

Western NIS Enterprise Fund

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Western NIS Enterprise Supports Hub Schools in Ukraine with UAH 6.3 M Grant

Kyiv, August 29, 2016 – In addition to funding “Hub Schools” pilot project office, Western NIS Enterprise Fund provided an additional \$ 250,000 (about UAH 6.3 M) for infrastructure development of 24 pilot hub schools. The funding will allow buy training equipment for physics, chemistry, and biology labs, as the facilities used by rural schools are very outdated. However, high-quality new equipment alone will not automatically improve the quality of teaching. Therefore, the pilot project “Hub Schools” includes a special training course for teachers and directors of hub schools, where they will practice innovative teaching methods and school management skills, and with the help of mentors make a school development plan, that will be implemented in their schools.

Also, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will provide funding for the pilot hub schools renovation.

"The number of schools to be refurbished throughout Ukraine is quite large, so the Fund focused on supporting the pilot project covering 24 schools in all regions of Ukraine. We have created a project office, which selected schools after the visits to each region and coordinated efforts with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. We are confident that investment in education is the best way to promote the development of progressive, modern and successful society. That is why we supported the hub schools development program, launched in cooperation with Pro.Svit", mentioned **Jaroslawa Johnson, President and CEO of Western NIS Enterprise Fund**.

Iryna Ozymok, WNISEF Local Economic Development Program Manager, said: "A student should be the center of the secondary education system reform. A well-planned strategy will provide a brand new level of education focused not only on the transfer of knowledge to students but helping children to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills; advanced training for teachers and transformation of schools into the center of community consolidation. The neighboring countries have already successfully passed through this transformation process. We want to build a network within the country, starting with 24 pilot schools, to jointly solve the outstanding issues and share our achievements, so that this experience could be thereafter disseminated in other Ukrainian schools."

The first seminar "Hub Schools: International Experience and the Opportunities of Ukraine", attended by 24 directors of schools participating in the project, was held August 17-19 in Kyiv. The participants discussed the concept of hub schools and new challenges and opportunities arising from the decentralization reform with the Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine Pavlo Khobzey. They also got acquainted with the Polish experience in reforming the school network, the most effective international education models, and how employing innovations and modern technologies will help to improve the quality of education.

Distinguished guest of the event was **Natalie Jaresko**, who initiated the pilot project when being the Finance Minister of Ukraine: "I am very happy that the hub schools project that we initiated last year had been launched. I hope that the selected schools will become a vivid example of improved education and the learning environment for students, parents, teachers and the community. All the parties involved in this process should become change agents for a successful future of our children."

Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF) is a \$150 million regional private equity 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 in Ukraine and Moldova. In March 2015, WNISEF launched a new three-year legacy program funded by a portion of the profits earned from its investment activities. Today the Fund implements 4 programs, which aim to support Ukraine and Moldova at this critical period by developing sound economic policy and leadership.

Hub schools is a project initiated by the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and with the support of the international donors such as the USAID, Western NIS Enterprise Fund, Caritas, and Microsoft Ukraine. The project aims to enhance the education of children who live and study in rural areas, promoting the development of 24 hub schools in all regions of Ukraine as educational and cultural centers that will fully meet the educational needs of children from ungraded, closed or reorganized schools.

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