



Western NIS  
Enterprise Fund



## Creating The Future: Five Leadership Academies Open Doors For Students From All Over Ukraine

*More and more Ukrainian high school students are daring to take a gap year after graduation instead of immediately entering university. The ceremony for the start of the new academic year at Ukrainian Leadership Academy and the opening of four new Academies took place on September 17, 2016 in Kyiv.*

A social year or a 'gap year' is a time for finding one's way in life and for serving society. It is popular among young people in Western Europe and the USA and it is becoming popular among Ukrainian high school graduates. This year, 200 youngsters from all over Ukraine commenced studies at the Ukrainian Leadership Academy (ULA). The Academy is a unique program that combines elements of physical, academic and spiritual education and development. Following the first Academy which opened in Kyiv last year, four more Academies in Poltava, Lviv, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv are opening this year, the second year of the program. The ULA is funded by the Western NIS Enterprise Fund.

According to a national survey of gap year students, young people who take a break from traditional education to dedicate a year to volunteering and self-development will, in future, become happier employees and more active citizens. This is particularly important for Ukraine in this time of complex social and economic transformation, when the country needs a new generation of leaders. Thus, the ULA's main objective is to choose young people with high leadership potential and provide them with the best training and tools for self-development which will permit them to discover themselves, choose their life's path and become responsible leaders who will benefit their country.

**Roman Tyckivskyy, Head of the Ukrainian Leadership Academy, said:** "Ukraine is a proud country. The people born here are spiritually strong. I'm happy to see thousands of school graduates from all over the country competing to be students of the Ukrainian Leadership Academy. They are striving for change. And I believe that in 15-20 years from now, everyone will be able to say, that Ukraine is the nation of active citizens, who took control of their lives and are a reborn anew with great energy."

At ULA, Ukrainian school graduates also have an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that the traditional education system does not provide. During their studies, they can try different activities, more profoundly explore their identity, learn to work in teams, and feel a stronger connection to Ukraine through intensive traveling, as well as history and culture courses. They also develop critical thinking, independence, networking skills, etc. and learn to implement their own initiatives. Participants are engaged in studies five days a week plus an additional volunteering day. The ULA's visionaries are prominent and talented Ukrainians, including Yaroslav Hrytsak, Vladyslav Troitskyi, Ivan Malkovych, Sviatoslav Vakarchuk, Father Andrii Zelinskyi, Bishop Borys Hudziak, Viktor Zotov and Jaroslawa Johnson, among others.

**Valeriia from Sloviansk, an alumna of the first ULA:** "This year changed my life. During the ten months spent at the Academy, I developed initiative and purposefulness. When your days are full of various events, all this knowledge and the new experience you gain, you feel a really strong need to share it with someone. And the popular word "volunteering" here made totally different sense to me".

39 students graduated from the first national Leadership Academy in June 2016. The second year embraces over 200 students, selected among 1200 applications from all regions of Ukraine. They will study for ten months in five cities: Kyiv, Poltava, Lviv, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv. The ULA's recruitment team visited 183 schools to present the program. Over 50 teachers and tutors will facilitate learning.

"I am very happy that the number of young people looking for change is growing. By 2020-2021 we expect to see 25 Academies, one in each region of Ukraine. By that time, the first ULA alumni will already become professionals in the business, public and civic sectors, and they will be bringing the values of the Academy

with them. Our dreams of a new generation of young Ukrainian leaders are being fulfilled. The Ukrainian Leadership Academy accomplished its mission last year and we believe the second year will be even more challenging and equally successful. But this is only the beginning,” commented **Jaroslawa Z. Johnson, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Western NIS Enterprise Fund.**

The national ULA office in Kyiv continues to build partnerships with local authorities, city administrations, and educational and business communities in order to expand the program at the local level.

### **The future of Ukraine starts here!**

***The Ukrainian Leadership Academy** is a 10-month program of personal and collective development for secondary school graduates built on combination of physical, psychological and intellectual development and based on the values. The Academy was founded in 2015 with support of the Western NIS Enterprise Fund.*

***Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF)** is a \$150 million fund, a pioneer in Ukraine and Moldova with more than two decades of successful experience investing in small and medium-sized companies. In 2015, WNISEF launched a \$35 million legacy program, funded by a portion of the profits earned from its investment activities. Today the Fund is implementing four programs, aimed at supporting Ukraine and Moldova during this critical period by developing sound economic policy and leadership. [www.wnisef.org](http://www.wnisef.org)*

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