



YOU HAVE A FRIEND IN ME

“You Have A Friend in Me” is an initiative established in the wake of the refugee crisis in Poland caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine. The program aims to connect young Ukrainian refugees entering Polish high schools, representing a significant portion of the over 1.3 million refugees who have arrived in Poland as of today, with their Polish peers. The latter would be willing to help them integrate into the new country and new educational system.

In the whole process, the free platform uses two application forms: one for a friend from Poland and one from Ukraine. Then based on provided responses about one’s age, location and interests, people are put up in the most compatible pairs. Every Polish friend declares their type of help: it can be academic - in any field or level - social, linguistic or mental support. With the growing interest of potential applicants and partners, we are planning to expand our program abroad, starting with the countries of Eastern Europe, where the biggest populations of Ukrainian immigrants are located. “You Have A Friend In Me” has a ready to work team in Hungary and plans for Slovakia and Moldova. Additionally, to support our participants, we started establishing cooperation with teachers of numerous subjects to create online lessons for Ukrainian students.

In just two weeks, “You Have A Friend in Me” received nearly 10,000 applications and paired up first friends. The program received preliminary help from Amazon and its software engineers to expand the program’s website’s cloud computing capacity and process applications more efficiently. Additionally, the initiative was profiled by a dozen media outlets, including the most prominent newspapers and online publications in the country:

- BBC [link: <https://bbc.in/3MM1bzJ>];
- TVN [link: <https://bit.ly/3wsBdLL>];
- Interia [link: <https://bit.ly/3iqing3>];
- WP [link: <https://bit.ly/3L1R6Nm>].

Essential information:

- A platform pairing up young people from Poland with those from Ukraine;
- Partners including Cambridge, LSE, and Yale Polish Societies as well as Cambridge cLASs and Young Leaders Conference;
- Nearly 10 000 applicants;
- A post about “You Have A Friend In Me” on Facebook reached 1 million people.

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