Zero Project Innovative Practice 2018 on Accessibility

# Audio descriptions-app making movies accessible for the blind

# Turkey – Young Guru Academy – My Dream Companion

## Summary:

### Young Guru Academy (YGA) is an NGO founded in 2000 in Istanbul, Turkey, that identifies and trains young people in leadership responsibilities. “My Dream Companion – a Mobile Audio Description” is a cost-free mobile application developed by visually impaired YGA graduates and Turkcell, a mobile phone operator. The application provides audio descriptions of movies for visually impaired persons, making cimemas and film culture accessible to them throughout the country. Since 2015 approximately 180,000 visually impaired persons have benefitted from the application.

## Problems Targeted:

### Movies without audio description are not accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. In some cinemas, wireless headphone systems are used for audio descriptions, but they are costly and rarely available.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact:

### My Dream Companion was launched in 2011 with the strategic partnership of visually impaired Young Guru Academy graduates and Turkcell, a mobile phone operator. Visually impaired individuals can access the application via the Apple Store or Google Play Store, or by calling a dedicated phone number (8020).

### The application provides an audio description of movies over a mobile phone without requiring any additional equipment or software. Voice recognition technology gives the listener a detailed description via an external voice of the scenes in a film that have no dialogue. The technology recognizes the parts in a film where the dialogue stops and automatically starts an audio description synchronized with the film. The service can also be used for viewing DVDs and television programmes.

## Outlook, Transferability, and Funding:

### The application has an average of 200 downloads each week, and two new movies are made available each week. Currently, the project team is working on getting new partners to sustain the app, as it should remain free for users.

### The application has not yet scaled to other countries, although the internationalization of this project could be easily done by working with partners in order to secure financial sources.

### Turkey’s largest GSM company, Turkcell, has become their strategic partner and provides them financial resources. The project also receives non-financial support in return for preparing audio description for various institutions. The equivalent financial weights are 60 per cent for funding from businesses and 40 per cent for non-financial support.

## About the Practice at a Glance:

### Name of Innovative Practice: My Dream Companion

### Organization:Young Guru Academy (YGA)

### Country of Implementation:Turkey (All Regions)

## Facts and Figures:

* Over last three years some 180,000 visually impaired people have benefitted from the app.
* Two new movies are available each week.

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## Links and Further Reading:

### <http://www.yga.org.tr/en>

### <http://www.yga.org.tr/en/my-dream-companion>

## Quote:

“I still remember the first day using the audio description feature in a movie theatre. The joy of being independent and understanding every detail in the movie was an unforgettable experience.”

—Yunus Tarik, a visually impairedapplication user