



Technovation Challenge, a global tech entrepreneurship competition for girls started its new season in Ukraine



November 3, 2017, Kyiv, Ukraine — The Innovation Park Unit.City hosted the kick-off session of the tech entrepreneurship competition for schoolgirls, and the discussion of technical opportunities for girls in Ukraine. Ukraine joined the program in 2017, and has already seen 15 teams of girls making mobile apps for solving issues in the Ukrainian cities. The project in Ukraine is supported by the Western NIS Enterprise Fund and Peace Corps.

"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 CEO at Western NIS Enterprise Fund.

"We are seeing good results after the first year of Ukraine's participation in the program. 15 teams presented their mobile app solutions at the national event in Kyiv; five teams made apps for cities at the Technovation Summer Camp in Lviv; and the team from Zaporizhia went to San Francisco, CA to take part in the Technovation Awards Ceremony. These girls have become role models for others in terms of perseverance, entrepreneurial skills, and, most importantly, responsible leadership," said Iryna Ozymok, Local Economic Development Program Manager at Western NIS Enterprise Fund.

"This year we aim to engage more teams of girls who will succeed through all the competition stages, and come up with apps for their communities; develop a strong network of mentors willing to help the girls bring their ideas in life; and, again, prove all the cities and villages of Ukraine that girls do want and can be tech leaders," commended Nadiia Babynska, Co-coordinator of the Technovation Challenge in Ukraine.

A number of female leaders from the leading IT companies in Ukraine—including Hrystyna Skopyk, Director of Women Who Code Kyiv; Ruslana Shadrina, computational linguist at Grammarly, co-founder of Myhelix; and Olexandra Alkhimovich, Director of Luxoft Ukraine—participated in the presentation this year, and inspired the girls to dare face challenges, believe in themselves, and explore new horizons for themselves and the cities they live in.

Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF) is a \$150 million regional fund, a pioneer in Ukraine and Moldova with more than two decades 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 \$168 million to 118 companies employing around 25 000 people and made it possible to unlock \$1.5 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 aimed to transform lives of the ordinary people in Ukraine and Moldova. 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. Teacher, 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. Technovation Team wants the next generation of women to not just be consumers of technology, but creators and innovators. In the last years, Technovation has grown into a network of the best and brightest entrepreneurs, coaches and mentors from around the globe, who are passing on their skills on to a new generation to help create a worldwide web of tech-savvy, knowledge-hungry girls willing to learn, socialize, and create something to change the world, their world.

We stand by young women who lead the change by solving problems in their community.

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