



Success Stories
#ChangingCities



Business Skills, Cybersports, and Coding: New Opportunities for Young People at the “Resident” Space in Enerhodar

In October 2020, a youth business consulting centre called “Resident” opened in Enerhodar. It is an informal creative youth space for work, development, and recreation. Created by Vidrozhennia (an NGO) and with the support of Enerhodar City Hall and the international technical assistance project “Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance” (PLEDDG), the centre has become a crucial step in major qualitative changes to the youth environment of Enerhodar. Children and youth come here to learn coding, robotics, and to acquire business knowledge and skills.

“Our team had long wanted to come up with effective mechanisms of cooperation with young people in the city and the region and, most importantly, form a creative space in Enerhodar where they could feel as comfortable as possible and avail themselves of opportunities for development, creativity, and personal growth. The idea matured gradually over a 5-year period: we kept revisiting it while looking for opportunities to bring it to life. Thanks to PLEDDG and other partners, we managed to create a venue where children and youth spend their time productively: study information technology, have fun, work, create business startups, and get to know like-minded people,” says **Uliana Korobchuk, Leader of the Youth Business Consulting Centre Project and Chair of Vidrozhennia.**

The “Resident” space is operating on the premises of Khenokh Enerhodar Institute for State and Municipal Administration and consists of 3 locations: The Coach Room, the CyberAthlete Club, and a co-working zone. Collectively, they form an integrated environment where young people can pass the time meaningfully. The Coach Room hosts study programs, trainings, and workshops. The CyberAthlete Club is a venue for cybersports competitions, and the coworking zone is a place where young people sharing common interests can get together to work and communicate. The “Resident” centre has also launched the RoboCode coding school where children get to know the IT industry, study web design, and take their first steps in game and mobile app development.

“We plan to hold training activities in a variety of formats in the Coach Room. Even though the situation with offline events is uncertain now, we are considering the possibility of renting out our conference hall to those wishing to deliver lectures, trainings, and workshops. In case of any requests for specialized master classes for people living with disabilities or for other social initiatives, we will be happy to make the premises available free of charge. The CyberAthlete Club currently has 4 powerful computers and 2 large screens with a PlayStation console and a virtual reality system. Youth come to us to learn how to play computer games free of charge. This is not to say that children become glued to the screen and play as long as they want. The entire process is properly coordinated, and the Club has cybersports coaches. We already have several complete teams that compete in cybersports tournaments. The Club also has instructors who teach children 3D modeling,” **Uliana** adds.

Even though the “Resident” space just began receiving visitors and students in late October 2020, active online work with children and youth has been underway since last summer. For example, the centre launched the Arduino robotics course that has since enrolled close to 50 children of various ages. For several months now, students have been learning to design and assemble electronic devices for various applications on their own, learn coding, and explore the features of the popular Arduino board.

“The Arduino board is an example of a small computer. All of its operations can be configured manually even by a child. Arduino does whatever the user programs it to do, and in this way, we learn to code during classes. Younger children (ages 8 to 11 years) interact with Arduino via the Ardublock graphic programming language, while older children (ages 12 to 16 years) study the C++ language. The board is unique in that it allows users to visualize the result of commands written by them, which gives children a clear understanding of what coding is all about. I currently have 7 groups of students with 6-8 children per group. The most active participants of classes are young engineers and inventors with a great desire to create something that had not existed before. They are always interesting to be around and they stay one step ahead of the study plan: “Let’s do something to make this happen!” or “What if we connect this with that?”

We deliver online classes via the Tinkercad website where all boards, wiring, connections, and electronic devices are presented virtually. Some students buy the Arduino board to use at home, connect it to the computer, and run programs on it. Its operating principle is the same in both the virtual environment and in the real world. Since Arduino can be connected with all kinds of electronics such as sensors, motors, screens, and wiring, we study a new connection type during every class and develop skills essential to using the chosen material. We consistently delve deeper into new subjects and regularly repeat the material covered to internalize the new knowledge,” says **Vitaliy Pererva, a robotics course teacher at the “Resident” youth centre.**

A private enterprise training program named Starter has been developed as part of the same initiative. It is meant to enable young people to transform their business idea into a detailed business plan or even launch a startup over the course of 3 months. The program consists of thematic modules focusing on ways to find business ideas, business modeling, marketing strategies, effective selling techniques, information technology, personal development, and environmental business sustainability. Two groups of students successfully completed the course online. Practical experience shows that the training helps some students expand on their specific business idea, while others come to understand that their idea is not promising, which is an equally useful experience. The Starter training program is delivered by expert coaches, as well as partners, university and college instructors, and local business owners, who offer additional trainings or consultations to trainees.

“I studied with the first group of the Starter program in summer. I am still a college student, studying marketing. I joined the program with a clearly defined business idea: I want to open a European cuisine restaurant in Enerhodar, where jazz, blues, and funk music will be played. The training was very interesting, and I learned lots of useful things for myself. Most importantly, my concept crystallized into a business plan in which potential investors have taken a very keen interest,” says **Ivan Lisikh, a trainee of the Starter private enterprise program.**

At the end of every Starter program, graduates present their projects as part of the Source Capital competition. Creators of the top-five projects receive free expert consultations over the course of the year, and local business owners are also prepared to fund promising ideas of novice entrepreneurs. Other graduates are helped with project promotion on crowdfunding platforms or finding grant funding depending on the specifics of their initiatives. Enerhodar-based business owners are willing to make donations to a prize pool for this competition in the future.

“In the summer, we visited nearby villages to promote our centre and its programs and saw how many people are interested in training activities. They are prepared to go to Enerhodar to acquire new knowledge and skills. That is why we will most likely turn the Starter program into a commercial undertaking in the future. As for possible uses for the centre premises, it can host events of various formats: lectures, trainings, exhibitions, master classes, business lunches, and much more. We have plenty of ideas for developing and promoting the “Resident” space. The most important thing now is to be able to resume active offline meetings,” **Uliana Korobchuk** adds.

The “Resident” team looks forward to welcoming new guests who will be able to unlock their potential by using the capabilities of such versatile training and opportunities for achieving their goals. Once the youth centre becomes fully operational, this will serve as an impetus to development of small and medium-sized private enterprise among young people in Enerhodar and will fill new generations with confidence that growth opportunities are close by. By supporting similar initiatives in partner cities, PLEDDG promotes a favourable business environment and infrastructure where promising ideas are born and implemented, which translates into harmonious and positive development for the city and the region.



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The series of success stories #ChangingCities demonstrate successful examples and innovative approaches to democratic governance and local economic development in Zaporizhzhia, Vinnytsia, Poltava and Ivano-Frankivsk oblasts in Ukraine, that have resulted from the efforts of the international technical assistance project “Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance” (PLEDDG) which is being implemented by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and funded by Global Affairs Canada.

