

Interim report

of the Armenia Chapter project **“Rehabilitation of disabled people, retired athletes, pensioners, jobless school graduates by training them in Internet literacy, social networks and setting-up new businesses/start-ups in the Republic of Armenia”**

(Short version of the title: **Internet literacy for vulnerable groups**)

One of the priorities of the Internet Society is to increase the reach of the Internet. And while the process is going fairly well for the young and active part of the population the vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, retired sportsmen, pensioners, and jobless school graduates mostly remain unconnected because of the lack of knowledge and devices. So, the goal of the project is to increase the reach of the Internet by bringing it to the vulnerable groups of the population.

There are the following focus groups that are under the attention of Armenia Chapter: people with disabilities, pensioners, retired athletes, and young school graduates having no specialty and jobs. We consider that retired engineers are the most suitable target group among pensioners. Young school graduates having no specialty and jobs are probably the most active group and they will work side by side with elder people adding young energy and agility to the activity.

We cooperate with:

- "PYUNIK" Armenian Association for Disabled people,
- Charitable NGO, 64+" public organization of retired athletes. After leaving the sport, a lot of athletes are facing financial problems because they cannot support themselves without being prepared for new life conditions without having an alternative profession and knowledge.
- Public organization of retired engineers and technician

- Jobless young school graduates having no specialty. This group is probably the most vulnerable as jobless young people are subject to criminals' influence and giving them Internet skills will avert them from joining street gangs. The main goal of the project was to train them in computer and Internet literacy, social networks, bring them to the Internet, and set up start-ups/small businesses. Achievement of this objective will help them to return to an active life and earn enough money to support themselves.

45 people (10 people from the first three target groups and 15 young jobless school graduates) were chosen. The criteria of choice were their willingness to start their own business and having some business ideas. A manager was assigned to each group of people. They were Hasmik Melikyan, Annie Dallakian, and Gagik Sargsyan.

In the photo, there is shown a group of disabled people from the "Pyunik" organization with the General Manager of the project Igor Mkrtumyan and the manager of the group Hasmik Melikyan.



As a result of the first step 45 participants were selected. The list of participants is shown below:

AlvardDavtyan	Hakob Sargsyan	Marine Petrosyan
Ani Amirxanyan	Hasmik Melikyan	Meri Mangryan
Anna Poghosyan	Hayk Avetisyan	Narek Derdzakyan
Aram Simonyan	HovhannesIspiryan	Narek Yeghiazaryan
EdikBakshyan	Hrachya Avagyan	NarineAzaryan
Edmond Hovhannisyan	Hrachya Harutyunyan	NarineKarapetyan
Eduard Yeghiazaryan	InesaDilikyan	NarineZakaryan
Erik Antonyan	Irina Martirosyan	OnikTovmasyan
Erna Ghazaryan	Karen Azaryan	SargisZakaryan
Gagik Gyanjumyan	Karen Mikayelyan	Serob Manukyan
Gagik Hakobyan	Lena Karapetyan	Sona Khachatryan
GayaneGrigoryan	Liana Aneshyan	SyuzannaNazaryan
GayaneYesayan	LilitNazlughanyan	TatevArakelyan
Georgi Gevorgyan	MadatyanZaruhi	Tigran Nazaryan
Gor Hakobyan	Maria Agbashyan	Varduhi Hakobyan

All participants became students of a month-long business course provided by the Business Support Center (BSC). BSC is an EU-funded company, laid by the EU TACIS program and is considered a "forge of the country business professionals".

BSC organized the course for the project participants with the following content:

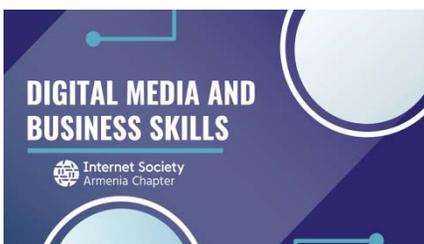
- From idea to business
- Development of business model(s)
- Development of business plan(s)
- Businesses' legal status and registration
- Market research
- How to attract investments
- Accounting and taxation
- Business management
- Personnel management
- Marketing strategies
- Digital marketing
- Financial management
- Sales management
- Time management
- Organization of business processes

3 student groups were formed with 15 participants in each group.

Below are some photos from the classes:



To inform students about the project activity a Facebook group "Digital Media and Business Skills" was created. All news concerning the schedule of lectures for each group as well as other announcements were published on this Facebook page.



After the course, the program participants received certificates on successful completion of the BSC's management course "How to set up and manage a private business".



At the end of this course, a survey on the evaluation of the lecture course was announced.

The participants were invited to think about business ideas and present a short description of their idea, answering the following questions:

- Business description
- The purpose of the business
- Product or Service Description:
- Target group - Who is it for (for example, children, adults, women, men ...)

The survey was needed to work with more practical examples in the classroom.

A brainstorming session was organized, where all participants of the program presented their business ideas. The pros and cons of each idea were discussed. Some were supported, others criticized, and changes proposed. The following ideas were selected that will serve as starting points for business coaches:

1. Meri Mangryan. "64+" NGO needs a web site and a Facebook page.
2. Irina Martirosyan and Hrachya Harutyunyan. Wants to set up a business in art management: paint art, music. They need a web site.
3. Hrachya Harutyunyan. Abstract paintings on T-shirts. He wants to set up an art manager business.
4. Lianna Aneshyan. Handmade bijouterie, homemade peanut butter. Needs an online store and marketing help.
4. Gayane Esayan. Psychotherapy specialist. Wants to set a psychotherapy clinic for up to 30 patients (a separate house in a green, relaxed environment, where patients can relax, take séances of psychotherapy, and recover). Needs a business plan and investors. She would also like to organize special touristic routes for patients.
5. Eduard Yeghiazaryan. He has a building, fruit gardens, and several land plots. Wants to sell them or donate to a benevolent undertaking.
6. Hasmik Petrosyan. Buying and reselling bijoux, through the Facebook oriented to women of 18-25 years old. Needs help in marketing goods.
7. Hovhannes Spiryan. Wants to set up a store for selling intellectual games (Lego type) and newest mobile accessories and gadgets. Needs help in setting a Facebook page/Internet website and marketing.
8. Tigran Nazaryan. Hand made goods from semi-precious stones and obsidian. Needs a Facebook on-line store and marketing help.
9. Syuzanna Nazaryan. Handmade embroidery. Buyers will get a present - hand painted dish.
10. Varduhi Hakobyan. Beauty salon with a half-price discount for disabled people. Needs investors, advertising, and marketing.
11. Narek Derdzakyan. Growing and selling black roses. Needs advertising and marketing.
12. Maria Aghbashyan. Virtual tourism. Mobile application with virtual access to different sightseeing places.
13. Karen Matevosyan and Maria Aghbashyan. Touristic business, guides. Need a Facebook page, advertising, and marketing help.
14. Anna Khechumyan. Knits socks and make soft toys. Needs a Facebook page and store.
15. Gayane Grigoryan. Idea: Reproduction and sale of aquarium fish. Needs a Facebook page and store.
16. Ani Amirkhanyan. Wants to open a private children cafe. She has a good experience.
17. Karen Mikaelyan. Deputy chief editor of a Russian language newspaper. Because of the lack of money, the newspaper is issued once a month. Needs crowdfunding help to keep the newspaper alive.
18. Gagik Sargsyan. Has an idea to create an Internet store of Armenian bijoux, souvenirs, brandy, jewelry. Needs a website.
19. Visually impaired people. Need rebranding of the radio-menq.am web site.

The work of one of the ideas was started earlier and was presented to the participants. This was a newly opened Facebook page of Karen Matosyan's (a participant of the "Internet literacy for vulnerable groups" program) named "HISTORICAL COUNTRY TOUR" idea. Karen's idea was one of the first in the program and will motivate other participants.



Then a lecture course on the basic knowledge on Computer "Literacy" was conducted. Topics of the lecture were operating systems, browsers, Microsoft office. The course was provided by VahanMiskyan, the leader of the "Computers, services and WiFi Internet for rural libraries" program.



Then "Internet Literacy" course lectures had started including the "rules" of safe and secure use of the Internet for business purposes, the basics of intellectual property, domain names, and other important issues. The first of the 3 lectures were conducted in the Chapter's office. Then the emergency state was announced because of Coronavirus banning live meetings. It took some time for the ISOC Armenia chapter to take measures for transferring the activities on-line.

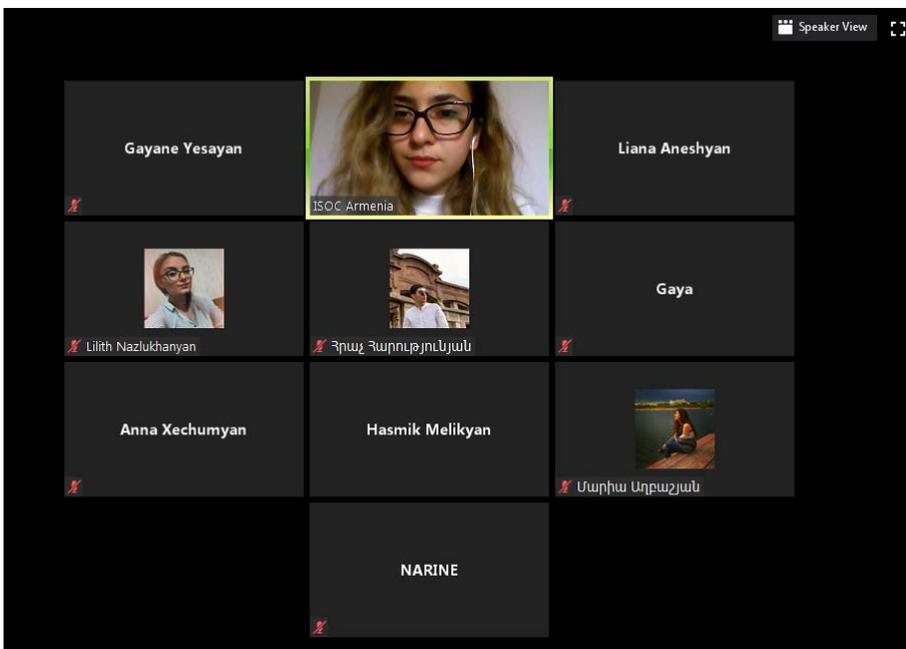
Program lectures postponed because of coronavirus forced the Chapter to continue teaching in a new way, using telecommunications via the Zoom video conferencing system. Lianna Galstyan conducted the lectures of "Internet Literacy" via the Zoom video conference.

Some participants were satisfied by the Business Support Center's lecture course considering that it is enough for setting their business. However, the majority of participants (see the list below) continued participation in the online lectures.

List of on-line lecture's participants:

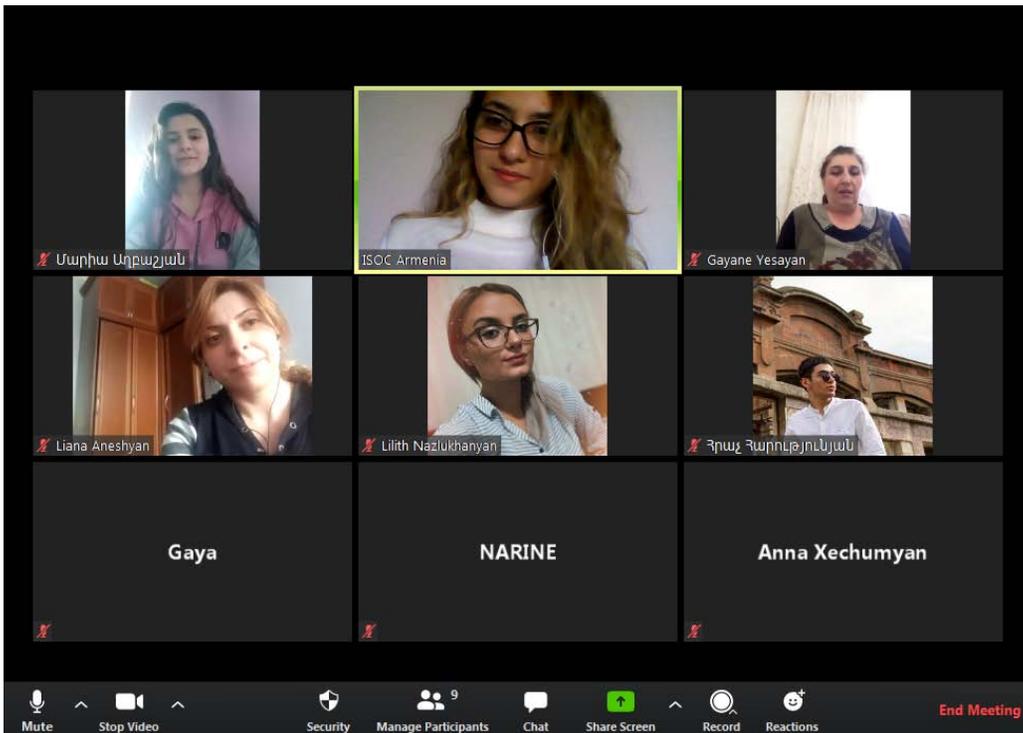
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Gagik Hakobyan	Karen Mikayelyan



The Social Media Marketing course of the "Internet literacy for vulnerable groups" program was then provided. It was carried by Annie Dallakian and included:

- Digital marketing & SMM overview
- What is SMM? its need for business.
- Content Marketing & Strategy
- Facebook from 0 (Business Page & Ads)
- Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook Page, Ads Manager
- Important resources: editing, tools, web & more.



The course familiarized students with Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube, and their use. It also trained students in searching the work on the Internet, looking for a job, learning how to get money.

That was the last lecture course. So, the first stage of the program is completed.

At the next stage, we'll provide computers to organizations, participated in the program, start working on business ideas of participants, set their private businesses, create their Internet presence by developing web sites and social media pages.