



Full Circle

How studying abroad helped Hrant Akopian achieve success back home



WHEN HRANT AKOPIAN moved across the world from Armenia to Argentina as a teenager, it was for an important cause. His father, who had previously served in the Soviet Embassy in Buenos Aires, was tasked with returning, this time to open the embassy of the Republic of Armenia in the Argentine capital, becoming the first official Armenian diplomat in Latin America. Although Hrant thrived academically, first at the AGBU Marie Manoogian School then later at the University of Buenos Aires where he earned his economics degree, something was always missing. “When I left Armenia, I left my heart and soul on the streets of Yerevan,” he lamented.

The emotions he experienced upon his return years later are forever etched in his memory. “When I came back for the first time and was walking along the streets, I had this feeling that this is where I belonged. I am part of this land and I realized Armenia is the place where I feel happiest.”

It is also the place where Hrant has found professional success. After earning his MBA at Columbia University in New York, Akopian returned to Armenia again to work for Converse Bank, Armenia’s sixth largest bank. As Chief

Financial Officer, he is responsible for asset liability management, budgets, financial markets, investor relations and expanding the bank’s ties with international financial institutions including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. Focused on dynamic growth, professionalism and transparency, Converse Bank is helping modernize financial management services in Armenia and support economic growth.

When he is not keeping a close eye on the economy, the AGBU New York Summer Internship alumnus also serves on the board of directors of the country’s national postal service provider, HayPost. He also finds the time to manage the career of one of his best friends, renowned World Cup chess champion Levon Aronian.

Just as he once benefitted from career advice early in his career, Hrant considers it his responsibility now to help mentor young professionals, but also to set a broader example for Armenians contemplating careers abroad. “I feel very rewarded professionally. Staying to work in Armenia no longer means you have to sacrifice your career potential. It is a perfect match.” ☺