement with 8 Syrian–Armenian actors, who agreed to participate in the work of the theater group. Director G. Seyranyan presented the estimate for stage work for 3 months. It included the costs of salaries, decor, costumes, musical design, and printed advertising. It was expected that thanks to the mediation of the MD, it would be possible to solve the problems of the rehearsal hall and the performance hall. It was desirable that the RA MD State Non–Commercial Organization would bear the costs of the program⁵⁶.

Meanwhile, documentary journalist Anush Babajanyan organized a photo exhibition in Yerevan under the title “Newcomers: Syrians in Armenia”, the aim of which was to depict the problems faced by Syrian–Armenians in Armenia through art. The exhibition presents Syrian–Armenian repatriates of different times: those who came before the 2011 war, those who came during the war, those who settled in Armenia, those who intend to return to Syria, those who want to emigrate to other countries⁵⁷, etc.

Already on May 29, 2013, the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD, within the framework of the Ministry’s “Diaspora Armenian Integration Program”, organized a concert of the “Karot” Choir (led by Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia Zhirayr Altunyan), consisting of 40 Syrian–Armenian amateur performers living in Armenia, with the participation of the T. Altunyan Song and Dance Ensemble⁵⁸.

Soon, the artistic director and chief conductor of the Pan-Armenian Youth Symphony Orchestra, Edvard Yesayants, operating under the auspices of the MD proposed including Syrian–Armenians in the Symphony Children’s and Youth Orchestra⁵⁹.

And Gayane Simonyan–Teryan from Syria applied to the MD with a request to form a Syrian–Armenian children’s choir⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 2, գ. 76, թ. 1–3:

⁵⁷ B a b a j a n y a n. Photo Exhibition: The Newcomers: Syrian in Armenia. 2017, February 24. – <http://repatarmenia.org/en/events/a/photo-exhibition-the-newcomers-syrians-in-armenia>.

⁵⁸ Ջ ա ք ա ղ յ ա ն. 2018, 575, Հայաստան–Ափյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. – 2014, 73, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, ց. 3, գ. 32, թ. 34:

⁵⁹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 36, թ. 36:

⁶⁰ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 36, թ. 50:

On December 20, 2013, a concert entitled “Towards a New Life ...” was organized at the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall in Yerevan with the participation of Syrian–Armenian and Armenian artists⁶¹, etc.

On February 11, 2014, the president of the “Caravan-88” charitable non-governmental organization, Zoya Julhakyán, wrote a letter to the MD, informing that the organization had planned to organize cultural classes for Syrian–Armenian children in the hall of the Malatia-Sebastia District Municipality by preliminary agreement. The program envisaged creating various cultural groups for 85 Syrian–Armenian children: a recitation group (10–15 people), dance groups (25 children, 25 teenagers), a singing group (20 people, of which 10 would be selected for the final classes).

They also planned to organize a series of seminars on Armenian culture, singing, dancing, and recitation groups. At the end of the program, a demonstration concert was to be held at the State Theater of Musical Comedy named after H. Paronyan with the participation of the relevant groups⁶². The total amount of the project was 9,986,200 drams, of which 1,200,000 drams were to be paid by benefactors, and 8,786,200 drams were applied for to the MD⁶³.

With the support of the MD, exhibition–sales of Syrian–Armenians’ handicrafts have been organized many times. For example, such events were organized on February 14, 2014 at the State Theater of Musical Comedy named after H. Paronyan, and on February 15, in the “Lovers” Park⁶⁴ and elsewhere.

At the suggestion of the RA Minister of Diaspora and with the consent of the Mayor of Yerevan, T. Margaryan, on April 19, at St. Easter, an exhibition-sale of Syrian–Armenian children’s handicrafts under the title “The Breath of Syrian–Armenian Culture in Yerevan” was organized in the territory of the “La Piazza” cafe on Northern Avenue⁶⁵, etc.

Syrian–Armenians actively participated in various cultural events in Yerevan, “fully integrating into the public life of the capital”⁶⁶. Already in June, 2014, the Armenian Regional Department of the ARS organized a concert of the Syrian–Armenian “Shavigh” children’s and youth choir (conductor: Gayane Simonyan–Teryan) at the “Arno Babajanyan” Concert Hall, dedicated to the International

⁶¹ Ջ ա ք ա ղ յ ա ն. 2018, 575, Հայաստան–Ափյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 73, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, գ. 3, գ. 32, թ. 34:

⁶² ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 95, թ. 20, 21:

⁶³ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 95, թ. 22:

⁶⁴ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 32, թ. 34:

⁶⁵ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 98, թ. 96:

⁶⁶ Շարունակվում են սիրիահայերին ցուցաբերվող սոցիալական աջակցության ծրագրերը. 2017, 17 փետրվարի. – <https://www.pastinfo.am/hy/news/2017/02/17/Շարունակվում-են-սիրիահայերին-ցուցաբերվող-սոցիալական-աջակցության-ծրագրերը/510431>:

Children's Day. Before the Concert, a festive reception and gift distribution were organized for about 100 children in collaboration with the UNHCR, the UN Children's Fund, and the "World Vision" organization⁶⁷.

Soon, on August 29–30, a charity concert entitled "Yerevan and Aleppo of the 70s Sing" was organized at the A. Khachaturian Concert Hall with the participation of Armenian and Syrian–Armenian artists⁶⁸.

Within the framework of the 5th Homeland–Diaspora Conference, on September 19–20, the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD organized an exhibition–fair of Syrian–Armenian handicrafts and dishes.

And on October 10–11, the Department participated in the 7th Conference of the International Association of Armenian Women, in particular, within the framework of the conference, organizing an exhibition–fair of Syrian–Armenian handicrafts and dishes under the title "The Breath of Syrian–Armenian Culture in Yerevan"⁶⁹.

On the occasion of UN Day, as well as within the framework of the "1 Family" campaign, on October 25, UNHCR in the Republic of Armenia, represented by Christoph Bierwirth, organized a jazz festival entitled "Join UNHCR and Share Their Music" in the "Sculpture Garden" of the "Cafesjian" Art Center, with the participation of Syrian–Armenians living in Armenia, as well as musicians from the Republic of Armenia and the Diaspora⁷⁰.

The Syrian–Armenians have also participated in and won awards in the ceremonies organized by the MD. Thus, in 2014, they won awards in the categories of "Defender of the Mother Tongue", "Best Armenian Educational Institution", "Best Publication on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide" (for Diaspora media outlets), "We Were, We Are, We Will Be" (essay competition)⁷¹.

In total, during the year 2014, the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD organized 3 concerts, 8 exhibitions–fairs of Syrian–Armenian handicrafts and confectionery, 3 gatherings–meetings, summer recreations for Syrian–Armenian children at 3 camps of Armenia, presentations of books by Syrian–Armenian artists, events dedicated to the New Year and Christmas holidays, as well as other events⁷².

⁶⁷ Զ ա ք ա ղ յ ա ն. 2018, 575, Հայաստան–Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 73, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, ց. 3, գ. 9, թ. 28, գ. 100, թ. 55:

⁶⁸ Զ ա ք ա ղ յ ա ն. 2018, 575, Հայաստան–Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 73, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, ց. 3, գ. 105, թ. 88:

⁶⁹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 34, թ. 20:

⁷⁰ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 108, թ. 72:

⁷¹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 34, թ. 40 շրջ., 41, գ. 34, գ. 35, թ. 61 շրջ.:

⁷² ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 34, թ. 19 շրջ.:

The working “Diaspora Armenian Integration Program” of the MD envisaged that throughout the year (in some cases, particularly in November), the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD would support at least 4 events for Syrian–Armenians who had moved to Armenia. It included: 2 concert programs with the participation of Syrian–Armenian groups, artists, and children and youth creators, as well as support for Diaspora Armenian public associations operating in Armenia (“Family Cultural Union of Iraqi Armenians”, “Center for Coordination of Issues of Syrian–Armenians” NGO, “Aleppo” NGO and other organizations), organization of joint gatherings⁷³, etc.

During 2014, excursions to native museums, sights, as well as other cultural events were organized for Diaspora Armenians, including Syrian–Armenian students and pupils. Gatherings, discussions, and evening gatherings were held for the integration of Diaspora Armenians. Support was provided to Diaspora Armenians, including Syrian–Armenians, to attend art schools and study music, singing, dancing, and fine arts. In order to give impetus to the development of Diaspora Armenian artists in the Republic of Armenia, book printing, CD release or acquisition, exhibitions, etc. were organized⁷⁴.

In 2014, an exhibition of paintings by students of the local AGBU “Saryan” Academy⁷⁵ was organized in Aleppo⁷⁶. Even during the hottest days of the war, the “Saryan” Academy, along with other local educational institutions, continued its activities without interrupting the courses of the younger generations and adults. The role of the Academy’s lecturer, the artist Hrazdan Tokmajyan⁷⁷ from Armenia, is great in this matter. 32 paintings by students of the “Saryan” Academy entitled “Days of Sorrow. Aleppo” were brought to Armenia, where the young people depicted Aleppo of those days through their own eyes. It was decided to organize the opening of the exhibition under this title, on January 27, 2015, in the hall of the AGBU office in Yerevan, with the joint efforts of the MD, AGBU, and the CCSAI NGO.

Particular importance was attached to the fact that work should be carried out to transfer the Armenian spiritual and cultural heritage stored in the personal collections of Syria, as well as in the repositories of community

⁷³ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 31, թ. 111–112:

⁷⁴ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 32, թ. 34:

⁷⁵ Հալեպի ՀԲԸՄ «Սարյան» ակադեմիան գեղանկարչական կրթության կենտրոն է, որը հիմնվել է 1955 թ. ճարտարապետ, պրոֆեսոր Զարեհ Կապլանի և ակնաբույժ Ռոբերտ Ճեպեճյանի ջանքերով (տե՛ս ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 44, թ. 18, 22):

⁷⁶ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 44, թ. 18:

⁷⁷ Հրազդան Թոքմաջյանը ծնվել է Գյումրիում: 1993 թվականից դասավանդել է ՀԲԸՄ Հալեպի «Սարյան» ակադեմիայում, միաժամանակ ակադեմիայի ուսումնական գործընթացների կազմակերպիչն է, «Սարյան» ակադեմիայի ղեկավարը (տե՛ս ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 44, թ. 21):

structures and libraries of other endangered communities, to the Motherland as soon as possible and to store them in state museums and libraries⁷⁸.

In mid-2015, a concert of the “Bells” ensemble led by Syrian–Armenian conductor Shahe Keshishyan was organized in Yerevan together with the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD, the RA Ministry of Culture, and the CCSAI NGO, during which Komitas’ works were performed⁷⁹.

At the same time a concert with the participation of Syrian–Armenian artists dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was organized in Yerevan together with the Department of Armenian Communities in the Near and Middle East of the MD, the RA Ministry of Culture, and the CCSAI NGO⁸⁰.

In January, 2016, the Armenian Relief Fund (ARF) launched the “Healing through Art Therapy” program, within the framework of which 20–23 refugee children from endangered communities from Syria, Iraq, as well as Ukraine “attend the groups of the National Center of Aesthetics with love and great enthusiasm”. Within the framework of the program, exhibitions of children’s works, visits to Yerevan museums, nearby attractions and other cultural centers were also organized⁸¹.

Along with the increase in the number of Syrian–Armenians in Armenia, cultural events have also increased year by year. Thus, on June 1, 2016, an “Anush” opera recital was organized at the Al. Spendiaryan National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet for 30 Syrian–Armenian children.

On the occasion of International Children’s Day, on June 2, 50 Syrian–Armenian children attended the “Let’s Sing and Dance with Talin and Friends” concert program at the H. Paronyan State Theater of Musical Comedy.

On June 12, within the framework of the Chinese Culture Days in Armenia, a group of Syrian–Armenians attended the “My Dream” concert program of the Chinese Dance and Song Ensemble for People with Disabilities at the Al. Spendiaryan National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet.

On June 26, 50 Syrian–Armenian youth participated in the Holy Liturgy celebrated in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin with the participation of His Holiness Pope Francis of Roma⁸².

In December, 2017, at the initiative of the Youth for Development Foundation, with the support of the US Embassy in the Republic of Armenia, “World Vision” – Armenia, and “Mission Armenia”, the “12 Stories” exhibition opened in Yerevan, presenting the difficult path of 12 Syrian–Armenian women and girls during the

⁷⁸ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 44, թ. 19:

⁷⁹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 34, թ. 16:

⁸⁰ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 34, թ. 18:

⁸¹ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 135, թ. 95, 96:

⁸² ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, գ. 3, զ. 172, թ. 100:

war. The authors of the paintings are young contemporary Armenian artists. The aim of the exhibition was “to raise awareness of psychological violence and other problems among Syrian–Armenian women and girls, as well as to support them in overcoming these problems”⁸³.

On May 30, 2018, the Yerevan-based “Lalafa” vocal studio (artistic director: Hranush Tonoyan) sent a letter to the newly appointed Minister of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia, informing that the studio will represent Armenia at the festival to be held in Loret de Mar, Spain, from June 25 to July 2. Hermik Keshishyan, a 2nd grade student of the studio, a Syrian–Armenian with excellent performance, is also included in the list of festival participants. He requested the support of the MD to cover the child’s travel expenses, since the parents, due to unemployment, are unable to do so⁸⁴, etc.

Sporting events

Aiming to promote the abilities of Syrian–Armenian youth who have sports skills or simply want to engage in sports, the responsible structures of the Homeland have spared no effort in taking care of the physical health of Syrian–Armenians. Thus, in 2012–2013, the “Dinamo” sports non-governmental organization of Armenia provided Syrian–Armenian youth with the opportunity to train in 10 sports for free⁸⁵. By order of the Chief of the Police of the Republic of Armenia, Vladimir Gasparyan, from January 20, 2013, the “Dinamo” sports organization offered Syrian–Armenian youth arriving in Armenia the opportunity to conduct free training in the following sports: boxing, Greco–Roman, freestyle wrestling, judo, table tennis, chess, kickboxing⁸⁶.

Soon, at the request of the MD, the management of the specialized children’s and youth sports school of the Olympic diving relay named after David Hambardzumyan also provided free training opportunities to Syrian–Armenians who wanted to⁸⁷.

It should be noted that our new Syrian–Armenians have already achieved significant success in the sports arena shortly after arriving in the Motherland. Thus, 11-year-old Serli Musheghyan, who, through the mediation of the MD, had the opportunity to train for 2 months free of charge at the specialized

⁸³ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 9, թ. 29:

⁸⁴ ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 3, գ. 159, թ. 95:

⁸⁵ Հայաստան–Սփյուռք չորրորդ համաժողովում (2011 թ., սեպտեմբերի 19–20, Երևան) արված առաջարկությունների կատարման վերաբերյալ. 2014, 73, ՀԱԱ, ֆ. 1786, ց. 1, գ. 137, թ. 1, Ձ ա ք ա ղ յ ա ն. 2018, 575:

⁸⁶ Սպորտով զբաղվել ցանկացող սիրիահայ երիտասարդները հնարավորություն կունենան շարունակել մարզումները նաև Հայրենիքում, 2013, 15 հունվարի. – <https://www.panorama.am/am/news/2013/01/15/police/607009>.

⁸⁷ 11-ամյա սիրիահայ աղջիկը ճանաչվել է Հայաստանի լողի պատանեկան առաջնության չեմպիոն, 2013, 17 հունվարի. – <https://news.am/arm/news/136266.html>.

children's and youth sports school of the Olympic diving relay named after David Hambardzumyan, was recognized as the champion of the Armenian youth swimming championship⁸⁸, etc.

Conclusions

Thus, during 2012–2018, the RA authorities, as a result of coordinated work with the MD and various international, Diaspora and local organizations, took care of and ensured the summer vacation of Armenian children who stayed in Armenia, as well as those who remained in Syria and experienced all the bitterness of war and the horrors of military clashes, in their native camps and rest homes, organized excursions to the sights of Armenia, organized educational, rehabilitation and healing, New Year's, cultural, festive, sports and other events. The above-mentioned were aimed at restoring the mental health, rehabilitation and integration of our compatriots in Armenia, creating favorable conditions for their settlement in the Homeland and for the successful integration of Syrian–Armenians into Armenia's life.

All these events, while aimed at restoring the mental health, strengthening and integration of our compatriots in Armenia, at the same time aimed to popularize, develop and deepen the skills and abilities of Syrian–Armenians with Western Armenian roots, creating favorable conditions for their settlement in the Homeland.

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⁸⁸ 11-ամյա սիրիահայ աղջիկը ճանաչվել է Հայաստանի լողի պատանեկան առաջնության չեմպիոն, 2013, 17 հունվարի. – <https://news.am/arm/news/136266.html>.

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ՀԱՄԱՐ ԻՐԱԿԱՆԱՑՎԱԾ ԻՆՏԵԳՐԱԿԱՆ ԾՐԱԳՐԵՐԸ
(2012 – 2018 թթ.)

ՔՆԱՐԻԿ ԱՎԱԳՅԱՆ

Ա մ փ ո փ ու մ

Բանալի բառեր՝ Սիրիա, համայնք, պատերազմ, հայրենադարձություն, ինտեգրացիա, ամառային ծրագրեր, ամանորյա միջոցառումներ, մշակութային միջոցառումներ:

2012–2018 թթ. Հայաստանի Հանրապետության իշխանությունները՝ Սփյուռքի նախարարության և միջազգային, սփյուռքյան ու տեղական տարբեր կազմակերպությունների հետ համակարգված աշխատանքների արդյունքում հոգացել ու ապահովել են Հայաստանում հանգրվանած, ինչպես նաև Սիրիայում մնացած և պատերազմի ողջ դառնություններն ու ռազմական բախումների սարսափները ճաշակած հայ երեխաների ամառային հանգիստը հայրենի ճամբարներում ու հանգստյան տներում, կազմակերպել են ուսուցողական, կազդուրման, առողջացման, ամանորյա, մշակութային, տոնական, սպորտային ու այլ միջոցառումներ, իրականացրել էքսկուրսիաներ Հայաստանի տեսարժան վայրեր և այլ ծրագրեր:

Այդ բոլոր միջոցառումները, ուղղված լինելով Հայաստանում մեր հայրենակիցների հոգեկան առողջության վերականգնմանն ու կազդուրմանը, միաժամանակ նպատակ ունեին հանրահռչակել, զարգացնել ու խորացնել արևմտահայ արմատներ ունեցող սիրիահայերի հմտություններն ու կարողությունները՝ բարենպաստ պայմաններ ստեղծելով հայրենիքում նրանց հաստատման ու հայաստանյան կյանքին հաջող ինտեգրման համար:

Քնարիկ Ավագյան – պ. գ. թ., ՀՀ ԳԱԱ պատմության ինստիտուտի Հայ գաղթօջախների և Սփյուռքի պատմության բաժնի ավագ գիտաշխատող: Գիտական հետաքրքրությունները՝ ԱՄՆ հայ համայնքի, Սփյուռքի պատմություն: Հեղինակ է 1 գրքի և շուրջ 140 հոդվածի: ORCID:0009-0000-5496-4997. lira777@yahoo.com

ИНТЕГРАЦИОННЫЕ ПРОГРАММЫ, РЕАЛИЗОВАННЫЕ В АРМЕНИИ
ДЛЯ АРМЯНСКИХ ДЕТЕЙ И МОЛОДЕЖИ ИЗ СИРИИ
(2012 – 2018 гг.)

КНАРИК АВАКЯН

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Сирия, община, война, репатриация, интеграция, летние программы, новогодние мероприятия, культурные мероприятия.

В 2012–2018 гг. благодаря скоординированной работе властей РА с Министерством диаспоры и различными международными и местными организациями был обеспечен летний отдых для репатриировавших из Сирии армянских детей, а также армян, оставшихся в Сирии в период военных действий. С этой целью были предоставлены лагеря и дома отдыха в Армении, организованы образовательные, реабилитационные, медицинские, новогодние, культурные, праздничные, спортивные и иные мероприятия, а также экскурсии для ознакомления с достопримечательностями Армении и т. д.

Названные мероприятия, направленные на восстановление психического здоровья и реабилитацию, одновременно способствовали развитию и углублению природных способностей и навыков сирийских армян с западноармянскими корнями, тем самым создавая благоприятные условия для их успешной интеграции в местную среду.

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