

Support of  
blind and  
visually  
impaired  
people

# Internet Availability Center of Blind and Visually Impaired People



There are many visually-impaired people in Armenia. They are well-educated and familiar with Internet. Giving them the possibility to surf and browse the web is adding much to their freedom. The Internet can be of great value to them as it empowers them to independently complete tasks which they would normally not be able to accomplish without help from others. Traditionally, blind people have been dependent on written information that has been translated into braille or audio books, which often take time to be produced. Through the Internet, new information (such as newspaper articles) is available.

The most common way for the vision-impaired user to access the internet is with a traditional browser and text-to-speech software. There are also screen readers and applications like self-voicing web browsers and other software helping visually impaired to use the Internet.

ISOC Armenia Chapter considers the help to the vulnerable groups of population one of the main concerns.

Following this goal, we planned to implement several projects. The first of them was the creation of Internet availability center for blind and visually impaired people. There was an infrastructure for that– the House of culture of blind people with its Director, Yuri Avetisyan. We started cooperation with them, drafted necessary construction works, computer and service rooms, cabling, Internet connection and came forward with an application for ISOC grant.

The grant was received and soon the premises were renovated, and the center started working.

Within the framework of the grant the following works were completed:

- electrical and network cabling was done,
- a contract with ISP for the Internet connection was signed.
- 10 special computer desks were acquired. Four more were donated by privates.
- 6 computers were acquired, 2 were donated by the Armenian branch of the American IRD (Internet Relief and Development) organization, and 2 more were donated by the Armenian Internet Registry,
- Two «Onix» and one «Pearl» device, scanner and braille printer, as well as a projector was provided by the Ministry of Transport and Communications. One scanner-printer was donated by the “Armenians and sea” organization.

- 10 films with tiflo-commentaries were received from Russian Society of Blinds.
- A furniture was received from the Armenian branch of the IRD, including cabinets, tables, armchairs, sofa, magazine table, small cabinets as well a drinking water device and air conditioner,
- Within the framework of the grant the Arev program was purchased and installed on 6 computers. The program was developed for blinds by the Yerevan Institute of Mathematical machines. Thus, by the end of January 2013 the establishment of the Internet Center was completed.







Although there was a problem. Computer premises look perfect but the whole three-storey building was not renovated for 20 years and looked neglected.

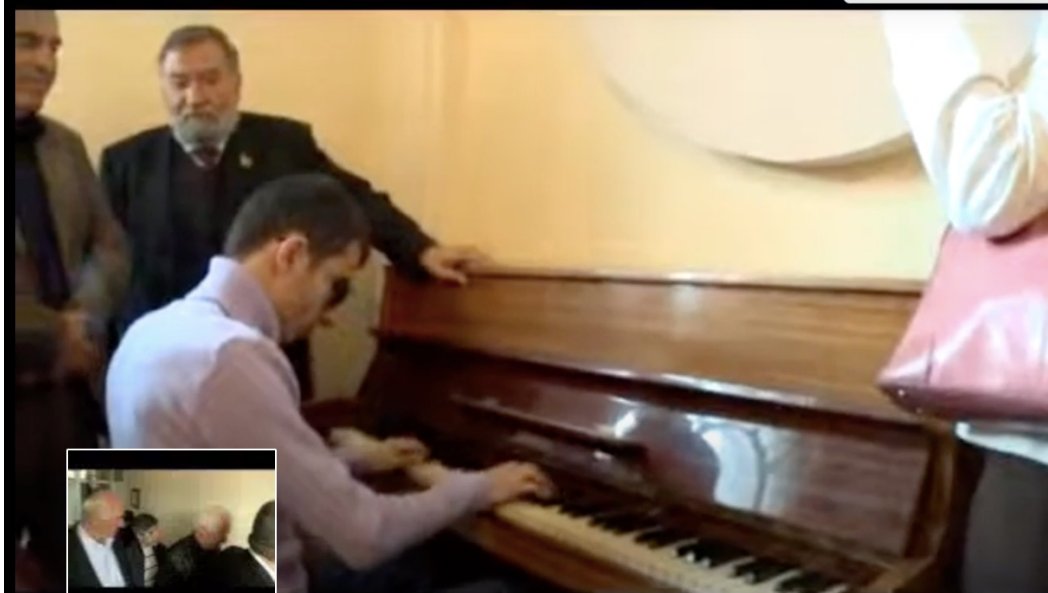


When the Center was ready, the First Lady of Armenia, Ms. Rita Sargsyan, and the Minister of Culture, Ms. Hasmik Poghosyan, were invited to the House of Culture.





Being impressed by the Center and having acquainted with the problems, Ms. Sargsyan invited the President of the Union of Armenians of Russia, Mr. Ara Abrahamyan, to the House of Culture, who, having familiarized himself with the situation of blinds in Armenia, promised to reconstruct the building of the House of Culture and turn it into a modern rehabilitation center. Soon the House of Culture was completely renovated. Thus, the Internet society grant became the catalyst for a large project for the renovation of the entire cultural center.



Later, when the computer rooms were renovated, and the center started operating the Ministry of communications decided to donate the computer equipment for blinds, received from ITU to the House of culture. It included Braille keyboard and printer, image amplifiers and computers.

The Armenian Internet Registry provides small salary for 3 positions of lab instructors (visually impaired) of the Center.

We want also to name a soul of the project, Vice-President of the ISOC Armenia Chapter, Mr. Armen Nazaryan, who unexpectedly passed away 2 years ago.



To commemorate his great work, the Center was called after him.

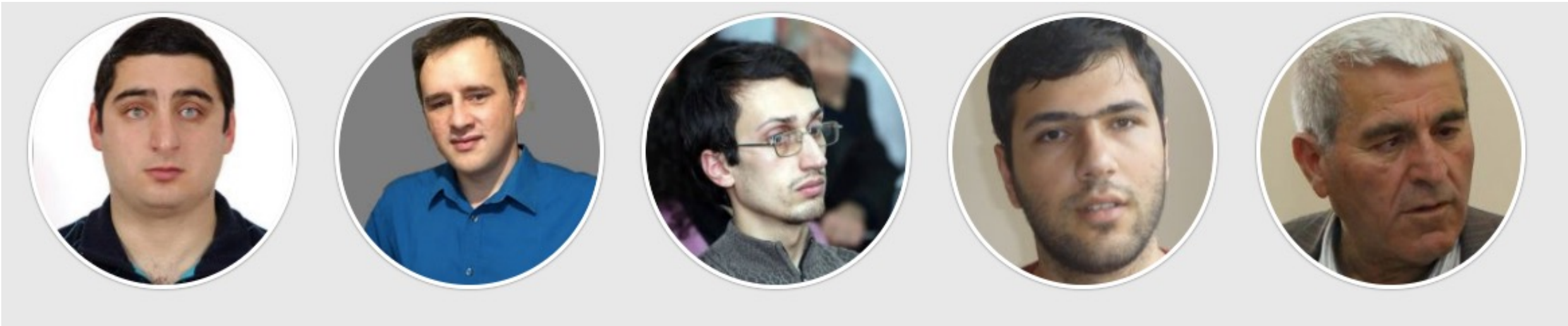




# Internet Radio for Visually Impaired



When the Internet availability center was created in the House of culture of blinds, it attracted many visually impaired people and stirred new ideas. Some of them came up with the idea of creating an Internet radio for blinds. The idea was supported by ISOC Armenia Chapter.



The group of authors of the idea included Andranik Kocharyan, Sipan Asatryan, Rudolf Zabrodin, Vahan Sahakyan, and Yuri Avetisyan.

The authors of the idea called the radio Radio MENQ (meaning 'we' in Armenian). It was planned that an Internet radio station made by blind and visually impaired people mainly should serve listeners in their own and other disabled communities.

It was planned that broadcasts should cover themes starting from Paralympic sport and discussions of the lives of people like Stevie Wonder and Louis Braille, through strategies for using public transport, dealing with stress and depression as a disabled person and winning big in games of chess.



ISOC Armenia Chapter together with the team of mentioned enthusiasts started working on the grant application and presented it to the Internet Society.

The grant application was approved soon, and the group started working hard to on the project and the development of radio broadcast programs.

The project has a considerable technical part as it included the creation of the modern recording studio where the authors could prepare their radiobroadcast programs.

The other component of the project was the installation of a streaming server, providing streaming of audio programs to the Internet.

The implementation of the project became possible due to the Internet availability center and the infrastructure created earlier.

On the next pictures you see the recording studio, recording studio control room, and streaming servers.

Recording studio is well isolated and control room is seen through window. Communication between recording studio and the control room is provided by phones.





Each of the team members, authors of the idea, took the responsibility for a planned radiobroadcast program:

Rudolph Zabrodin –You can, My universities, News,  
Program for children

Sipan Asatryan – Toward Independence, Problem and  
solution

Yuri Avetisyan – Learn to play chess

Andranik Kocharyan – Sports and we

Vahan Sahakyan – responsible for composing daily  
broadcast program schedule.





**Andranik Kocharyan** developed and recorded following «Sport and We» programs:

1. Introduction to the history of the Paralympic Games
2. Who can participate in the Paralympic Games. Several Paralympic sports
- 3 Paralympic sports, swimming, boccia and goalball
4. The guest of the program was Samvel Rostomyan, the President of the Armenian National Disabled Sports Federation
5. The guest of the program was Rudolf Zabrodin
6. The guest of the program was Sipan Asatryan
7. International and Armenia laws related to disabled sports. The guest of the program was the Secretary of Armenian Disabled Sports Federation, Mrs Varduhi Aramyan.
8. The guest of the program was Arthur Tadevosyan, who was the champion of several swimming championships. Athlete's motto is: "Believe in your strength, fight to the end and win."

**Sipan Asatryan** was responsible for «Toward Independence» radio program series. He developed and recorded the following programs:

1. What is self-dependence
2. The role of vision in human life and the consequences of violation
3. Loss of vision and its consequences (Professional discussion)
4. The value of hearing in one's life
5. The role of auditory perception and its proper use in the life of blinds
6. White cane, Historical Overview
7. White cane. Acquaintance with a cane, a professional discussion about the white cane
8. The use of the white cane (part 1)
9. The use of the white cane (part 2)
10. The use of the white cane (part 3)
11. Dance, independence as a contributing factor.
12. Blinds and public transport (part 1)
13. Blinds and public transport (part 2)
14. Blinds and metro.
15. «Tiflotechnique" What facilities exist to support the life of blinds and visually impaired. (Part 1)
16. « Tiflotechnique " What facilities exist to support the life of blinds and visually impaired. (Part 2)
17. « Tiflotechnique " What facilities exist to support the life of blinds and visually impaired. (A discussion)

18. Further steps for blind parents, after the discovery of child's visual problem. Tips for correct blind child-parent relationship.
19. Special Education is still at the beginning of the 20th century. Opinions on the state and the full acceptance of persons with physical problems today. The physical side of the problem and its compensation. How important is a compensation on the way to independence? (Part 1)
20. Special Education founded in the early 20th century. The physical side of the problem and its compensation. How important is a compensation on the way to independence? (Part 1)
21. How to care a blind or visually impaired during the first year of a child's life. (Part 1)
22. How to care a blind or visually impaired during the first year of a child's life. (Part II)
23. How to care a blind child on the second year of life. What are the most important at this stage? How child's problems should be solved with the help of parents.
24. How to care about the development of a blind child on the second year of his life. (Part 2)
25. How to care about the development of a blind child on the second year of his life. (Part 3)
26. How to care about the development of a blind child on the second year of his life. (Part 4)
27. How to care about the development of a blind child on the third year of his life. (Part 1)
28. How to care about the development of a blind child on the third year of his life. (Part 2)
29. Accompanying dogs. To what extent are these animals help parents:



Sipan Asatryan\_was responsible for «You can» radio program series.



Sipan Asatryan\_is writing a program in the recording studio.

Sipan Asatryan was responsible for « Problem and solution » radio program series. He developed and recorded the following programs:

1. What role blind and visually impaired people can play in the society)
2. The family as a factor contributing to the blind and visually impaired people finding their place in the society)
3. The role of education in the process of socialization of blind and visually impaired people)
4. Why do the blind and visually impaired people take a passive position in the society?)
5. The main problems of youth in Armenia)
6. A historian Abraham Tsaturyan presents actual problems raised in his articles)
7. People with disabilities as part of civil society (part II))
8. Disabled persons, marriage, unwritten social laws.
9. Persons with disabilities as part of civil society (Part 2)
10. Labor market and a person with a disability.
11. persons with disabilities as a group at risk of being trafficked. review existing laws.
12. Problem and solution, 2016 achievements and failures for people with disabilities.
13. What are the expectations?. What are the plans of the radio?
14. film or other artistic directions of the image of people with disabilities.
15. people today to communicate with persons with disabilities.

**Rudolf Zabrodin** was responsible for «Psychology in life» radio program series. He developed and recorded the following programs:

1. Who is a psychologist and how he can help you?
2. Disability, perceptions, stereotypes
3. What's a nogen thinking?
4. What is psychosomatics?
5. How to use internal resources to achieve the goal
6. Formation of social norms and their influence on the personality
7. Discussion of a letter
8. What are psychological barriers arising in the job search
9. What is stress and how to become stress resistant
10. How to improve self-esteem. (Part 1)
11. How to improve self-esteem. (Part 2)
12. Petulance. Why do people get offended?

13. What is acquired helplessness and how to get rid of it. (Part 1)
14. What is acquired helplessness and how to get out of it. (Part 2)
15. Premarital relations. (Part 1)
16. Premarital relations. (Part 2)
17. Targeting. What is the difference between a dream and a goal? To formulate objectives. (Part 1)
18. Targeting. What is the difference between a dream and a goal? To formulate objectives. (Part 2)
19. The communication of confidential
20. How to respond to criticism.
21. to overcome the difficulties of life.
22. parent-child relationship. How parents treat their children with disabilities. (Part 1)
23. parent-child relationship. How parents treat their children with disabilities. (Part 2)
24. Winners' psychology. How to win? (Part 1)
25. Winners' psychology. How to win? (Part 2)
26. Beliefs and attitudes of Life psychology
27. How to communicate effectively

He also developed and recorded the following « You can» programs:

1. The guest of the program was Alexander Zhuykov
2. Ray Charles
3. Louis Braille
4. Nikoghayos Tigranyan
5. Yerjanik Gevorgyan
6. Ashugh Havasi
7. Stevie Wonder part I
8. Stevie Wonder part II
9. Levon Karapetyan
10. Diana Gurtskaya
11. Program is dedicated to the deaf-blind scientist Alexander Suvorov
12. The guest of the program was Rudolf Zabrodin
13. The guest of the program was chessmaster Yuri Avetisyan, Director of the House of Culture of the Union of Blinds of Armenia
14. The guest of the program was historian Abraham Tsatouryan.
15. The guest of the program was Arsen Grigoryan, 11-year-old musician.
16. A program dedicated to the composer Simon Hovhannisyan.



17. The guest of the program was a musician Hovhannes Hovhannisyan.
18. The guest of the program was Gor Hambardzumyan, a 10-year-old musician.
19. A program dedicated to the famous singer Andrea Bocelli, who enchanted the world with his voice. (Part 1)
20. A program dedicated to the famous singer Andrea Bocelli, who enchanted the world with his voice. (Part 2)
21. A program dedicated to the famous singer Andrea Bocelli, who enchanted the world with his voice. (Part 3)
22. A program dedicated to the famous singer Andrea Bocelli, who enchanted the world with his voice. (Part 4)
23. A program dedicated to the famous singer Andrea Bocelli, who enchanted the world with his voice. (Part 5)
24. The guest of the program was Andranik Kocharyan.
25. A program devoted to the 85th anniversary of the famous blind scientist Albert Mousheghyan.
26. The guest of the program was Artak Beglaryan.



Rudolf Zabrodin is conducting an interview in the recording studio.

Rudolf Zabrodin was responsible for « My universities » radio program series. He developed and recorded the following programs:

1. The guest of the program was a Jurist, masseur Andranik Qocharyan
2. The guest of the program was a student of Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory Hakob Babayan
3. The guest of the program was a Philologist, Tiflopedagog, Armenian diaspora specialist Sipan Asatryan
4. The guest of the program was a pianist Levon Karapetyan
5. The guest of the program was a student at Yerevan State Pedagogical University after Khachatur Abovyan Nare Alaverdyan
6. The guest of the program was Arev Melkonyan
7. The guest of the program was a classical singer Alexander Zhuykov
8. The guest of the program was a lawyer, masseur, PC instructor Giorgi Grigorian
9. The guest of the program was the violinist Lusine Harutyunyan (part 1).
10. The guest of the program was violinist Lusine Harutyunyan (part 2).
11. The guest of the program was Lusine Sargsyan and Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory, Master.
12. The guest of the program was network specialist Vahan Sahakyan.
13. The guest of the program was Tigranuhi said.
14. What is inclusive education. Guest psychologist, expert Sofia Hovsepyan inclusive education.
15. The guest of the program was Artak Davtyan.
16. The guest of the program was singer V. Manukyan.
17. The guest of the program was the European Regional Educational Academy student Rafael Asiryan.

**Rudolf Zabrodin** was responsible for « News» and « Program for children » radio program series  
He developed and recorded the following programs: Antoine de Saint-Exupery's The Little Prince  
part 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

### Grimm Brothers' fairytales

1. "The Frog King or Iron Heinrich"
2. "Successful trade."
3. "An amazing musician."
4. "Mrs. snowstorm moaning"
5. "Seven Crow"
6. "son dishonest"
7. "Celestial talerner"
8. "omniscient doctor."
9. "Spirit in a Bottle."
10. "Hansel and Gretel"
11. "three leaves of a serpent."
12. "Cinderella"

## **Hans Christian Andersen fairytales**

1. "The girl and the matches."
2. "Silver Coin"
3. "The Princess and the Pea."
4. "The Butterfly"
5. "seashell and rose bush."
6. "Burdock luck."
7. "Bride and Groom"
8. "fuze"
9. "Thumbelina"
10. "The gardener and his owners"
11. "Wild Swans" (Part 1)
12. "Wild Swans" (Part 2)
13. "Mermaid"
14. "Spruce Tree"
15. "The Ugly Duckling"
16. "Nightingale"
17. "Story of the Year"

R.J. Palacio "miracle" Part 1 - Part 26

Yuri Avetisyan has developed «Learn to play chess» radio program series.

1. « Learn to play chess» (Introduction)
2. « Learn to play chess» (Lesson 1 – 45)

Disaster risk reduction issues, №01

1. "Emergency situations". Natural disasters. The guest of the program was Zaruhi Tonoyan.

<https://radio-menq.am/>

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*Radio Menq*

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Most of the radio programs are addressing the issues of people with disabilities, focusing on the problems of people with visual impairments, as well as preparing programs through which those who are blind or have visual impairments will receive necessary advices. It will also try to inspire young people who have problems with integration, socialization and other insurmountable problems. The radio will also be useful for parents of the visually impaired, professionals working with them, social workers, educators and other specialists.



Meeting of the group with the head of musical programs of the Armenian Public Radio, Mrs. Alisa Kalantaryan



The archive of all broadcasts was created letting to listen to any broadcast that was on the air. It is very important that all developed programs are in the archive and can be accessed any time.

Total about 200 radio programs were recorded and broadcasted. The main purpose of those programs was to raise questions concerning disabled people and promote their self-reliance and empowerment. To achieve these goals the team of the Internet radio didn't limit itself to radio broadcasts only, but also organized workshops - seminars for orientation and the use of white canes by blind people. Internet radio has become a beacon of light, giving a hope to young blind people.

One very inspiring individual story was that of Levon Karapetyan, a blind pianist who moved around with helpers. He managed to apply for a study period in France and study there. Listening to Radio MENQ's "Toward Independence" broadcast in France he was very interested in some of the tools for self-development mentioned in the program. When he came back to Armenia, he visited the Culture House and asked the team to teach him how to use the white cane among other things. He received mobility training and a lot of things changed in his life. Radio MENQ team is going to prepare a special program devoted to his experience some time in the near future.

Another story involved a young man who has no hands. After listening to the program "Psychology in Life" he became more able to deal with the psychological difficulties connected to his disability. He became socially active and free of complexes. It permitted him to communicate with people more openly. He started to look for a charity program that could provide him a job and found one in Germany.

Our listeners often tell the team, "When I feel bad, I listen to your radio, and I get an incentive to overcome my difficulties", or simply, "You are doing the right thing".

Computer rooms and instructors have helped many blind and visually impaired to learn basic knowledge and skills of working on computers. Each month there were shows of movies with tiflo-comments. Internet radio team organized several shows with tiflo-comments. Participants were impressed by this opportunity to taste the essence of films. Many wondered how a blind person can watch movies. After watching the movies there were discussions. It positively affected the blinds, because they can sense the art, as well as feel the usefulness of the audience. It generally produces a positive attitude towards people with visual impairment.

The project opened new horizons and opportunities for the blinds. Among other benefits of the project was the jobs provided for young people with disabilities, as well as new opportunities for self-realization for the blinds. Good examples of it were Sipan Asatryan, Rudolf Zabrodin, Andranik Kocharyan, Vahan Sahakyan, Arev Gevorgyan, Levon Karapetyan and other young people who took part in the project and realized their potential.

Having earned a good experience, the team of Internet radio plans:

- expand the Internet radio audience
- raise problems of not only disabled people but the youth also.
- attract youth as volunteers
- create social podcasts
- record Armenian audio books
- show about 12 movies with tiflo-comments with further discussions
- carry about 10 master classes on training on the use of white canes, sport life - showdown
- organize flash mobs
- conduct 10 training seminars for youth

Most important, however, is the work experience blind and visually impaired people have earned through the project. Among a number of examples, one blind man came asking to help him work as a sound engineer.

He was trained and following training sessions he was fulfilling that role for the station. Many parents of children with disabilities, and students from various universities call Radio MENQ team, noting the importance of the radio in their lives, and especially “Psychology in life”, “You Can” and “Toward Independence” programs.

The blind community has reacted very positively to the fact that many blind scientists and artists are featured on the programs. And also, there is the opportunity for Radio MENQ workers to get experience from more famous radio stations like “Radio Van” and “National Radio” which have agreed to provide master classes for staff.

In 2017 ISOC AM project "Internet radio for visually impaired people" was awarded the WSIS 2017 prize. The photo of the ceremony as well as the prize are shown below.

