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## SUCCESS STORY

# Community Connections

### Supporting Young Playwrights of Armenia



*Student actors audition for works by beginner playwrights.*

**Theme:** Theater Management

**From:** Armenia

**Dates of the Program:** June 12 – July 3, 2008

**Host Organization:** Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA)

**Training Location:** Cambridge, Massachusetts

#### Success

Community Connections alumnus Ruben Babayan, head of the Department of Acting at Yerevan State Institute of Cinema and Theater, and Professor Narine Grigoryan, also of Yerevan State Institute, are building bridges to connect young playwrights, actors and directors in Armenia. With support from the National Theatre Union of Armenia, Babayan and Grigoryan have organized student auditions for works by new playwrights, providing an opportunity for young playwrights to receive feedback from actors and directors.

#### Overview

In June 2008, Babayan and Grigoryan were among ten theater professionals in the Community Connections Theater Management group, hosted by the Yerevan Cambridge Sister City Association in Boston. Such renowned playwrights as Joyce van Dyke and Kate Snodgrass of the Boston Playwrights' Theatre, met with the group to emphasize the necessity of fostering cooperation between playwrights and actors in order for them to achieve professional success.

Grigoryan was inspired by such meetings. "This is a very effective practice that can be adopted in Armenia. Currently, most playwrights have limited connections with the theatre community and audiences, and a poor understanding of their needs. The quality of the play is the cornerstone of making theater a success," she said.

To support improved collaboration, Grigoryan and Babayan convened a committee of accomplished playwrights, directors and actors to evaluate young playwrights' works. Following an open and widely advertised competition, the committee selected promising plays, and organized auditions for students of the institute. They were an exceptional success, having allowed participating playwrights to test their writing, and actors and theater professionals to share their feedback. Motivated by this success, the two alumni plan to continue bringing together playwrights and theater professionals for joint projects.