

## MONITORING OF LOCAL REQUIREMENTS, NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CREATING AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF VIRTUAL YOUTH BUSINESS HUBS

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**Annotation.** *The article highlights the problems of education during the period of war in Ukraine. The idea of the grant project ERASMUS+ Call [ERASMUS-EDU-2022-VIRT-EXCH] - Virtual Exchanges in Higher Education and Youth - "International Network of Virtual Youth Business Hubs" (VEHUB4YOU) is presented. The VEHUB4YOU project focuses on the transfer of business knowledge from the EU to young people in Eastern partner countries through virtual exchange technologies as a means of improving and strengthening the educational process for Ukrainian children who are internally or externally displaced as a result of Russia's military aggression in Ukraine. The article presents the results of a survey of young people, namely: students and teachers of schools, universities and colleges from Ukraine and Azerbaijan. The survey is dedicated to the determination of the need and interest of students in the creation of an international network of virtual youth business hubs with the aim of improving the quality of education by providing access to modern European education, transfer of business knowledge from the EU to the youth of Eastern partner countries using virtual exchange technologies, etc. The authors of the article summarized the most popular international virtual mobility courses for young people as a result of a survey.*

**Keywords:** *education, training, European cooperation, virtual mobility, non-formal education, distance learning, business innovation, educational hub, internally displaced persons.*

**Introduction and problem statement.** Ukraine's internationalization, accession to European communities, etc. provides unique opportunities for multilateral cooperation in education and science. On the other hand, the outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine and the imposition of martial law throughout the country have significantly affected the organization of the educational process in educational institutions of various types of accreditation, from secondary schools to universities and academies. Many educational institutions have been destroyed, with libraries, equipment, and educational materials

being destroyed as a result of massive shelling [2, 3, 4]. In Ukraine, 180 schools have been completely destroyed and more than 1,300 educational institutions have been damaged as a result of Russia's military aggression. A significant number of participants in the educational process (administrators of educational institutions, academic and teaching staff, students, parents) were forced to change their place of residence, leave the war zone and move to other regions and outside of Ukraine. A number of towns and villages are under occupation, subject to harassment by the Russian regime. A significant number of educational institutions were forced to move to the territory controlled by Ukraine. Out of 13,000 schools, only 9,000 can now return to full-time education [3, 5].

As Human Rights Watch notes, according to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, as of January 2023, more than 95 percent of students, who were ready to continue their education, were enrolled in schools. That was a significant achievement for Ukraine in wartime. Despite these measures, the interruption of education due to the war, as well as the global impact of the coronavirus pandemic, show that the shift from face-to-face to distance learning often leads to losses in the quality of education. Significant efforts are needed to help Ukrainian children resume learning [14].

For two years before this, Ukraine's education system had also been operating under restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was not in line with the standards adopted by the European Education Community. The primary task was to organize a safe environment and switch to distance learning [10, 12].

The Laws of Ukraine "On Complete General Secondary Education" and "On Higher Education" emphasize the possibility of active use of mixed learning and distance learning technologies in the period of martial law and post-war recovery. Mixed learning makes it possible to effectively combine traditional methods with new technologies, which helps to improve learning and actively engage students in the learning process.

Today in Ukraine, children who live far from the combat zone and did not move to other regions of Ukraine or abroad during the war are studying on part-time, distance, or mixed form of learning. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, as of November 14, 2022, 4 million 31 thousand 537 students are enrolled in general secondary education institutions. Of these, 1,013,951 students are studying full-time, 1,892,891 are studying remotely, and 1,124,695 are studying in a mixed mode of learning. Please note that this includes the total number of students enrolled in Ukrainian schools, not just those who live far from the combat zone and did not change their place of residence during the war. Of the 1,892,891 students studying remotely, more than 1 million are from Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, Dnipro, Sumy, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv and Kherson regions. However, due to prolonged air raids and power outages lasting several hours, the educational process in the safe areas is also interrupted. After all, when teachers and students are in a shelter during an air raid or without electricity and, accordingly, high-quality Internet, participants in the educational process cannot continue neither full-time nor distance learning at this time. Therefore, children spend a significant portion of their school time studying on their own. All of this only exacerbates educational losses [4].

In 2022, the project team of teachers from the Faculty of Management and Business

Design of the Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, together with foreign partners, received a grant project ERASMUS+ Call [ERASMUS-EDU-2022-VIRT-EXCH] – Virtual Exchanges in Higher Education and Youth – "International Network of Virtual Youth Business Hubs" (VEHUB4YOU). The VEHUB4YOU project aims to transfer business knowledge from the EU to young people in the Eastern partner countries (aged 13 to 30) through virtual exchange technologies as a means of improving and strengthening the educational process for Ukrainian children who are internally or externally displaced as a result of Russia's military aggression in Ukraine [16]. Already in 2024, the first international virtual business hub will be organized on the basis of the Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design and business training will be launched for high school, college and university students of both economic and non-economic specialties. This step will be the beginning of the creation of an international network of virtual youth business hubs, which includes 60 virtual international business hubs in schools, universities and rural libraries in Ukraine and Azerbaijan. European universities, with the help of universities and youth organizations in Ukraine and Azerbaijan, will share their business courses and experience of lecturers with young people from the Eastern Partnership countries.

As a result, 1800 representatives from 60 hubs and 250 facilitators from Eastern partner countries will participate in the project, as well as 220 participants from other identified regions (Southern Neighborhood and Sub-Saharan Africa). The project participants will develop a pool of methodological materials for online business training. The VEHUB4YOU project is expected to improve the quality of education by providing access to modern European education; at the organizational level, it will promote entrepreneurial training, and at the level of individual project participants, it will provide them with skills of business planning, product marketing, and tools for starting their own business. It is expected to modernize school, college, and university curricula in line with new trends in virtual learning and to increase the effectiveness of virtual education [16].

The use of online technologies in the educational process allows for a wide coverage of different educational categories and age groups. The main difference is that the content and methods of teaching may differ depending on the age group and the characteristics of each level of education. For gymnasium students, it is advisable to develop special curricula according to their level of development and needs. University students may have more advanced courses, focused on specific majors. In addition, it is important to take into account the difference in approaches to learning, communication, and assessment between school and university levels. School learning may require more supervision and support from teachers, while university learning is a priori more independent and research-oriented. Given these features, the parallel provision of online services to high school and university students can be an effective way to provide education at different levels and develop skills in using modern technologies in the learning process [11, 13, 15].

As a result, children are in completely different conditions, and each group requires analysis of specific conditions and specific support from the state, especially children who are in the temporarily occupied territories or in the combat zone and fight for their

lives every day. The full-scale war has only significantly expanded the size of each group of children and the impact on their lives and education.

**Review of the literature.** The organization of the educational process in secondary schools and institutions of higher education of Ukraine in the context of full-scale hostilities has been the subject of research by both domestic and foreign scholars. O. Glushko, S. Kravchenko, L. Kalmykova [7], O. Lokshyna [8], N. Nikolska, E. Nikolaiev [9] and others studied the role of the EU countries in the integration process of Ukrainian pupils and students into the educational systems of foreign countries, as well as analyzed and systematized the problems of the Ukrainian education system and the quality of the educational process in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But despite numerous studies, the problem of improving the methods of organizing online learning, as well as introducing innovative ways to effectively conduct classes in a distance format, requires further research and development. Recent studies on online learning for students and pupils offer many interesting insights and practical recommendations [1, 6].

**Goals and tasks.** The purpose of the article is to analyze the needs of participants in the educational process in the context of a full-scale war and to provide recommendations for effective motivation of pupils and students to acquire knowledge through the effective use of modern online services, educational platforms, and joint virtual exchange projects for pupils and students of Ukraine for the purpose of multilateral cooperation in the field of education with the EU countries.

The objectives of this article are to determine the interest of the target audience by analyzing the data from a survey of young people and teachers about the need and interest of students in creating an international network of virtual youth business hubs: school students, university and college students from Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

**Main research methods.** The methodological basis of the study includes traditional methods, namely: observation, description (empirical); generalization, survey, analysis, classification (theoretical) and systematic. All of these helped to research, describe, analyze and summarize the needs of the target audience and the peculiarities of the educational process under martial law.

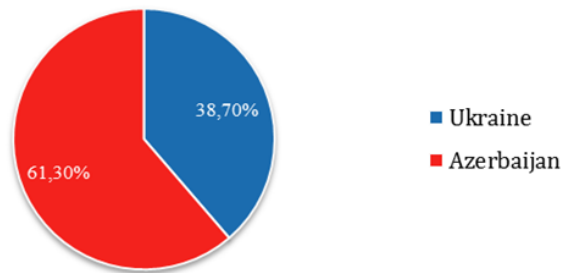
**Summary of the main material.** 2,294 respondents took part in the survey of students' need and interest in the creation of an international network of virtual youth business hubs: school students, university and college students from Ukraine and Azerbaijan. The geographical distribution of respondents is: 1406 respondents (61,3%) from Azerbaijan and, accordingly, 888 (38,7%) respondents from Ukraine (Fig. 1). The age structure of the respondents is shown in fig. 2.

The majority of survey participants (49,7%) are aged 18-24; 18,8% – 13-15 years old, 24,6% – 16-17 years old; 6,9% – 25-30 years old.

The vast majority of students (89,9%) want to become business owners in the future (Fig. 3).

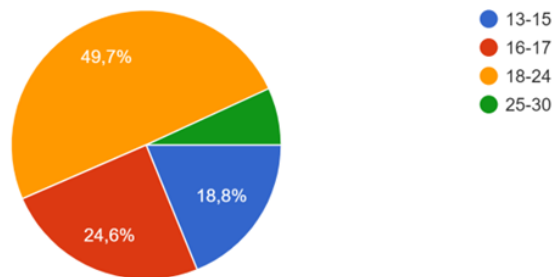
During the survey, it was found that the majority of students (57,7%) intend to improve the level of foreign language proficiency through participation in international mobility programs (Fig. 4).

1. What country do you live in? 1. У якій країні ти живеш? 1. Siz hansı ölkədə yaşayırsınız?



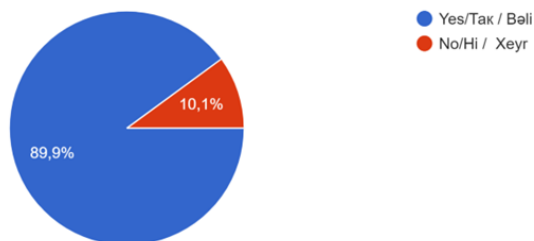
**Fig. 1. The geographical distribution of respondents**

2. What is your age? 2. Який твій вік? 2. Yaşınız neçədir?



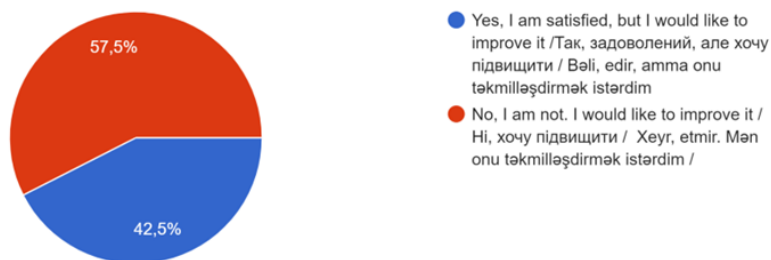
**Fig. 2. Age structure of respondents**

3. Would you like to become a business owner in the future? 3. Чи бажаєш ти в майбутньому стати власником бізнесу? 3. Gələcəkdə biznes sahibi olmaq istərdinizmi?



**Fig. 3. Aspiration of students to create their own business**

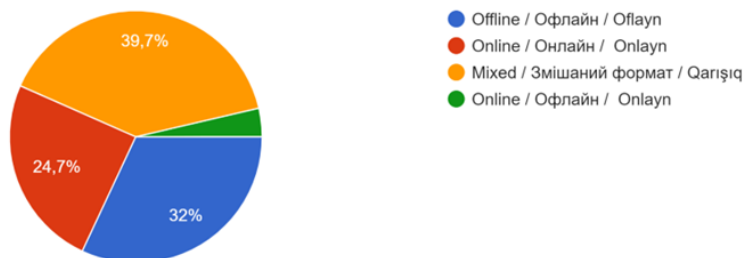
4. Are you satisfied with your level of a foreign language? Would you like to improve it? 4. Чи задоволений ти своїм рівнем володіння іноземною...ane edirmi? Onu təkmilləşdirmək istərdinizmi?



**Fig. 4. Students' desire to improve their foreign language skills through participation in international mobility programs**

According to the survey, most students want to participate in international virtual mobility programs in a hybrid format: 39,7% – in a mixed format, 28,4% – online, 32% – offline (Fig. 5).

5. How do you find it more convenient to learn? 5. Як тобі зручніше навчатися? 5. Öyrənməyi necə daha əlverişli hesab edirsiniz?



**Fig. 5. Preferred format of student participation in international virtual mobility programs**

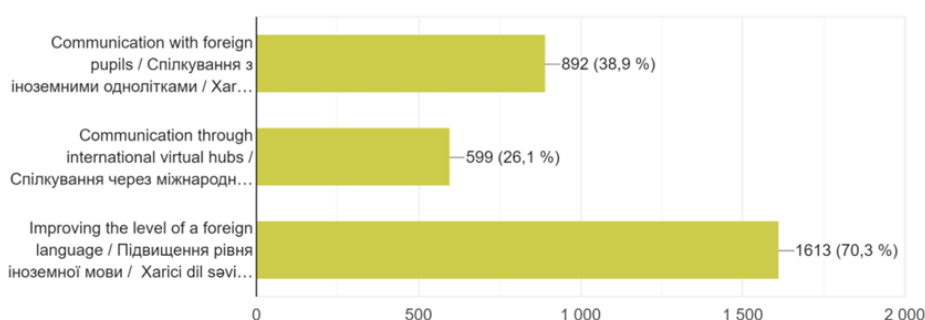
Thanks to participation in international virtual mobility programs, students want to develop and improve various communication skills: 70,3% of respondents want to improve their knowledge of a foreign language; 30,9% of respondents want to communicate with foreign peers; 21,6% – to communicate through international virtual hubs (Fig. 6).

Among the business competencies that survey participants would like to develop, 5,4% wish to develop business competencies; 55,2% – skills of creating own business; 23,2% – skills in creating startups (Fig. 7).

According to respondents, the formats of conducting virtual mobility events should be

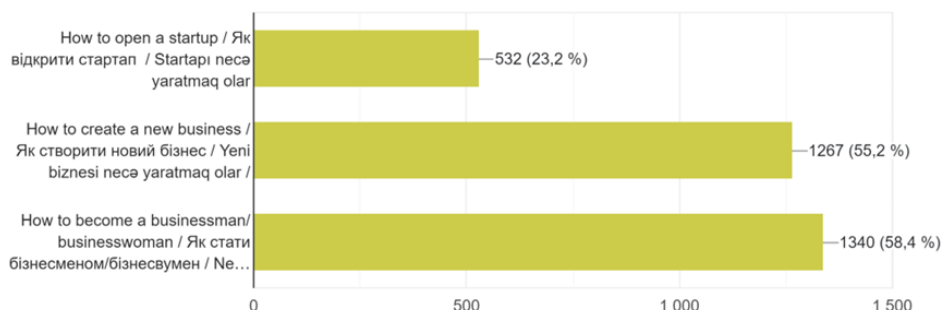
diverse. 50,1% want to participate in international summer schools, 43,5% – in international training; 40,9% – in practical classes; 25,5% – lectures; other participants also chose to participate in Olympiads, case competitions, international round tables (Fig. 8).

6. What soft skills are you interested in (would you like to develop, improve)? 6. Набуття яких комунікативних навичок є для тебе цікавим (хотів ...nız (inkışaf etmāk, tākmillāşdırmāk istērdiniz)?



**Fig. 6. Directions of development of communication skills of students in international virtual mobility programs**

7. What business competencies are you interested in (would you like to develop, improve)? 7. Які бізнес-навички для тебе цікаві (хотів би розвинути...nız (inkışaf etmāk, tākmillāşdırmāk istērdiniz)?



**Fig. 7. Directions of development of students' business competencies in international virtual mobility programs**

The results of a survey of students regarding the courses they wanted to take in international virtual mobility programs are interesting (Fig. 9). According to the results of the research, the most popular courses for students are:

- organization of own business 42,9%; economy for business – 37,0%; basic financial literacy – 33,7%, online marketing – 32%; social networks for business – 27,9%; management – 27,7%; creation of an online business (marketplace) – 25,2%; project management – 23,2%; business communications – 21,7%; business design and

startup management – 25,2%; offline marketing – 19,2%;

- courses aimed at developing students' digital skills: digital platforms for business – 22,5%, digital communication tools – 14,9%; digitalization – 19,6%; 3D visualization for virtual marketing – 18,0%;

- courses related to social networks and the possibility of using their functions for business: social networks for business – 27,9%; Instagram for business – 28,5%; TikTok for business – 23,1%; YouTube for business – 23,5%; Facebook for business – 15,5%; LinkedIn for business – 7,6%; Telegram for business – 17,8%; Chat bots for business – 16,6%; Animation for business – 10,9%.

8. What events would you like to participate in? 8. В яких заходах ти бажав би взяти участь? 8. Hansı tədbirlərdə iştirak etmək istərdiniz?

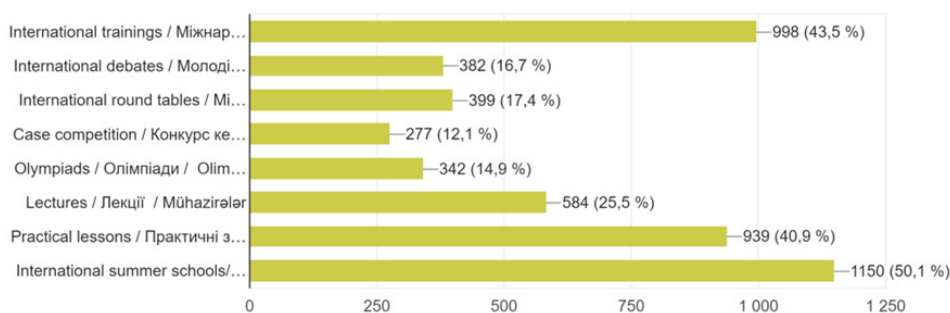


Fig. 8. Measures of international virtual mobility programs

Digital applications used by students for virtual exchange and learning are presented in Fig. 10.

The most popular digital applications used by students for virtual exchange and learning are: Instagram – 71,8%, Telegram – 69,7%; E-mail – 61,2%; Zoom – 58,1%; WhatsApp – 61,8%; Google Meet – 37,6%; Viber – 28,4%. Messenger – 18,0%.

According to the survey, students use the MOODLE and Google Meet platforms reluctantly: 7,2% and 37,6%, respectively, and hardly use Mural, A teacher's professional blog.

The majority of surveyed students (79,1%) have a desire to participate in joint lessons with their peers from other countries online and wish to receive a Certificate (90%) about international studies within the framework of a European project (Fig. 11, 12).

Students who have expressed interest in participating in international virtual exchange programs should submit their proposals for the name of their own youth business hubs: Center for young businessmen, Youth business center, Educated youth center, Business education, The road to success, The result of endurance and will, Vision of the future, Towards development with young people, Helpful, Light to the future, Business development center, Forward together, Bright road to the future, Career Center,



9. Which courses from the suggested list could be the most useful for you? (It is possible to choose several variants) 9. Які курси з наведеного перел...і ola bilər? (Bir neçə variant seçmək mümkündür)

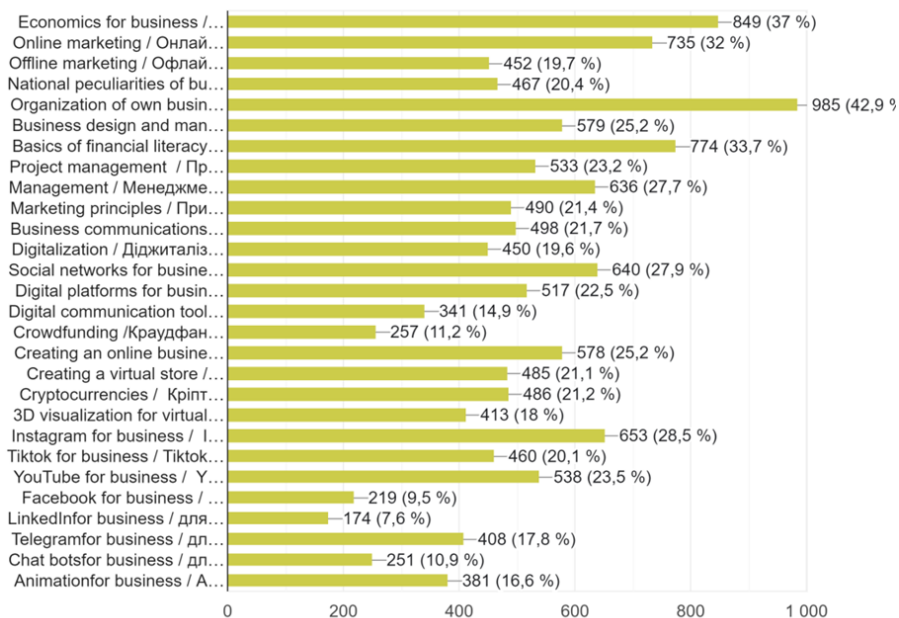


Fig. 9. Demand for international virtual mobility courses among students

Young businessmen, Business center, Business among young people, Grand, Good luck, Successful Business, Youth business center, Sacrifice, Youth hostel, A confident future, Young will come, Teenagers, Youth hub, Youth & creativity, Business and design, Economy and creativity, Eagles, Quest, Insect, Youngbae, Unification of people, Modern economy.

10. What new digital tools and apps do you use? 10. Які нові цифрові інструменти та застосунки ви використовуєте? 10. Hansı yeni rəqəmsal alətlər və proqramlardan istifadə edirsiniz?

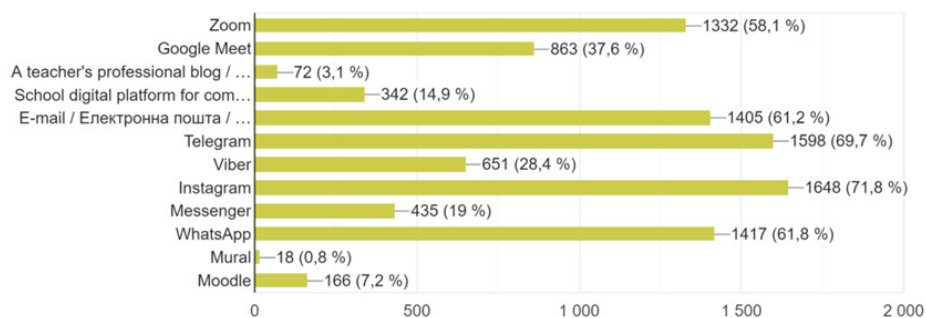
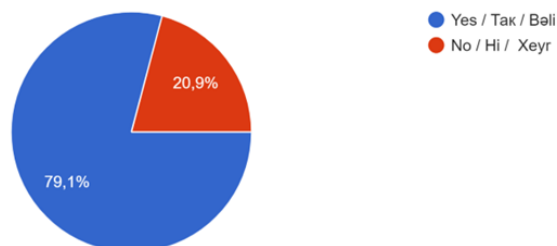


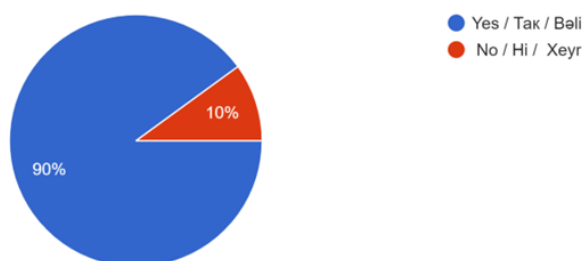
Fig. 10. Digital applications used by students for virtual exchange and learning

11 . Would you like to participate in joint lessons with pupils from other countries online? 11 . Чи бажаєте ви взяти участь в спільних уроках зі своїм...lərlə birgə dərslərdə iştirak etmək istərdinizmi?



**Fig. 11. The desire of students to participate in joint lessons with their peers from other countries online**

12. Would you like to receive a Certificate of international study within the framework of a European project? 12. Чи бажаєш ти отримати Се...beynəlxalq təhsil sertifikatı almaq istərdinizmi?



**Fig. 12. Intentions of students to participate in joint lessons with their peers from other countries online**

**Conclusions.** According to the results of the survey, it can be concluded that the majority of surveyed students (89,9%) want to become owners of their own business in the future, and therefore are interested in participating in the international youth virtual mobility program. Students are interested in all formats of international mobility: synchronous and asynchronous.

By participating in the international youth virtual mobility program, students wish to develop and improve their communication skills: level of foreign language proficiency; communication with foreign peers; communication through international virtual hubs. Students also wish to develop business competencies; skills of creating your own business; skills in creating and implementing startups.

The most popular international virtual mobility courses for students are:

- organization of one's own business, economics for business, basic financial literacy, online marketing, social networks for business, management, creation of an

online business (marketplace), project management, business communications, business design and startup management, offline marketing;

- courses aimed at developing students' digital skills: digital platforms for business, digital communication tools, digitalization, 3D visualization for virtual marketing.

The results of the conducted survey of facilitators and students regarding their wishes and expectations from the international virtual mobility program make it possible to draw the following conclusions:

- most of the respondents are interested in participating in the international virtual mobility program;

- survey participants are ready to participate in the international virtual mobility program in synchronous and asynchronous formats;

- facilitators and students need to develop communication skills and business competencies based on participation in the international youth virtual mobility program;

- the courses most in demand among facilitators are: basic financial literacy, organization of one's own business; digitalization, business communications; business design and startup management; economics for business, project management, management, digital platforms for business, digital communication tools; social networks for business;

- the most popular courses of the international youth virtual mobility program among students are: organization of one's own business, economics for business, basic financial literacy, business communications; online marketing, offline marketing, social networks for business, management, project management, business design and startup management.

The next step of the authors' research and the grant project will be to develop a Program to train teachers in European modern digital methods of virtual exchanges. Ukrainian and Azerbaijani teachers, lecturers and researchers will improve the quality of the educational process and the adaptability of their work in the most severe conditions of martial law in the country with these modern technologies of virtual exchanges.

The VEHUB4YOU project is expected to improve the quality of business education by providing access to modern European education; at the organizational level, it will promote entrepreneurial training, and at the level of individual project participants, it will help them to acquire skills in business planning, product marketing and tools for creating their own business. The project is expected to modernize school, college and university curricula in line with new trends in virtual learning and increase the effectiveness of virtual education.

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