

PhysMath Friends Foundation

Investing in the Talent Engine Behind Armenia's Tech Future

Armenia's technology sector is one of the fastest-growing in the world. Over 10,000 tech companies now operate in the country, generating \$2.3 billion in annual revenue and contributing 7% of GDP. NVIDIA, Adobe, Cisco, and Siemens run R&D centers in Yerevan. Armenian-founded companies like ServiceTitan, Picsart, SuperAnnotate, ActiveLoop, BlueOrigin, Onex, Fimotech, Krisp and many more have built global products from this talent base. The sector has grown at 23% annually for the past decade.

Behind every great tech ecosystem is a pipeline of exceptional talent.

The China Blueprint: Proof That Talent Systems Win Tech Races

China's dominance in AI is not an accident. It is the product of a decades-long, state-driven investment in identifying and developing gifted students through "genius classes" at elite high schools. Every year, an estimated 100,000 talented teenagers enter these science-focused talent streams. The results speak for themselves: genius-class graduates founded ByteDance, built DeepSeek's breakthrough AI models, lead both of China's largest ecommerce platforms, and created the chipmaker Cambricon that now rivals NVIDIA. When DeepSeek shocked the world in 2025 with a frontier AI model built at a fraction of US costs, its team of 100+ engineers was almost entirely composed of genius-class alumni. China now graduates five million STEM majors per year, compared to half a million in the US. ([FT: "China's genius plan to win the AI race is already paying off"](#))

The formula is clear: identify exceptional young talent early, provide intensive training through olympiad preparation and competition, create a pipeline from elite secondary schools to top universities, and channel graduates into the technology sector. This is exactly what Armenia's PhysMath model does, on a scale proportional to the country. The opportunity is to systematize and expand it nationally, replicating China's proven playbook in a country where the tech sector already generates \$2.3 billion in annual revenue and is growing at 23% per year.

In Armenia, that pipeline has a name.

PhysMath School: Six Decades of Proven Excellence

Founded in 1965, the Artashes Shahinyan Physics-Mathematics School is the #1-ranked school in Armenia and was shortlisted among the world's top 10 schools by the World's Best School Prizes in 2023.

The track record is extraordinary. Over the past 11 years, 156 PhysMath students have represented Armenia at international olympiads, earning 115 medals: 4 gold, 34 silver, and 77 bronze. In 2025, PhysMath students won 11 of Armenia's 17 international olympiad medals, accounting for 65% of the country's total medal count. Across all Armenian participants over the past decade, the nation earned 186 medals (5 gold, 51 silver, 131 bronze) from 302 students. PhysMath is the single institution driving the majority of these results.

Today, the Foundation supports 29 weekly Olympiad clubs engaging 405 students across four disciplines: physics (167 students), mathematics (152), informatics (63), and astronomy (23). Students come from PhysMath and 21 other schools, with 27% of club participants attending from outside institutions. Training is led by 13+ coaches, many of them international olympiad medalists themselves.

The Foundation: Built by Armenia's Tech Leaders

The PhysMath Friends Charitable Foundation was established in 2019 to strengthen and scale this model. It is governed by a board of 9 members drawn from Armenia's top technology companies, including the CEOs of Krisp, Onex, Fimotech, LigaTech, and NEGTEL, among others. This is not a traditional charity; it is a strategic investment vehicle led by people who understand exactly how STEM education translates into economic value.

The Foundation's revenue has grown rapidly: from 11.6 million AMD (~\$30,000) in 2024 to 31.8 million AMD (~\$82,000) in 2025, a 174% increase. It has secured support from organizations including the Global Entrepreneurship Foundation, Krisp, Onex, Root, Art-Group, and the Estonian Embassy's microfinancing program.

What the Foundation Does Today

"Champions in the Making": The flagship program that funds and operates the 29 Olympiad clubs, develops Armenian-language olympiad curricula, and builds a national mentorship network connecting coaches, alumni medalists, and current students. Six teachers are conducting structured research to create the first standardized olympiad preparation materials in Armenian.

Robotics Club and National Championship: 40 active participants (up from 10), building working robots and competing at the national level. In 2025, 13 robots were submitted to RoboChallenge, and 3 competed at the national olympiad. One-third of national olympiad robotics participants are girls.

Debate Club: Students develop critical thinking, public speaking, and argumentation skills. The club hosted an inter-school championship and international debate events, with sessions held at the European University and at Krisp's offices.

Communication Module: Students learn to conduct interviews, write essays and formal letters, and present publicly. Six students competed in national academic competitions, earning 2 medals.

Summer Math Camp: An intensive week-long program using games, collaborative problem-solving, and team challenges to ignite passion for mathematics in younger students.

"Young Mathematician" Olympiad (new for 2026): Armenia's national olympiad system currently excludes students below Grade 7, cutting off early talent identification at a critical age. The Foundation is launching its own national-level math olympiad for Grades 5-6, open to top-performing students from all regions. The program includes a national competition judged by a professional jury, followed by intensive summer and autumn olympiad schools at PhysMath for selected students. This directly mirrors the China model: identify gifted students early and place them in a structured, competitive pipeline. Budget: 1,195,000 AMD (~\$3,100) for 50 participants in year one.

Girls in STEM Initiative: A strategic priority for 2026, including panel discussions, a month-long public campaign featuring women in STEM, mentorship for girls' robotics teams, and media literacy training. Currently 17% of olympiad club participants are girls and 20% of 2025 international medal winners are female. The Foundation is actively working to increase both numbers.

The Next Phase: From One School to a National System

Armenia's olympiad success is concentrated in Yerevan, and largely within PhysMath. Talented students in the regions of Lori, Shirak, Kotayk, Armavir, and Tavush lack access to trained mentors and structured preparation. This is a structural inequality the Foundation is positioned to fix.

****The Olympiad Movement Initiative will replicate the PhysMath model across five provinces:**

- Develop and publish standardized olympiad curricula in mathematics and physics
- Select and train 10 regional coaches (5 math, 5 physics)
- Launch at least 10 olympiad clubs serving approximately 180 students
- Partner with FAST Foundation and Qarakusi Educational Foundation

The initiative is already gaining institutional momentum. The Armenian government is in the process of endorsing the Olympiad Movement and plans to include dedicated support in its 2027 national budget. The Hovnanian Foundation has committed grant funding to help launch the program. The goal: within three years, regional students competing alongside Yerevan students at international olympiads.

Why This Matters to You

Armenia is a country of 3 million people that consistently punches above its weight in global STEM competitions. Its tech sector employs 58,000+ specialists and is growing faster than almost any comparable ecosystem. But the pipeline is fragile. It depends heavily on a single school and a handful of dedicated coaches, many of whom volunteer their time.

The PhysMath Friends Foundation is the organized, transparent, tech-led effort to make this pipeline sustainable and national. When you support this foundation, you are not making a charitable donation in the traditional sense. You are making a direct investment in Armenia's most valuable long-term asset: its people.

Every dollar funds a measurable outcome: a student trained for an international olympiad, a robotics team building their first prototype, a regional teacher gaining the skills to coach the next generation, a girl discovering that she belongs in STEM.

How to Donate (Tax-Deductible for US Donors)

US-based contributions are made through the **Hi-Math Foundation**, a subsidiary of the Hi-Am Charity Foundation based in Los Angeles. 100% of funds go directly to PhysMath Friends. **All donations are tax-deductible.**

Wire Transfer:

Hi-Am Charity Foundation

Bank of America

Routing Number: 026009593

Account Number: 000246802222

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