

CENTER FOR POLICY ANALYSIS
(C.P.A.)

The American University of Armenia

The Center for Policy Analysis (CPA) has been founded at the American University of Armenia in 1995, to conduct multi-disciplinary applied research in a broad spectrum of contemporary social, political and legal fields pertaining to Armenia and the surrounding region. By advancing objective and independent research, debate and public service, the Center promotes greater knowledge and understanding of Armenia and the region.

Guiding Principles

When in 1993, the American University of Armenia began the School of Political Science and International Affairs, it sought to build the educational foundation for the establishment of a modern, open and democratic society in Armenia. With an emphasis towards objective and analytical learning, the University sought to develop the students' understanding of the complexities involved in shaping an independent statehood and a democratic political culture in Armenia. With the establishment of CPA, the University seeks to continue its educational mission by promoting research and analysis to develop in the long run a cadre of local resident researchers applying modern research methodologies to local and regional issues. By advancing modern and independent research and disseminating information, CPA aims to play a contributing role in the democratic transition process of Armenia and the larger development of its surrounding region.

The AUA has been founded in partnership with the government of Armenia to provide a Western educational resource base for the needs of the country. In line with this mission, the Center seeks to link its research with the policy needs of various segments of Armenian society including the legislature, ministries, institutions of

higher learning and public or private organizations, so as to forge a greater interaction between policy making and research. CPA places particular emphasis on advancing the practical and applied foundations of its basic research work and linking them to technical training to make its work more readily applicable in the context of Armenia.

Working in close collaboration with the AUA faculty and benefiting from their expertise and knowledge as well as other University resources, the Center seeks to expand the interaction between faculty, researchers and students. Most notably the Center provides a forum for academic exchanges between local and international scholars and researchers. In promoting such interaction CPA seeks to actively ensure the professional development of its research staff.

Within the context of its research, the Center places particular emphasis on expanding the educational and professional ties between institutions of higher learning in Armenia and the region. The sharing of information and the pursuit of academic exchange in an environment that encourages openness are at the crux of knowledge and modern research. After the years of ideological isolation and segregation of information which Armenia experienced under the

Communist system, the Center seeks to stimulate the greater integration of information and discussion by those sharing a common involvement in the educational process.

The Center also aims to develop a resource base of information and reference data about Armenia which can become the foundation for further research conducted by the Center or others. The Center shall develop access to Western sources of information on topics related to its work. To complement its expertise and knowledge, the Center works in close collaboration with other research centers at the AUA.

In an information age where facts and ideas can be connected immediately, the Center seeks to conduct its work in an environment which stimulates comparative knowledge and analysis. Particularly, the Center seeks to utilize a regional approach when studying issues of wider concern. Besides the commonality of issues pertaining to the period of transition, the region of the Caucasus faces questions for which resolutions may be best sought by thinking in common regional terms. The focus of the Center will be to promote such regional thinking.

By conducting research and fostering exchange with other edu-

cational institutions, the Center aims to enhance greater understanding of Armenia and the Region from a local as well as an international perspective. By providing greater information and debate the Center aims to be an active participant in fostering democracy and the particular institutions which are the key constituents of a working democratic political system.

Policy Research Areas

The program of the Center shall consist of basic research, development and educational activities focusing in the listed research areas. The Center may also carry out *Sponsored Research* or *Technical Assistance* in furtherance of its mission. The research work of the Center will focus on the following areas:

Government And Democracy

The role and functions of the government in a period of transition from a communist system to a market oriented pluralistic society are subject to redefinition at all levels of society. This area of research focuses on studies of various aspects of social and political change involving a new interaction between government, the private sector and institutions which may best create the enabling environment to promote change in an informed and consen-

sual context.

As part of government studies, the Center pays particular attention to public administration and the furtherance of information about local and republican level state structures. In light of the constitutional and administrative changes occurring in Armenia, the Center shall focus on the study of administrative reform and its consequences, including analysis on government procedures and interagency relationships, to make recommendations for the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness in government.

The transition to a pluralistic society has brought about the emergence of new social and political indicators in Armenia. The Center seeks to promote the advancement of democratic processes and institutions by providing information and conducting studies on political attitudes and behavior, electoral processes, political parties, mass media, opinion making processes, public interest groups, and volunteer organizations.

Law & Legislation

This field focuses on research and analysis of legal institutions and legal change to search for options and recommendations which best establish the foundation of a society based on the rule of law.

In its beginning stages, the Center shall promote basic information on the evolving legislation in Armenia and address issues concerning the regulatory underpinnings of legislation and the capacity for implementation. By furthering information about legislation and legal analysis, the Center aims to contribute to the development of a society based on individual and property rights.

Regional Studies

The break up of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent states in the region of the Caucasus has drawn the attention of the World to this area as a region with a new set of geopolitical dynamics and a dual potential for development and conflict. The Center shall provide information and conduct research on the history, politics, culture and socio-economic development of the region, the evolution of state building and the study of interstate relations so as to promote new ways of thinking in terms of bilateral and regional interests and relationships. With its work, the Center aims to play a contributing role in the resolution of regional conflicts and the promotion of greater regional and international integration and cooperation.

Education and Outreach

- The Center shall disseminate its research findings through various publications, Occasional Papers series, monographs, briefings or conference proceedings which will be generally made available to the public.
- The Center promotes dialogue about topics related to its research areas by organizing or sponsoring seminars, conferences, roundtable discussions and other meetings bringing scholars, professionals and policymakers together to address specific issues.
- In order to encourage interaction between social scientists from Armenia, and the Center's researchers and the AUA faculty, the Center awards a *Visiting Fellowship*, whereby social scientists from Armenia will be selected to receive a grant for conducting research at the Center. All selections will be made on a competitive basis. With due funding, it is intended that this Program encompass in the future visiting fellows from other regional institutions.
- The Center provides an informal public lecture forum for the free exchange of ideas between scholars, professionals, distinguished public figures, diplomats, and others in leadership positions on issues relat-

ed to the research work of the Center.

Community Service

- The Center shall organize or provide technical training geared to special groups in areas related to its research work, or as an extension of particular research projects. Such training may be in the form of workshops, interactive programs, or seminars.
- In order to promote public participation, the Center seeks to provide informational and planning support to public and professional, volunteer and non-governmental organizations which play an active role in connecting grass root activities with policy making processes.
- The Center provides a forum to enhance interaction between various schools, institutes and universities in Armenia and promote the discussion of issues of common interest in the field of education.

For More Information
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