

Jinishian JOTTINGS

...from poverty and despair to self-sufficiency and hope

Letter from the Staff

The Jinishian Memorial Program (JMP) has been enabling Armenians in need to move from poverty and despair to self-sufficiency and hope through relief, development, and spiritual uplift for nearly 45 years. Working ecumenically with the three Armenian denominations, the Apostolic, Evangelical and Catholic Churches and in partnership with individuals and organizations across the globe, JMP meets the needs of Armenian communities in Armenia and the Middle East. JMP is engaged in economic and community development, preventative health care and civil society initiatives as well as provides basic social services and direct relief that helps tens of thousands of Armenians in the midst of social, economic, political and ethnic instability. Donors have helped JMP reach vulnerable groups, particularly youth and women, like Astghik and Silvia, to assist in their empowerment which enables them to actively participate in civic initiatives, manage their health, and find sustainable employment. Recently, a young volunteer from the United States joined Astghik and JMP's Civic Dialogue and Action project in Armenia to share his knowledge and experience engaging in civic initiatives, as well as experience a cultural exchange. The volunteer also helped the JMP Armenia staff and beneficiaries develop their English, creative photography and technology related skills. JMP staff and those we serve are grateful for the support of our volunteers, donors and partners. Learn ways you can partner with JMP through your donations or by volunteering. Visit our websites www.pcusa.org/jinishian; www.jinishian-lebanon.org; www.jinishian.org, or contact us via email jmp@pcusa.org. JMP staff looks forward to hearing from you and partnering in a success.

Announcing 2011 Study Tours to Armenia and Karabakh June 12-24 & October 9-12.

Discover an old country, engage with JMP stakeholders and make a positive social change.

www.pcusa.org/jinishian-tour



CDA Armenian project leaders at an annual youth summit. Astghik is pictured third from the right. Photo by Ruben Krikian.

A Rising Star

By Ruben Krikian, Civil Society Program Coordinator JMF Armenia

To sustain Armenia's transition to democracy and develop a healthy civil society, youth need to be actively engaged and given opportunities to participate in political dialogue and social development. In 2005, the Jinishian Memorial Foundation - Armenia (JMF) launched the project Civic Dialogue and Action (CDA) in two regional universities of Armenia. Presently, thanks to a grant from the Foreign Ministry of Norway, Civic Dialogue and Action is thriving in seven regional universities by engaging over 1500 students. The project vivifies and enhances civil participation in Armenia through supporting and encouraging university students to play more active, capable and informed roles in Armenia's economic, social and political development. Astghik Hoveyan, a student at Gavar State University during 2005 and 2007, was an active participant in the project. After graduation in 2007, she continued volunteering for the project, advising students in implementing small civic activities through community needs assessments. In 2008, she was selected to join the JMF team as a CDA project officer in Gavar State University. Astghik is a highly reputable person and role model among her students. She is not only a valuable and knowledgeable resource person, but also an energetic person who sincerely shares her compassion with friends. Astghik stresses, "the youth are not just the future, but they are the present of the country and their voices should be heard." The name Astghik means petite star, and Astghik is a real star in the university, well known for her brave character and efforts in spreading democratic values among peers. Astghik is only one of many students whose lives were positively changed as a result of the project. Among the seven project officers currently coordinating student activities in the universities, five are former students. Other CDA graduating students are now involved in the civil life of the country as NGO leaders, mass media representatives and civil activists.

"the youth are not just the future, but they are the present of the country and their voices should be heard."

Debate Club: A Lifetime Experience

By Anahit Galikyan, Civil Society Project Officer JMF Armenia

The Youth Engaged in Society (YES) project implemented by JMF Armenia and Youth for Achievement NGO promotes civil society through extracurricular debate clubs in over 100 schools in Armenia. Tatev joined the debate club in 8th grade thinking she would participate in the club a year at most. However, she was captivated by the project and continued through graduation. Not only did the project help her understand and debate issues of human rights and democracy, it led her to study law at the French University of Armenia. With guidance from JMF, Tatev has started a debate club in her university, which continues to attract students and engages them in debate on critical issues facing Armenia. "Debate club is a lifetime experience that increases students' knowledge and self-confidence," says Tatev.



Tatev at the YES National Debate Championship in Yerevan, Armenia. Photo by Ruben Krikorian

A Holistic Approach to Health

By Seta Pamboukian, Country Director Lebanon

The JMP in Lebanon operates a health program for families and individuals with little to no income, providing reduced-cost medications to maintain a healthy lifestyle or to prevent life threatening illnesses. Beyond the distribution of medications, the JMP health program staff also uses a holistic approach to health and medicine. Nurses and social workers work together with clients, individually or in groups, to meet the clients' health and wellness needs. One woman, suffering from depression, participated in an eight-month group session on developmental health for women. The support she received from the group gave her the confidence and motivation required to lead a more productive and fulfilled life. Shortly after the group session she found a part-time job in sales.



Silvia preparing food stuff for her customers in Aleppo, Syria. Photo By Ani Cholakian.

Women's Empowerment in Syria

By Ani Cholakian, Country Director Syria

Silvia is a mother with two sons and a husband who suffered from cardiac failure which rendered him unable to work. The eldest son, fearing that his father will soon pass away, developed clinical depression and presently receives care. In the absence of any health coverage, the JMP in Aleppo contributed financial assistance to help the family meet their medical needs. Moving toward a sustainable development approach, JMP invited Silvia to participate in its Kitchen Project, an economic development initiative that teaches women skills in cooking, catering, hygiene, marketing and accounting. After joining the project, Silvia became enthusiastic about starting her own catering business from her home. With great success she is supporting her family financially and spiritually. She is able to afford medical expenses for her family and send her youngest son to the Armenian Orthodox seminary in Lebanon. She keeps her positive attitude towards life and thanks God every day for her family. Customers have been encouraged to make advance orders knowing well that the preparations are fresh, organic and made in a clean environment. She is grateful to JMP for the temporary financial assistance and opportunity to become empowered to support her family during challenging times. In Syria, JMP operates under the sponsorship of the three Armenian Church denominations.

...its Kitchen Project, an economic development initiative that teaches women skills in cooking, catering, hygiene, marketing and accounting.



Participants in the Teenage Girls Self-Development Program in Beirut, Lebanon. Photo by Lucy Khatchadourian.

minimum wage. The woman and her children started seeing a JMP social worker for guidance and counseling. The eldest sister at 17 years old was encouraged to join JMP's Teenage Girls Self-Development Program in Beirut. The program aims to empower girls to lead healthy lifestyles with emphasis placed on family relations, sex education, team building and self confidence building. She was reimbursed for her transportation expenses from Anjar and given a scholarship through the program to pursue vocational training as an esthetician. Presently, at 20 years old she is working as a well respected esthetician in Anjar. She gained self-confidence and is happy to be able to work and provide for her family.

An Esthetician's Story

By Seta Pamboukian, Country Director Lebanon

A mother and her three children were in a desperate socio-economic situation living in the Anjar village in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. The mother was forced to place her children in an orphanage temporarily while she worked for below