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IREX Training Helps Disabled Armenians Gain Jobs

New information technology skills acquired by four disabled trainees through the Internet Access and Training Program (IATP) so impressed Mayor Vanik Asatryan of Spitak, Armenia, that he agreed to open a computer service room at the town's main cultural center and to employ the trainees.

A local IATP volunteer conducted a training from May 24 to June 9 for the group at the IATP Spitak site. During the first week they learned to use standard computer programs. The next week, the participants learned Internet basics and advanced uses. They were introduced not only to Internet browsers and computer networks but also to e-mail services. Then the participants continued their study of typical computer software.

Once the participants had completed their extended course, the IATP Spitak site administrator introduced the mayor of Spitak to the trainees and their skills. "In 1988 when I was 16 years old," said trainee Marine Asatryan, "the Spitak earthquake happened, after which I became disabled. I participated in many programs organized by different international and local organizations, but only thanks to IATP did I find a job and become integrated into the community."