Rural Connectivity Armenia Project
Bridging the Digital Divide

Kristine Gyonjyan
Director, Union of Operators of Armenia
The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical significance of the Internet, reshaping our methods of work, learning, and communication.

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<th>Background</th>
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| 36.85% of Armenian population lives in rural areas |

| 100% mobile connection coverage. Thanks to 4G license buildout obligations, most Armenians have access to 4G networks, but still there is a place to grow |

| 66.5% broadband network coverage |
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Bridging the Digital Divide in Armenia

• Equal Opportunities for All Citizens
  • Commitment to providing equal opportunities to every citizen of Armenia.
  • Ensuring equitable access to essential digital services.

• Universal Access to High-Quality Internet
  • Extending high-quality internet services to every corner of Armenia.
  • Including remote rural and mountainous areas in the coverage.
Pilot Project: Bringing High-Speed Internet to Underserved Rural Areas

Addressing Connectivity Challenges

Objective of the Pilot Project

• Bringing high-speed internet to underserved rural areas.
• Targeting regions where conventional private sector providers face challenges in meeting telecom service demand.

Challenges Faced by Internet Service Providers

• Operating expenses surpass expected revenues over an extended period.
• Difficulty in meeting the growing demand for telecom services.

Project phases

Piloting
Expansion
Rural Connectivity Armenia Project
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- Shaghap has 230 households
- Population 1023, Territory 6.2 sq km
- Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
- Vedi – Shaghap Optical line – 17.9 km

First Pilot Rural Community Connected in 2021
Community Benefits of High-Speed Internet Expansion

➢ **High-speed Fiber Optic Internet for Every Household:**
   Enables access to reliable and fast internet connectivity, facilitating various online activities such as education, work, and entertainment.

➢ **Expanded Cable TV Options:**
   Access to over 100 TV channels compared to the limited selection previously available, enhancing entertainment choices and cultural exposure.

➢ **Retention of Young People in the Community:**
   Encourages young individuals to remain within the community by providing essential digital infrastructure and opportunities, reducing migration to urban areas.

➢ **Stimulation of New Business Ventures:**
   Fosters entrepreneurship and economic growth within the community by providing access to global markets, promoting innovation and creating job opportunities.
Benefits for Children

➢ Free of charge High-Speed Internet at School
   Provides students with equitable access to digital resources and educational materials, regardless of socio-economic status.

➢ Establishment of Robotics Laboratory
   Offers hands-on learning experiences in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), fostering creativity, problem-solving skills, and innovation among students.

➢ Enhanced Remote Learning Opportunities:
   Facilitates remote learning and access to educational platforms, enables instructors from other schools to deliver lessons remotely, bridging educational gaps and ensuring continuity in learning.
Invaluable Partnership We Made

<table>
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<tr>
<th>State Bodies</th>
<th>International Organization</th>
<th>Operators &amp; Local Community Authorities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Image] MINISTRY OF HIGH-TECH INDUSTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA</td>
<td>![Internet Society Logo]</td>
<td>![UNION OF OPERATORS Logo]</td>
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Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for UNECE Region | 13-14 March 2024 | Geneva 8
Director of the Union of Operator of Armenia Kristine Gyonjyan, was awarded a special prize of Connecting the Unconnected champion by the Internet Society for her significant contribution to the establishment and development of community networks.
In 2023, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) signed a project document with the Ministry of High-Tech Industry of Armenia, providing support to expand connectivity to more communities and implement capacity-building activities in the newly connected areas to maximize the impact of high-speed internet.
6 New Communities in Ararat Region

- Zangakatun
- Vardashat
- Urtsalanj
- Lanjar
- Lusashogh
- Lanjanist

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<th>Capacity Building Activities</th>
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<td>▪ Basic Digital Literacy trainings</td>
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<td>▪ Internet Safety and Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Communication and Collaboration Tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Media Literacy and Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Digital Entrepreneurship and Economic Opportunities</td>
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<td>▪ Etc.</td>
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Partnerships: Key to Success
Robust partnerships essential for project achievements.
Collaboration with diverse stakeholders drives progress.

Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals
Direct alignment with Sustainable Development Goals:
- Goal 4: Quality Education
- Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Supporting Government Vision
Enabling achievement of Armenian Government's broadband coverage target.
Thank you!

Kristine Gyonjyan
Director

Union of Operators of Armenia

Date 14 I 03 I 2024, Geneva