



**The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP)**

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### **ATOP Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Mission to Armenia**

#### **Trauma healing, Transforming Horizontal & Generational Trauma, & Nurturing Emotional Intelligence and Self-care**

##### **Summary**

Why did we return to Armenia? There have been multiple traumatic events taken place with bordering Azerbaijan. The past 5 years have been bloody; wars, blockade, and ultimately the ethnic cleansing in 2023 has had devastating consequences on the population who are displaced. Approximately 110,000 Armenians residents were displaced across Armenia in villages, towns, and many have left the country due to unemployment, and scarcity of resources.

Our objectives were 1. Transform trauma of ethnic cleansing took place in Sept 2023 by Azerbaijan, 2. Transform Horizontal Violence, 3. Transform domestic violence, 4. Continue suicide prevention awareness, 5. Continue Ecological awareness, 6. Provide energetic healing, 7. Teach 7-step modality, 8. Nurture Gender empowerment, 9. Compile the oral histories of Artsakh survivors. From 30 April to 12 May 2024, MeaningfulWorld team volunteered in Armenia for a follow up Humanitarian Outreach Mission. Dr. Kalayjian initiated and led the first outreach mission immediately after the devastating earthquake in 1988; since then, we have continued to volunteer consistently in Armenia over 25 humanitarian missions. Our team was comprised of Margo Sargsyan & me. We emphasized collecting oral histories, and helping heal the survivors who were thrown out of their homes in Artsakh, (AKA Nagorno-Karabagh). Trauma that is healed will help nurture Post-Traumatic-Growth (PTG) and prevent transmission of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to the next seven generations, as well as to prevent Horizontal Violence. We specifically used the 7-step Integrative Healing Model, tapping solution, meditation, breathwork, energy healing, Flower Essences (FES), essential oils, & Soul-Surfing.

<https://newsroom.aua.am/2024/05/15/aua-hosts-dr-ani-kalayjian-lecture-armenian-genocide/#prettyPhoto>



**Bari Luys – Armenia TV**



**at AUA with Prof Sukiasyan**

While in Armenia, we worked with over 25 families from Artsakh in different regions. We observed improvements in their mental health (since October 2023), as most were settled in their new homes, and some had employment, and others searching for one. Children were attending schools, and universities, although searching for their friends and classmates, and yearning for their homes in Artsakh. Most expressed feelings of fear of continuing to lose lands to Azerbaijan, worry about uncertain political situation with neighbors who are not only unfriendly, but also full of hatred, and high levels of anxiety. In many workshops people expressed feelings of anxiety and fear on levels of 7-10 (10 being the most severe), after our interventions and tapping, we were able to bring those levels down to 2-3. Which is a great success, and evidence for people to continue using these modalities on their own. Some psychologists who participated shared “After your stretches, workshop, & soul-surfing, I felt so relaxed and I was able to sleep for the first time so soundly, as never before.” Expressions such as “Your method is incredibly healing, thank you for your time and passion,” exemplified their expressions. Another participant from Artsakh wrote on Facebook, “I received such positive energy meeting you and working with you. The oils and Flower Essences you gave helped me tremendously. Since the war I have been getting anxiety attacks, and as soon as I felt the symptoms, I picked up your lavender oil and rubbed it as you directed, then sprayed the Flower Essence of Peace & Justice, and I slept so soundly for the first time. May God Bless you always.” We provided emotional healing through emotional managements, mindfulness, breathwork, also gifted essential oils of lavender & rosemary, and Flower Essences donated by Flower Essence Society, [www.Fesflowers.com](http://www.Fesflowers.com). [Flower Essence Services](#)

We had several presentations at the Yerevan State University, special gratitude to **Robert Sukiasyan**, as well as the American University of Armenia. Our topics ranged from Genocide Prevention, denial as the last stage of Genocide, stress awareness & management, & self-care using our signature 7-step Integrative Healing Model.

We nurtured our previous collaborators, and we forged new NGO’s and other volunteer organizations. Special gratitude to **Anush Martirosyan** (Co-Founder | Transparent Armenia Charitable Foundation) who provided contacts of the Artsakhian families and **Anna Aslanian** from Union Forte Volunteering Organization who connected us with three amazing volunteers.

Link to Bari Luys: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/V7vfk5ZjV1tBuCbs/?mibextid=WC7FNe>



*Founders of Oghak NGO*



*Yerevan State University Lecture*



*With Naira Aghapegyan, Public Radio*

Gratitude to **Milana Petrosova**, President of Positive Psychotherapy Association of Armenia, we had an intensive and moving workshop working on empathy, and self-care with over 30 psychologists.

Gratitude to **Tamara Gevorgyan**, CEO of **Helios Medical Center** who treated us for a healing retreat; **Karen Hakobian** and **Hripsime Chareta Tumanyan**, for a retreat in their ancestral home in Ashtarak, **Tatoents Qotuk**, with authentic Armenian food and drinks amongst rustic surrounding in picturesque Ashtarak, it is a must to all travelers to Armenia. The list of gratitude is extensive, and we are so grateful to be part of this healing journey. A new collaboration with **Oghak** was very fruitful. This is a great center for women & children, teaching life sustaining skills and new occupations to help empower women and families. Special gratitude to **Vera Sisserian** and her sister who are founders and CEO of the center.

Special gratitude to our Executive Assistant **Margo Sargsyan**, who is a certified psychologist who graduated with honors from Yerevan State University with an M.A. in Personality Psychology and Counseling. She has been working with ATOP MeaningfulWorld Armenia Missions since 2021. Together we were able to reach over 25 families from Artsakh, and outreach to many universities as well as NGO's.

We nurtured new collaborators such as the Genocide Prevention Department of Yerevan State University, thanks to **Mr. Robert Sukiasyan**, and the Department Director Prof. Vahram Petrosyan, together, we will conduct research, have an international conference next spring 2025, with an invitation to be on the board of editors of their professional journal. We worked with over 200 people directly, and over a million through **Armenia TV on Bari Luys**, special gratitude to **Artak and Arevik**. As well as on Public Radio with anchor **Naira Aghapegyan**, who enlightened the listeners of the mental health status of the communities we observed in Armenia.

Here is Margo's reflection: "I concluded the mission with mixed feelings: On the one hand, I was so happy that a lot of work had been put in for months to secure engagement; on the other hand, everyone rushed to ask us to help their relatives once they learnt about the healing, and the monetary compensation. We did face a lot of hardships when it came to explaining that our INGO was not a charity: we help people heal, therefore, surveys must be completed before we could assist in the healing. Our work with the families from Artsakh showed that people do come from different walks of life even when they have walked the same path of exile together. Some families were very welcoming and grateful and contributed to the research a lot and allowed us to bring healing, some were resisting even the idea of participating in the project, while others rushed to send us additional contacts of families that we should also help. At the end of the day, I was happy to see that they were open to speaking up about all the atrocities that had happened in their lives and who were ready to extend their hands to help one another.

I would also like to add that I saw the same resistance to healing therapy when working with some universities and TV/media channels. We had to convince them that we need to focus on mental health. In some cases, when they gave us that green light, like **Armenia TV and Bari Luys**, they were



amazed themselves about how useful even a 15-minute interview could be, they even went over time to hear and experience Emotional Freedom Technique. Others possessed poor organizational skills, and resisted preplanning, leaving everything to the last minute.”

I too have noticed that to pre plan and organize ahead of time has been a challenge in Armenia, as everyone lives day-to-day, a life in waiting for something to happen by someone else. The 650 years of occupation by Ottoman Empire (Learned Insha Allah, God willing), followed by 75 years of Soviet Regime (depending on government, losing independence) *has resulted in learned helplessness.*



*With our volunteers at AUA*



*At YSU with Student Scientific Council ~ Volunteer Diana Antonyan*



*School #94 Principal & teachers~ Volunteer Nvard Movsisyan ~ survivors from Artsakh in Etchmiadzin*



*At the Positive Psychotherapy Association*



*Heart-to-Heart-Circle of love and Gratitude!*

***Our Motto: When one helps another, BOTH become stronger!***

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