



DO YOU HAVE A "PHILOSOPHY OF GIVING BACK," A MOTTO, OR A VALUE OR ACTION YOU TRY TO INCORPORATE INTO YOUR VOLUNTEER WORK?

I believe in finding specific projects that speak to me. Watching the investment mature and develop over time from conception to execution is rewarding and gives a clear sense of the impact of my giving. Most recently I've enjoyed giving scholarship opportunities for college students to attend the very same program that shaped my career. It's always good to pay it forward.

🇬🇧 Tro Manoukian

Manchester, U.K.

After an eye-opening internship pointed him towards the right career, Tro Manoukian has made it count through his financial contributions, sponsoring scholarships to empower the next generation of Armenian youth with similarly enriching experiences.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH AGBU? When I was a 20-year-old university student in Yorkshire, England, my parents encouraged me to participate in the **New York Summer Internship Program**. Growing up in a very small Armenian community, it was my first experience spending significant time with peers from different experiences, but with the same cultural background. Having an interest in textiles, I worked for a company called Georgica Associates and spent the summer learning about the silk industry.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE AGBU MEMORY? During my internship summer, I had the opportunity to meet Ralph Lauren at the Polo Headquarters. It was completely unexpected and I didn't even realize who he was at first. I was quite taken aback because he was so accommodating—he listened to my views and he offered his. Looking back, he took me quite seriously for someone at such a young age. **It's just an example of how doors open when it is least expected.**

WHAT PART OF YOUR ARMENIAN HERITAGE DO YOU MOST IDENTIFY WITH? I most identify with the deep Armenian sense of community. The Armenian community has provided me with a level of support and guidance through every stage of my life. I've never found that elsewhere.

HOW HAS THE AGBU AND YOUR ARMENIAN HERITAGE CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR SUCCESS? My whole involvement with **the silk industry** goes back to that first internship through the AGBU. Had I not participated in the Internship Program, I honestly don't



know what I would be doing now. The **professional connections I made helped me upon graduation** and have carried me through my career. Without that experience, I would likely be working for one of the large retailers—I would be just a number in a large mechanism, rather than running my own business.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOTIVATION FOR GIVING BACK TO AGBU? Younger Armenians contributing to the cause will hopefully attract further young professionals. The duty to contribute should not be left to our parents. **It's important to attract a new generation to carry on the tradition** that our elders established of giving back.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO AGBU'S YOUNGER GENERATION ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING BACK TO AGBU? AGBU contributed enormously to my career. The opportunity to give back to the community, in particular, our youth, is as significant as AGBU's commitment to our public. Young alumni of these AGBU programs know first-hand how valuable and important it is to keep these programs available in the future since they experienced it themselves. Encouraging recent alumni to give back **in order to allow their younger peers to share in the same positive experience** they went through could really compel them to donate.

