

“MOZAIK A-M”

ASSESSMENT OF “MENK ENK”  
CROSSCULTURAL TV SHOW

FINDINGS OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE  
SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEYS

**PRESENTED TO  
INTERNEWS ARMENIA**

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## INTRODUCTION

The survey had four interrelated objectives: *a)* to learn about the information needs and media habits of the program's target audience; *b)* to assess the profile of regular viewers of the program; *c)* to assess the impact the program has on its audience; and *d)* to gather specific feedback from the audience on content and presentation of the program, as well as to compare the data with the data of the survey carried out in the same schools in the same time period in 2006.

Two methods of data collection were used: a) structured face-to-face interviews and b) focus group discussions. Structured interviews were conducted with 300 schoolchildren from 20 secondary schools of Yerevan<sup>1</sup>. Two focus groups were conducted with regular viewers of “Menk enk” (12-15 year-old and 16-17 year-old children).

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<sup>1</sup> Only one new school was involved in the survey (school N129 instead N148), as the school principle did not allow to conduct survey in the school as students there were overloaded with exams on that days.

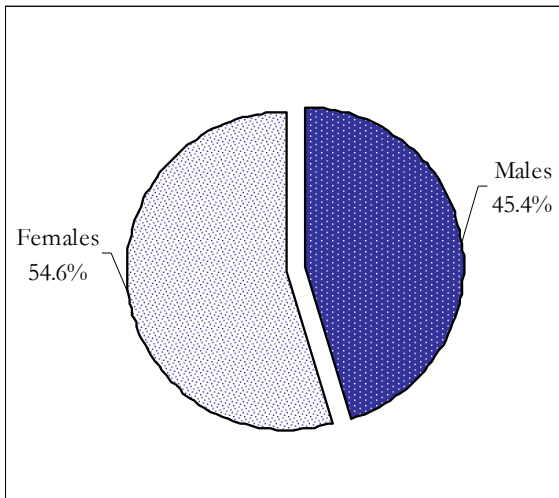
# CHAPTER 1. WHO WE ARE?

## SOCIAL-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

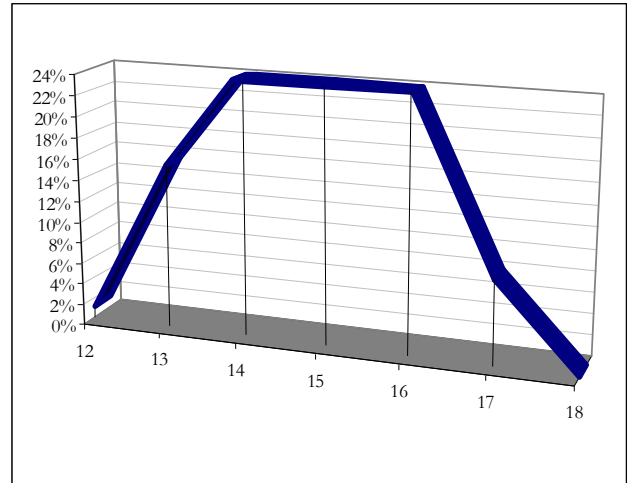
### GENDER AND AGE BREAKDOWN

47.3% of the respondents were males and 52.7% were females. The youngest survey participant was 12 years old and the oldest was 17 years old. The majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 13-16; the mean age of the survey participants was 14.3.

*Chart 1. Gender breakdown*



*Chart 2. Age breakdown*



Distribution of the survey participants by gender and age is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Gender-age cross-tabulation*

Age	Gender		Total
	Males	Females	
12	0.7%	0.3%	1.0%
13	9.3%	6.3%	15.7%
14	11.3%	14.0%	25.3%
15	11.7%	13.7%	25.3%
16	9.7%	14.7%	24.3%
17	4.7%	3.7%	8.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## NATIONALITY, RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND LANGUAGES SPOKEN

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**Nationality:** 99.3% of the respondents were Armenians. Only two respondents were Russians.

**Religious affiliation:** The overwhelming majority of the respondents (77.9%) belonged to Armenian Apostolic Church and 13.7% said they consider themselves just Christians. Two children said they feel closer to Catholic Church, two belonged to Russian Orthodox Church, and another one has mentioned Fen-Shui doctrine as his religion. 11 children (3.7%) were not sure about their religious affiliation and seven respondents claimed they did not feel themselves close to any religious group.

**Languages spoken:** 94.7% of the respondents usually speak Armenian at home. The remaining 5.3% of the children said they speak Russian more often. At that, almost all respondents stated they speak at least one foreign language (94.9%). Almost all respondents can watch and understand TV programs broadcasted in Russian (96.8%) and 39.6% of surveyed child can understand programs in English. 4.7% of the respondents speak German and a few others have knowledge of French, Spanish, Georgian and Turkish languages.

## FAMILY BACKGROUND

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**Number of family members and marital status of the parents:** Families of the survey participants consist of an average of 4.7 members, with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 11 members, including the respondents. Majority of the families consist of 4-5 members.

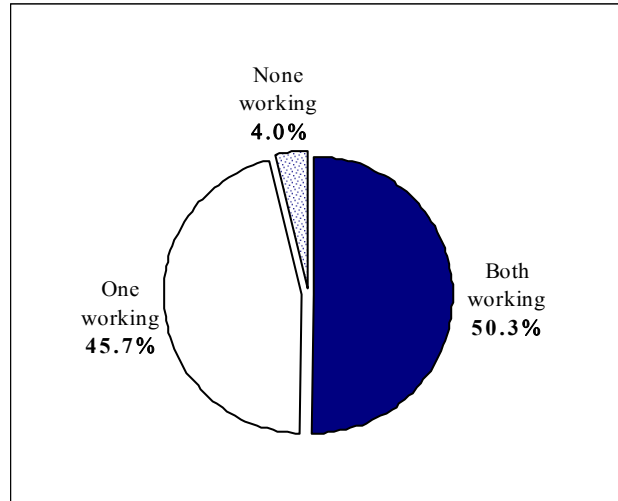
*Table 2. Number of household members*

Number of members	Percent
2-3	12.0
4-5	64.3
6-7	22.0
8 and more	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Mothers of 94.7% of the survey participants are married, 2.7% are divorced and 1.7% are widowed. Mother of one of the respondents has died and two respondents refused to answer the question.

**Occupation and education of the parents:** An encouraging finding was that only 4.0% or 12 of the 300 surveyed children stated neither of their parents work (in 2006 4.6% or 32 children have answered so). In the remaining cases one or both of the parents work (45.7% and 50.3% accordingly).

*Chart 3. Occupation of the parents*



Among **spheres of employment** of the parents, the respondents have most frequently mentioned service industry (23.5%), trade (21.9%) and education, science and medicine (17.2%) are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places. 11.3% is busy in the sphere of construction, 7.7% - army, police and defense services and 6.5% work in manufacturing companies. 2.8% of the respondents said their parents

work in governmental bodies (tax inspectorate, etc.) and for 0.8% work in political parties. 12.1% of the respondents found it difficult or refused to answer.

As in 2006, this year as well, the **education level** of the children’s parents is quite high, which, in our opinion, is highly conditioned by the fact that the survey was carried out only in Yerevan.

*Table 3. Highest education level achieved by the parents*

Education level	Percent
No education	0.3
Incomplete secondary	1.0
Secondary	18.1
Secondary special	10.7
Higher	63.5
Post-graduate	1.7
Don't know/Not sure	4.0
Refused to answer	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Financial situation:** In order to assess the living standard of the families, we have provided the respondents with a set of statements illustrating possible situations and asked them to choose one option that, in their opinion, best describes the financial situation of their families. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Financial situation of the respondents' families**

<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Percent</b>
We don't have enough money even for food	0.0
We have enough money for food, but buying clothes is difficult	0.3
We have enough money for food and clothes and can save a bit, but not enough to buy expensive goods such as a TV set or a refrigerator.	16.4
We can afford to buy certain expensive goods such as a TV set or a refrigerator.	50.7
We can afford to buy whatever we want	25.2
DK/NS	1.0
NR/Refused	6.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

If the answer choices are assigned numeric values of 1 to 5 and interpreted as low living standard (1), lower than average living standard (2), average living standard (3), higher than average living standard (4) and high living standard (5), the results of the survey would mean 75% of the surveyed children have assessed their financial situation as higher than average or high. This also allowed estimating the mean living standard of the whole group as 4.08 points from possible 5, which is very close to the results of 2006.

*Results of both surveys, this one and the survey conducted in 2006, show big discrepancy between the estimates of children and the real social situation of the families; but this can be conditioned with the fact that children usually try to overestimate their living standard to avoid the stigma of “poor” and “vulnerable”.*

#### **TYPICAL RESPONDENT**

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The typical respondent of the survey can be described as a 13-16 year-old Armenian student of a secondary school of Yerevan, who belongs to Armenian Apostolic Church, speaks Armenian at home, but understands at least one foreign language (Russian and/or English). At least one of his or her parents has higher education and is employed. He or she does not belong to financially vulnerable strata of the society, or does not [want to] perceive his or her family as poor.

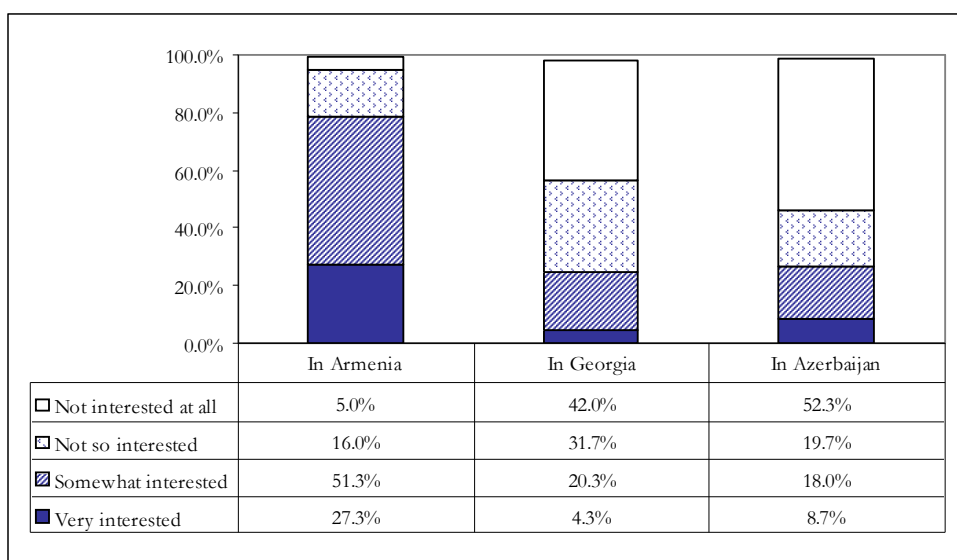
## CHAPTER 2. WE AND OUR WINDOWS TO THE WORLD

### MEDIA HABITS OF THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

#### GENERAL MEDIA HABITS

**Interest in current events:** Although almost 80% of the survey participants stated to be interested in current events in Armenia, only about a quarter of the respondents were curious about the events taking place in Georgia and Azerbaijan (24.6% and 26.7% correspondingly).

*Chart 4. Interest in current events*



*Note: Some of the respondents found it difficult to answer how interested they are in current events in Georgia, and Azerbaijan (1.3% and 1.0% correspondingly).*

**Sources of information:** When asked about sources of information on various topics, almost all respondents mentioned television (96.3%). Moreover, 82% of the children said they watch TV every day or nearly every day (6 or 7 days a week) and there was no one who never uses television as a source of information.

For 94.6% of the respondents as an important source of information serve their friends and relatives. They have stated that they discuss news and events they are interested in with their friends and relatives at least several times a week.

Around half of the respondents (53.7%) use internet once or twice a week and 44% listen to the radio for getting information. Around one third of the children read newspapers and magazines (33% and 34.1% correspondingly), and quite small is the number of children who watch foreign TV channels or listen to foreign radio stations.



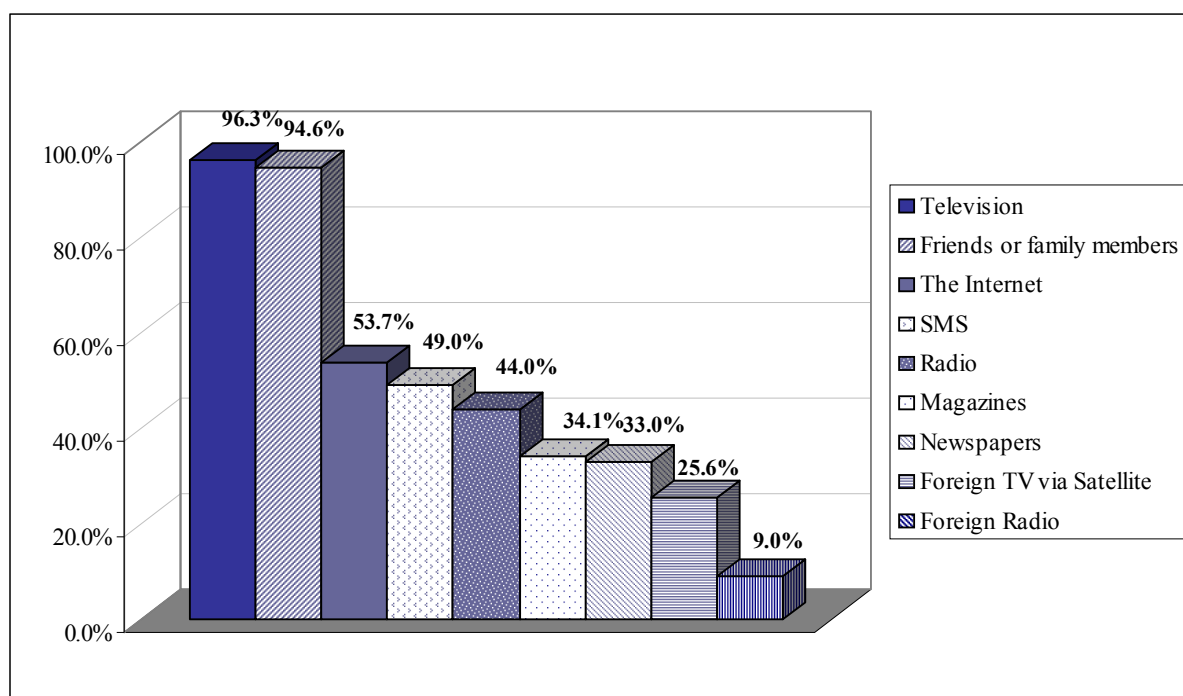
Quite big is the number of children for whom SMS serve as source of information. 30% of the respondents get information via SMS almost every day, and 19% - at least 1-2 times a week. It is worth mentioning that this number has doubled comparing to 2006 results. This can be explained with the fact that mobile telecommunication is becoming more and more accessible, and the number of school-children who have mobile phones is raising rapidly.

**Table 5. Sources of information**

Source	Frequency of usage						
	Daily/ most days a week	Several days a week	1 or 2 days a week	From time to time in the past month	Less often	Never	DK
Television (any)	82.0	10.7	3.7	2.3	1.3	0.0	0.0
Friends or family members	80.0	10.0	4.7	1.0	3.3	1.0	1.0
Radio (any)	13.3	14.7	16.0	5.0	28.0	23.0	0.0
The Internet	19.3	15.7	18.7	7.7	12.7	25.3	0.7
SMS	30.0	12.0	7.0	1.7	10.3	38.7	0.3
Magazines	5.3	8.7	19.0	7.7	33.0	26.3	0.0
Newspapers	7.7	10.7	15.7	13.4	27.8	24.4	0.3
Foreign TV via Satellite	7.0	10.3	8.3	1.3	12.0	60.0	0.0
Foreign Radio	2.0	1.7	5.3	2.0	9.3	78.7	1.0

Based on the frequency of usage, the sources of information can be ranged as follows.

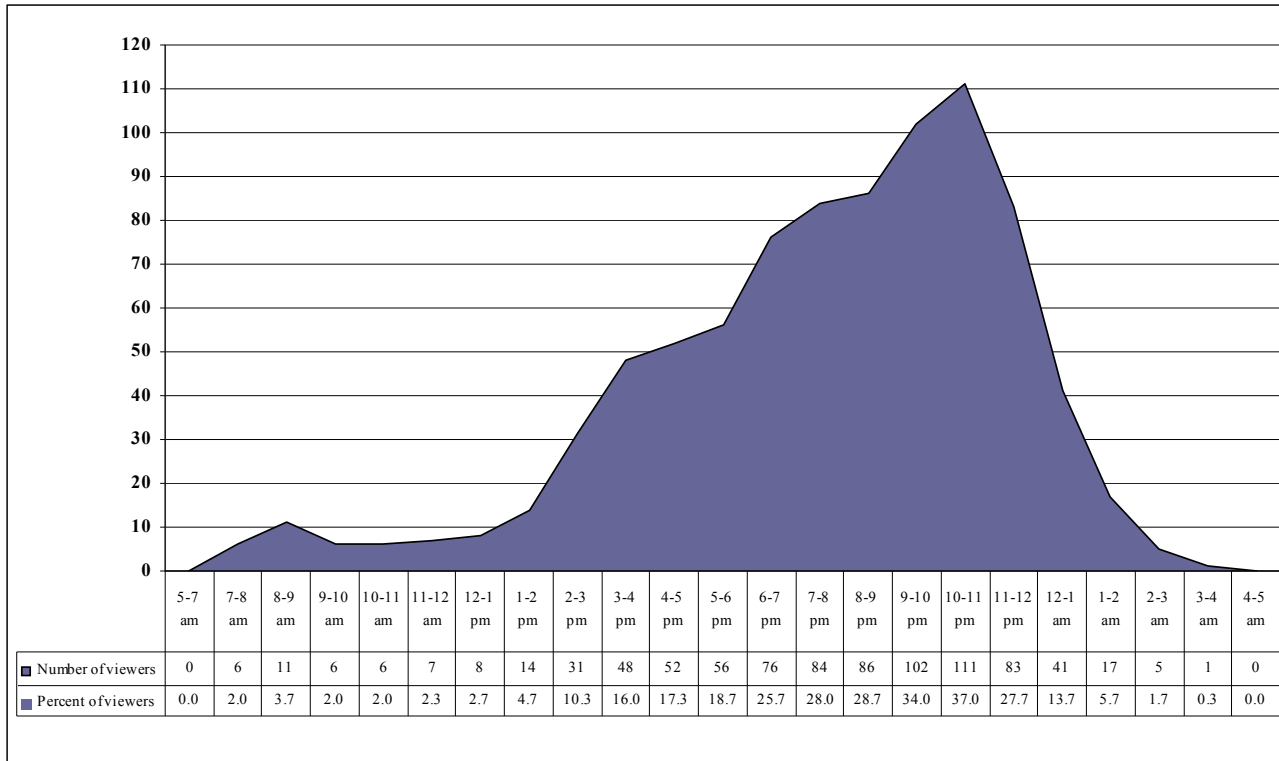
**Chart 5. Sources of information used at least once a week**



## TELEVISION

**Watching time:** 94.3% of the respondents have last watched TV the day before the interview. We have asked them to specify at what time they have been watching it. It appeared that majority of the survey participants have watched TV between 9 and 12 pm and around 20% of respondents watched TV at any hour in the afternoon (12-6 pm).

*Chart 6. TV watching time (absolute number and percent of viewers)*



**TV channels received:** Majority of the respondents (67.4%) said they can watch 14-25 TV channels at home. 7.3% can watch only up to 6 channels and 17% of the respondents can watch more than 26 channels.

In most of the families (76.3%) TV signals are received through antennas on the roofs or outside the windows, and 10% receives TV signals through antennas on TV or in the room. 15% of the respondents said they have individual satellite dishes and another 1.3% have shared dishes.

Around half (51.9%) of respondents who have satellite dishes receive international and regional TV programs from “NTV”+, 14.8% receive programs from “Telecome 1”, and 11.1% - from “Hot Bird 1”.

## INTERNET

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**Access to internet:** 74.3% of the surveyed children were internet users. This number is almost the same as in 2006, but the number of children who can access internet at home has increased by 10% - 48.6% instead of 38.4% for 2006. And the number of children who access internet in internet cafes has reduced by 8% - 54.7% instead of 62.4 of 2006. These numbers allow us assuming that information technologies become more accessible for more and more people. Around one third of the respondents use internet at homes of their friends or relatives (31.4%) or at school (17%).

The majority of survey participants said they access the internet via dial-up connection (66.3%), 16.3% connects to the internet through DSL and 7.2% uses satellite connection. The remaining 18.3% of the children were not sure about the type of connection, which is reasonable, since most of them use the internet in public places.

Majority of the respondents stated they can access media files in the internet or on their computers. 70.7% listens to audio and 68.9% watches video files from the internet.

As far as intensity of internet usage is concerned, more than 75% of the children [who use the internet] access the internet at least once a week.

*Table 6. Frequency of internet usage*

Frequency	Percent
Daily/most days per week	20.6
Several days per week	26.9
1 or 2 days per week	27.4
From time to time in the past month	11.7
Less often	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**WebPages visited:** Overwhelming majority of the children said they access internet pages in Russian (87.9%) and 70.9% of them use also pages in English. But, as in 2006, this year too, very few children use pages in Armenian language. This outcome, however, is not surprising, considering that Armenian web resources are yet very poor, especially the ones that are targeted at children.

Below are the top-five web-pages accessed by the respondents:

1. [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) (78.5%)
2. [www.rambler.ru](http://www.rambler.ru) (72.1%)
3. [www.hayastan.com](http://www.hayastan.com) (26.0%)
4. [www.mail.ru](http://www.mail.ru) (17.8%)

5. [www.google.am](http://www.google.am), [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), [www.google.ru](http://www.google.ru) (12.3%)

Majority of the survey participants said they learn about new websites from their friends (77.6%). Around quarter of respondent finds new web resources through search engines. Some children mentioned they get information about new websites from internet advertising (12.6%). Around equal number of respondents said they learn about new pages from advertising on radio or TV and their teachers (8.5% and 8.1% correspondingly).

## CHAPTER 3. WE AND OUR THOUGHTS

### *OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES OF THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS*

#### WE AND OUR PROBLEMS

**Perception of problems facing Armenia:** In order to assess the respondents' opinions as to the issues currently facing Armenia, we have provided them with a list of problems and asked them to categorize those according to the level of importance for the country. The estimates of the surveyed children regarding the urgency of each problem for the Armenian society are presented in the table below.

*Table 6. Problems facing Armenia (arranged in order of importance)*

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Critical (1)</b>	<b>Serious (2)</b>	<b>Not so serious (3)</b>	<b>DK/NS</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Unemployment	58.3	35.0	4.7	2.0	<b>1.45</b>
Human rights violations	57.0	32.3	8.7	2.0	<b>1.51</b>
Corruption	57.3	28.7	12.0	1.7	<b>1.54</b>
Low salaries	44.7	46.3	7.0	2.0	<b>1.62</b>
Drug use	49.3	29.7	16.7	4.3	<b>1.66</b>
Crime/insecurity/lack of safety	45.0	36.6	15.1	3.4	<b>1.69</b>
Health problems	35.7	45.7	16.3	2.3	<b>1.80</b>
Lack of educational opportunities	38.5	37.1	22.4	2.0	<b>1.84</b>
Environmental problems	31.3	47.7	18.0	3.0	<b>1.86</b>
Armed conflict	32.7	36.7	24.7	5.7	<b>1.91</b>
Contraband	24.4	45.2	21.1	9.4	<b>1.96</b>
Terrorism/political violence	33.0	26.7	33.7	6.7	<b>2.01</b>
Ethnic conflict/tension	22.0	41.7	28.3	7.7	<b>2.07</b>
Conditions of life	18.7	49.3	30.0	4.3	<b>2.14</b>
Lack of a free press	16.3	40.7	34.7	5.7	<b>2.17</b>

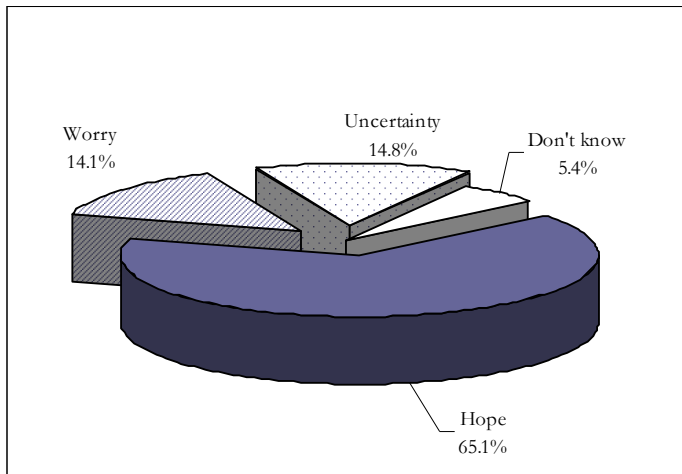
We can state that children's perceptions of problems that Armenia is facing now have not changed since 2006. They consider unemployment, low salaries and violence of human rights to

be serious and crucial problems. Around half of the respondents think that drug use is a serious problem for Armenian society and around 60% consider corruption and crime to be serious problems.

As in 2006, this year as well, the respondents think that the danger of terrorism, political violence, armed and ethnic conflicts is quite low in Armenia. They also do not consider the lack of free press to be a serious problem for our society. But they think that environmental and health problems are quite crucial ones.

**Look into future:** Majority of the surveyed children are optimistic about their nearest future.

*Chart 7. How do you view the next 12 months to come?*



## **WE AND THE OTHERS**

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**Attitudes towards certain nations:** Quite naturally, overwhelming majority of the respondents (80.2%) has very positive attitude towards Armenians. As far as the “others” are concerned, most of the children are most favorably inclined towards Russians and French, have positive attitude towards English and Americans. As for the neighboring countries, children have neutral [though closer to negative] attitude towards Georgians and are unfavorably inclined towards Azeri and Turkish.

Table 7 on the next page illustrates the opinions of the respondents about each of the nations.

**Table 7. Attitudes towards certain nations**

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Very negative (1)</b>	<b>Rather negative (2)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Rather positive (4)</b>	<b>Very positive (5)</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Armenian	2.0	0.7	2.7	13.8	80.2	0.3	<b>4.71</b>
French	1.7	1.0	22.0	28.3	45.7	1.3	<b>4.17</b>
Russian	4.7	8.3	16.0	29.7	41.0	0.3	<b>3.94</b>
English	2.7	4.0	28.1	34.8	29.1	1.3	<b>3.85</b>
American	5.7	7.7	27.0	32.7	26.0	1.0	<b>3.66</b>
Georgian	12.7	18.7	34.0	23.0	10.3	1.0	<b>3.00</b>
Azeri	51.8	22.7	17.4	6.4	0.7	1.0	<b>1.80</b>
Turkish	67.7	13.0	12.0	4.7	1.7	1.0	<b>1.58</b>

**Attitudes towards Armenian-Azeri conflict:** Majority of the surveyed children (93.2%) have peaceful feelings about the conflict. It is worth mentioning that this number has increased by around 10% compared with the results of previous year. At that, 36.7% (instead of 40.3% for 2006) among those who are inclined towards peaceful resolution of the conflict said they previously leaned to military solution of the problem. 8.7% (instead of 15.8% for 2006) of the respondents stated they are now leaning towards military solution, although three years ago they were more inclined to peaceful approaches. Eight respondents (3.9%) were not sure about their attitudes towards the conflict resolution process.

**Opinions regarding relations between nations:** We have offered the survey participants a set of statements regarding relations between different countries and people of different ethnic backgrounds and asked them to share their opinion regarding each of those statements. Overwhelming majority of the respondents (70.3%) strongly agreed that *countries should allow their neighbors to live in peace*. At the same time, 60.9% of the children agree that *nations need to protect themselves however they can*. Only 15.8% of children strongly believe that *societies where everyone has the same ethnic background are best*. Moreover, majority of the children are convinced that *cultural diversity makes a nation stronger* (76.0%) and that *it is possible for people from different backgrounds to be friends* (80.0%).

## CHAPTER 4. “WE” AND THE WAY WE WANT IT TO BE

### “MENK ENK” VIEWER PROFILE AND AUDIENCE PREFERENCES

#### AUDIENCE

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**General statistics:** Comparing the results for 2007 and 2006, the number of children who have watched "Menk enk" at least once has increased by 8%: 54.7% instead of 46.4% for 2006. Almost all of them have watched the program in the last 12 months (98.2%) and 70.6% have watched the program within the past month.

*Table 8. When did you last watch “Menk enk”?*

Frequency	Percent
Yesterday	1.8
Within the past 7 days	30.7
Within the past 30 days	39.9
Longer than 30 days ago	19.0
DK/NS	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Note: Figures are based on responses of 164 respondents, who watched the program in the last 12 months.*

13.4% of the respondents said they specifically tune to the channel to watch “Menk enk” (this number has reduced twice compared to the numbers of 2006), 84.8% of the children said they watch the program when it occasionally came on the channel they were watching. At the same time, 38% of the children said they try not to miss the program, while more than half of the respondents confessed they watch “Menk enk” when they have nothing else to do (53.4%).

**Viewer profile:** In order to describe the typical viewer of the program, we have analyzed the composition of the group of respondents who said they try not to miss the program. This group is mostly comprised of girls (72.5%). The age group that is most interested in “Menk enk” is 14-15. At the same time, majority of the respondents, who have watched “Menk enk” at least once, believe that “Menk enk” is intended for children exactly their age (85.3%). This means the potential audience of the program includes 13-16 year-old children.

This year too, the survey shows that regular viewers of “Menk enk” have better attitude towards Georgians and Azeri than the rest of the respondents: 42.2% (instead of 32.9% for 2006) of the regular viewers are favorably inclined towards Georgians, as opposed to 29.4% (instead of 23.1% for 2006) of the rest of the respondents. And 11.3% (instead of 8.3% for 2006) have positive attitude towards Azeri, as opposed to only 5.3% (instead of 2.2% for 2006) of the other

children. The survey, however, again did not allow establishing whether “Menk enk” has contributed to the betterment of the attitudes or better attitudes made the children interested in “Menk enk”.

## PREFERENCES

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**Topics covered:** Top-five topics that “Menk enk” viewers are most interested in are:

- stories about teenagers,
- traveling,
- entertainment,
- music and
- relations between boys and girls.

Majority of the respondents likes topics covering sport, education/school, human rights, culture, history and literature. The respondents seem to be not interested in economics/business, social issues, and politics. Most of the children like stories about Armenia, however, according to the children’s estimates, stories about Georgia and Azerbaijan belong to the category of less interesting topics.

**Table 9. Topics of interest**

Topic	Very interesting (1)	Somewhat interesting (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat uninteresting (4)	Not interesting at all (5)	Mean
Traveling	86,3	9,4	1,9	0,6	0,0	<b>1,15</b>
Stories about teenagers	79,0	16,7	0,0	1,9	0,6	<b>1,25</b>
Entertainment	71,0	23,5	3,1	0,6	0,6	<b>1,34</b>
Music	70,2	20,5	4,3	1,9	1,2	<b>1,41</b>
Relationship between boys and girls	65,4	26,5	4,3	1,2	1,2	<b>1,44</b>
Sports	58,6	27,2	8,6	2,5	0,6	<b>1,56</b>
Stories about Armenia	56,5	32,9	3,7	3,7	1,2	<b>1,58</b>
Culture/History/Literature	58,4	29,2	5,0	3,1	2,5	<b>1,59</b>
Human Rights	59,9	24,1	4,9	7,4	1,9	<b>1,65</b>
Education/school	59,3	30,9	3,7	3,1	1,2	<b>1,80</b>
Stories about Georgia	35,4	44,1	9,3	5,6	3,1	<b>1,94</b>
Family issues (relations with parents)	44,7	29,8	10,6	7,5	5,0	<b>1,96</b>
Science/Technology	38,9	29,6	15,4	11,1	2,5	<b>2,06</b>
Environment/Ecology	35,2	30,9	15,4	11,7	4,3	<b>2,17</b>
Internet	38,9	28,4	14,2	10,5	6,8	<b>2,17</b>
Health/Medicine	34,8	26,7	21,1	11,8	3,7	<b>2,22</b>



Religion	28,0	37,3	16,8	9,9	6,2	<b>2,28</b>
Stories about Azerbaijan	31,9	37,5	8,8	5,6	13,8	<b>2,30</b>
Weather	21,6	34,6	22,8	13,6	5,6	<b>2,46</b>
Social issues	21,0	36,4	19,8	12,3	7,4	<b>2,47</b>
Economics/Business	19,8	34,0	21,0	15,4	8,0	<b>2,57</b>
Politics	19,9	24,8	26,1	11,8	14,9	<b>2,76</b>

**Rubrics:** As for the rubrics of the program, the children have almost repeated their preferences. Traveling and stories about teenagers still appear on the first place, while social issues are given the lowest priority. In order of importance for the viewers, the rubrics of “Menk enk” can be listed as follows:

- We are with our wants (53.4%)
- We are with our mountains (47.9%)
- We are with our problems (33.7%)
- We are with our notes (30.1%)
- We are with our kingpins (23.9%)
- We are with our genius (23.3%)
- We are with our ads (6.1%)

If we compare the results with that of 2006, it appears that respondents’ interest has significantly changed only towards the "We are with our wants" rubric – it has increased by 10%.

**Moderators:** More than 65.0% of the respondents could not remember names of the “Menk enk” moderators. The rest have memorized the names of Artak Vardanyan (9.3%), Tigran Danielyan (8.6%), Anna Harutyunyan (8.0%), Elina Chilingaryan (6.2%), David Grigoryan (3.7%), Margarita Aghasyan (2.5%) and Seda Grigoryan (1.2%).

## **A “CRITICAL” GLANCE**

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**Advantages and disadvantages of “Menk enk”:** Overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed that “Menk enk” is interesting because it is made by teenagers for teenagers (89.6%) and because it allows learning about kids in neighboring countries (96.3%). 79.8% of the children also think the program allows kids in other countries learn the truth about Armenia, and 84.1% of the respondents said “Menk enk” is good because it is educational.

Majority of the respondents (74.8%) did not find the program boring. 19.3% of children think that “Menk enk” does not make Armenia and Armenians look good, while 61.1% does not agree with this opinion. Around 30% stated that when watching “Menk enk” they get the impression that the teenagers in Georgia and Azerbaijan live more interesting life than they do here. 11% of

the children think “Menk enk” sometimes upsets, because the topics are not serious enough, while 14.7% is of opposite opinion and states that the topics are too serious. However, the majority of the respondents are completely satisfied with the thematic balance.

**Suggestions for improvement:** 35.5% (instead of 41.1% for 2006) of the children said they like the program the way it is, and would not like to change anything. If given the opportunity, 10.5% of the children would extend the duration of the program and would present bigger variety of topics. 8.0% would invite kids from the other countries to discuss issues and 4.3% would change the design of the studio.

## CHAPTER 5. DIGGING DEEPER

### *RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUPS*

#### GENERAL OPINION

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The analysis of Focus Group discussions again shows that the kids, in general, liked “Menk enk”. Majority of the participants, especially from the younger age group, mainly liked the diversity of the program. They mentioned that the program presents different topics and each teenager can find something interesting from him/herself. Children also liked the program as “*it is educational*”. The participants mentioned also that it is very interesting for them to learn how the teenagers in neighboring countries live.

The participants of older age group were a bit more critical. Some of them think that teenagers are more interested in show-business news, music and movies. Some of them also think that the program is boring as the moderators are younger than themselves (they had such impression). There was also an opinion that the program is for children who are 12-14 years old, but not for them.

#### PERCEPTION OF THE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

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Discussion participants of the two age groups were of the same opinion when discussing the program objectives. They have mentioned two main objectives of “Menk enk”:

- to give teenagers of the three countries an opportunity to get acquainted with culture and traditions of that countries,
- to give teenagers the opportunity to get to know each other.

Many children liked the second objective the most, as “*at home adults don’t speak good about our neighbors, and “Menk enk” gives the opportunity to see the daily life of the teenagers in neighboring countries*”. Some children mentioned that thanks to the program they have uncovered many common things between themselves and Georgian and Azeri teenagers.

The participants of the younger age group expressed an opinion that *“Menk enk” shows them interesting options of leisure*” and teaches them to use their time in more rational and interesting way, by telling them about hobbies and leisure of teenagers of other countries.

One of the participants mentioned the extermination of hostility between Armenians, Georgians and Azeri as the objective of the program. He thinks that *“certainly there have been injustice, but all that should concern the adults; and the programs aims at exterminating that amity at least among younger generation”*.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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The overwhelming majority of focus group participants said that before watching “Menk enk” they did not have information about the neighboring countries and their opinion about those countries was based either on their imagination or on what adults told them, and their opinion was never positive.

Several children also mentioned that before watching “Menk enk” they did not have any interest towards Georgia and Azerbaijan, or there was no such program which would make them interested. Many children stated also that “Menk enk” made them curious about Georgia and Azerbaijan, interests, habits, problems and daily life of teenagers who live there.

Many children have mentioned also that the program has changed their opinion about neighboring countries: *“people of my age have the opinion that Azeri do nothing more but thinking how to harm Armenians, that Azeri people are from a different world. But the program shows that they are just like us and are a normal nation”*. *“I think that the program has positive impact, as we were always told that Azeri are our enemies, but our generation has nothing to do with the previous one”*.

Children think that *“Menk enk” tries to establish relations among people, but apart from politics*”, *“tries to reach peace”*.

## **ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM CONTENT**

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When discussing the content of “Menk enk” the focus group participants mentioned, that the materials about Georgia and Azerbaijan present the daily life of their youth, present their life as it is, both from positive and negative sides, and that they would like the Armenian materials not to tell about extraordinary people, but about the majority. The discussion participants would also like the program to show how teenagers organize their leisure here, and to tell about their school-life. Some of the participants stated that when watching the program one can get the impression that teenagers’ life in Armenia is more boring than in Georgia and Azerbaijan, as there are no interesting places for leisure and that the teenagers have nothing interesting to do.

The teenagers would also like the program to present more materials about modern music and musicians, movies and sport: *“there was lack of sport, extreme and modern music in the*

*program*". One of the participants made a suggestion of inviting young musicians, actors and sportsmen, or making a material about them.

During the discussion we asked the participants to imagine that they have to make a material for "Menk enk" and asked them to tell what their material would be about, how it would look like. Several participants said they would present historical monuments of Armenia "*which might be a bit boring for us, but should be interesting for foreigners*". For making this material more interesting the participants suggested making material about interesting events in historical places: "*for example the concert of chamber orchestra in Garni, etc*".

Two participants said they would like the program to present Armenia from strong and positive sides. At the same time the participants would not like the program discussing history as "*this could be a reason for misunderstandings with our neighbors*".

Many participants would like to present places for entertainment: they suggested making a material about teenagers who spend their evening at "Play City" entertainment center, or teenagers who have organized something interesting in their yard. Many participants would like to make a material about school-life, or rather material about life in school, but not about the educational process itself. Several participants would like the program to present a material where teenagers could express their opinion about an important issue, or express their complaints and critical opinions.

## **ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM PRESENTATION**

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Talking about the way "Menk enk" is presented, the participants of younger age group mentioned that they like the "*language*" of the program as it is very simple and they can understand everything: "*it is more simple than our school books*". The teenagers also liked that during the program the moderators speak short and only about the presented material, they also like that some issues are spoken about with humor.

The participants of the younger age group liked also the moderators, the way they speak and their appearance. Teenagers think that the simple appearance of the moderators makes everything to look more natural. Several participants found the dialogues of the moderators to be a bit boring.

The participants of the older age group were more critical. Some of them think that the moderators should be of their age – 16-17 years old (they were sure that the moderators were younger) and that they should comply with each other: "*one of the moderators was tall while the other one was quite short, one was older and the other one was much younger, etc*", "*the moderators' clothes looked like uniform, they should wear more colorful clothes*". The participants think that the moderators should wear simple but more modern clothes.

The participants of this age group found the dialogues of moderators to be boring and unnatural. Some of them suggested the moderators not reading the script but to express their opinion about

the materials that was just shown. Some of the participants think that it is boring that the moderators, between two materials, speak only about the material that was just shown and about the one that should be shown next. These participants would like to hear something else – some interesting news, or the moderators' opinion about the material.

Some participants also think that the moderators' were "*playing adults*" – meaning the way they speak, and most probably the reason is that "*they just read the scenario that someone else has written for them*".

The teenagers also did not like the studio design. They think that the white background of the studio and "*several colorful lines*" look boring and suggest making the studio more colorful and attractive.

All the participants of the discussion liked the name of the program. They think it is short, original and meaningful.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

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The suggestions mainly refer to the content of the program, especially to the selection of topics. The participants were particularly interested in materials about daily life, leisure, school-life, music, movies and sports.

### **Suggested topics:**

- Daily life (including: daily life of Armenian youth in their yards, schools and entertainment centers, etc)
- Leisure and entertainment (including: life on the dance floor, cafes and entertainment centers, night-life of Yerevan)
- School life (including: school life which is not connected with the educational process itself, graduation ceremony)
- Sports (including: stories about different sports and young sportsmen in Armenia)
- Culture (including: historical monuments of Armenia, stories about famous artists, programs with their participation)
- Music (including: stories about young musicians, programs with their participation). The teenagers would also like the program to include more modern music. In particular they suggest the dialogues of the participants or the materials to be coupled with good music.

As in 2006, this year too there was a suggestion of three countries presenting the same topic during one program, so that the viewers can draw parallels.

The suggestions concerning program presentation mainly concerned improvement of the weaknesses discussed above: making the moderators speech more natural, dressing them more attractively and changing the studio design.