ADVANCING ARMENIA BY INVESTING IN IDEAS

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Category: Opinions

"All achievements, all earned riches, have their beginning in an idea."
Napoleon Hill

Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles, 3 September 2020

Among unique attributes, the capacity of abstract thinking sets humans apart in the animal kingdom. This concept formation which exists only in the mind affords us the ability to imagine things that have not yet been invented or are impossible to happen. This cerebral faculty to think of solutions to pressing political, social, and economic problems facing society has been the sole engine driving our civilization to a higher level of achievement.

Abstract thinking does not need a factory or a laboratory; the human mind can produce ideas anytime and anywhere. Great ideas have been born in caves, villages, work settings, playgrounds, dreams, and even in shower. Ideas have transformed the world.

Yet, virtually all countries have neglected to give ideas the position it deserves in their government. Armenia's government can benefit from an organized system of monitoring the international environment for new ideas and for their implementation by government agencies.

In July of 2020, I wrote on article on the imminent danger of the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant and how to mitigate or solve this problem in the wake of Azerbaijani's threat to blow it up. I knew someone in Armenia should read my warning and suggestions. The article was published in Keghart under the title of "Damocles Sword Over Armenia" (July 20, 2020). To my surprise, a kind and understanding person in the Diaspora had read it, commented on it, and sent a donation to Publisher Dikran Abrahamian, praising him for the professional standard of the highly-respected electronic website-newsletter. The reader said: "I hope that Dr. Demirdjian's article will be read at the highest level of the Armenian government. It is a technical piece that the Yerevan authorities should ponder and why not engage the eminent scholar as a consultant."

Almost in every article, I say: “Ideas have changed the world; ideas should change Armenia as well". Armenia would benefit from ideas coming from its people, the Diaspora, and from non-Armenian sources. But there must be a systematic way of gathering old ideas, new ideas or half-baked ideas. To do that, the government of Armenia should establish an advisory board in charge of monitoring international sources such as books, journals, news items, etc. and to feed viable ideas to the relevant ministry to follow up on it. For example, Armenia has been hemorrhaging from immigration. What are some of the ways other countries are trying to solve their problems and learn from them.

Industry has exploited the concept of gathering ideas for progress by establishing a special department for such activities under the name of "research and development." Research and development (R&D), as a phrase, was not heard of in early 20th century. Since then, it has become a

universal watchword among industrialized nations.

Nowadays, R&D is the beginning of most systems of industrial production. The innovations that result in new products and new processes have their roots in research and followed through the steps of laboratory idea, prototype production, manufacturing start-up, to full-scale production and market introduction.

R&D has become the backbone of industry. Without it, companies won't be able to remain competitive to satisfy customer demands for new products and services, for novelty, and for new-improved products.

An extensive search of Armenia's government structure, consisting of 15 ministries, failed to reveal any use of a systematic way of searching for ideas and implementing them. In fact, none of the other governments reviewed has an agency, advisory group, even a committee commissioned to search for ideas to improve the way government has been functioning to better society's political, social, and economic life. Countries, such as the U.S that have science and technology centres are not the same (as the one I shall propose for Armenia) for there is a big difference between "research" and "search." Research involves experiments, testing, etc., while "search" is to look for ideas for possible implementation.

The concept, but not the practice, of R&D can also be applied to the government activities with some modifications. Here are the main steps for Armenia to benefit from the formation of a centre assigned primarily to search, identify viable ideas, and suggest feasible implementation in the relevant ministry programs to advance the country:

Step One: Establish a centre of authority in the government structure such as an advisory board or a committee for new ideas and implementations to report to the various ministries of the Armenian government. Let us call it "Ideas to Change Armenia's World."

Step Two: Monitor the international environment for new ideas to solve local or national problems or to improve old methods of doing things. Sources of ideas include the Internet, scientific periodicals, books, subscription to the popular Armenian Diaspora publications such as the widely circulated and award-winning “USA Armenian Life Magazine” and its “Hye Kiank” Armenian edition, highly-respected “Keghart.com” or “Keghart.org” website newsletter; “The California Courier” newspaper and “Asbarez” that specializes in political news to name a few publications. Additionally, there are Armenia periodicals which discuss issues and ideas for progress.

Step Three: Brainstorm internally for new ideas for problems identified, but their solutions are not included in the sources found through idea generation process consisting of:

> **1. Defining the problem you want to solve. 2. Identifying the objectives of a possible solution. 3. Generate ideas/solutions individually**. 4. **Once you have gotten clear on your problems, your objectives and your personal solutions to the problems, work as a group to**

select the best solution (idea).

Step Four: Summarize the relevance and the viability of the new ideas and their implementations in short executive summary reports and disseminate them to all ministries for awareness and possible comments.

Step Five: Present the report to the relevant ministry for consideration. If need be, prepare a PowerPoint presentation to formally introduce the new idea(s) to the minister who can use the idea(s) to advance his or her duties and obligations to the country.

Step Six: Follow up on the implementation of the ideas submitted for application in solving local or national problems. Ministers may forget the idea(s) submitted to them. Jogging their memory with a friendly note would be appropriate.

What is being suggested is not an independent think tank. It is a government entity responsible for providing the ministries with ideas to advance Armenia.

If Armenia seizes the opportunity to become the first government to create a center to search for ideas to put the nation on the path to progress, then we should wholeheartedly embrace the idea of establishing a centre responsible for generating ideas.

I believe we should honor that long-standing promise to our next generation that they will inherit a better Armenia than we did because ideas are not only aplenty, they are free and are able to make changes in our lives.

Research in the past had many challenges. You had to go to the library and search the catalogs and the stacks of books for information to generate ideas. Nowadays, the information age has made it so easy that we call the change to "Home Personal Library" thanks to the Internet and the World Wide Web. You can do all that work at home or at your workplace office. Few ideas have gone on to have as profound an effect on our current lives as the Internet. Without the Internet we feel lost due to its extraordinary abilities to connect us with all sorts of information.

The Armenian government would be the first ever to institute such an advisory board to serve the various ministries by providing them with ideas for progress. Without ideas humans would still be living in caves and hunting and gathering food. Ideas, no matter how humble, have propelled the wheels of civilization of homo sapiens' progression toward better lives and, in the process, they have changed the world.

If Armenia aspires for greatness, the search for ideas would be imperative by a centralized system in a special department--for ideas have changed the world, and ideas will change Armenia as well!

Comments



Arusyak – 2020-09-17 17:26:56
Very well said Houry



Houry Ellezian – 2020-09-17 14:37:34
Agree 100%. In an ideal world that would be ideal. Armenia will get there if people learn to listen. Listen to each other, listen to new ideas and experts' opinions, and without accusing each other, and without politicizing scientific facts. Powerful corporations through hired fakes, are now politicizing scientific facts to discredit experts and push their agendas forward. Experts therefore, should not fall into their trap and play their games. Research and development are much needed in every aspect and every ministry, more urgently so, in the diaspora domain. Without it, implementation of laws cannot succeed. We keep hoping for the best, and believe in the new generation who are thinking differently.



Sarkis Karapetyan – 2020-09-14 10:45:54
Sounds all fine and dandy until you try to advance anything in Armenia, but then you get shafted by Armenia. Armenia has done me dirty in too many ways to forgive. No more bleeding heart to a nation and people who I tried to help with nothing to gain, which I was fine with. I had no idea that not only was it nothing to gain, but it was to screw and squeeze everything else out of me. It's dummies like me that now will have to turn my back to a nation that turned its back on me more than twice. Then so be it RA.