

DENYS BOROVYK

Student EM-23

Khmelnytskyi National University

NATALIIA BOROVYK, teacher

Lisovodsky Professional Agrarian Lyceum

Teacher of general professional disciplines

ORCID: 0009-0004-1683-4933

SERHIY HORIASHCHENKO

Ph.D., Associate Professor

Khmelnytskyi National University

ORCID: 0000-0001-6623-2523

LEARNING ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH OWN MINI – COMPANY ACTIVITIES

Abstract: In the modern world, youth entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in shaping the economic potential and social development of society. This article focuses on exploring the promising opportunity that offers young entrepreneurs new avenues in the field of entrepreneurship. The authors analyze and systematize the key aspects of youth entrepreneurship, discuss innovative strategies, and challenges faced by youth in this sphere. Current trends and opportunities for the development of youth entrepreneurship in contemporary conditions are highlighted. Special attention is given to the impact of technology and social networks on fostering entrepreneurial activity among youth. The research results underscore the importance of supporting and fostering youth entrepreneurship as a key factor for sustainable economic growth and societal innovation.

Keywords: youth entrepreneurship, leadership, business, Junior Achievement Ukraine, mini-companies.

In the process of Ukraine's recovery after the war, it is crucial to actively engage the workforce with skills such as entrepreneurship, creativity, communication, and teamwork, as success in the modern economy largely depends on them. Support for entrepreneurial activities among youth provided by the Non-Governmental Organization "Junior Achievement Ukraine" is significant in this process. Despite the challenges faced by the educational sector due to the war, collaboration with JA leads to an increase in the number of young people receiving entrepreneurial education. This contributes not only to the recovery of the economy and development of communities but also creates opportunities for personal success in the future on their own land, unleashing their potentials and ambitions.

Supporting youth in their development and discovering their abilities is crucial for Ukraine's economic recovery, especially in the coming years. Migration, whether internal or external, temporary or permanent, underscores the need for flexibility and adaptation of young Ukrainians to changes in the labor market.

The key to their future success lies in the accessibility of practical educational opportunities aimed at developing entrepreneurial thinking, starting from schooling, and mastering financial instruments necessary for starting their own businesses.

Ukraine has already embarked on a series of ambitious reforms in both general and vocational education. These changes are aimed, among other things, at transitioning to a competency-based approach and increasing the practical component in education through closer interaction with the private sector.

Modern entrepreneurship education programs for youth should include a component of digital skills training, such as online teamwork, business collaboration, and process management. Financial literacy education should provide practical information on budgeting tools, saving, and investing in the era of online banking and cryptocurrencies.

Changing youth aspirations, implementing modern technological teaching methods, and early exposure to real entrepreneurial experiences are important priorities for Ukraine and its international partners.

The goal of Junior Achievement's activities is to prepare youth for the job market and develop their entrepreneurial skills for a successful future. Funding for Junior Achievement is provided by companies, institutions, foundations, and individuals.

The Company's program allows students to transform their business ideas into reality by creating their own companies and gaining management experience. Program participants learn to develop business plans, execute production and sales plans, create effective presentations, and control the quality of products or services.

The entrepreneurship course "Company" is based on practical teaching methods that encourage students to seek new information and adapt to changes. This aligns with the modern requirements of the economy, where young and adaptable individuals capable of self-realization are needed.

Programs such as "Entrepreneurship Camps" begin with intensive two-day events where participants form teams, develop business ideas, analyze them, and present them to a jury. This allows youth to gain not only knowledge but also practical skills for their future careers.

Participants in educational programs receive support from volunteer consultants who represent active business structures. They provide mentorship support and coordinate the activities of student companies.

Upon successful completion of the "Company" program, participants have the opportunity to receive an international "Entrepreneurial Skills Pass" (ESP) certificate, which confirms their entrepreneurship skills.

Junior Achievement has been successfully operating since 1919. In today's world, entrepreneurship plays a key role, and the development of youth entrepreneurship is facilitated by the Non-Governmental Organization Junior Achievement Ukraine.[1]

Even in the area affected by Russian aggression, Junior Achievement programs continue to develop thanks to the support of partners and government agencies. Companies and organizations such as Citi, MetLife, WNISEF, the Ukrainian Startup Fund, as well as ministries of education and state administrations, play a role in this. Through joint support in Ukraine and Europe, Junior Achievement fosters entrepreneurship skills necessary for the country's economic recovery.

Junior Achievement Ukraine is part of the global network of JA Worldwide, founded in 1919 in the United States to support youth entrepreneurship. The organization is one of the largest and most effective non-governmental organizations in the world working for youth.

Junior Achievement programs reach over 10 million people annually in 100 countries worldwide with entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and workforce readiness education. A distinctive feature of the education is the active involvement of mentors from the private sector who provide practical experience of successful entrepreneurship.

Participants in the programs acquire leadership skills in the economic development of their countries and communities. Workforce readiness programs help young people choose their future career paths and acquire necessary education. Participants have the opportunity to intern alongside experienced professionals, gain digital skills, and develop practical business experience.

Entrepreneurship education programs lay the foundation for an entrepreneurial career. Through participation in these programs, youth work on developing innovative products, securing funding, and marketing strategies.

As of 2023, over 15 million students worldwide are enrolled in Junior Achievement programs in more than 100 countries.

Junior Achievement programs contribute to the development of career ambitions, increase employment rates, and foster entrepreneurial skills. They also promote entrepreneurial culture in educational institutions and engage key players from the private sector.

External evaluations show that graduates of Junior Achievement (JA) programs in Sweden find employment on average within 4 months of completing their education, significantly less than the average youth who typically seek employment for at least 11 months. Research conducted in Norway showed that JA graduates have a 12% higher average income and are 44% more likely to hold managerial positions compared to other graduates.

JA, the largest non-governmental and non-profit organization in Europe, actively works on developing entrepreneurship education for youth. In 2022, over 4 million young people in Europe were enrolled in JA programs. Through a partnership with the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), JA Europe initiated the resumption of JA program activities in Ukraine. Within this partnership, JA Ukraine, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the education departments of regional state administrations, began working with educational institutions in Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions, later expanding its activities to Lviv and Chernivtsi regions.

After the start of the full-scale war by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the JA network in Europe actively joined projects to support Ukrainian youth. The Russian JA organization was suspended from participation in all international events of the Junior Achievement network, and all JA educational materials were promptly translated into Ukrainian. The network of corporate partners of JA significantly increased the volumes of educational projects in favor of Ukraine.

Gen-E is the largest youth entrepreneurship festival in Europe, combining two European competitions – “Company of the Year” and “Startup of the Year”. In 2022, it took place in Tallinn, Estonia. Ukraine was represented at this event by two teams presenting business ideas and products of Ukrainian mini-companies. Participation in Gen-E provided Ukrainian young entrepreneurs with the opportunity to showcase their achievements and products, as well as to understand European entrepreneurial experience.

Participation of companies in Junior Achievement programs can have a significant impact on the development of entrepreneurship among youth. There are several ways in which companies can get involved:

Become corporate volunteers or mentors: This allows employees of companies to share their experience and knowledge with youth, contributing to the development of their entrepreneurial skills.

Financial support: Companies can financially support Junior Achievement programs to help them expand their activities and attract more youth to entrepreneurship education.

Partnership in program implementation: Companies can enter into partnership agreements with Junior Achievement for the joint launch and implementation of entrepreneurship education programs for youth.

Advocacy and support: Companies can support and promote Junior Achievement initiatives among their employees, clients, and partners, thereby increasing awareness of the programs and attracting more participants. [4]

Participation of companies in Junior Achievement programs will contribute not only to the development of entrepreneurship among youth but also to economic growth and the creation of a favorable entrepreneurial atmosphere in Ukraine. The role of business mentors in these programs is extremely important as they help young people gain not only theoretical knowledge but also practical experience in a real business environment.

In the 2022-2023 academic year, Lviv and Chernivtsi were selected as pilot regions because they had the highest number of educational institutions participating. In the “Company” entrepreneurship program, 37 educational institutions from these regions participated. More than

300 students, approximately 50 teachers, and 20 business mentors took part. Students founded and successfully launched 44 mini-companies. Specifically: 26 mini-companies were established in Lviv region, and 18 in Chernivtsi region. The average number of participants in a mini-company was 6 individuals. The most popular activity areas are presented in Figure 1. In particular, 11 mini-companies were created in the food sector, 8 in clothing and accessories, 3 in metalworking, 8 in interior decor creation, 2 in mobile app development, 2 in agriculture, and 10 in other areas.

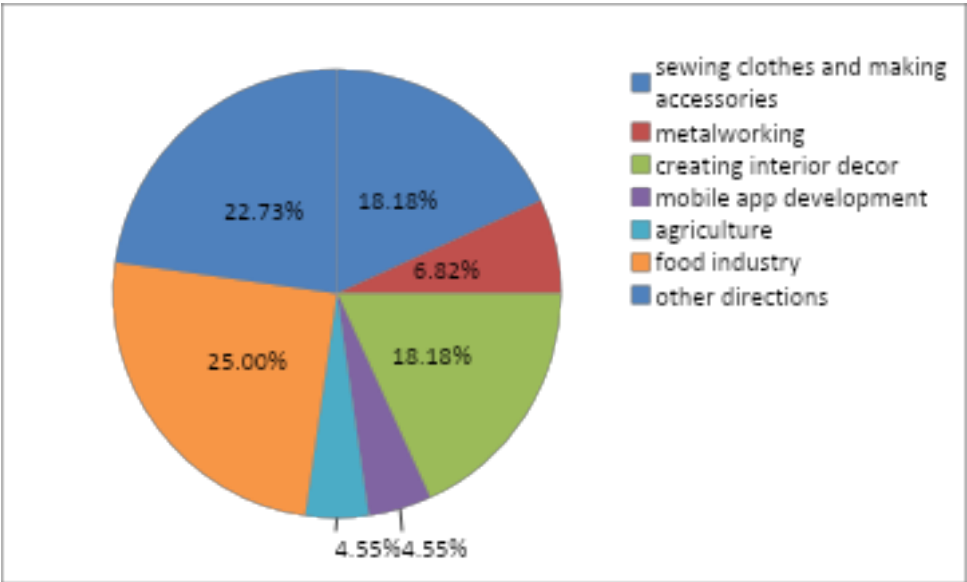


Fig. 1. Most Popular Activity Directions of Mini-Companies over Ukraine

After completing the first stage of training, approximately 300 students established 44 educational firms (26 companies in Lviv region and 18 in Chernivtsi). The most popular activity directions for mini-companies were food production (11 mini-companies), clothing tailoring and accessory manufacturing, as well as interior decor production (8 companies each in these areas). Among other interesting directions are mobile app development, provision of population service according to students' specialization, metalworking, and others.

Fifteen business mentors-volunteers from the business sphere have been involved in the implementation of the “Company” program to assist students in realizing their business ideas.

Since September 2023, the public organization Junior Achievement Ukraine has expanded its activities to 10 new regions - Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Vinnytsia, Kyiv, Poltava, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia regions, and Kyiv city. The academic year in all regions began with seminars for teachers. Then, work was carried out in educational institutions to form teams.

Khmelnytskyi region has been identified as one of the promising areas for youth education. In the vocational and technical education institutions of Khmelnytskyi region, the “Company” educational program will be implemented through integration into the module “Basics of Entrepreneurship” of the subject “Technologies”.

As of February 22, 2024, a total of 208 mini-companies have been created from 158 educational institutions in 10 regions of Ukraine and Kyiv city. The data are summarized in Table 1. They were established based on vocational and technical education institutions and specialized colleges participating in this year's educational program for entrepreneurship development “Company” by Junior Achievement Ukraine.

Table 1 - Distribution of Mini-Companies by Regions

No. Order	Region Name	Number of created mini-companies	Number of educational institutions
1	Khmelnyskyi	35	24
2	Lviv	45	36
3	Chernivtsi	22	14
4	Ternopil	20	15
5	Ivano-Frankivsk	40	19
6	Kyiv	20	19
7	Vinnytsia	8	10
8	Dnipropetrovsk	11	10
9	Zaporizhzhia	2	6
10	Poltava	1	1
	city Kyiv	3	4
	<i>Overall</i>	<i>208</i>	<i>158</i>

The activity directions of mini-companies in Khmelnytskyi region in 2023-2024 are presented in Figure 2.

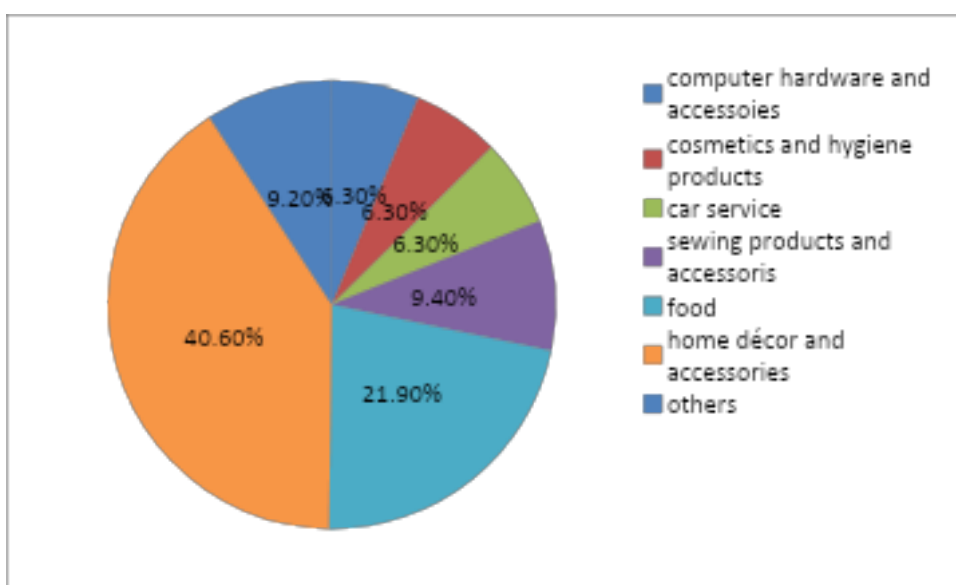


Figure 2. Directions of activity of mini-companies in Khmelnytskyi region.

Analyzing the data of the figure, it can be seen that the majority, 40.6%, are engaged in home decor and accessories, followed by 21.9% in food, 9.4% in sewing products and accessories, while 6.3% each are involved in computer equipment and accessories, cosmetics and hygiene products, and auto services.

The state educational institution “Lisovody Professional Agrarian Lyceum” also created its mini-company “Student Bakery”, which participated in a two-day entrepreneurship camp with the business idea of “Baking homemade pastries”. In addition to us, 88 education seekers and 21 educators from vocational education institutions in Khmelnytskyi region took part in the camp’s activities.

One of the exciting moments in the “Entrepreneurship Camp” was a motivational meeting with entrepreneur-mentors. They talked about how to deal with career fluctuations and gave advice on what to learn for a successful career.

During the sessions, participants generated business ideas, analyzed them, and learned the nuances of self-presentation. Teams presented their projects to the jury. Winners were determined based on the criteria shown in Figure 2:

Content of the business idea - 40%;

Quality of presentation - 20%;

Teamwork - 30%;

Creativity and originality - 10%.

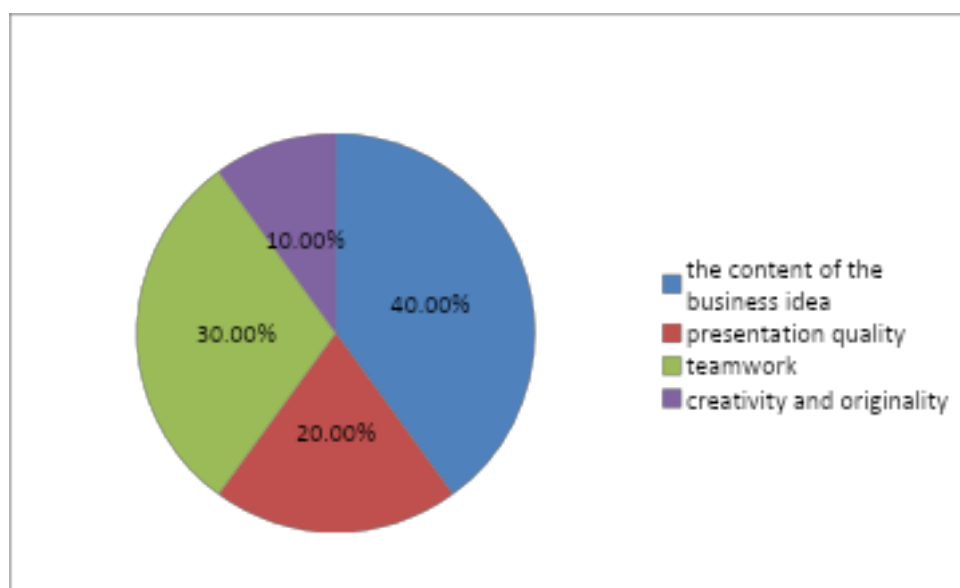


Figure 3. Evaluation Criteria

Teams generated 21 ideas for their own businesses during the camp. The ideas from the camp participants were diverse, including a gift agency “Announcement”, a confectionery “We are from Ukraine”, “Sweet Treats”, a bakery “Student Bakery”, a pie shop “Pie Island”, a candy store “Polonska caramel”, a food processing company “De Hidra”, a clothing design workshop “Star Shirts”, a bead jewelry company “Podil Pearls”, design workshops “Pen.Ok”, “Klava Art”, an eco-products store “Ecolavka”, a sewing company “Shoose Change Create”, a toy sewing workshop “Pink Panther”, a company “Ukraine 3D”, a company “Power Accums”, an auto repair shop “Garage”, a decorative pots manufacturing company “Vali”, a patriotic night light manufacturing company, a company “Comfort Home”, a company producing organizers for bulk products. [3]

The goal of the educational event is to help learners acquire practical skills in entrepreneurship, finance, planning, and economics. Most importantly, the “Entrepreneurship Camp” taught students to think like entrepreneurs and showed what knowledge and skills are needed to implement their own business idea, as well as introduced them to people who have already implemented successful business projects.

Participants of the “Entrepreneurship Camp” met and were inspired by Andrii Turak, Director of Development at Junior Achievement Ukraine. He vividly and figuratively explained why entrepreneurship is the future of our country, described to the students what they would learn over the next two days and the entire school year as participants in the “Company” program. [5]

In Andrii Turak’s speech, there were many interesting and motivating points. Here are a few key thoughts from his speech:

You will do everything that entrepreneurs do in real life, except one thing: you will not pay taxes. Everything else will be real!

Your task for this year is to gain positive entrepreneurial experience. So that the first experience is not traumatic, but truly positive.

The main thing is the desire to be happy, everything else is just ways to achieve it.

Life is a constant series of crises, and we are not prepared for them. What to do? Prepare yourselves.

You may not be an entrepreneur, go to work, and be an employee, but treat your work as your own business. The main thing is your attitude, and then you have every chance to be successful and the best in your field.

We often want to harvest where we haven't planted anything. That doesn't happen. You have to plant something first, take care of it, work on it, and only then can you expect results.

It is very important how you see yourself and how you talk about yourself. You may not be someone yet, but it is important what you are already striving for.

You are already entrepreneurs. Your business is your life. You can treat it like an employee who just spends his time at work. Or you can treat it like a business owner who can make it whatever he wants. The result depends only on how you treat this business and whether you create the right environment for its development.

During the workshop on the topic “What are Soft Skills and Why Should They Be Developed”, together with the Director of Development at JA Ukraine, business trainer Andrii Turak, teachers sought answers to the following questions:

What skills are important for students to successfully work on their projects?

What is needed to achieve goals?

Why is it necessary to learn for proper motivation?

What skills need to be developed for effective teamwork?

What is needed to become better at listening and hearing, handling criticism, and providing feedback?

How to train critical thinking?

To find answers to these questions, teachers worked in teams, completed joint tasks, and answered challenging questions. After the workshop, educators, in addition to valuable knowledge, received homework assignments.

In the concluding speech on the first day, Andrii Turak, the Director of Development at JA Ukraine, shared key tips with students and educators:

How to effectively present a business idea;

How to properly present your product;

How to work with illustrations and text in presentations;

How to structure it;

What and how to speak;

And, importantly, how to prepare for the presentation itself.

A captivating moment at the “Entrepreneurship Camp” was a motivating meeting with entrepreneur mentors. They talked about how to react to career fluctuations and gave advice on why it's worth learning for a successful career.

Successful entrepreneurs Irina Maisturchuk, owner of the “Mom’s Farm” network, Mariana Overchuk, owner of “Soap Stories” company, and Liudmyla Shevchuk, director of the Scientific and Methodological Center for Vocational Education and Qualifications Upgrading in the Khmelnytskyi region, joined the evaluation of business ideas developed during the “Entrepreneurship Camp”. [2]

Our mini-company “Student Bakery” presented its business idea: baking homemade pastries. Participants were awarded certificates for active participation in the “Entrepreneurship Camp”.

Impressions from the “Entrepreneurship Camp”, shared by Natalia Hutsalyuk, a member of the “Student Bakery” mini-company, during an interview, are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 - Interview Text with Natalia Hutsalyuk

Question	Answer
What impression did your participation as a member of the team representing the Vocational Agricultural Lyceum “Lisovody Professional Agricultural Lyceum” at the “Entrepreneurship Camp” have on you?	"The Entrepreneurship Camp" brought me a lot of benefits and knowledge. Firstly, it provided me with a lot of motivation and support from the organizers, who invited successful entrepreneurs to share their journeys, helped each team individually, and promised to provide feedback throughout the competition. Also, by interacting with people who have achieved significant heights, I understood what distinguishes a truly successful person from someone who just wants to appear successful.
What important lesson did you learn from the “Entrepreneurship Camp”?	I learned an important lesson for myself - the “Entrepreneurship Camp” helps you understand yourself, understand what you really want, what you know, what people need.
What exactly did you learn at the camp?	Of course, in camp, my team and I learned the basics of entrepreneurship, we learned to understand what useful things we can give to people in order to make money from it.
What did you like the most as a participant?	I really liked the speech of speaker Olena Khoma, who taught the basics of rhetoric. We learned how to clearly present information so that people are interested in it and listen to you.
The conclusion I drew for myself is that...	Even though our team didn't win a prize, as Director of Junior Achievement Andrii Turak said: “The main victory is victory over oneself”. And I fully agree with that because over these two days, we truly became better, at least for ourselves.

Mentors have been appointed, including Olena Penkal – a restaurateur, owner of the Pub “Papapub”, and the recreational complex ATC “Dacha”, who is a mentor for our mini-company “Student Bakery”.

Every student in our country should be humane, grow in love, and have a chance for success. Entrepreneurship is the force that drives people forward. After all, entrepreneurship fosters an active life position, the ability to make informed decisions, assess risks, take responsibility, and see opportunities in the world around us. These skills and knowledge will help students in education build a successful career, start their own businesses, and succeed in various fields of activity in our Ukraine and change the world for the better.

A new type of training is starting in vocational education – entrepreneurship training through the activities of their own mini-companies. It represents the future for many education seekers, as it develops business skills, creativity, and innovation, financial and technical literacy, and promotes the formation of leadership abilities.

We believe that in Ukraine, after the end of the war, numerous mini-companies will develop and thrive, progressive enterprises will operate, and powerful private businesses will work.

References

1. Junior Achievement URL: <https://ja-ukraine.org/>

2. Preparing for entrepreneurship. URL :
<https://khmnmc.km.ua/%D0%B3%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%83%D1%94%D0%BC%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%8F-%D0%B4%D0%BE-%D0%BF%D1%96%D0%B4%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%94%D0%BC%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%86%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B0/>
3. Honcharova, I. V., Yevtushenko, V. A., Mykhailenko, D. H. (2023). Features of entrepreneurship development in conditions of military actions and post-war recovery of Ukraine. Problems of Modern Transformations. Series: Economics and Management. <https://doi.org/10.54929/2786-5738-2023-7-03-04>
4. file:///C:/Users/%D0%90%D0%B4%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD/Downloads/annualreport_ja_2022_final.pdf
5. Entrepreneurship Camp URL :
<https://ja-ukraine.org/programs/tabir-pidpriemnictva/>