

Press-release

Schoolgirls create 29 mobile apps to change Ukraine



On May 12, 2018 the Sikorsky Challenge startup school of Kyiv Polytechnic Institute hosted Regional Pitch Event of the Technovation Challenge, an international IT education program for schoolgirls. Twenty-nine teams of girls aged 10-18 years from 37 cities of Ukraine presented their products – 29 mobile applications, aimed to change Ukraine.

The judges, represented by WNISEF, Peace Corps, Sikorsky Challenge, Miratech, Social Boost and YEP Incubator, chose the winning team – “Cage” from Kremenchuk, Poltava region, which will go to the World Pitch Summit, that will be held this August in San Francisco, USA. The girls created a Live! app, which calculates the sleep hours, rest, mental activity, walks and water amount that user needs. On top of that, the app sets an alarm clock, offers tasks for mental activity, meditation, and provides video exercises and relaxing music. The app is available at Google Play. The main prize, a trip to San Francisco, was granted by Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF), the main partner of Technovation in Ukraine.

The Daisy Dreams team from Kotsyubynske, Kyiv region, came as runner-up, having presented an application aimed to solve the problem of vaccination in Ukraine. The girls got a \$ 500.00 prize to move their project further.

A total of 91 teams applied for the contest in Ukraine this year. Twenty-nine of them completed the prototype applications under the mentors’ supervision. Almost half of the mentors were representatives of the Peace Corps in Ukraine, which partner the project. It took three months for the girls to put their initiatives into

action: from ideation and design to creating mobile applications aimed to solve the problems of their communities. The girls addressed environmental issues, health, safety, inclusion, communication with parents and even the smoking campaign.

"Western NIS Enterprise Fund is happy that the topic of female leadership is gaining support in Ukraine. Technovation Challenge is one of the most significant initiatives, which helps girls realize their role in the community, overcome the stereotypes around women that the society imposes on them, and make this world a better place," said **Jaroslawa Johnson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Western NIS Enterprise Fund.**

"In Ukraine, jobs are still symbolically divided into those for women and for men. Currently, women part in IT is about 25%, but this number is increasing. The program aims not to bring all the girls to IT sphere, but to show them the alternative, to prove, that entrepreneurship is for women as well, and through innovation they can change both the life of their communities and their own one. The value of the program is the development of leadership skills and teamwork, which, in fact, get girls ready for any job. I am happy to see that this year the number of teams has doubled," noted **Iryna Ozymok, WNISEF Local Economic Development Program Manager and Technovation Ambassador in Ukraine.**

Technovation is the world's largest IT entrepreneurship program for girls, launched by Iridescent, a non-governmental organization supported by the world top-rank IT companies, such as Google, Microsoft, Adobe and others. The program is free for girls. It took just a few years for the initiative that started in the US to grow from 45 participating girls into a global network of 20,000 girls in over 100 countries. Ukraine joined the program last year.

The main partners of the program in Ukraine are Western NIS Enterprise Fund and Peace Corps. The Sikorsky Challenge startup school, Genesis, and Beetroot Academy IT-school, which provided the prizes, have also joined this year's Regional Pitch Event together with the Academy of Labor, Social Affairs and Tourism.

Technovation is a program of US-based organization Iridescent. It is volunteer-run and free for girls aged 10 to 18 years old. Participants work in teams of 3-5 for a couple of hours after school once or twice a week, during 12-20 weeks from December to April. Once they submit their project, they compete with other teams around the world for a chance to travel to San Francisco and win the funding from the technology giants who partner with the program. <https://www.facebook.com/TechnovationUkr/>

Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF) is a \$150 million regional fund, a pioneer in Ukraine and Moldova, funded by the U.S. government via the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). With more than two decades of successful experience in investing in small and medium-sized companies, the fund invested \$172 million in 127 companies, employing over 25,000 people and unlocking \$1.4 billion of total capital over its tenure for Ukrainian and Moldovan companies. In 2015, WNISEF launched a \$35 million legacy program focused on export promotion, local economic development, impact investing and economic leadership. WNISEF is funding innovative, high-impact, reform focused programs aimed to transform lives of the ordinary people in Ukraine and Moldova. Visit www.wnisef.org