



**ASSOCIATION OF  
UKRAINIAN CITIES**  
BY JOINT EFFORTS

# **BEST STORIES OF RESILIENCE AND CO-ACTION IN COMMUNITIES IN TIME OF WAR**

**SECOND  
NATIONWIDE  
CONTEST**



**ORGANISED UNDER THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN THE ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN CITIES  
AND THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**



**2024**



The Congress  
  
Le Congrès

COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# PREFACE

Given the considerable interest of local self-government in the contest to find best stories of resilience and joint action in a time of war, which was held under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Association of Ukrainian Cities and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in 2022, with the support of the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, it was decided to hold a Second Nationwide Open Governance Contest.

The purpose of the contest is to raise awareness among the public, communities and Ukraine's international partners about of inspiring stories and successful cases of solidarity and close co-operation between residents, civil society organisations and local self-government bodies which will inspire others and prove that these municipalities work for and together with their residents even in times of war.

112 applications were received from 82 Ukrainian communities, and the winners were selected in categories such as "Youth engagement", "Public spaces as platforms for interaction and dialogue" and "Public engagement in the recovery and development of territorial communities", and, to cap it all, the Special Open Government Award.

We are thankful to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for their co-operation.

We commend the communities for their resilience, for supporting their populations and for providing them with these most necessary of services.

We are grateful to the Armed Forces of Ukraine for their daily struggle, incredible courage and bravery, which is inspiring communities to recover and grow in these most difficult of times!



**Executive Director of the Association of Ukrainian Cities,  
PhD in Public Administration  
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# TERNOPIL TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

## TERNOPIL REGION

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The Department of Family, Youth Policy and Child Protection, together with youth NGOs, developed an effective mechanism for the direct engagement of youth and youth NGOs in the allocation of youth policy budget funds and piloted it by **creating the Ternopil Youth Programme for 2024–2026**.

“No decisions about youth without youth” is the motto underpinning the Department’s activities. The current programme was developed by the Department of Family, Youth Policy and Child Protection together with youth NGOs by analysing the previous programme “Family Support and Youth Policy Development in the Ternopil Territorial Community for 2020–2023”, surveying the needs of local young people and holding joint meetings and discussions.

The contribution of young people to solving society’s problems is largely determined by the quality of partnerships between the authorities and young people.

In a context of decentralisation, youth policy should be focused on creating a comfortable living environment conducive to youth development in communities. On implementation, priority should be placed on the development of youth infrastructure and youth engagement in policy-making and non-governmental oversight.

### **The stages in this activity:**

**STAGE I.** Creation of a database of active youth NGOs in the community, building contacts between youth NGOs and local self-government bodies.

**STAGE II.** Analysis of the needs of young people in the community through surveys, focus groups, direct inquiries, etc.

**STAGE III.** Public discussions on determining priority directions for youth policy in the community.

**STAGE IV.** Establishment by local self-government bodies of the criteria for the submission of project proposals by young people and youth NGOs.

**STAGE V.** Public discussions of project proposals submitted by young people and youth NGOs within the defined priority lines and with the desired funding;

**STAGE VI.** Analysis by local self-government bodies of the proposals submitted and any necessary adjustments.

**STAGE VII.** Programme advocacy and implementation oversight by local self-government bodies.

The programme outlines priority directions for local self-government bodies and civil society institutions working on solutions for youth problems and sets out the following priority areas in the implementation of youth policy in the community:

- building Ukrainian civic identity, patriotic upbringing of young people, promotion of Ukrainian culture and folk traditions, civic engagement of young people;
- supporting youth initiatives, creating conditions for intellectual self-improvement and individual creative and spiritual development, promoting meaningful leisure for young people;
- development of youth volunteer activities;
- wider youth engagement in decision-making processes;
- establishment, promotion and maintenance of a healthy and safe lifestyle among young people, prevention of negative factors in the youth environment;
- extracurricular acquisition of knowledge, skills and other competencies by young people, implementation of informal education projects and events;
- creation of conditions and implementation of measures for youth employment;
- building youth contacts internationally and within Ukraine;
- provision of financial support to youth and children's NGOs;
- creating a network of youth centres and spaces.

More than 30 youth NGOs were involved in the creation of the programme, and they proposed about 70 permanent projects to be included in the programme.

## July 2023 — active



# VOLODYMYR-VOLYNSKYI TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

VOLYN REGION



**The Co-ordination Centre for the Registration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**, which offered help and round-the-clock support to hundreds of people driven from their homes by hostilities, was set up in the first days of the full-scale war in the premises of the Centre for Cultural Services of Volodymyr City Council. The Centre is a structural unit of the office for Culture and Arts of the Department for Humanitarian Affairs of the Executive Committee of Volodymyr City Council.

More than 3,000 IDPs are registered in the community nowadays, and the city has become a second home for them over the past two years.

**Employees of the Centre for Cultural Services actively involve internally displaced young people in the cultural life of the city.** HarVol, a youth music band, was created in May 2022, and Sierra Crew, a dance group, was established in May 2023. They welcomed boys and girls from Kharkiv and Volodymyr.

Bands and solo singers take an active part in various festivals and concerts celebrating state holidays and professional days, as well as charity events in support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine; they have won prizes at art competitions in Ukraine and abroad.

The Riznobarvya Theatre Studio, which was created by a woman internally displaced from Donetsk and already recognised by the Amateur Folk Collective, is very popular in the community. Some of the actors involved in the theatre studio are also IDPs. In this theatre studio, young actors can develop their talents, creativity and soft skills, and learn to put themselves forward.

All classes are free. The members of these creative groups demonstrate their skills at every performance — they include artistically accomplished dance, soulful vocals and great acting talent.



The search for talented, artistic and creative people is an integral part of the daily work of the Centre for Cultural Services.

🕒 **March 2022 — active**



# KAMIANSKE TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

DNIPROPETROVSK REGION



The **Youth Personal and Professional Development Programme “Leaders of Change”** continued unabated in Kamianske community in the summer of 2022 and the fall of 2023.

40 young people — locals and IDPs aged 14 to 35 — joined the Leaders of Change Programme, which covered theoretical and practical issues and facilitated direct communication between young people and local authorities. As part of the programme, the participants devised their own youth projects and presented them to the authorities, also receiving financial support from relevant departments for their implementation. Surprisingly, the local authorities benefited as much from the programme as the participants, as it challenged their stereotypes about young people’s supposed passivity and unwillingness to grow.



The activity contributed to greater local government openness and transparency towards young people and youth engagement in management processes in Kamianske community. One positive

impact of this practice over 2022-2023 was that Kamianske City Council became a partner in more than 300 events organised by local youth, which reached more than 10,000 young people. **On the initiative of young people supported by the local authorities, the community created a Child-Friendly Space, two Digital Education Hubs, a Youth Media Studio and a Youth Hub in a bomb shelter.**

A child-friendly space is a place where children, together with their friends and like-minded people, can receive psychosocial support and spend their free time in a meaningful way.

The youth media studio offers modern equipment, enabling young people to explore the creative industries, hold individual activities, group classes and lectures in the studio, record vocals and musical instruments, and produce vlogs and podcasts.

**A multifunctional inclusive and adaptive space, the “Place of Strength” Kamianske Community Centre for Sustainability**, is being built to create a safe, united and sustainable community and enhance the capabilities of civil society. The Centre was made possible through close co-operation by young people with local authorities, activists and NGOs, taking into account the specific needs of the community.

The newly created “Place of Strength” Centre for Sustainability is intended to provide psychological support for young people, families in difficult life circumstances, women and vulnerable groups, and help them to develop resilience skills. In the long term, the Centre will help to strengthen the capabilities of young people and increase public safety levels, including through prevention of gender-based violence.

Another important component of the Centre’s work is education: comprehensive training courses specially adapted to the needs of the Kamianske community have already been developed. These practical courses will help overcome wartime challenges. The activities include training on public and environmental safety, building healthy relationships and prevention of gender-based violence, educational and art camps for teenagers and workshops on mental health improvement.

🕒 June 2022 — active





# CHERNIVTSI TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

CHERNIVTSI REGION



**The Youth Internship Programme** was first launched in Chernivtsi in September 2022. 2 waves of internships were held in September – December 2022 and in January – April 2023, and now the 3rd wave is underway.

This innovative practice makes it possible for participants to set up a project together with the head of a structural unit of Chernivtsi City Council during their internship, then work on its implementation afterwards as a public figure, thus promoting the activities of youth NGOs.

The strategic goal is to employ young people with a view to updating the staff of Chernivtsi City Council and its pool of potential candidates.

Outcomes:

1st wave of internships: 74 applications for internships were submitted, 55 interns were interviewed, 44 persons successfully completed internships, and 6 persons were employed (13.6%);

2nd wave of internships: 72 applications, 57 interns, 45 persons successfully completed the internship, and 6 persons were employed (13.3%). 3rd wave of internships: 55



applications, 35 interns; the internship is ongoing (the smaller number of interns is due to increased practical skills requirements).

The more than 120 interns assembled on the platform for communication with the Youth Parliament are now actively involved in youth events in the city.

## 🕒 September 2022 — active



# BALAKLIIA TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

KHARKIV REGION



Since October 2022, the city of Balakliia has gradually been healing from the enemy's terrible onslaught and trying to return to normal life. People are coming back home, and young people have also been returning. Already on 16 November 2022, the CUBE YOUTH HUB launched active efforts with the support of the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Tourism of the Balakliia City Council of the Kharkiv Region and the "Together. Meeting Points" Project implemented by the Ukrainian Professional Development Fund with the support of UNICEF Ukraine and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine.

The 9-month project yielded the following outcomes:

- participants in the events held to prepare for the National Multisubject Test (NMT) successfully passed the test and were very grateful to their coaches and organisers;
- career counselling helped applicants identify specific priorities for their future careers;
- a songwriting workshop brought together creative teens who created their own music brand and have already had a chance to perform at local events;
- adolescents, led by their coach, prepared Evenings on a Farm Near Dykanka and gave several performances on the big stage at the Balakliia House of Culture.

With a view to promoting the development and self-expression of young people, and creating a platform for education, culture, sports and creativity where everyone can feel like an important member of the community, bring their ideas to life and fulfil their potential, the Youth Council at Balakliia City Council in the Kharkiv Region initiated and implemented **Youth Week**.

On 5–13 August 2023, a varied set of events were held for the young people of Balakliia in various locations in the city, including:

- youth vechornytsias — evening





events with guitar music, fresh air, friendly gatherings around the bonfire, and games in the company of friends, making for a cosy atmospheric Monday evening with an especially warm vibe;

- the first quest-room “Investigation of an UNSolved Case”: 7 teams that had signed up in advance had a chance to feel like real investigators and solve a notorious case involving a local reporter. An exciting plot and a mysterious atmosphere;

- Mafia game night — a psychological

detective game promoting strategic thinking, persuasion, tactics and acting skills;

- “Karaoke at the Fountain” singing event: the youth of Balakliia had a chance to perform their favourite songs, both solo and in a group, near the fountain in a cosy park;

- VeloDvizh of Gratitude #Thank\_you\_AFU\_for\_our\_homes: a cheerful morning sports event that featured smiles, patriotically decorated rovers and a tour of the hometown. About 50 young people who took part in the event received pleasant surprises. Police and hospital workers accompanied the participants throughout the event;

- Speka Art Picnic featured performances by the city’s youth cover bands, voting and announcement of the winners of a photo contest — #YouthCommunity2023 — and open-air film screenings;

- ArtQuiz MEMology, a youth quiz where teenagers learned more about the history of Ukrainian memes through entertaining content, teamwork and intellectual team building intended to develop communication skills, cohesion, teamwork and leadership skills;

- sports events included mini-football and volleyball tournaments for Youth Day.

About 500 young people were involved in the activities held during the Youth Week in Balakliia. The success of the event depended on co-operation between the Youth Council, the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Tourism of Balakliia City Council and the Balakliia City Military Administration.

# SHPOLA

## TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

### CHERKASY REGION



The Veteran Hub — a support space for veterans and their families — operates in Shpola. “Nothing for veterans without veterans”, “peer-to-peer”, “one-stop shop”, “to hear and emphasise” — these core principles have become the driving force behind the social concept of creating a space for veterans in the Shpola community. The Veteran Hub is a residence, a house and a home, where people can identify and solve problems together and receive help with their needs and self-fulfilment; it is like a family which simply offers an agreeable, calm, cosy and unforgettable environment.

Opening this veteran space in the community was the idea of the demobilised service persons themselves, and they did it in co-operation with the Shpola City Council and the Department of Social Protection of the Population and Health Care of the City Council with the support of local businesses.

The premises of the former educational institution, the Shpola Inter-School Educational and Industrial Complex, which covers almost 50 sq.m, now host several functional areas such as a dynamic children’s space; a centre for dialogue and individual or group remedial classes; a place to be alone, drink tea, calm down and recharge mentally; a reading corner; and a counsellor’s cubicle with a personal computer. The space is barrier-free, including for people with disabilities — there is a ramp, and gendered and inclusive indoor bathrooms.

A new member was added to the staff of the City Council’s Department of Social Protection and Health Care, namely a leading specialist tasked with co-ordinating the work of the Veteran Hub and the organisation of both public events and individual counselling on basic issues such as legal aid, psychological adjustment, education and training services, work with families and art therapy. There are other specialists who provide social support and legal advice on statuses and benefits and passing the Military Medical Commission and the Medical and Social Expert Commission. They include representatives of the



Cherkasy Human Rights Centre and the Shining Path Psychology Centre (based in Cherkasy); female activists from the “From the Heart of Ukraine” NGO (Shpola); the psychologist, Anton Semenov, who set up “How Are You, Brother?”, a Ukrainian nationwide volunteer project; and Roman Salomatin, priest at the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Orthodox Church of Ukraine) in Shpola. The veteran space is usually open from Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m, however, the hours are flexible, and its practitioners can adjust and work on weekends as well. For the first time in the territorial community of Shpola, the premises next to the Veteran Hub are now hosting Debut — a children’s chess club that is attached to the Municipal Centre of Culture and Leisure. The instructor is Roman Taran from Shpola, a veteran of the Russia-Ukraine war, who was seriously wounded on the battlefield.



The four months over which the Veteran Hub operated resulted in psychological synergy (taking into account the individual circumstances of veterans and their families and hence creating a positive emotional environment and people-centred communication), infrastructure (premises, which will gradually be scaled up to provide physical rehabilitation services (massage, gym and museum rooms)) and the commitment of human resources and funding from the public and private sectors. The city council members decided to allocate UAH 100,000 from the local budget for repairs and renovations. The management of LNZ Group, a modern diversified agro-industrial company, made a large donation to modernise the premises of the Veteran Hub.

The veterans’ hub is currently focused on providing assistance to servicepersons of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations; participants in hostilities, persons with war-related disabilities and veterans; persons who volunteered for national security and defence activities; families of servicepersons.

The Shpola Veteran Hub now has its own account on Facebook at <http://surl.li/qoprp>. The official website of the Shpola City Council (<https://shpola-otg.gov.ua/>) now has a separate section “For Servicepersons”, which posts information about local financial and mental support programmes which may be of interest to veterans and their families.

🕒 **October 2023 — active**

# KYIV TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY



**The Vcentri HUB is a network of municipal public spaces** acting as local resource centres for democracy and government-community dialogue, opened in Kyiv in 2020. Today, three Vcentri HUBs operate successfully in the Obolonskyi, Shevchenkivskyi and Holosiivskyi districts, regularly conducting educational activities intended to provide informational, legal and psychological support for groups such as IDPs, elderly people and volunteers. It is also intended to promote public participation tools, NGO consultation; and educational events for the structural units of bodies including the Kyiv City State and District State Administrations.



Since 24 February 2022, Vcentri HUBs have been working as district humanitarian aid centres. They currently provide services for veterans and their families, including canister therapy for the rehabilitation of veterans; rehabilitation meetings offering psychological help and art rehabilitation to families of fallen defenders; sessions with a military counsellor or psychologists from the Kyiv City Centre for Gender Equality, Prevention and

Counteraction of Violence; and free legal aid. Donor Day charity events are also held to collect donor blood for military hospitals.

Social and volunteer projects to help the Armed Forces are ongoing and include the collection of supplies to make trench candles and camouflage nets and of books for soldiers in hospitals and charity chess tournaments.

Vcentri HUBs are active in the following areas:

- a communication platform for government, community and businesses (public consultations, reception of citizens by officials, project presentations, round tables and discussions);

- an educational and cultural centre for senior citizens (the course for senior citizens includes the study of topics such as digital literacy, using Helsi, DIIA and Kyiv Digital Applications, paying utility bills online, psychological and legal support and participation tools);

- a resource and methods centre for the development of civil society institutions and the organisation of civil society events (in which Vcentri HUB serves as a free platform with the necessary equipment);

- a centre for promotion and methodological support for the use of participation tools (promotion of existing participation tools, consultation and training for the public, development of methodological materials, development of recommendations for their improvement);

- implementation of the youth policy (education and leisure, providing meeting places for young people, organising meetings with representatives of the government and business community, career guidance);

- public council activities (meetings, conferences, training for representatives);

- a resource centre for the support of associations of flat-owners (OSBB) and non-profit associations (support for co-financing programmes, legal and financial advice, educational activities);

- effective public servant instruction (training, seminars, workshops on various topics, from specialised events to public speaking classes and the basics of mediation and facilitation);

- activities of MPs and members of the Kyiv City Council (reporting, non-political events).

To access the free Vcentri HUB platform, sign up at the portal [www.vcentri.com](http://www.vcentri.com). It will also tell you more about the Vcentri HUB rules and features.

The relevance of the Vcentri HUB network and the opportunity for everyone to participate in the development and implementation of joint public, cultural and educational activities at local level has contributed to the spread of this practice, and Vcentri HUBs will shortly be opening in the Dniproviskyi and Solomianskyi districts of Kyiv, and ultimately, in all the districts of the city. Introductory video: <http://surl.li/pxili>.





# MARIUPOL TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

DONETSK REGION



The **National Network of I'Mariupol Support and Dialogue Centres**, which is intended to support and preserve Mariupol community, was launched on 27 April 2022.

Following the occupation of the city of Mariupol by the Russian armed forces, residents of Mariupol who had left the city and settled elsewhere in Ukraine were in great need of cohesion and a sense of community. In the face of these new and difficult challenges, a team from Mariupol municipality began building a united Mariupol community in other cities of Ukraine, organising a kind of public space — a network of I'Mariupol Centres.

Over the two years of its existence, the network has grown to 25 centres in 17 cities in Ukraine.

Each I'Mariupol Centre is a forum for all-embracing support and communication, offering venues for meetings and legal, psychological and medical consultations and large children's spaces. In addition to building peer-to-peer contacts, former Mariupol inhabitants can also communicate with municipal authorities, NGOs and famous people from Mariupol. The centres help Mariupol residents find jobs in their host cities and resolve legal issues. This dialogue builds a pool of requests from residents from the Mariupol community to the city council, the state and partners on issues related to damaged and destroyed property.

Six Turbota Accommodation Centres have already been opened in Kyiv, Odesa, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro and Ivano-Frankivsk and provided 70,000 services (dentistry, tailoring, laundry, hairdressing and co-working services) to people from Mariupol.

61,000 Mariupol residents now regularly receive help at the I'Mariupol Support and Dialogue Centres. Employees have provided 128,000 consultations, and the Mariupol residents have received 560,000 humanitarian kits.

There are also two Rodyna Recreation Centres in Vinnytsia and Morshyn, whose services have been used by 2,000 people of all ages.

To solve the most pressing problem — the lack of housing — dormitories are being opened, which will soon accommodate about 2,500 Mariupol residents. This is as much

a question of the social adaptation and integration of Mariupol citizens to and into their host cities as a question of providing housing.

Establishing assistance centres helped to set up a de-facto network of platforms that unite the Mariupol community and help to resolve these new residents' integration issues.

The network of centres keeps growing. Two more I'Mariupol Comprehensive Support Centres are to be opened in the Poltava region and in an accommodation centre in Vinnytsia. It is not too early to assert that Mariupol residents are waiting for the end of the occupation together. Not only do they wait but they also remain in contact and discuss the future of their hometown under the banner of Ukraine.

## 🕒 April 2022 — active



# HAIVORON TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

KIROVOHRAD REGION



**The Co-ordinating Council on Family, Gender Equality, Prevention and Counteraction of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence and Combating Human Trafficking** is working in close co-operation with local NGOs, Ukrainian Yard and the Centre for the Personal Recovery and Transformation of Society

to establish co-operation with competent bodies responsible for the implementation of assistance programmes for persons affected by domestic violence and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). It also engages in co-operation as part of the national, regional and local Action Plans for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, Security, including:

- the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and the Centre for the Development of Democracy (a Kyiv-based NGO) initiated and supported the training and certification of 30 community specialists in crisis communication and cybersecurity. It also provides support and case management for female survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and other war crimes;
- the Day Centre for Social and Psychological Assistance to Survivors of Domestic and/or Gender-Based Violence was established with the support of the UN Population Fund in Ukraine; the Mobile Brigade of Social and Psychological Assistance to Survivors of Domestic and/or Gender-Based Violence was created at the Haivoron City Social Services Centre;
- educational institutions implement the education project “Supporting Mental Health and Learning Life Skills for Children and Students in Villages and Towns of Ukraine”, providing training, educational and counselling services.



The following form part of the efforts of **the Haivoron City Council's Co-ordination Centre for the Support of the Civilian Population** to support the recovery and development of

## **the community with the help of international partners and NGOs:**

- therapy and veteran hubs have been established to actively implement the Ukraine-wide Mental Health Programme “Yak Ty?” (“How Are You?”);
- the IDP Socialisation Room was renovated, and an Active Longevity Club was created for the elderly with the support of the Kirovohrad Regional Branch of the Red Cross Society of Ukraine;
- the premises of the former hospital were renovated to accommodate IDPs, 3 additional rooms were set up for temporary accommodation, and the IDP Accommodation Centre was established;
- the University of the Third Age was opened at the Territorial Social Services Centre;
- social workers and psychologists were recruited for the project “Path of Resilience: Increasing the Resilience of Ukrainians by Strengthening Psychosocial Support Capabilities for Veterans” implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in partnership with the STAN NGO with funding from the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, which helped to receive a grant for repairs and purchase equipment for the veteran space as well as participating in the training course “Dialogue-Based Approach to Decision-Making at the Community Level”;
- the UNICEF Spilno.Spot has become fully operational;
- VIDNOVA:UA Youth Exchange Project was held by the Zadzerkallia Joint Co-ordination Centre with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, the All-Ukrainian Youth Centre and the Eidos Centre for Political Studies and Analytics together with UNDP Ukraine, as part of the projects “Supporting Civil Society and Youth” and “Promoting Human Security in Ukraine through Responding to the Multidimensional Crisis Caused by the War”;
- the Youth Space and the Chess and Checkers Club were opened for children, young people and everyone else;
- a military-patriotic tent camp for students was held;
- the Bavovna Battalion volunteer workshop for tailoring adapted clothing for wounded soldiers was launched.

 **February 2022 — still in progress**

# ZVIAHEL TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

ZHYTOMYR REGION



**“The Book That Heals” — a social project whose aim was to set up a mini-library in the rehabilitation and children’s wards of the Zviahel Multidisciplinary Hospital** — was implemented by the Zviahel Library and the Department of Culture and Tourism of the Zviahel City Council in co-operation with socially conscious businesses and activists in Zviahel Territorial Community.



In 2023, a unique comprehensive rehabilitation department was opened in Zviahel, on the premises of the Zviahel Multidisciplinary Hospital, to provide inpatient treatment for serious stroke victims, patients with musculoskeletal disorders and military personnel with gunshot wounds, mine-related and blast injuries, and spine, spinal cord and other injuries, and to carry out joint endoprosthetics procedures. Many patients there suffer from complex psychological issues.

Medical professionals treat the patient’s physical conditions while books help with their mental health. Books are an excellent means of fostering mental and physical rehabilitation. This is what inspired the idea to create a mini-library featuring books that would cheer patients up, help them unwind and overcome their depressive states, complementing the main treatment regimen.

A large-scale information campaign was launched among residents and businesses to implement the project in the community. The project successfully attracted local entrepreneurs who, united by the common cause, provided comfortable furniture and bought some of the books. Residents brought a large number of books from their home libraries. The project was also supported by nine Ukrainian publishing houses from other cities that sent more than 200 new modern publications in Ukrainian. Some writers

submitted their own books. In addition, medical professionals and rehabilitation experts were provided with modern medical literature on new rehabilitation techniques.

A similar mini-library was opened in the children's ward for the youngest patients. They now have something to distract them from their illness, improve their condition and spend their time meaningfully. The heroes of the books are an example of resistance and courage in the face of illness. Interesting and joyful books with positive messages and bright illustrations are great for book therapy. In addition to books, students of the Zviahel Military Lyceum with advanced military and physical training delivered art and craft supplies and toys to the children's ward.

"The book that heals" is a social project providing important support for the military and children and is looked on very positively by the community, especially by patients and medical staff.

## 🕒 September 2023 — active



# KREMINNA TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

LUHANSK REGION



**The Working Group on Public Safety, Social Cohesion and Restoration of Kreminna**, a territorial community which is still temporarily occupied, is a tool for public engagement in the recovery and development of the community. It is an open dialogue platform as well as a consultative body, contributing to the implementation of community decisions in local self-government policies and to moves from project management to programme management intended to effect permanent and qualitative changes.

The Working Group has proven its effectiveness even in wartime. Since 2019, it has interacted closely with civil society institutes, the public and law enforcement agencies on community development projects based on open governance principles. Following the onset of the full-scale invasion, the Working Group successfully handled the evacuation of residents and provision for their essential needs through social, psychological and humanitarian assistance, community protection services, and support for IDPs.



Among its main tasks were:

- facilitating the co-ordination of relations between local state authorities and local self-government, NGOs, law enforcement agencies, volunteer organisations and the public on issues raised for discussion by the Working Group requiring their participation and interaction;
- playing an advisory role through consultations with the public and recommendations to the authorities.

The Working Group successfully established its activities online and achieved results that are inspiring further action in the areas of social cohesion, public safety and recovery. Joint activities yielded the following key results:

- in 2023, five Working Group meetings were held and the Programme for the Promotion of Volunteering Development in the Kreminna Territorial Community for 2024–2027 was drawn up and approved;

- two new NGOs were created and co-operation was established with 6 relocated NGOs;

- two mini-initiatives were launched to promote social cohesion (“Creating Civic Activity Spaces in the Premises of the Co-ordination Centres for IDPs in Kyiv and Rivne”) and public safety (“Organisation of Surveys at the Sites of Fire and Rescue Operations using a Quadcopter and Public Outreach”);

- local events were held in the host communities (the Festival of Ukrainian Folk Toys and Games, participation in the Young Borscht and Feel Ukraine Festivals);

- advocacy of IDP issues through appointment of a lawyer to the Working Group;

- activities involving more than 10,000 IDPs from Luhansk Region.

The Working Group has become an effective platform for interaction and the co-ordination of various initiatives, and the success of its activities shows how joint efforts can lead to concrete results and improve social cohesion and security in communities.





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**ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN CITIES**  
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**OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

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