

Case 5: Listen up Foundation



Who?

It is the first Bulgarian organization developing IT solutions to facilitate equal access for hearing-impaired people. It is a registered NGO. Established by Ashod Derandonyan and Alexander Ivanov – both hearing-impaired but well-educated and experienced – one of them in graphic design and leadership, the other one – a social entrepreneur by nature and highly experienced in the NGO sector and finances. Both of them fully dedicated to the cause to provide equal access for deaf and hard of Hearing people.

What?

They created an online platform for Video Relay and Speech-to-Text services to give every deaf person the opportunity to participate fully in social life. Using the platform, the deaf people are able to communicate freely with their hearing peers. The platform was launched in May 2016. (for more information watch the video)

They provide Video Relay Services (available for the first time ever in Bulgaria), Speech-to-Text Services, as well as Video Live Stream & Speech-to-Text.

Why?

Their mission is to build a bridge between the deaf and hard of Hearing people and the society by offering a range of innovative communication and information services. A bridge, that will give deaf people equal access to information, education and career development.

How?

Listen up is the winner of the Change Competition initiated and supported by the Change Foundation and Reach for Change Bulgaria. They received financial and mentoring support.

Listen up is amongst the winners of the Business Plan Competition for NGOs within the program for social entrepreneurship implemented by the Bulgarian Center for non-profit Law, UniCredit Foundation and supported by America for Bulgaria Foundation. The financial support received was used to develop an online platform for online sign language translation and speech-to-text transformator.

Many organizations help them continue developing the platform and extend their portfolio of services. Samsung, America for Bulgaria Foundation, Nova Broadcasting Group, Bulgarian center for Non-govermental Law, Viber and a national mobile telephone operator are among those who provide financial, training and mentoring support to their fresh, persistent, creative team of sign language experts and translators.

Conclusion

Web links:

<http://zaslushaise.bg/en/>

<https://www.facebook.com/zaslushaise/about/>

Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzFDgdAIRvU> (in EN)