

How to Increase Family Tourism in Armenia:
Emphasis on the Armenian Diaspora in Lebanon

by

Nayri Kechichian

Presented to the
Department of English & Communications
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

American University of Armenia
Yerevan, Armenia

May 5, 2016

Introduction

The Travel and Tourism industry is one of the fastest growing markets in the world. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) 2015 statistics, Travel & Tourism contributed to 9.8% of global GDP (US\$7.2 trillion), and has employed around 284 people worldwide (1 in 11 people). Also, in 2015, the industry has grown by 3.1% - the 6th consecutive year of positive growth for the sector.

Looking at these figures shows that if a country works hard on developing its Travel & Tourism sector, it will have a good economic standing, especially that according to the WTTC, "Travel & Tourism will outperform the global economy throughout the next decade, growing by an expected 4% on average annually over the next ten years". Thus, working hard on increasing tourism in Armenia is one of the best ways to establish a sustainable method of income to the country.

This capstone highlights the flaws in the Armenian tourism industry based on research on families from the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon, who have at least 2 children, and shows a plan to increase family tourism in Armenia.

For some, it may not be clear why the research is based on travellers who travel with their families. According to Heike Schänzel, Ian Yeoman, and Elisa Backer in their book "Family Tourism: Multidisciplinary Perspectives", families account for 30% of the leisure travel market around the world. This is not a number to take for granted, especially now that the economic and the political situation in Armenia are not stable.

Having been working in the Travel & Tourism industry for more than two years, and having clients from Lebanon that were travelling as a family have helped me realize that the demand for

a quality time with the family members away from everyday stress is increasing in Lebanon, and the diaspora is looking towards family-friendly destinations, and are frequenting Armenia at least once in their life. However, this does not mean that families are not enjoying their stay in Armenia. Many of my clients have complained that Armenia is a destination for the elderly, because there is nothing to see other than monasteries and museums. There is a chance that these negative experiences are being a reason for Armenia to lose potential tourists. Thus, this capstone emphasizes the complaints families have about their vacations in Armenia, what positive experiences they have had, and for those who have not been to Armenia, what they expect to see or experience. Taking into account that the research was not conducted only on parents, but children are active participants, this capstone will have a balanced view into the positive and negative sides of travelling to Armenia as a family, which can be used to improve tourism in Armenia and encourage family tourism in the country.

Literature Review

Armenia is a small post-soviet country that is located in Western Asia and is bordered by Nagorno Karabakh, Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. Which brings us to the point that when people think of travelling, Armenia is not the first country that comes to their mind, taking into account the constant battles its neighbor Armenian country; Nagorno Karabakh has with Azerbaijan, and the closed borders Armenia has with Turkey. Armenia is ranked number one in the world when it comes to population's access to clean drinking water and mobile network coverage, which are things that tourists are looking for when travelling to a certain country. Also, it was at the bottom of the list when it came to the number of HIV-infected people. This fact also

is relevant to tourists because it shows the country's population is in a relatively healthy situation. Yet, in 2015 it was ranked 89th out of 141 countries (down from a position of 79th in 2013). In 2015, despite the decrease of tourism in Armenia by 1%, Travel & Tourism contributed \$1.5 billion to the Armenian GDP. This means Armenia has potential to have significant revenue from the tourism industry, but the question is whether necessary steps are being taken to reach to that point. According to Tovmasyan's article, "Tourism Development Trends in the World", there are marketing, legislation, statistics, infrastructure and human resource problems in Armenia when it comes to travel and tourism, which is reflected in a 2015 statistic which ranks Armenia 117th when it comes to effective marketing to attract tourists.

The lack of extensive action to attract tourists from the Armenian diaspora became more visible to me when I read Kwaku Nti's article "Uniting the African Family" that Africa, which many consider a third-world continent, has changed the name of the Ministry of Tourism to Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relation to attract people from African descent, showing that the African Diaspora is part of Africa, and the country could not succeed and go forward without them. Also, unlike Armenia, Africa eliminated cumbersome visa regulations to facilitate the visit of the diaspora to their native lands. However, when it comes to Armenia, Armenians have to apply and pay for a visa, which based on my experience irritates some from the diaspora, because the diaspora thinks they are entitled to visit their native land (although in the case of Lebanese Armenians, Western Armenia; Eastern Turkey, is the native land) without having to go through burdensome steps just to get a visa.

In 1915, when Armenians were forced to move from Western Armenia into the unknown, they had no clue whether they were going to be able to go back to their homeland, or whether they were going to have contact with their loved ones or Armenians in general that were left behind.

However, globalization has made communication and interaction easier, making things easier in our developed lives nowadays. Globalization has made it possible for those who have left and those who have stayed behind to maintain social, economic, political and emotional ties, but not all is positive when it comes to globalization and more contact between those in the diaspora, and those in their native lands. Getting in contact with those in the native land more frequently sometimes estranges the diaspora, because they uncover more essential differences than similarities in class, gender roles, and cultural norms and practices.

Homeland is one's historical place to which a person is emotionally attached and is obliged to return to, in this case, Lebanon. Whereas, center is a place that someone has positive memories and personal attachments towards, but it not obliged to return to, in this case, Armenia. For the sake of this capstone, several articles have been read related to the diaspora of several countries, to determine what diaspora truly means, how the diaspora connects with the "center", and how we can strengthen the bond and the relationship between the "center" and the diaspora, instead of allowing the diaspora to get estranged from the "center".

Just as the Eritrean diaspora (Arnone, 2011), the Armenian diaspora also confused nostalgic imagination of Armenia with reality. This confusion paves the way for a larger gap and distance between the diaspora and Armenia, hence have a negative effect on travel and tourism. Some of the major differences and conflicts between the diaspora and the "center" I came across during my research and interactions with tourists from the Armenian diaspora in Lebanon are the following:

Women's rights and position within the "center" differs from that of the diaspora. For example, Eritrean women in the diaspora have more rights and they are more free to do what they want;

work, study, go out, etc. whereas women in Eritrea are mainly house-bound and do not enjoy the privileges their relatives or friends have abroad (in this case in Milan). Although the case is not exactly the same in Armenia, but Armenian diaspora women in Lebanon have more say in their lives and families than women in Armenia, which bring about misunderstandings when they visit Armenia.

Another major issue that plays a huge role in separating the diaspora and those living in Armenia is the concept locals in Armenia have that those who live in the diaspora are rich, and that they are spending their money on things that they work hard to get or do not even have the chance to get. Whereas the diaspora thinks that they are working hard all year long and they deserve to spend that money on leisure at least for a week in a year. The same image is presented by Anna Arnone in her article “Tourism and the Eritrean Diaspora”. In this article she interviewed tourists in Eritrea from the diaspora in Milan who state that their relatives and friends in Eritrea blame them for spending so much money on dinners out and evenings at a bar.

Adding fuel to fire, Sherma Roberts states in her article “Assessing the Potential of Diaspora Tourism” that the diaspora sometimes resents being labeled a tourist when visiting the country of their origin, which they think minimizes their legitimate claim to their roots. I have not come across tourists from the diaspora in Lebanon who have shown this concern, but this capstone is going to tackle this issue through interviews.

Working in the travel industry for two years has given me insights about tourists who visit Armenia, and in these two years I have come across many who state that Armenia is not a good place to visit with kids, because there is nothing much to see other than churches and museum, which do not interest children. The lack of children’s interest has forced parents to choose other

destinations for their family vacations, to avoid conflicts with the kids and to give their kids something to enjoy and look forward to. According to Heike A. Schänzel and Karen A. Smith in their article “The Socialization of Families Away from Home: Group Dynamics and Family Functioning on Holiday”, families travelling with children represent one of the largest and most constant markets for the tourism and leisure industry, but people have not spent time researching children’s and families’ holiday experiences. Moreover, they state that even those who have done some research on families travelling with children have not taken the voices of the kids into consideration, and the research results are based on what parents think. This capstone is going to consider children as active agents, and the results of individual interviews of children with the consent of their parents or guardians are going to be taken into account to create the best way to increase family tourism in Armenia. A tourism plan that does not simply increase tourism in Armenia, but one that keeps children interested in coming back to Armenia regularly. Also, according to Schänzel and Smith, even fathers are usually passive when it comes to researches conducted on families. This is also something that is going to be changed in the format of the research conducted to fill in the gaps of other researches. During my research, I came across disturbing realities of family dynamics during holidays or travel. For example, in Schänzel and Smith’s article I read that not everyone is happy and satisfied on a daily basis during a family vacation that included children. According to the authors, sometimes the mothers did not have a chance to rest and enjoy their vacation because they still had responsibilities towards their spouse and kids. Other times the children were miserable because they had to follow their parent’s itinerary and do whatever interests their parents. This is something that is going to be almost eliminated in this project. This aim of this capstone is to create a plan in which mothers will have

less responsibilities, and children have a chance to detach from their parents and follow their interests.

There is a lack of research on the tourism activities of Armenian families. Taking that into account, first-hand experience and knowledge of what families from different parts of the world want are going to be used as a base for the research. Families visiting Armenia from Lebanon are part of the diaspora. That is why I think it was essential for me to study more about diaspora tourism separately, to cover all aspects of my project without leaving any gaps. By studying the weaknesses and strengths of tourism in Armenia, what other countries have done to attract tourists from the diaspora, and how families function on holidays I had a more thorough understanding of what I should do and what I should look for while writing my capstone.

Research Questions and Methodology

This capstone aims to answer one main question; “What should Armenia do to increase Lebanese diaspora family tourism in Armenia?”, and two sub-questions; “What urges the Lebanese diaspora to visit Armenia?” and “Why do families chose to visit or not visit Armenia for a vacation?” The reason behind including the sub-questions is to strengthen the research conducted on the central question.

To get answers to these questions, field research was conducted in Lebanon between December 10, 2016 and January 21, 2017. In order to obtain more concrete results, the interviews were done with families who had at least two children who are not married and live in the family household. At the end, 35 families were interviewed from different regions of Lebanon like

Bourj Hammoud, Anjar, Fanar, and Mezher. This reason people from these 4 locations were chosen is to make the participants as diverse as possible. For example, Mezher is considered a place where reside people from a relatively high society. And on the other hand, Bourj Hammoud and/or Fanar are considered residential areas for low to middle class people. This gives the research different points of view, and not just one from either people that belong to the high class or the low class. The total number of children who participated in the interviews is 78, whose ages range from 6 months old to 25 year old.

Taking into account that the duration during which the interviews were conducted was a holiday season, and most people were busy with their Christmas and New Year's Eve preparations, the participants were selected through friends, family and acquaintances, and their political and religious backgrounds were not taken into account as a major factor.

The interviews consisted of two different parts; interview with the parents and a separate interview with the kids, with the consent of their parents in case they were below 18 years of age. The questions for each section of the interview were different. Parents were asked 29 questions, whereas kids were asked 9 questions. Also, it is important to take into account the minority of the children aged between 0 and 2 years old were not interviewed for an obvious reason; their age and the ability to talk.

Also, to not make the interviews a burden on the families participating, the interviews were conducted either in their residence or at their work place (in case they owned their own business). This part eased the entire process, because the participants were not confused as where to meet.

Research Findings and Analysis

Most of the research findings from the interviews conducted for the purpose of this capstone were expected. Working in the industry, and having the chance to listen to the ideas, concerns and the points of view of tourists, gives you the chance to know what the faults are in Armenia when it comes to the travel and tourism industry, and what needs to be improved.

Participants of the interview conducted for the purpose of this capstone were from different backgrounds, interests and social standings, but they have one thing in common; their love and interest towards Armenia. 32 out of the 35 families who participated in the interviews mentioned that they have visited Armenia at least once, whereas the other three families visit Armenia on a regular basis, for two months every year. 50% of the families who said they have been to Armenia at least once stated that they stayed in Armenia for a week, whereas 22% said they have stayed for 15 days, and the other 28%; for 10 days. This shows that the majority prefer to stay for a short period of time because they either have work responsibilities they have to get back to, they don't have the monetary stability to stay longer, or because they feel they have nothing much to do. During their stay, 16% of the 32 families stayed in hotels, whereas the large majority, 84% of them rented apartments or houses. This finding shows that by increasing family tourism in Armenia, middle class Armenians will hugely benefit from it, because their apartments and houses are being rented, and they are having additional income. When couples visit Armenia, they tend to stay in hotels, because the nightly price of a three star hotel and an apartment is almost the same. Thus, either foreign investors or rich Armenians are going to be the ones to benefit, and not the middle class. Those three families who visit Armenia on a yearly

basis own either an apartment or a house in Armenia, and that is where their stay during their two-month long vacations.

When the participants were asked about the reason they choose to visit Armenia, all of them, without exception, said because Armenia is their motherland. Other reasons were thrown in also; safety, taking into account that Yerevan is ranked 25th out of 117 cities when it comes to safety. Cost, knowing that leisure in Armenia is cheaper than any other country, especially Lebanon. Language, because despite the difference in Western and Eastern Armenian, people still understand each other one way or another. Culture, because the culture in Armenia in some cases is similar to the Armenian culture in Lebanon, and people are familiar with it. For example, respect and care towards children; if a child is Armenian, than he/she belongs to the nation, and everyone feels responsible for him/her. And last, but not least, to get their children attached to Armenia. This point is specifically relevant to the three families who visit Armenia every year, because they are thinking of moving to Armenia in the future, and they want their kids to get used to the culture, life and language in Armenia.

During their visit, the places the families visited are the following: Echmiadzin (St. Gayane church, St. Hripsime church, Mother Cathedral), Zvartnots Cathedral, Sardarabad, Gyumri, Garni, Geghard, Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum, History Museum, Ashtarak (Saghmosavank, Armenian Alphabet Monument), Khor Virap, Areni, Noravank, Tatev, Artsakh, Oshakan, Amberd, Lake Sevan, Dilijan, Tsaghgatsor and Jermuk. The percentage of families who visited the above mentioned destinations is as follows:

Churches/Monasteries/Temples:

- Echmiadzin (St. Gayane church, St. Hripsime church, Mother Cathedral): 100%
- Khor Virap: 99%
- Garni: 98%
- Geghard: 98%
- Noravank: 86%
- Oshakan: 75%
- Tatev: 67%
- Zvartnots Cathedral: 60%
- Amberd: 52%

Memorials:

- Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum: 100%
- Sardarabad: 80%

Museums:

- History Museum: 23%

Others:

- Lake Sevan: 100%
- Dilijan: 100%
- Areni: 86%
- Ashtarak (Saghmosavank, Armenian Alphabet Monument): 75%
- Tsaghgatsor: 75%
- Jermuk.: 61%
- Artsakh: 52%

- Gyumri: 20%

As you can see, the highest ranking destinations are those that the participants have learned about all their lives, like the Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum, and Echmiadzin. And, the destinations that are fun for the family, like Lake Sevan. As for the lowest ranking destinations such as the History museum and Gyumri, are clear examples of what tourists travelling with their family do not like to see, because there is nothing fun or interesting in those places that will suit the entire family.

All in all, the interviewed families showed satisfaction towards their visits to Armenia, despite having some minor concerns and dislikes. They liked the fact that they got the chance to visit the places they have learned in school, and put everything in place. They loved seeing a country that is not polluted like Lebanon. They got to see clean streets and nature in the middle of the city.

As for the concerns, well, they had many. For the purpose of this capstone, I am going to distribute them to 5 groups; food and beverage, destinations, language, locals and government.

One of the most discussed topics during the interviews was in regards to the food and beverage industry. 100% of the interviewed families mentioned that they do not like the food and the service they get in Armenia. They could not explain in detail why they did not like it, but one housewife mentioned, “The food is too bland, there are no spices, salt, and pepper. It’s as if they do not season their food before cooking or serving it”. When the topic shifted to the service restaurants or diners in Armenia offer, the reactions on the families’ faces was unforgettable. One man brought the example of a diner that is located near the Republic Square saying that “the food there is better than the other places we’ve been, and based on recommendation from friends, we went there, and set inside, although the weather was hot, and we could have sat

outside, but my kids wanted to sit inside, and that is what we did. You won't believe how long we waited just to get a menu! I'm a picky person, and I counted the minutes on my cellphone, we waited exactly 20 minutes before anyone even laid eyes on us. Apparently they were low on waiters, and all of them were working outside on the terrace. You won't see a service like this in Lebanon, not even in the countryside, not even in the worst areas of Lebanon; near the borders." Taking into account that the customer service one gets in Lebanese restaurants is exceptional, and the cuisine is full of seasoning, it is no surprise to see such negative experiences when it comes to the food and beverage industry in Armenia.

The second point that got much critic is the destination/touristic sites. The major concern the families showed was that the touristic sites they visited were so similar to each other. Every place they went was to see churches and monasteries, and they said they got sick of seeing the same stuff over and over again. For example, the children said they wanted to see more interesting places like amusement parks, more English movies in the cinemas, extreme sports, and, water sports in Sevan.

Language is the third point the families were upset about. "We're all Armenians, we should have one language that we can all understand", was the reaction of one of the fathers. Armenians in Lebanon know Western Armenian, whereas locals in Armenia know Eastern Armenian. The difference between the two languages puts a barrier between the diaspora and the locals. A common example of this barrier is with the word "Hajis" which means please, and is used frequently in Western Armenian. When Armenians from Lebanon visit Armenia, and use this word, they are looked at in a weird way, because that word does not exist in the Eastern Armenian vocabulary. Another language conflict example is with the word "tske", which means leave it, in Western Armenian, whereas in Eastern Armenian it means tighten it. What families

were more concerned about is the fact that when they went to buy anything from regular stores (not supermarkets), or from the open-air market; Vernissage, the cashiers or the owners of the place did not understand Western Armenian or English, which put them in a difficult situation, where they could not communicate effectively.

People have different personalities, traditions, and way of life, but when we think of Armenians, we think that most of them should have the same traits, and there should be mutual respect. One of the other most put forward concerns shown by the families was that the locals were looking at them in a different way, like tourists. “I know we’re not living here, we’re technically tourists, but we are Armenians, this is our land too, why should we be looked at differently?” said one of the children. “When we get into taxis, and ask them how much we should pay, the drivers always charge us more. For example, we once took a taxi from Republica hotel to our friend’s house near Proshyan. It’s 14 km journey, and we should have been charged 1,400, maximum 1,500 AMD. And do you know how much we paid? 5,000 AMD! Do you think this is fair?” stated one of the fathers. His wife added by saying, “What we want is to be considered Armenian and nothing else. We want to feel equal.” Not feeling equal to local Armenians does not stop with the taxis, it is actually a common thing when buying souvenirs or paying entrance fees at specific destinations like Garni. For example, in Garni, a local citizen pays 200 AMD, whereas for tourists, it’s 1,000 AMD. And Armenians from the diaspora are being charged as tourists, more than double the price designated for Armenians.

As for the final point; government, the only issue the families had towards that is the visa they are forced to obtain before entering Armenia. Those who have Armenian citizenship do not have that issue, but those who do not have the citizenship, especially male children who cannot obtain a citizenship because they are going to be forced to do military service, always have to apply and

obtain a visa for which they have to pay 6\$, for up to 21 days of stay and 31\$ for up to 120 days of stay. “We’re Armenians, we do everything we can to help our country prosper, we constantly send monetary help, why do we still get a visa?” said one of the wives.

After hearing the concerns the families have, a plan can be put to increase the flow of Armenian families from Lebanon. To attract more families, the government first should find a way to implement another system for Armenians from the diaspora instead of visas. This will be an incentive to bring more tourists into the country. This might take some time to implement, but it is feasible. If Africa could do it, so can Armenia! Armenia has 10 year residency passports for those interested in obtaining it, but it costs 150,000 AMD, and requires plenty of paperwork such as proof of current citizenship, information regarding pas citizenships, occupation, and reason for applying for a residency, how many times have you previously visited Armenia, and so on. What I would suggest they do to ease the process is provide all Armenians with Armenian residency with a minimal charge and with just an official document that proves the person applying for residency is Armenian.

As for the food and beverage industry, they should be informed by the Ministry of Culture (because there is no Ministry of Tourism in Armenia) about the concerns tourists have, in order to better the management of the restaurants and be well trained for the demanding tourists. This does not in any way mean that the entire Armenian cuisine should change, but they should take into account the tourists, which during summer bring good income to the owners of the establishments.

When it comes to the destinations and the touristic attractions, the Ministry of Culture alongside top local and foreign travel agencies should arrange a meeting to see what interests travellers

usually have, and what they could do in Armenia that would interest the tourists. Based on the research conducted for the sake of this paper, what travelers are seeking is fun and leisure, which based on their testimonies seem to lack or are insufficient in Armenia. So, what the Ministry of Culture start doing is seeing how Lake Sevan can be used for the country's benefit. How the beaches can be improved, and what can be added to attract more tourists, not just from Lebanon, but from all over the world.

Language is a hard thing to work on, because solving that issue will require long time. However, what can be done is educate Armenians residing in Armenia about Western Armenian from the time they are still in school, and emphasize on teaching foreign languages like English. What the government could do in this case, is start free language learning classes for those working in the Travel & Tourism industry who would like to learn English. Of course this plan would cost, but the results will be worth it. Another step that would be beneficial in this case is cooperation between schools in Armenia and Armenian schools in Lebanon to organize exchange programs, to get Armenians from the Lebanese diaspora and Armenia acquainted with each other's language, customs and lifestyle to ease the process of integration when they visit Armenia and vice versa.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

This research has potential to be expanded and looked into more, because the number of participants is small considering that around 156,000 people of Armenian origin live in Lebanon nowadays (this constitutes to 4% of the total Lebanese population), and the research this

capstone is being based on is conducted on 148 individuals (the number includes infants), which is less than 1% of the population with Armenian origins.

Also, the duration during which the research was conducted was short. The research was done between December 10, 2016 and January 21, 2017, a holiday season, during which most families are busy with their families, or have travelled abroad.

I believe there is still a long way to go to get to an ultimate, ideal plan for the Armenian tourism industry to attract more tourists, especially from the Armenian diaspora. Armenians currently reside in most well-known countries such as the United States of America, Australia, Canada, France, and so on, and there is still opportunity to implement the same research on the Armenian diaspora in those locations. Last, but not least, the issue the diaspora has with the views and customs of the local population. In order to reach a solution, and change this relationship for the better, a research should be done to record the thoughts and views local Armenians have towards the diaspora. This, like the language, will take a long time to be changed, and will require some assistance from the schools and the teachers, because everything starts in schools, and people get shaped in schools.

Works Cited

Arnone, A. (2011). Tourism and the Eritrean Diaspora. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 29(4), 441-454. doi:10.1080/02589001.2011.603211

Doncean, M. (2014). The Role of Emotions in The Process of Knowledge of Tourism Products . *Agronomy Series Of Scientific Research / Lucrari Stiintifice Seria Agronomie*, 57(1), 259-262.

- Maruyama, N., & Stronza, A. (2010). Roots Tourism of Chinese Americans. *Ethnology*, 49(1), 23-44.
- Nti, K. (2014). "Uniting The African Family:" Monuments, Tourism, Development, and Neoliberalism in Ghana—Historic African Diaspora Relations. *Journal Of Third World Studies*, 31(2), 113-125.
- Roberts, S. (2012). Assessing the Potential of Diaspora Tourism. *Journal Of Eastern Caribbean Studies*, 37(3/4), 115-131.
- Schänzel, H. A., & Smith, K. A. (2014). The Socialization of Families Away from Home: Group Dynamics and Family Functioning on Holiday. *Leisure Sciences*, 36(2), 126-143. doi:10.1080/01490400.2013.857624
- Tovmasyan, G. (2016). Tourism Development Trends in the World. *European Journal Of Economic Studies*, 17(3), 429-434. doi:10.13187/es.2016.17.429
- Tovmasyan, G. (2016). Tourism Marketing in the Republic of Armenia. *European Journal Of Economic Studies*, 16(2), 358-363. doi:10.13187/es.2016.16.358
- Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact 2016 Annual Update Summary. (2016). Retrieved December 1, 2016, from World Travel & Tourism Council, http://www.wttc.org//media/files/reports/economic%20impact%20research/2016%20documents/economic%20impact%20summary%202016_a4%20web.pdf
- Yeoman, I., Dr. (2012, July 28). Future of Family Tourism. Retrieved December 1, 2016, from <http://www.tomorrowstourist.com/blog/?p=85>

Appendices

Information About the Children

	# of	Age & Sex	Age & Sex	Age & Sex	Age & Sex
Children					
1	2	7- Female	10- Male		
2	2	1- Female	5- Male		

3	2	1- Male	5- Male		
4	3	19- Female	20- Male	21- Female	
5	2	4- Female	10- Male		
6	2	10- Male	15- Male		
7	2	12- Female	15- Male		
8	2	2- Male	4- Male		
9	2	12- Female	12- Male		
10	2	6- Male	8- Male		
11	2	16- Male	18- Female		
12	2	16- Male	18- Male		
13	2	20- Female	24- Female		
14	2	11- Female	17- Male		
15	2	16- Female	17- Male		
16	2	2- Female	5- Male		
17	2	1- Female	11- Male		
18	2	3- Male	6- Male		
19	2	17- Female	17- Male		
20	2	12- Male	17- Male		
21	2	2- Female	18- Female		
22	2	6 m- Male	6- Male		
23	4	18- Female	20- Male	25- Female	27- Female
24	2	18- Male	20- Male		
25	2	5- Male	11- Female		

26	4	4- Female	12- Male	17- Female	20- Female
27	3	12- Female	20- Male	21- Male	
28	2	17- Female	24- Male		
29	3	17- Female	21- Female	24- Male	
30	2	18- Female	22- Female		
31	2	7- Female	20- Female		
32	2	2- Female	17- Male		
33	2	21- Female	25- Female		
34	2	17- Male	24- Female		
35	3	5- Male	12- Female		

Questionnaires

Questionnaire of the parents:

1. *Have you ever visited Armenia? If yes, how many times? When? If no, why?*
2. *What was the length and purpose of your visit?*
3. *What made you decide to visit Armenia?*
4. *What things were familiar, foreign, or uncomfortable to you in Armenia?*
5. *What experience(s) was (were) unexpected?*
6. *What was (were) the most significant experience(s) to you?*
7. *In what ways did you feel connected/ disconnected to Armenia?*
8. *Where do you feel at "home" and why?*
9. *Have your feelings of belonging changed because of the visit to Armenia? In what ways?*

10. *What other countries have you visited? Did you do the same activities in Armenia as you did there?*
11. *When in Armenia, do you feel a connection to the ancestors and your ancestral land or to current day Republic of Armenia?*
12. *Have you experienced language barriers in Armenia? Please explain.*
13. *What do you consider as homecoming, visiting Armenia or returning to Lebanon? Please explain.*
14. *Do you describe your time in Armenia as “experiential” or “experimental”?*
15. *Would you accept being separated from your children/parents for some parts of your stay in Armenia?*
16. *Do/Did you imagine Armenia as a utopia?*
17. *How does the memory of the Armenian Genocide affect you while in Armenia?*
18. *What did you like/dislike most about your vacation in Armenia?*
19. *Did you spend the majority of your time in Yerevan or outside Yerevan?*
20. *What destinations did you visit? Do you think they were suitable for your family? Do you think your kids enjoyed their visit to those destinations?*
21. *What activities do you think will make a trip to Armenia more interesting?*
22. *Do you mind applying for a visa before visiting Armenia? Please explain.*
23. *Do you mind being considered a tourist while visiting Armenia? Please explain.*
24. *What do you think the Armenian government should do to attract more tourists from the Lebanese diaspora?*
25. *Do you think a vacation in Armenia is expensive? If yes, please specify.*
26. *Do you think there should be special activities for kids in Armenia?*
27. *Do you think there should be special guides for kids in Armenia?*
28. *Would you trust leaving your children with babysitters in Armenia?*

29. *Do you feel you're at a vacation when in Armenia, or do your daily parental responsibilities take most of your time?*

30. *What would you change about your visit to Armenia? (If applicable)*

Questionnaire of the children:

1. *Are/were you interested in visiting Armenia?*

2. *Did your parents chose to visit Armenia or you urged them? (If applicable)*

3. *If you have not been to Armenia yet, will you urge your parents to take you to Armenia?*

4. *What things did you see in Armenia?*

5. *What things would you like to see in Armenia?*

6. *Would you be afraid to separate from your parents at some points during your vacation?*

7. *Would you mind spending some time with a babysitter?*

8. *Do your teachers talk about visiting Armenia?*

9. *Have you or your friends discussed visiting Armenia?*

10. *What activities would make you like visiting Armenia and urge you to visit frequently?*