

Appendix 1.

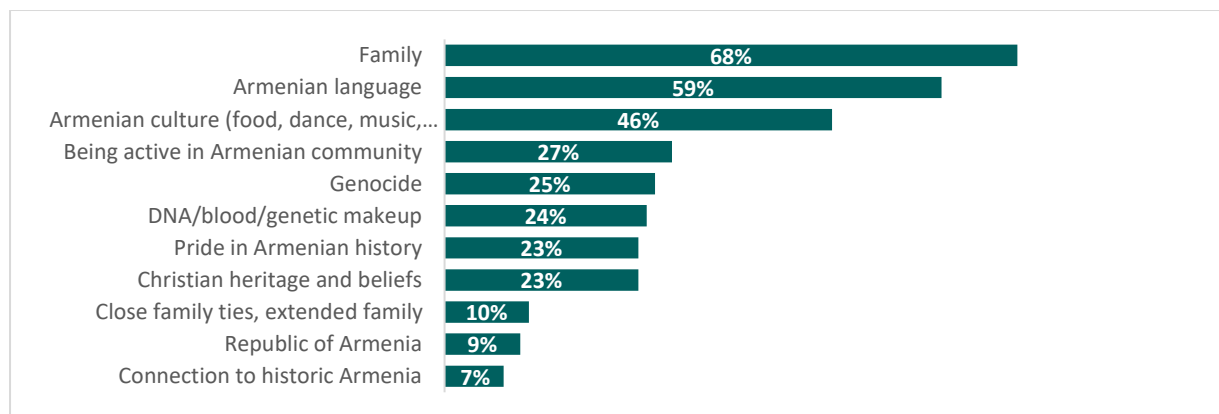
ARMENIAN LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND TRANSMISSION IN DIASPORA: BACKGROUND PAPER¹

How is Armenian Identity Perceived and Defined?

According to Hratch Tchilingirian, being Armenian is considered a “package” containing different things for different diasporans. Yet more frequently, the Armenian Identity or Armenianness is defined by the following features:

- Identity is largely defined through hyphenated Armenianness, where family, language and culture are the defining constituents of Armenian identity.
- Christianity and the Armenian Church are important aspects of Armenianness, but a wide spectrum of perceptions on religion and more nuanced views on spirituality exists.
- **Armenian language and culture are a vital part of being Armenian and community life and demand for high-quality Armenian education is high.**
- Visionary leadership and more cultural and educational activities are high in demand in community life.
- As an independent state and country, Armenia is an important point of reference for the Diaspora.

More specifically, according to the Armenian Diaspora survey 2019, the *Armenian language* is considered the second means to define the Armenian identity, followed by the *Family*.



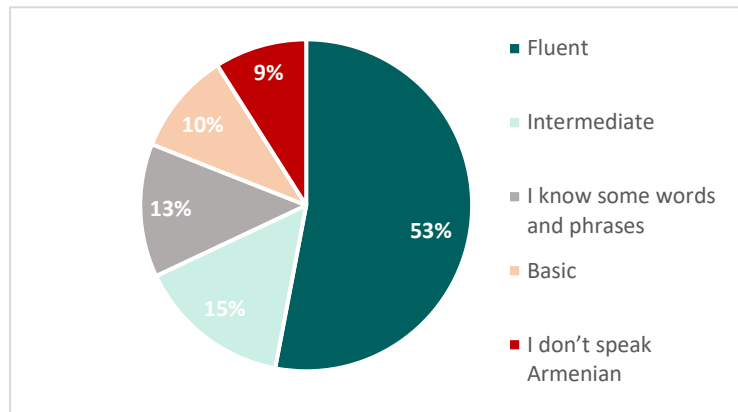
In which ways do you define your Armenian identity?
n=2,697

Armenian Language

There has been a growing concern in the past years about the decline of Armenian speakers and the closing of Armenian schools in the Diaspora. The ADS 2019 results, however, provide a positive picture regarding the use of the Armenian language and the Western Armenian variant in particular.

¹ The document is developed based on the statistical findings and qualitative analysis provided by the Armenia Diaspora Survey

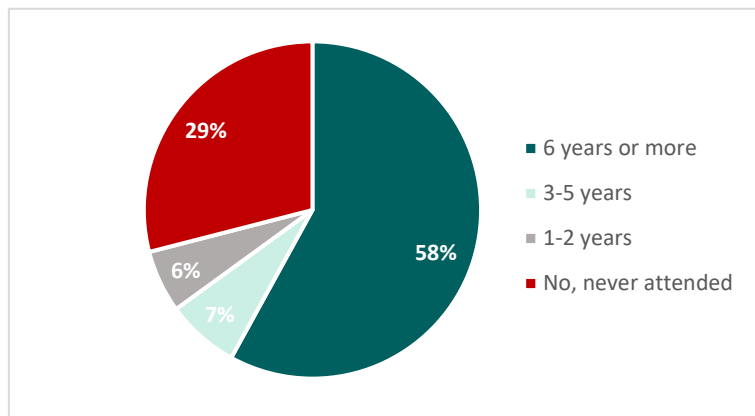
The survey had several questions exploring the use of languages in various settings. Respondents were asked about their fluency in Armenian as well as the language(s) of communication with spouses/partners, parents, grandparents, and children. Among all respondents 53% said they were *fluent* speakers of Armenian, while 15% thought they were at the *intermediate* level.



How would you assess your fluency in speaking Armenian?
n=2,666

Generational presence, as the ADS data shows, has much impact on the knowledge of Armenian. For example, among the immigrant generation, 85% of respondents were fluent in spoken Armenian, 9% had intermediate speaking abilities, 3% had some basic skills, 1% knew some words and only 2% did not speak Armenian. In contrast, among the grandchildren of the first immigrants, only 4 in 10 respondents indicated fluent knowledge of spoken Armenian (39%); 15% had some intermediate skills, 12% had basic knowledge, 21% knew only a few words and phrases and 13% did not speak Armenian at all.

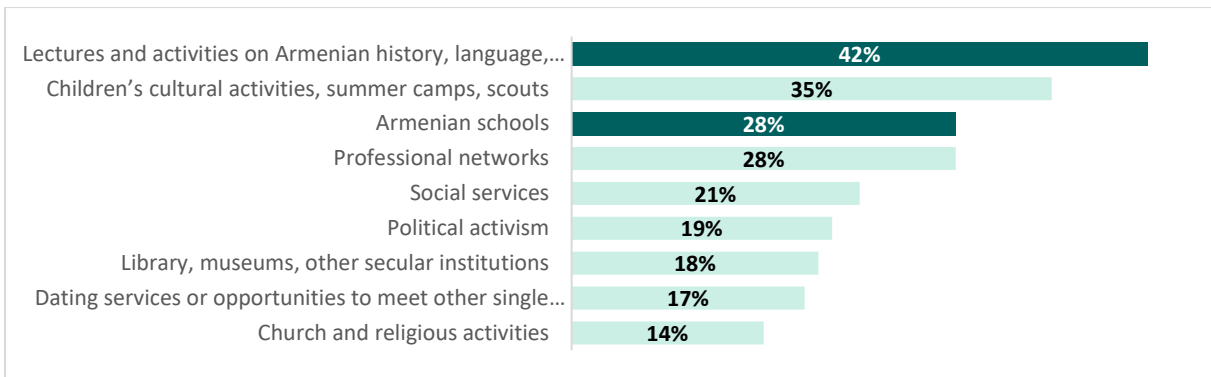
In all surveyed communities, 8 in 10 respondents grew up learning or trying to learn the Armenian language (78%). Among all respondents, 58% had 6 years or more of Armenian school experience and 29% never attended an Armenian school or any after-school or weekend classes. Since several Armenian schools were closed in the Diaspora in recent years, the survey suggests a strong need for Armenian schools that will teach the Armenian language and culture, while also providing high-quality general education.



Did you attend an Armenian Day School or after-school/weekend classes as a child? If so, for how long?
n=2,589

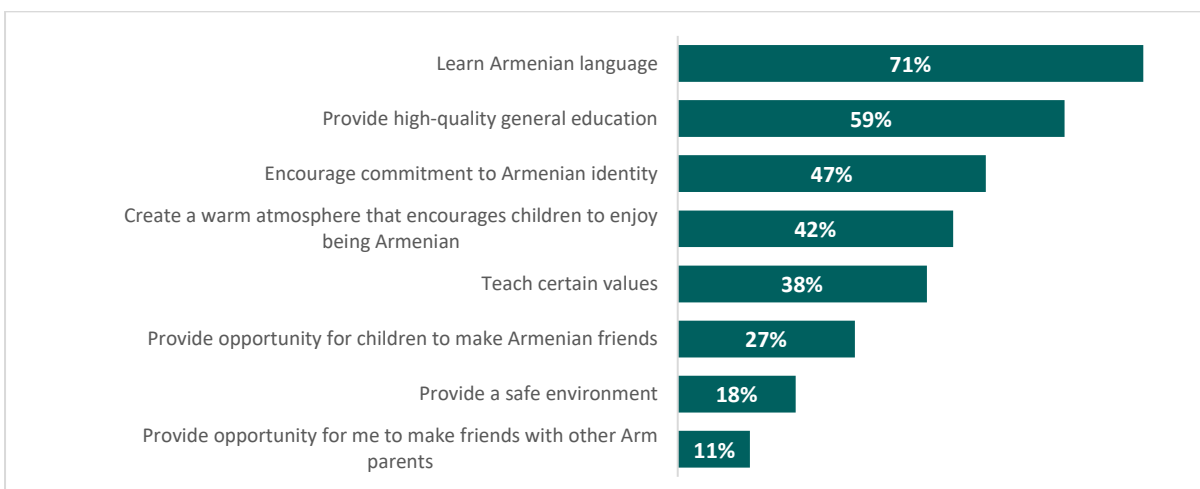
Armenian Schools

When asked about activities necessary for the communities, more than 40% of the respondents mentioned *Lectures and activities on Armenian history, language, art, music, cooking, dance, etc.* as a top priority (42%), and nearly 1/3 of them highlighted the need for the Armenian schools.



Which activities are needed in your local Armenian community?
n=2,597

The ADS respondents were also asked to indicate their top three choices from a list of priorities regarding what Armenian schools should provide for children. Nearly three quarters of the respondents (71%) indicated “learning Armenian language” as the top expectation.



What do you want Armenian schools to provide for children?
n=2,697

According to Vahe Sahakyan, teaching Armenian language and culture is a perennial challenge in the diaspora. The peculiarities of the context of each community, the variants of Western and Eastern Armenian used in particular localities, and other factors—such as limitations in advanced teaching and technology-based resources and qualified teachers—complicate the matter. More challenging, however, is meeting the expectation for high-quality general education. In this regard, Armenian schools in various countries compete with local non-Armenian schools on a number of standards, which significantly vary from country to country, even from state to state in large countries, such as Canada or the United States.

According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora, there are dozens of pan-Armenian and spiritual organizations, hundreds of community and patriotic groups, around **1,000 daily and weekly schools**, scientific and educational institutions, sports and cultural associations, charities, and socio-political entities actively working in the Diaspora