



A peer-to-peer  
English program for  
Ukrainian youth

# 2021 Annual Report



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# Our Program

## THE NEED

Every year, our world grows more interconnected. Entrepreneurs and politicians, scientists and artists, educators and CEOs are meeting and collaborating with their counterparts across the globe. The near-universal language paving the way for such international collaboration is English.

Ukraine's government and citizens recognize the importance of plugging into these global networks. Today, 91% of Ukrainian students study English. However, Ukraine still ranks 30th of 34 European countries in English proficiency. Furthermore, the latest PISA global competence assessment ranked Ukrainian students 56th out of 63 countries in intercultural communication skills.

Why does this happen? In short, English-language education in Ukraine does not teach speaking effectively, and few Ukrainians have the chance to regularly interact with foreigners. As a result, many Ukrainian students have studied English for years but can barely carry on a conversation.

## OUR SOLUTION

ENGIN is a free peer-to-peer program helping a generation of Ukrainian youth improve their spoken

## WHY ENGLISH IS KEY

- About **85%** of scientific and academic publications are published in English; in some fields, this number exceeds **90%**
- **56%** of Internet content is published in English
- **63%** of newspapers and magazines and **35%** of films are released in English
- **1.3 billion** people (every **6th** person in the world) speak English\*

\*Ethnologue.com

English and intercultural skills, equipping them to access academic and professional opportunities.

Our model is simple: we pair Ukrainian students age 13–22 with English-speaking peers across the world for weekly online conversation practice and cultural exchange. Each participant is screened via an online application and video interview to ensure their fit for the program. Participants are then matched based on age, preferences, interests, and schedules.

With training and extensive resources, we help our

**MARCH 2020**  
when we launched

**9300**  
total participants

**60**  
Ukrainian partners

**65**  
American partners

**95%**  
of students' English improved

**8.3%**  
average improvement

volunteers create a safe, comfortable online learning environment and develop a productive peer relationship. Volunteers meet with students for an hour each week; the 1-on-1 format allows sessions to be customized to each student's level and needs. The ENGIN team is always available to answer questions, offer ideas, and resolve any problems that may arise.

“

**I've become more self-assured and actually started improving my English knowledge. Apart from boosting my confidence and English speaking skills, I am learning to communicate with people of different nationalities, opinions, and cultures. English listening skills too, a section Ukrainian students especially struggle with. ”**

Alexandra, ENGIN student

To supplement their 1-on-1 sessions, we provide students with several other opportunities to improve their English:

- Weekly group sessions, where small groups of 4 to 6 students rotate through speaking activities with 3 different volunteers
- Volunteer-led Telegram chats, where students practice texting each other in English
- Weekly social media posts introducing common English expressions and slang terms

#### **A ONE-OF-A-KIND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

In addition to filling a critical gap in English education in Ukraine, ENGIN has offered thousands of young volunteers a unique service opportunity.

A growing number of young people are looking for flexible, rewarding volunteer work. Many are fulfilling community service requirements at school or university; others are simply hoping to develop new skills, meet people, and give back to the community.

But finding the right volunteer opportunity can be a challenge. Some volunteer sites don't accept minors for legal reasons; others only accept volunteers with

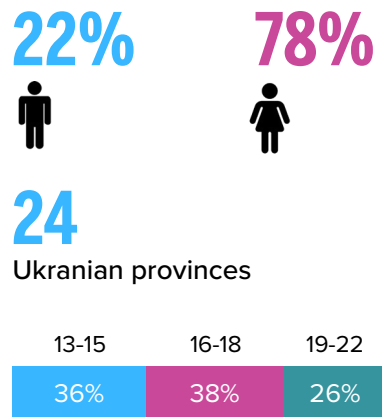
particular skills. Many of the volunteer opportunities open to students without special skills are administrative, rote tasks.

Once a volunteer finds a suitable opportunity, logistics can make it difficult to fit into a busy schedule. Many volunteer programs operate during very specific times. Sites may be located far from home or school. Volunteers may find themselves spending more time traveling to and from their site than actually volunteering.

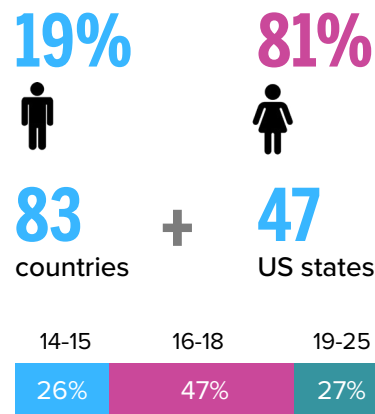
ENGIN removes all of these barriers. In our program, any English-speaking student age 14 or older can get involved in exciting, high-impact service and see tangible results after just a few months. And the program provides maximum flexibility—volunteers commit just 1 hour each week, and can choose the day and time they will volunteer. There are no application deadlines or fixed start dates—volunteers can sign up at any time and be matched to a student within 1 to 2 weeks.

### OUR PARTICIPANTS

#### STUDENTS



#### VOLUNTERS



## ENGIN's Nationwide Impact

**A**fter participating in our program, students expand their vocabulary, learn to apply their grammar knowledge in conversation, produce longer stretches of speech, accurately express more complex concepts, and make fewer mistakes. Our students also improve their overall communication skills and cultural competence by learning to work with a peer from a different culture. They become more confident and gain a more global perspective. In the longer term, these skills empower each student to access better academic and professional opportunities.

But the real magic happens when we repeat this

individual experience at scale, reaching our ultimate goal of 100,000 students. In this way, we can use the power of 1-to-1 connections to transform an entire country. When we create an entire generation of English-fluent, culturally competent youth, we will see multinational companies hiring more Ukrainians and opening offices in Ukraine. Ukrainian professionals in STEM, business, the arts, education, and beyond will increase their collaboration with colleagues abroad. Cutting-edge ideas and innovations will spread to Ukraine faster. Tourism will thrive.

The ultimate result? ENGIN will spur Ukraine's economic growth and help connect Ukraine to the world.



**To my mind, the greatest benefit of this project is that I can practice English all the time, even during holidays. I improved my spoken language and listening skills, enriched my lexical stock with slang words, which will help me to adapt to English-speaking surroundings. But the most important thing is that this project gave me confidence which helped to get the highest mark on the exam and influenced the choice of my future profession. ”**

Mariya, ENGIN student

## 2021 Accomplishments

### 3900

students recruited

### 3600

volunteers recruited

### 60+

student recruitment partnerships signed

### 13

months of interactive speaking activities created

### 155

volunteer training sessions conducted

### 250

group practice sessions conducted

2021 was a year of incredible growth for ENGIN. As our program quadrupled in size, we reached students in all **24 regions** in Ukraine, connecting them with volunteers from **47 US states** and over **80 countries**.

Our new partnership program was key to this growth—we signed agreements with over **60 educational institutions** and nonprofit organizations across Ukraine to help recruit students. Most of our partners are public schools; we also work with several universities, libraries, and specialized language centers.

Our team also worked hard to vastly improve the program throughout the year. We published a proprietary curriculum of interactive, speaking-first activities. We created online communities for both students and volunteers. We launched group sessions to offer students extra practice. For volunteers, we developed a volunteer training and detailed volunteer handbook.

We've also created a custom speaking assessment that will provide an objective measure of students' progress. We administered tests to a sample of students upon

“

**Through ENGIN sessions, I am able to connect to another person... and learn about another culture while teaching them about mine. ENGIN makes volunteering simple, easy, and organized with their lesson plans and newsletters, so there isn't as much stress on the volunteers. Also, ENGIN clearly cares about all of its volunteers, which makes me feel even better about volunteering with them. ”**

Jane, ENGIN volunteer

6

online student and  
volunteer communities,  
launched with

2000

total members

~1000

progress tests  
administered

5400

followers across  
Facebook and  
Instagram

signing up for the program, after 3 months of working with a volunteer, and after 6 months of working with a volunteer. We are currently analyzing the results to help inform our strategy in 2022.

More broadly, we developed and implemented a social media strategy that offers relevant content to our diverse audience of current and potential students, current and

potential volunteers, teachers, parents, and partners. We worked with our student and volunteer community to clearly define and communicate our mission. Finally, we received press coverage across Ukraine and US, including outlets such as Svoboda (US), Osvitoria (Ukraine), Thrive Global (US), and many local papers (Ukraine).

“

**International communication is how you become an ambassador for your country, your traditions. The ENGIN program gives you this opportunity and contributes to your speaking confidence, making this international experience more effective. ”**

Anastasiia, ENGIN student

“

**Since I was an English learner myself, ENGIN resonated the most with me and offered the perfect blend of casual friendships, cultural exchange, and meaningful work. ”**

Pascale, ENGIN volunteer



## Looking Forward

In 2022, we plan to continue growing rapidly while improving the core program and piloting several new initiatives. Some highlights of our strategy for 2022 include:

- 1. Student Recruitment Partners (Ukraine)** Add 50+ new partners; enhance the ENGIN partner experience by creating a partner community offering support, professional development, connections, etc.
- 2. Volunteer Recruitment Partners** Explore partnerships with educational institutions and nonprofits in the US, Canada, UK, Australia/New Zealand.
- 3. New Online Platform** Launch online platform to manage the full student and volunteer experience, allowing us to improve usability for participants, work more efficiently, and continue to grow
- 4. Community Building** Strengthen our student and volunteer communities through online events, interactive student and volunteer-led social media content, special contests, challenges, and more.
- 5. ENGIN for English teachers** If we can help a teacher improve her English, we help every student she works

with. ENGIN for English teachers will pair teachers with volunteers in the US for 1-on-1 speaking practice.

**6. Pilot ENGIN Station** Poor internet connections are a major obstacle to offering ENGIN to the kids who need it most. We will partner with a youth center or library in a small town to set up an “ENGIN station” with computers, headsets, and reliable Wifi.

**7. Outreach** As a new nonprofit, one of our greatest challenges is that most people don’t know we exist. Throughout 2022, we will explore various strategies for spreading the word about our program in Ukraine, the US, and beyond.

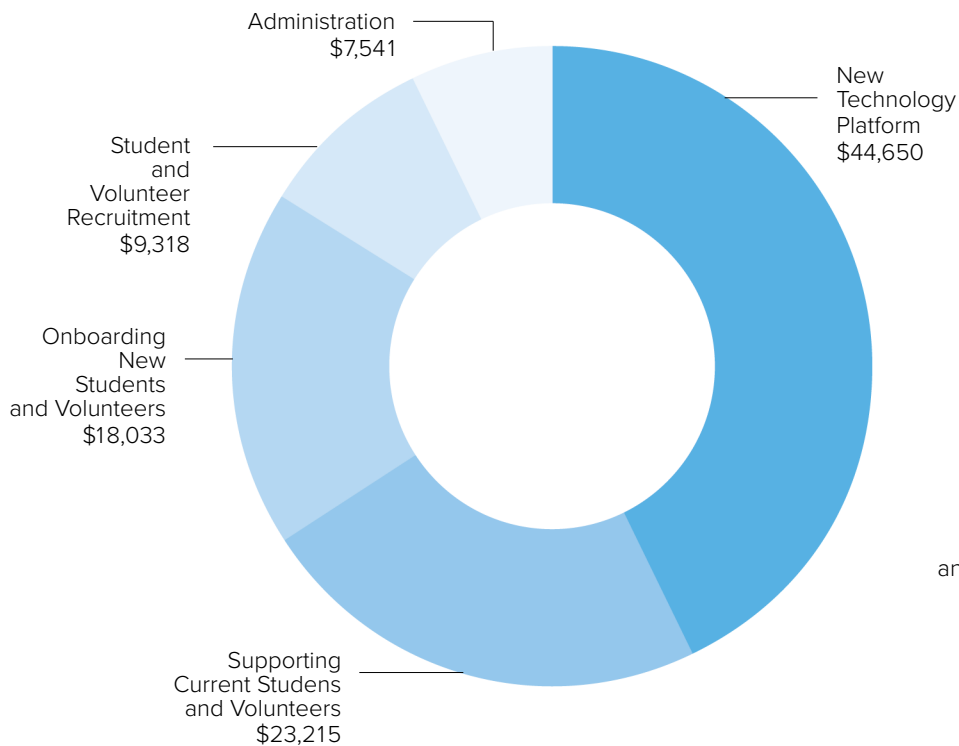
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**No one here will make you laugh for your mistakes or force you to memorize words and write tests just to get a checkmark. Here you can find new friends, support, and motivation.**”

Ivan, ENGIN student

# Financial Overview

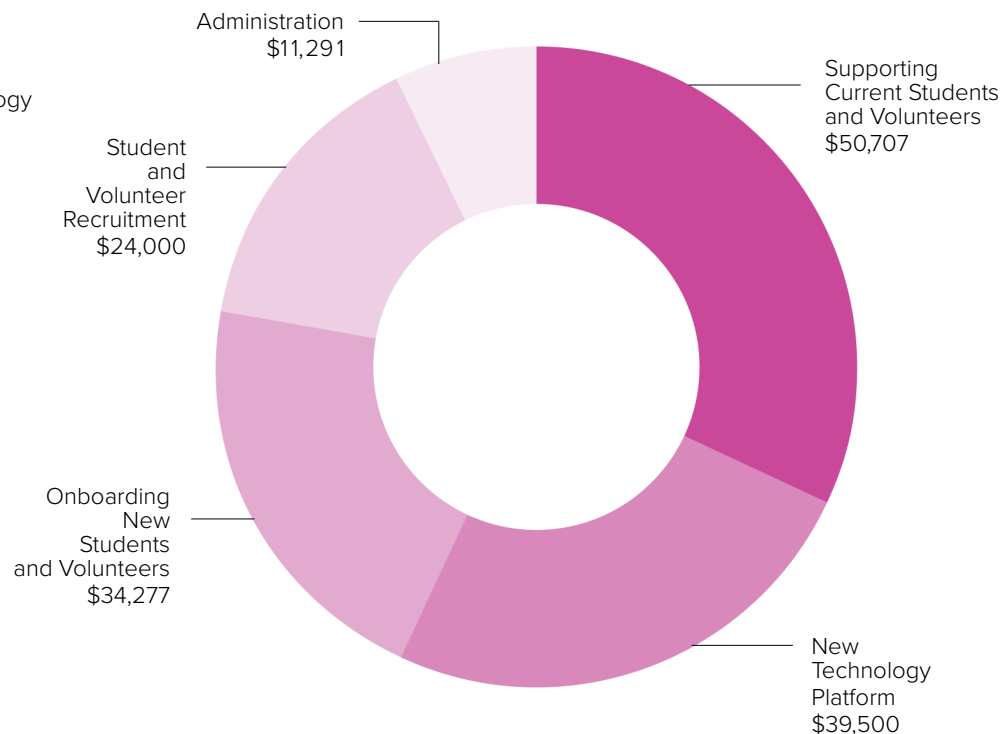
**2021**

\$102,757



**2022**

\$159,774



# Our Team



**Katarina Manoff**  
Founder



**Taya Zhernosiekova**  
Program Director



**Mykola Popadiuk**  
Country Director, Ukraine



**Vasia Zaretsky**  
Lead Developer

**Anya Chan**  
Program Manager

**Soe Young Lee**  
Assessment and Evaluation

**Olena Rukkas**  
Group Sessions Coordinator

**Nina Sivaji**  
Volunteer Training Lead

**Svitlana Dudka**  
Program Manager

**Gulnaz Madadli**  
Student and  
Volunteer Support

**Tetiana Sahaydak**  
Partnership Manager

**Tanya Tkachenko**  
Interviewer

**Navya Gullapuram**  
Volunteer Training Lead

**Karolina Naidon**  
Student and  
Volunteer Support

**Marta Savych**  
Interviewer

**Anastasiia Yuzyk**  
Student and  
Volunteer Support

**Anhelina Kyrsenko**  
Interviewer

**Daniil Ozernyi**  
Curriculum and  
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**Nazar Shkurashivskyi**  
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