

INSPARK

A New Creative Initiative for Armenian Youth in Lebanon

Armenian Communities Department
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

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Call for Proposals 2025

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Call for Proposals 2025

The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (hereinafter CGF) is pleased to announce a new grant programme for Armenian youth in Lebanon. This initiative supports innovative projects that address an expansive range of themes, including identity, social challenges, human rights, technology, language and community vitality. The programme builds upon CGF's commitment to Armenian youth, cultural advancement and creativity.

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

The Foundation has long collaborated with Lebanon's vibrant Armenian community, producing numerous creative and impactful projects be it through the [Creative Culture Programme](#), [Teacher development programme](#) or other grants. However, developments in Lebanon have made it difficult to launch new initiatives in recent years despite continuous efforts. CGF currently sees an opportunity to renew its commitment to supporting native Western Armenian-speaking youth and offering them fresh opportunities to create and express themselves.

This dedication emanates from the Foundation's broader mission to strengthen Armenian culture, language and identity across the Diaspora. In Lebanon, these goals have taken on renewed importance amid ongoing challenges. Armenian youth in 2025 are contending with post-war realities and forging new beginnings, simultaneously preserving a rich heritage while addressing contemporary issues in an ever-evolving world.

INSPARK is a grant programme designed to spark self-discovery, creative expression and community-driven change from within. INSPARK is an invitation to Armenian youth in Lebanon to break new ground, explore innovative ideas and share diverse voices with the world. By igniting imagination and fuelling purpose, INSPARK empowers participants to craft meaningful projects that enrich their lives and communities, ultimately helping to shape the future of Armenian culture.

2. OBJECTIVES – THEMES & PRIORITIES

OBJECTIVES

- To foster creative expression among Armenian youth in Lebanon and through them strengthen community identity and drive social change.

- To encourage young people to explore their creative potential in addressing key social and cultural issues.
- To support new voices and innovative ideas that enrich Armenian Diaspora life and culture.

THEMES & PRIORITIES

Proposals should address one or more of the following topics in a creative and potentially impactful manner:

a. Post-War Resilience and New Beginnings

- Healing and Recovery:
Tackling how communities rebuild emotionally and physically in the aftermath of conflict.
- Narratives of Hope:
Stories highlighting transformative experiences, lessons learned and visions for a peaceful future.
- Reconciliation and Understanding:
Efforts fostering dialogue across communities with historically strained relationships.

b. Armenian Diaspora Identity and Culture

- Preservation and Innovation:
Balancing the preservation of traditional art forms, language and cultural practices with current reinterpretations and contemporary approaches.
- Shared Heritage and Global Connections:
Exploring how diaspora communities maintain ties with each other and with the homeland, while engaging with new cultural influences.
- Migration and Belonging:
Engaging with personal and collective experiences of migration, displacement and formation of hybrid identities.

c. Social Issues and Human Rights

- Oppression and Power Structures:
Examining systemic discrimination, oppression and historical injustices within or beyond Armenian contexts, including leadership issues, economic inequalities and social divisions.
- Women's Rights and Gender Equality:
Addressing discrimination, empowerment and the advancement of women in social, political and economic spheres.
- Minority Rights:

Fostering efforts to build inclusive spaces, represent marginalized voices and challenge harmful stereotypes.

d. Innovation and Technology (AI, Digital Media)

- Digital Empowerment:
Leveraging technology to support education, activism and community building.
- Artistic Exploration:
Integrating AI, virtual reality and other emerging digital tools into creative and cultural projects.
- IT and Language:
Examining the role of technology, digital media and tech-based activism in the revitalization of language (especially Western Armenian).

e. Other Creative Themes for Social Change

- Environmental Justice and Climate Action:
Addressing ecological challenges, sustainability practices and community-led environmental initiatives.
- Youth Empowerment and Education:
Highlighting the role of youth leadership, civic engagement and intergenerational collaboration, including collaborative projects that bring together diverse communities and facilitate cross-cultural understanding and solidarity.
- Artistic Activism and Storytelling:
Engaging performance, written/spoken word and visual arts as catalysts for public discussion and societal shifts.

By integrating these expanded themes, the aim of INSPARK is to create a set of projects that are relevant to contemporary discussions and deeply rooted in Armenian social and cultural contexts. These broad and flexible themes also allow room for interdisciplinary projects that can help drive lasting, positive changes within local communities and beyond.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- **Age & Residency:**
Applicants must be of Armenian origin, **21-40 years old** and **currently residing in Lebanon**. Individuals or teams are welcome to apply.
- **Project Scope:**
The submission must be a creative initiative addressing the key themes of this call. Projects can span arts, media, technology, literature, performance, cultural heritage, community engagement, etc.

- **Project timelines:**
Projects should have a maximum duration of 24 months.
- **Language:**
Western Armenian is encouraged. Other languages may be used if they better serve the project.
- **Geographic Focus:**
Projects must be implemented (at least in a significant part) in Lebanon and benefit the local Armenian community.

Number of Submissions: Each individual or team may submit only **one** proposal under this call.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be reviewed by a CGF-based selection committee according to the following criteria:

- **Creativity and Innovation:**
Original thinking, artistic creativity and novel approaches.
- **Relevance and Social Impact:**
Alignment with programme themes; potential to create positive change or spark meaningful dialogue.
- **Feasibility and Clarity:**
Realistic and coherent planning with a well-defined scope, timeline and budget.
- **Cultural Significance:**
Contribution to Armenian culture and language, especially Western Armenian.
- **Quality of Proposal:**
Overall coherence, detail and project idea presentation.

5. DEADLINE AND PROCESS

- **Call Announcement:**
The call for proposals opens on 5 May 2025.
- **Application Submission Deadline:**
31 August 2025 (23h 59 Lisbon time). Late applications will not be accepted.
- **Evaluation & Decisions:**
Grant awardees will be announced by 15 October 2025.
All projects must be submitted online, through CGF's MyGulbenkian platform.

6. BUDGET

- Up to 10 grants of **€ 7,500** each will be awarded.
- Grants can be used to cover direct project-related expenses, including:
 - **Materials and Equipment:**
Items specifically needed to carry out the project.
 - **Travel Costs:**
Transportation and lodging for applicants.
 - **Venue Rentals:**
Costs associated with securing spaces for workshops, performances or meetings.
 - **Human Resource costs for project implementors, as well as Professional Fees / Purchase of Services:**
Consultants, facilitators, artists, translators or any external services required for the project.
 - **Other Direct Project Costs:**
Additional expenses directly tied to achieving the objectives (e.g., marketing, printing or promotion).

Timeline and Basic Budget Outline

The application should include the following:

- A timeline for project execution.
- A concise yet clear budget with a basic breakdown of anticipated costs, including materials, personnel and other expense estimates.

The budget should align with the project's timeline and scope, reflecting how the funding will be utilized to meet the stated goals.

7. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT & PROGRAMME BENEFITS

a. Project Management Workshops:

Grantees will receive specialized project management training early in their grant period. These workshops will help awardees refine their plans, develop strategies for execution and outreach, and learn essential skills if necessary (budgeting, team coordination, promotion, etc.). It will also allow awardees to share experiences and knowledge.

b. Consultation & Mentorship:

CGF will remain available for further guidance throughout the grant implementation to help ensure successful completion.

c. Collective Exhibition:

At the conclusion of the grant period, all awardees will collaborate on an exhibition or a public showcase of their work in a meaningful way. An additional collective budget of **€15,000** will be allocated for this purpose. This event aims to increase the visibility of each project, foster networking and celebrate the creativity of Armenian youth in Lebanon. While awardees will curate the exhibition, CGF will promote it to reach a broader audience.

8. HOW TO APPLY

1. Online Application:

The application form must be completed on the CGF Armenian Communities Department website (after 5 May 2025). The form will include:

- Project Title and Summary
- Project Description (concept, objectives, significance)
- Project Outputs
- Project Activities
- Timeline (key milestones from start to completion)
- Budget (breakdown of how you will use the €7,500 grant)
- Team Information (including relevant backgrounds or experience)
- Language(s) of Implementation
- Expected outcomes and impact on the Community
- (Optional) Supporting Materials (previous work, sketches, videos, etc.)

Applications may be submitted in Armenian, English or French.

2. Consultation:

During the application period (May-August 2025), CGF will be available to consult with applicants. For questions or guidance, an email must be sent to carmenias@gulbenkian.pt, with the subject line “INSPARK 2025 – Inquiry”.

3. Submission:

The completed online form must be submitted before the 31 August 2025 deadline, (23h 59 Lisbon time). Late applications will not be accepted.

4. Evaluation:

The selection committee will review all eligible applications in September. Shortlisted candidates might be invited for an interview and decisions will be announced by 15 October 2025. If necessary, CGF may request additional information or clarifications during the review process.

For more information on the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and its Armenian Communities Department, visit: <https://gulbenkian.pt/armenian-communities/>.

Data Protection (this section is included as per European legal requirements)

All personal data provided in the application process or during project implementation shall be treated exclusively for the purpose of managing the INSPARK grant programme by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF), as the entity acting as joint controller for processing the data.

The CGF may be contacted regarding any questions related to data processing carried out in this context and for these purposes through privacidade@gulbenkian.pt.

The personal data of the subject shall be kept for the period of time necessary for the management of the grant, except in cases where another period is required by applicable law. Some data (i.e., the name of the subject, date of application, terms and duration of the grant and personal data potentially included in the works and final publications) will be kept indefinitely by the CGF for the purpose of conservation of relevant information in the context of its relevant cultural assets.

The subject may, at any time, withdraw his/her consent for the processing of his/her personal data, in accordance with the applicable legislation, without prejudice to the validity of the processing made based on the consent previously given. The withdrawal of the consent implies that the CGF cannot treat his/her personal data for the purposes consented to and as such may result in the impossibility of the applicant continuing as such in the application.

The controller guarantees the subjects the exercise of their rights in relation to their personal data, such as the right of access, rectification, erasure, opposition, limitation of treatment and portability, according to the applicable legislation.

The controller implements all security measures necessary and adequate for the protection of the personal data of the subjects, either when the data is processed directly by them or when the data is processed by entities subcontracted by it.

The controller may treat personal data collected in this context directly and/or through subcontractors for the purpose of managing the grant. In such cases, appropriate contracts shall be entered into with such subcontracting entities, in accordance with the applicable legislation.

In the scope and for the purposes of managing the grant, the CGF may communicate the data of the subject to partner entities for publications and institutional communications. These entities may be located within the territory of the European Union or abroad, and in the latter case, appropriate mechanisms under the applicable legislation to safeguard the security of personal data processed shall be used at all times.

The subjects may file a complaint to the Portuguese National Authority (“Comissão Nacional de Proteção de Dados”) if they believe that there is a breach of data protection incurred by the joint controllers.