



SYRIAN-ARMENIAN BUSINESS NETWORK

Goals

The goal of the project is to create an internet-based platform that allows users to quickly find information about businesses owned by Syrian-Armenians in Yerevan. Besides basic contact and location information, the profile for each business will include a personal story about the owner, augmented with photos and/or videos.

Project Description & Background

Over the past 3 years, the conflict in Syria has caused millions of Syrians to leave their homes in search of safer environments. They have largely sought asylum in neighboring countries like Lebanon and Jordan, as well as those further afield, like Germany and Sweden. But among these nearly 3 million refugees is a contingent of Syrian-Armenians who have decided to repatriate to the country of their not-so-distant ancestors.

Today, several thousand Syrian-Armenians have settled in Armenia, mostly in Yerevan. They are all trying to change gears from the familiarity of their former life in Syria to the new cruising speed of life in their ancestral homeland. A healthy portion of these Syrian-Armenian repat/refugees have a strong entrepreneurial drive, and many of them have sought to open their own businesses with the hopes of generating a sustainable income and integrating symbiotically into the wider Armenian community. Their presence has infused the local business community with a fresh sense of

competition and creativity. As a result, the entire business culture has become livelier, and the consumers are the ultimate beneficiaries. These entrepreneurs are all extremely resilient and resourceful, but if they possessed the market visibility equal to those of their local counterparts, as well as a more robust knowledge of available marketing technologies, they would be able not just to survive, but thrive in their new environment. Perhaps they may even come to consider Armenia as their permanent home.

Although these individuals have come to Armenia as refugees, they have clearly demonstrated their desire to contribute to their new community. This is why Ayo! and **RepatArmenia** in collaboration would like to initiate a new project: thorough mapping of Syrian Armenian businesses in Yerevan that would provide the business owners with greater visibility in the market, and a more personal portrait of their business and their journey from Syria to Armenia. As a result, this mapping would broaden their clientele among tourists, and connect them more with local residents who can become sustaining and consistent customers.

The final product of this project will be an internet-based platform with advanced mapping and filtering functions that would allow users to quickly find information about businesses owned by Syrian Armenians. Besides basic contact and location information, the profile for each business will include a brief interview with the owner, photos and/or videos about the owner and the business, and capability to easily share this information through social networks. Upon completion, the product will be maintained and financed by RepatArmenia foundation. Such a platform can serve as a fantastic tool to assist these business owners in their endeavors while still respecting their autonomy and capabilities to support themselves. We at Ayo! believe in sustainable solutions, and this project will help Syrian-Armenian refugees to become the valuable and sustaining members of Armenian society that they fully deserve to be.

Budget

ITEM	TOTAL USD
Web design	\$2,000
Website development	\$1,500
Promotion costs	\$200
Project Manager	\$500
Volunteers	\$400
Transportation costs	\$50
Hosting and Domain	\$150

\$4,800

GRAND TOTAL OF THE PROJECT

*For all services related to the project, Ayo! and RepatArmenia are working solely with individuals and businesses in Armenia. **Jarakite Creative Partners** will be executing the design, FAR's own **Gyumri Information Technologies Center** will be handling the development, and the information collection is being carried out by local freelance photographers and journalists. Ayo! is thus aiming for this project to be doubly economically stimulating, as all the funds raised will be spent on services within Armenia.*