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EURASIA
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FROM WALLS TO BRIDGES

Istanbul–Yerevan Youth Dialogue and Peaceful Public Communication Initiative

Support to Armenia–Türkiye Normalisation:
Enhancing Cross–Border Linkages



PARTNER SEARCH

We are looking for an active partner
organisation based in Yerevan.



Costs planned
to be covered:

accommodation, meals,
travel, transfers, visa and
health insurance.



Response deadline:
20 July 2026



Contact:

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GENÇ GÖNÜLLÜLER DERNEĞİ
YOUNG VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION

This partner search concerns a project application to be submitted
under the above–mentioned grant programme.

PROJECT CONCEPT NOTE

From Walls to Bridges

Istanbul–Yerevan Youth Dialogue and Peaceful Public Discourse Initiative

Project Overview

Applicant organisation: Genç Gönüllüler Derneği – Türkiye

Partner sought: A legally registered and active civil society or youth organisation based in Yerevan, Armenia

Implementation locations: Istanbul and Yerevan

Planned duration: Up to 11 months

Programme: Support to Armenia–Türkiye Normalisation: Enhancing Cross-Border Linkages

Background and Rationale

The sustainability of the ongoing normalisation process between Türkiye and Armenia depends not only on diplomatic dialogue but also on the establishment of lasting, trust-based relationships between the two societies.

Limited direct interaction between the two communities over many years has contributed to the transmission of historical fears, stereotypes and prejudices to younger generations. Schoolbooks, historical maps, museum narratives, media content, social media posts and, at times, polarising political rhetoric may portray the neighbouring society as a permanent threat rather than as a diverse and changing community.

Historical maps and cultural narratives can also be interpreted as present-day territorial or political claims when they are presented without sufficient historical context. Similarly, associating an entire people with past conflicts or political disputes can deepen mistrust and distance between communities.

In Türkiye, discriminatory language targeting Armenian identity, the use of ethnic identity as an insult or accusation, the limited visibility of Armenian cultural heritage and hostile content circulated through social media also undermine mutual understanding and social trust.

The project will not attempt to judge historical disputes or identify one side as solely responsible. Instead, it will examine how historical and contemporary narratives affect young people in both societies and develop balanced, practical and peaceful methods to address racism, ethnic prejudice, xenophobia, hate speech and polarising public discourse.

Genç Gönüllüler Derneği has previous experience in Armenia–Türkiye youth cooperation. In 2007, representatives of the organisation participated in the project “**Everyone Is Different, Everyone Is Equal**” in Armenia and worked directly with Armenian young people. Armenian participants were later hosted in Istanbul within the framework of a European Union youth project.

These earlier activities addressed racism, xenophobia, equality, entrepreneurship and cooperation between young people. **From Walls to Bridges** will build on this experience and renew the relationship through the participation of a new generation.

Overall Objective

To bring together young people, civil society representatives and experts from Türkiye and Armenia in order to develop joint methods for reducing mutual prejudice, discriminatory narratives and hostile public discourse, while strengthening trust through visible community-based activities in Istanbul and Yerevan.

Specific Objectives

The project aims to:

1. Examine how educational, historical, political and media narratives in Türkiye and Armenia influence young people’s perceptions of the neighbouring society.
 2. Strengthen the capacity of Turkish and Armenian young people to recognise and respond to racism, xenophobia, ethnic prejudice, hate speech, disinformation and polarising language.
 3. Implement two visible community solidarity activities in Istanbul and Yerevan that directly benefit local educational, cultural or youth spaces.
 4. Develop practical methods and recommendations for educators, youth workers, journalists, civil society organisations and decision-makers on peaceful public communication and counter-narratives.
 5. Establish a sustainable cooperation mechanism between Genç Gönüllüler Derneği and the selected Armenian partner organisation.
 6. Use the project as a pilot and preparatory phase for a larger, multiannual Armenia–Türkiye youth dialogue, peacebuilding and social cooperation programme.
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Target Groups

The primary target group will consist of young people aged approximately 18–30 from Türkiye and Armenia.

The selection process will seek balanced representation and will prioritise:

- Young women;
- Young people with fewer opportunities;
- Participants from diverse social and educational backgrounds;
- Young people interested in youth work, education, media, culture, human rights, peacebuilding or social entrepreneurship;
- Young professionals and students in communication, history, political science, education and related fields.

The project will also involve:

- Youth workers and educators;
 - Civil society organisations;
 - Researchers and university representatives;
 - Media professionals and digital content creators;
 - Armenian educational and cultural institutions in Istanbul;
 - Local authorities and public institutions;
 - Journalists and decision-makers;
 - Organisations working on Armenia–Türkiye relations.
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Main Activities

1. Joint Preparation and Research

The Turkish and Armenian project teams will jointly develop a methodology for examining narratives and communication patterns in both countries.

Young participants and experts will work in mixed groups to review selected examples from:

- Schoolbooks and educational materials;
- Museums and exhibition narratives;
- Historical maps and accompanying descriptions;
- Traditional and digital media;
- Social media content;
- Political and public statements;
- Cultural heritage communication.

The research will not create a list of “guilty” individuals or institutions. Instead, it will identify recurring patterns of polarising discourse, assess their possible impact on young people and propose more constructive alternatives.

Particular attention will be given to:

- Distinguishing historical geography from current political claims;

- Presenting historical maps with appropriate dates, sources and context;
 - Avoiding the collective attribution of responsibility to an entire people;
 - Recognising multiple historical and social perspectives;
 - Preventing historical narratives from being used to produce hostility against present-day communities.
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2. Online Youth Preparation Programme

Before the face-to-face activities, selected young people from Türkiye and Armenia will participate in a joint online preparation programme.

The sessions will address:

- The formation of stereotypes and prejudice;
- Racism, xenophobia and hate speech;
- Intercultural communication;
- Conflict-sensitive communication;
- Media literacy and disinformation;
- Multiperspectivity in history education;
- Peaceful counter-narratives;
- Community activity design;
- Ethical storytelling and interviewing.

This phase will help participants establish trust, understand the project's ethical framework and prepare for sensitive discussions.

3. Istanbul Youth Dialogue and Peaceful Discourse Workshop

A five-day international programme will be organised in Istanbul with the participation of Armenian young people and representatives, Turkish participants and relevant experts.

The programme will include:

- Workshops on mutual perceptions, prejudice and hate speech;
- Analysis of controversial maps, media materials and public narratives;
- Development of alternative and peaceful communication approaches;
- Sessions with educators, journalists, youth workers and civil society representatives;
- Meetings with representatives of Istanbul's Armenian community;
- Development of recommendations for educational and public communication;
- Production of short videos, interviews, podcasts or digital stories;
- Preparation of the project guide and policy recommendations.

The workshop will not seek to reproduce historical disputes. Its focus will be on how sensitive historical issues can be discussed without producing new hostility between today's young people.

4. Community Solidarity Activity in Istanbul

Turkish and Armenian young people will jointly carry out a practical community activity in cooperation with an Armenian school, community foundation, cultural centre, youth space or another suitable institution in Istanbul.

Depending on the needs of the host institution and the necessary permissions, the activity may include:

- Painting or improving a classroom or common area;
- Renovating a youth or activity room;
- Creating a small library or learning corner;
- Producing a mural focused on coexistence, childhood, nature, culture or a shared future;
- Organising an intercultural youth activity with the local community.

The content and format of the activity will be agreed with the host institution and its users. No controversial territorial, political or nationalist symbols will be used.

The activity will demonstrate that young people from both societies can work together to improve a shared social space.

5. Yerevan Joint Implementation Programme

A smaller delegation of young people and project representatives from Türkiye will travel to Yerevan and work with the Armenian partner and local participants.

The programme is expected to last three or four days and may include:

- A joint improvement activity in a school, youth centre or community space;
- A workshop on discrimination, public discourse and media literacy;
- A roundtable with local civil society and media representatives;
- Meetings with educators, researchers or cultural institutions;
- Completion of joint digital content;
- Collection of material for the Armenian section of the project publication;
- Discussion of future cooperation and the larger follow-up programme.

The Istanbul and Yerevan community activities will share the same principle:

We cannot change the past, but we can improve the spaces and relationships that future generations will inherit.

6. Peaceful Public Discourse Forum

A final forum will be organised to present the project findings, community activities and recommendations.

Participants may include:

- Civil society organisations;
- Youth organisations;
- Academics and researchers;
- Educators and youth workers;
- Journalists and media organisations;
- Local authorities;
- Public institutions;
- Political and decision-making representatives.

The forum will focus on practical communication approaches rather than blaming individuals or institutions.

Expected Outputs

The project is expected to produce:

- A joint Turkish–Armenian youth working group;
- A comparative review of prejudices and public discourse patterns;
- Two visible community solidarity activities in Istanbul and Yerevan;
- A trilingual publication entitled:

From Walls to Bridges: A Guide to Peaceful Public Discourse and Counter-Narratives

The guide will be prepared in Turkish, Armenian and English and will include:

- Common patterns of polarising discourse;
- Methods for contextualising historical maps and museum materials;
- Multiperspectivity approaches for educators;
- Conflict-sensitive communication principles for media professionals;
- Peaceful public communication recommendations;
- Practical workshop methods for youth workers;

- Examples of constructive narratives and cooperation;
- Experiences from the Istanbul and Yerevan activities.

The project will also produce:

- A short policy paper entitled “**12 Recommendations for Peaceful Public Communication in Armenia–Türkiye Relations**”;
 - Youth-work and education workshop modules;
 - Short videos, interviews, podcasts or digital stories;
 - A cooperation protocol between the partner organisations;
 - A roadmap and preliminary framework for a larger follow-up project.
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Preparation for a Larger Programme

From Walls to Bridges is not designed as an isolated or one-off activity.

It will serve as a pilot and preparatory phase for a larger **Armenia–Türkiye Youth Dialogue, Shared Memory and Social Cooperation Programme**.

Through this project:

- The joint methodology will be tested;
- A reliable institutional partnership will be established;
- Training and dialogue materials will be developed;
- A network of relevant stakeholders will be created;
- The needs and priorities of young people in both countries will be assessed;
- A two- or three-year cooperation programme will be designed;
- Future funding opportunities under the European Union and other international programmes will be explored.

The larger programme may later include youth dialogue, education, media cooperation, cultural production, social entrepreneurship, community volunteering and long-term institutional networking.

Partner Sought in Armenia

Genç Gönüllüler Derneği is seeking an **active, reliable and legally registered partner organisation based in Yerevan**.

The preferred partner should have relevant experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Youth work;

- Human rights and anti-discrimination;
- Peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue;
- Media literacy and communication;
- Non-formal education;
- Community development;
- Armenia–Türkiye relations;
- European Union or international grant projects.

The Armenian organisation is expected to participate as a genuine project partner rather than solely as a participant-sending organisation.

Expected responsibilities include:

- Contributing to the project design and application process;
 - Participating in joint planning and decision-making;
 - Selecting and preparing Armenian participants;
 - Coordinating the Yerevan activities;
 - Establishing cooperation with a local school, youth centre or community institution;
 - Contributing to research and content development;
 - Supporting Armenian-language translation and dissemination;
 - Participating in project monitoring and documentation;
 - Contributing to the development of the larger follow-up programme.
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Financial and Participation Arrangements

The project is not intended to provide either partner organisation with unrestricted institutional funding or profit.

The project budget will be used solely for approved project activities and eligible direct project costs.

The planning foresees that the following costs for participants and relevant project representatives will be covered within the project framework:

- International and local transportation;
- Airport and local transfers;
- Accommodation;
- Meals;
- Visa costs, where applicable;
- Travel and health insurance.

The Armenian partner organisation will not be expected to provide co-financing, cover participant expenses or use its own institutional budget for project activities.

Similarly, neither Genç Gönüllüler Derneği nor the Armenian partner is expected to receive a freely disposable institutional budget. Expenditure will be directly linked to jointly implemented activities, participant needs and approved project costs.

The partnership is therefore not expected to create a financial burden for the Armenian organisation.

Expression of Interest and Deadline

Due to the limited application preparation period, interested organisations are requested to provide either a positive or negative response **no later than 20 July 2026**.

Organisations interested in joining the project are kindly requested to share:

- A brief organisational profile;
- Relevant project experience;
- Information about their implementation capacity in Yerevan;
- The name and contact details of the proposed contact person;
- Confirmation of their interest in participating in the joint application.

Following a positive response, an online meeting will be organised to clarify:

- Roles and responsibilities;
- Participant profiles;
- Istanbul and Yerevan activities;
- Project timetable;
- Documentation required for the application;
- Direct project costs to be covered;
- Cooperation on the future larger-scale programme.