

Press release

Eighty Ukrainian schoolgirls created social impact mobile apps to compete for a trip to San Francisco



On June 1, the PeremohaSpace coworking hosted 21 teams of girls aged 10-18, coming from 21 Ukrainian cities to pitch their projects at the Regional Technovation Challenge 2019, a global IT education program for teenage girls.

The jury, comprising representatives of the Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF), Peace Corps, Apriorit, Miratech, and YEP Incubator, decided the winner – the ProVE IT team from Zaporizhia, which will visit the Technovation World Pitch Summit in San Francisco this August. To help fight poverty and reduce food waste the girls have designed the Meal for Will app, aimed to connect restaurants and supermarkets with volunteer organizations that care for the homeless. The top award, a trip to San Francisco, was granted by WNISEF, the Technovation host in Ukraine.

The runner-up Universty team from Shepetivka, Khmelnytskyi region, presented the U4U (University for you) application, made to help future students choose the best university by the specific major. The bronze went to the girls from the Kharkiv region, who developed the SexTeen app providing teens with comprehensive and professional info regarding sexual education, risks, as well as answers to all questions on how to stay physically and mentally healthy. On top of that, this team got a few more gifts from the event partners – Peace Corps in Ukraine, and was invited to join the YEP!Starter Incubator.



This year, more than 250 schoolgirls applied for the contest in Ukraine. Under the mentors' guidance 80 of them completed the development of the app prototypes. Almost half of the mentors were the Peace Corps in Ukraine representatives, which partner this project, and the rest were teachers or parents. The girls had three months to bring their own concepts to life, making their way from an idea, designing, drawing up a business plan to creating mobile apps aimed to solve their community problems. This year, girls addressed sexual education, environment, health services access, job search, inclusion, volunteering, university choice, book exchange, etc.

*"The WNISEF's experience with Technovation turned into a new approach in the sphere of human achievements, which is usually ignored. We were amazed to witness the outcome of creating a unique space where kids could share their bright ideas both with peers and adults. The Technovation concept deserves to be in the limelight: if more adult leaders could see how persistent the kids are, they would appreciate youthful ingenuity even more, while putting off age and gender stereotypes," assured **Jaroslawa Johnson, President and CEO of the Western NIS Enterprise Fund.***

*"The third year of the contest in Ukraine shows that schoolgirls in our country are real agents of change, whose apps can even facilitate the reforms, particularly medical and educational. Also, these girls are committed to solve environmental and social problems; they get concerned with inclusion, bullying and the petitions efficacy. The program's value is not centered on coding only, but rather on fostering leadership skills and teamwork, inherently preparing girls for any job. I really want these girls to make us happy and proud of their advances," noted **Iryna Ozymok, Technovation Ambassador in Ukraine.***

Technovation is the world's largest IT entrepreneurship contest for girls, sponsored by Iridescent, a non-governmental organization supported by the top-rank IT companies of the world - 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 hosts the program for the third year in a row.

The main partners of the program in Ukraine are the Western NIS Enterprise Fund and Peace Corps. This year the Apriorit company and PeremohaSpace coworking have joined the ranks of the program's partners.

Technovation is a program of US-based organization Iridescent. It is volunteer-run and free for girls aged 10 to 18 years. 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 \$186 million in 130 companies, employing over 26,000 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