



Western NIS Enterprise Fund Launches Urban Movement "City Is Me" - New Educational Project for Youth in 18 Ukrainian Cities

Kyiv, Ukraine - March 18, 2024 - Cities today play a vital role in stimulating economic development, competing for talent, and addressing global challenges. Understanding how cities function and how to improve them is an important tool for strengthening citizen engagement. Recognizing this need, Western NIS Enterprise Fund is launching an educational project aimed to unite young people and provide them with the tools necessary for active engagement in urban life. The Urban Movement "City Is Me" program was designed to be held for teenagers aged 10 to 17 in 18 cities of Ukraine from March 18 to June 28, 2024.

The aim of the movement is to promote the awareness among the youth and hone their skills regarding life and functioning of the city, as well as to provide them with the opportunity to actively influence urban processes to produce qualitative changes in urban space. Through a series of interactive meetings, young people will learn about eleven urban topics, including urban infrastructure and urban planning, business in the city, its budget, sustainable development, safety, etc.

Iryna Ozymok, Local Economic Development Program Manager at WNISEF and author of the book "City Is Me," comments on it: "In a few years, today's teenagers will be choosing professions and cities to live and work in. We want to show them that they can already influence the development of their environments, that their needs and ideas are important. This project is aimed not only to engage young people in the processes of change, but also to create a link between residents and decision-making centers to change the lives of residents for the better. That is why we call this program a movement – from city to city, from community to community, but with a common goal."

"The Urban Movement "City Is Me" is a great idea that offers a conversation about our future. Where and how we want to live, how we can build our homes together, why it is better to create than to destroy ruthlessly... The courage and creativity of the teenagers' vision as to their own cities will help make them truly fabulous and fair," added **Viktor Knysh, creative producer of the Kyiv Palace of Children and Youth.**

The program was developed by professional urbanists and architects and will be launched in 18 cities and communities, with meetings taking place at local youth organizations. Apart from interactive classes and interesting tasks, participants will be able to communicate with invited experts, visit interesting video lectures, and explore their own cities. Participation in the program is free of charge.

Cities where the meetings will take place: Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Zaporizhzhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kropyvnytskyi, Znamianka (Kirovohrad oblast), Oleksandria (Kirovohrad oblast), Svitlovodsk (Kirovohrad oblast), Rivne, Lutsk, Lviv, Berdychiv (Zhytomyr oblast), Uzhhorod, Khmelnytskyi, Chernivtsi, Boyany (Chernivtsi oblast), Chernihiv, and Ternopil.

The project is organized by the Western NIS Enterprise Fund and is being implemented in the cities by 24 NGOs: Kyiv Palace of Children and Youth, Press Club of Reforms, NeFormat Youth Space, Ploskyriv Sports and Cultural Center, Institute of Urban Culture NGO, WE WORLD NGO, Zaporizhzhia City Council Center for Children and Youth Creativity of Shevchenkivskiy District, Sphere of Youth NGO, Kyiv City Branch of

the Union of Ukrainian Youth in Ukraine, Oleksandriya Youth NGO, Ivano-Frankivsk Youth Center "Rukh", Youth Center "Paragraph" NGO, Municipal Cultural Institution "Youth Residence", Potribni Tut NGO, municipal NGO "Center", Koma Youth Center, Zadzerkallia Youth Center NGO, LEVEL 80 Creative Space, Tech Startup School NGO, Youth of Bukovyna NGO, Volyn Youth Center NGO, NYTKA, Rivnenska Horyn NGO, and Rivne District Organization of the National Scout Organization of Ukraine.

Urban Movement in social networks:

Instagram @urban_rukh_ua

Facebook: @urban.rukh.ua

TikTok: @urban_rukh.ua

Hashtags: #urbanrukhs #urbanrukhs #cityisme

About Western NIS Enterprise Fund

Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF) is a \$285 million regional fund, a pioneer in Ukraine and Moldova with over 29 years of successful experience in investing in small and medium-sized companies. WNISEF was funded by the U.S. government via the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Since its inception, WNISEF's cumulative investments total over \$188 million to 136 companies employing 26,000 people and made it possible to unlock \$2.4 billion for companies in Ukraine and Moldova.

In 2015 WNISEF has 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 that support the lives of ordinary people in Ukraine and Moldova. Visit www.wnisef.org

About the book "City Is Me"

"City Is Me" is a book-guide to an informative journey into the world of urbanism for children and adults. The author Iryna Ozymok, who is involved in numerous urban projects and initiatives, together with illustrator Anna Ivanenko from the visual studio seri/graph, tell a bright, interesting, and fascinating story about city life: how it functions, how it is affected by technology, consumption, climate, and the computer revolution, and what is the role of humans in it. The book was first published in 2021, and an expanded edition was released in 2023, when new chapters were added to reveal the important challenges faced by city dwellers during the full-scale invasion. The expanded book "City Is Me" was also narrated by Nata Zhyzhchenko, the lead singer of ONUKA, whose most popular song is "This is my city...". "City Is Me" has been presented in many cities and countries:

-was named the best book of 2021 by PEN Ukraine;

-was included in the Top BaraBooka List 2021 in the nomination "Prose Debut of the Year"

-the book's illustrations received an award at the Bologna Children's Book Fair 2022.