

Ukraine kicks off the third Technovation Challenge 2019 – IT-entrepreneurship contest for schoolgirls



December 1, 2018, Kyiv, Ukraine - A presentation of the third IT-entrepreneurship contest for schoolgirls Technovation Challenge 2019 along with the discussion of IT-opportunities was held at the Grammarly office in Kyiv. Since Ukraine has introduced the program back in 2017, it yielded 45 girl teams developing mobile apps with significant social impact.

"I am firmly convinced that Ukrainian girls can significantly contribute to the growth of our country. Western NIS Enterprise Fund is proud to support such a crucial initiative as the Technovation Challenge. Communicating with innovative and progressive individuals girls will get inspired by changes, discover new opportunities for themselves and clearly see that nothing is impossible," commented **Jaroslawa Johnson, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Western NIS Enterprise Fund.**

Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports of Ukraine Oleksandr Yarema, accompanied by the heads of leading organizations and IT companies in Ukraine such as UNICEF, UN Women, Microsoft, Horizon Capital, Lviv City Council, and girls-inventors and mobile apps developers joined the presentation of the new projects' season, sharing the success stories that inspired girls not to be afraid of change, believe in themselves, and unlock new perspectives for themselves and the cities they live in. As part of the event a discussion "He for She" was held, where men told about well-known women-founders of startups.

"The program aims not to teach girls to work only with girls, but rather to help them believe in themselves, to understand that IT is not centered on technical work only, but may appear as a means of useful changes in any field, and to encourage the teams that can gradually grow into successful startups. Technology is based on values, as schoolgirls are developing community-focused solutions. They are future leaders and agents of change," said **Iryna Ozymok, Local Economic Development Program Manager at the Western NIS Enterprise Fund.**

Participation in the contest is free of charge. Submit your application till March 20, 2019 at <https://technovationchallenge.org/>. In Ukraine, the project is implemented by the Western NIS Enterprise Fund and Peace Corps. Such organizations as USAID, Microsoft, the Sikorsky Challenge Startup School, Beetroot Academy IT-school and Genesis partnered the Technovation regional pitch-events.

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 \$185 million in 129 companies, employing over 27,000 people and unlocking \$1.8 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

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 pitch their idea to get funding from the technology giants who partner with the program. Teachers, parents, IT professionals and other interested adults can volunteer as mentors to get free access to online resources and a chance to support the girls in this exciting educational program. Prior experience in IT is not required either from the girls or from their mentors, but a willingness to learn is imperative. <https://www.facebook.com/TechnovationUkr/>

