



ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN CITIES

BY JOINT EFFORTS

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

2025

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



**THIRD
NATIONAL COMPETITION
ON OPEN GOVERNMENT**



THE CONGRESS



LE CONGRÈS

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

FOREWORD



The National Competition on Open Government, launched after the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine under the memorandum of understanding between the Association of Ukrainian Cities and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe with the support of the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, keeps collecting successful stories of communities — inspiring acts of resilience and co-action of communities in times of war.

This is the third compilation of projects implemented by communities in cooperation with residents, businesses, civil society organisations, and donors, which demonstrate the ability of Ukrainian communities to thrive in the most difficult conditions, to help the Joint Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and to prepare for the next stage of rebuilding Ukraine.

The winners of the Third National Competition on Open Government presented in this compilation were selected from among 99 applications in the following categories:

- Youth engagement in decision-making processes,
- Innovative methods of interaction between local authorities and communities through communication,
- Centres of interaction and support for veterans and their families.

The experiences of the projects implemented can be scaled up across Ukraine and shared abroad within the framework of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Open Government Partnership and other international and multilateral initiatives.

We are thankful to the communities for their resilience, ideas, and creation of opportunities for development today and tomorrow!

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 are grateful to the Joint Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for their protection and for the opportunity to prepare communities for their recovery.

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PhD in Public Administration
Oleksandr SLOBOZHAN**

DUBOVE SETTLEMENT COMMUNITY

ZAKARPATTIA REGION



The **Mediastart media school** was launched in the spring of 2024 to strengthen the previously established Youth Centre “YouthTakeAction” and create an environment for young people to unlock their potential, learn modern media skills, engage in community development, and become their voice.

Dubove community, with a population of over 21,000 people, of whom over 3,000 are youth aged 14 to 35 years old, needed instruments for a transparent communication between residents and local authorities.

The launch of the Mediastart media school, which turns the media into a bridge between the local government and the community, was a response to these challenges.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

Instead of standard polls, the project team engaged the youth in interactive focus groups where they determined their own needs and community challenges, which allowed them to develop a truly relevant curriculum.

During 18 workshops, the youth mastered media instruments, including writing and reporting, the basics of media literacy, photography, and photo and video processing. Participants learned how to work with modern software (Canva, FL Studio 24, Wondershare Filmora, Adobe Lightroom) and put into practice the knowledge they gained.

The participants completed over 60 projects: starting from covering cultural events to creating social videos. They experienced the full cycle of content creation: from scripting to editing and publishing. The total reach of the video content exceeded 350,000 views, making the initiative visible not only within the community but also beyond.

The youth became an active participant in local events, recording decision-making processes and reporting on them. This contributed to building trust in local authorities and increasing the transparency of their work.

The **Mediastart media school** provides more than just education; it offers opportunities. The youth had access to modern equipment, digital instruments, and real challenges, making them part of the governance process. The creative approach, from writing reports to creating social videos, helped

the youth to unlock their potential and at the same time raise the image of the community.

This initiative has helped to engage more than 350 young residents, create a volunteer team of 10 activists, and increase the visibility of the community. The media school brought people together, provided the youth with a voice, and proved that creativity and digital technologies can change society.

📌 **Spring 2024 – in progress**



The **CAMPUS Youth Centre** was established under the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to develop active, responsible, and socially engaged youth.

The **Chuhuiv local authorities** have identified creating opportunities for the development of all categories of the population, from the youngest to the most respected citizens, as one of their priorities. Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the youth of the community have faced a number of challenges: lack of offline education, limited access to cultural and educational opportunities, emotional exhaustion, and lack of socialisation. To address these challenges, in 2023, it was decided to create the **CAMPUS Youth Centre**, which has become a platform for competency development, non-formal education, emotional support, and youth involvement in decision making at the community level.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

The youth are developing their skills and competencies through non-formal education: 10 training courses, 23 personal development trainings, 8 sessions to prepare for the National Multisubject Test (NMT) and 15 language clubs were held.

Measures are taken to support the psycho-emotional state of the youth: a range of social and emotional support programmes have been implemented, including individual and group psychological counselling, music therapy, theatre therapy, art therapy classes, film screenings, thematic parties, game evenings and quests.

45 sporting events were held to improve the physical and psychological well-being of the youth, and seven trainings were held to develop social liability and initiative.

Measures aimed at involving the youth in decision-making processes and developing civic engagement skills were also actively implemented:

- the School of Volunteering course prepared youth to participate in civic initiatives and volunteer projects;
- the youth NGO "MOLODII" was founded;
- participation in the preparation of strategic community documents.

The proposals of the members of the **CAMPUS Youth Centre** have been successfully integrated

into the Comprehensive Recovery Programme and the Spatial Development Programme for the Chuhuiv Community.

In 2024, the **CAMPUS Youth Centre** raised almost UAH 3 million to implement initiatives beneficial to the Chuhuiv Community.

An outstanding example of co-operation with a local government is the joint organisation of the “Help our Cossacks” charity event, which raised almost UAH 470,000 to support the 92nd Separate Assault Brigade and the 125th Battalion of the Territorial Defence Brigade.

Today, the **CAMPUS Youth Centre** is the community’s youth life hub. The implementation of the initiative has become an example of effective co-operation between the community, youth and international partners, contributing to local sustainable development and strengthening youth potential.

🕒 June 2024 — in progress



At the initiative of the youth council, the **Berehynia chatbot** on Telegram was created with the active participation of the Department of Youth Policy and Children's Affairs of Bakhmut City Council as well as the technical support of the Department of Computer Support and Information Technology, to provide assistance to those in need due to the challenges of war.

The **Bakhmut City Council** and its Department of Youth Policy and Children's Affairs regularly arranged meetings, roundtables, and consultations with the youth of the community to discuss current community problems and ways to solve them. The idea of creating an information and consultation instrument for war-affected people was initiated at such meetings. At a difficult time when it is important to have access to information and support, the Berehynia information chatbot was created in Telegram.

The Berehynia chatbot is a virtual assistant in combating violence, available around the clock and seven days a week, offering a wide range of services:

- Advice and guidance: the chatbot provides clear and understandable instructions on how to prevent violence, as well as recommendations for action if you are a victim or witness of violence, and answers to frequently asked questions related to violence, debunking myths and providing specific information;
- Resources for assistance: the chatbot offers a list of reliable organisations and institutions that can provide assistance to victims of violence, including psychological, legal and social support;
- Important contacts and services: the chatbot offers contact details of important institutions that people can turn to for help.

The creation of the Berehynia chatbot became possible thanks to the active participation of the youth and as a response to the needs of the community. For the project to be successful, Bakhmut's youth received the necessary knowledge and skills on combating violence, communication with victims, personal data protection, and other important aspects. Trainings and workshops were organised with the participation of experts.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

An effective instrument for providing assistance to victims of violence was developed.

The level of public awareness of the violence problem and opportunities for assistance has been improved.

The local youth has been activated and its role in the community life has increased as well. A positive precedent for co-operation between the community and youth has been set.

Berehynia is not just a chatbot, it is a loyal ally to fight violence, as people have somewhere to turn for help thanks to the 24/7 availability of information and support.

Join the Berehynia chatbot by following the link: [@UMPSDD_bot](#)

🕒 January 2024 — in progress



The **visualisation of the community budget** both on paper and in a theatrical presentation in a public area in plain words took place in the Zdolbuniv community.

In 2024, the **Zdolbuniv City Council**, with the support of communal institutions and facilities, business representatives, and NGOs, implemented full-fledged activities to simplify the presentation, clarity and accessibility of budget information, continuing the practice of collecting proposals for the draft budget from citizens, which was launched in Zdolbuniv back in 2015 by community activists. Expert assistance, including the preparation of presentation materials, was provided by the experts of the “Budget Participation from A to Z” project with the support of USAID HOVERLA.

The implementation of this initiative included the following stages:

- development of a local legal act regulating the process of engaging citizens in the budget process and budget visualisation;
- development and printing of a visualised budget for citizens;
- collection of proposals from citizens to the budget;
- public presentation of the community budget in a manner that is understandable to residents.

City council officials and employees made their own materials for the Budget Day in the community and told residents about the local budget in an accessible and simple way: where revenues come from and where expenditures are directed.

The “Budget Tree” was presented in the form of a decorative hawthorn tree that blooms on the streets of Zdolbuniv. Revenues in the form of hawthorn flowers were brought and placed on the “budget tree” by representatives of institutions that held a charity exhibition and sale that day. The flowers differed from each other in size and writings, meaning that the larger the flower, the more significant the contribution of this particular tax to the community’s income. Participants who pretended to be representatives of industries financed from the local budget received money in the form of symbolic “bags with hawthorn”.

During the event, proposals for the 2025 budget were collected and prizes were drawn from local producers, entrepreneurs, and the mayor of Zdolbuniv.

The event also featured an exhibition of drawings by the youngest residents of the community: children portrayed their vision of the budget.

During the event, printed booklets with infographics of the main components of the budget process were presented and a financial literacy lesson was held by an expert of the “For Transparent Local Budgets” Partnership.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

The citizens were presented with a user-friendly infographic of the local budget.

More than 100 budget proposals were collected, a number of which were taken into account in the formation of the budget for 2025.

More than 100 community residents were involved in the educational event, where they had the opportunity to take part as participants or observers, and submit proposals to the community budget and more than 20 entrepreneurs.

The **Zdolbuniv community** received the Best Budget Day award as part of the “Budget Participation from A to Z” project implemented by the NGO “For Transparent Local Budgets Public Partnership” with the support of USAID HOVERLA.

🕒 Spring-summer 2024



SLAVUTYCH CITY COMMUNITY

KYIV REGION

INNOVATIVE METHODS
OF INTERACTION BETWEEN
THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND
THE COMMUNITY THROUGH
COMMUNICATION



The **citizens' assembly** is a unique instrument of deliberative democracy organised by the Slavutych City Council with the support of the Council of Europe.

Slavutych is a young but strong city that demonstrates how public engagement and modern approaches to governance can change lives even in the most difficult circumstances. One of the key initiatives in 2024 was the citizens' assembly in Slavutych, which was aimed at improving the household waste management system. This topic was chosen at the citizens' assembly stakeholder forum.

A total of 4,000 households in Slavutych were invited to participate, with 45 core and 12 reserve members selected at random to reflect the social and demographic profile of the community. As a result of this approach, the composition of the participants turned into a "little Slavutych", representing all age, gender, educational, and social groups.

Over the course of three sessions in October-November 2024, the participants

- received the necessary information on waste management in an understandable form;
- participated in facilitated discussions and debates;
- and prepared recommendations for the city council to improve the waste collection, sorting, and recycling system.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

The participants of the citizens' assembly got acquainted with the work of the local solid waste landfill, and explored the experiences of administrations and NGOs in Kyiv, Chernihiv, Drohobych, etc. This experience allowed them to formulate practical, realistic, and effective proposals.

For about nine months, a large team of people worked on organising the citizens' assembly in Slavutych to make this unique experience for the community possible. The participants, as well as the co-ordinators, experts, entrepreneurs, and activists of Slavutych who joined it, were awarded certificates and letters of appreciation. The work of the citizens' assembly in Slavutych was directly co-ordinated by the Office for Support of Public Initiatives of the Regional Development Agency communal enterprise of the Slavutych City Council.

The citizens' assembly was organised in accordance with the Council of Europe's recommendations and guidance on deliberative democracy and, due to the expert, methodological, and financial support provided by the Council of Europe's project "Strengthening democratic resilience through civic participation during the war and in the post-war context", the event met international standards.

During the facilitated discussions, citizens were given the opportunity not only to express their opinions but also to influence decision making. This approach ensured transparency, trust in local governments, and consideration of the interests of different social groups. That is why the citizens' assembly has become a powerful instrument for creating an effective dialogue between the authorities and community residents.

The recommendations prepared by the citizens' assembly are being taken into account in the strategic planning of the city council and have become the basis for further decisions in waste management, investment attraction, and the formation of environmental awareness and responsible public culture.

The **citizens' assembly of Slavutych** is not only an example of an innovative approach to the management of the community, but also a symbol of the resilience of Ukraine. Despite the martial law, the community has managed to unite to address an important issue, create an effective mechanism for co-operation between citizens and authorities, and inspire other cities in Ukraine to implement similar initiatives. This success proves that even in challenging times, it is possible to build the future together.

🕒 June – November 2024





The **Henichesk Online Hub** was created due to the internal displacement of the residents of the Henichesk community, who moved out to almost all regions of Ukraine due to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation and the temporary occupation of the community's territory.

The **Henichesk City Military Administration (CMA)** decided to organise the operation of the Henichesk Online Hub, and by order of the Head of the Henichesk CMA in February 2024, a task force was established to devise assistance to the population of the Henichesk City Community.

The main assignment of the task force was to identify ways and means of addressing issues related to the protection of the rights and freedoms of displaced persons among the residents of the Henichesk community – preserving their lives and health, social protection, employment, the right to education – and creating all the necessary conditions for their livelihood.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

Based on the data analysed, a profile was created of the main issues and requests of the residents of the Henichesk community who found themselves in difficult living conditions caused by the military actions of the Russian Federation and the community's occupation, and were thus forced to leave their homes and move to the territory controlled by Ukraine or abroad.

These methods were effective and provided an opportunity not only to identify the current needs of community residents, but also to identify individuals and families belonging to vulnerable groups and living in difficult life circumstances and in need of special attention and protection (i.e., military personnel, families of deceased and/or missing military personnel, prisoners of war, large families, persons with disabilities, chronic or serious illnesses). This helped to determine the forms and possible methods of assistance.

Priorities for assistance were determined based on the available capacities and resources in the community.

After processing the requests, military personnel and their families, as well as individuals in need of expensive treatment, were identified and provided with financial assistance from the community budget.

Assistance to the population of the Henichesk city community is provided in these main areas:

- administrative services, including updating the data in the territorial community register and entering information into the register of damaged and destroyed property;
- provision of drugs, medicines, and rehabilitation equipment to the community residents;
- primary legal aid (consultations);
- evacuation and temporary accommodation;
- education;
- social security, veterans' policy, domestic violence, gender issues;
- co-ordination and consultations on humanitarian aid;
- psychological support.

🕒 **February 2024 — in progress**



LETYCHIV SETTLEMENT COMMUNITY

KHMELNYTSKYI REGION

CENTRES OF INTERACTION
AND SUPPORT FOR VETERANS
AND THEIR FAMILIES



The **“By your side” veterans’ space** of the Letychiv territorial community was created by the Letychiv Settlement Council together with the Letychiv Union of Veterans “Defender” Public Organisation after winning the competition “Varto: Ednannia”, implemented by the Ukrainian Veterans Fund in co operation with ISAR Ednannia as part of the project “Strong Civil Society of Ukraine — Driver of Reforms and Democracy”, which provided funding for this project.

The **Letychiv Settlement Council** provided co-financing in the amount of 10% and a barrier-free access space in good condition. Representatives of socially responsible businesses in the community joined the support and development of the “By your side” veterans’ space by purchasing and donating equipment, including a stationary bike, a treadmill, a power trainer, a Swedish wall and a Yevminov board, as well as a massage table. This equipment was installed in the gym of the veterans’ space. Part of the funds was spent on furnishing the veterans’ space offices and purchasing the necessary equipment.

Within the framework of the Accelerator of projects to support veterans, another grant of US\$ 1,656 was received from the Local Action Office to develop a logo for the veterans’ space and purchase handouts.

In July 2024, the Letychiv community won another grant in the “Time to Act, Ukraine!” competition from the MHP-Hromady Charitable Foundation to ensure barrier-free access and improve the conditions for visitors to the veteran’s space by repairing the sanitary room with inclusive access. The amount of the grant was UAH 100,000 with co-financing from the settlement budget amounting to UAH 229,314.

The community pays great attention to the children of veterans: they organise patriotic education, camps, and rehabilitation activities for children in the Carpathians.

Co-operation with the “Caritas-Khmelnyskyi Charitable Foundation” Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church has been successful in the framework of the Resilience Centre based on the veteran’s space in the Letychiv community.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

Military personnel and their families are provided with psychological, legal and documentation support.

The Centre provides trainings, physical rehabilitation for veterans and the disabled, and assistance to the families of the deceased and missing. The work is based on the “person-to-person” principle and includes consultations, both individual and roundtable, and trainings with the involvement of the necessary specialists.

The created space provides an opportunity to hold meetings for combatants and their families to unite them, restores and improves their psycho-emotional state, and gives them the opportunity to express themselves.

During the nine months of operation of the veterans' space in 2024:

- 211 individuals attended psychological trainings;
- 66 individuals received individual psychological counselling;
- 17 individuals took career guidance classes;
- 12 individuals completed training on writing grant applications for starting a veteran business;
- 124 individuals received psychological counselling.

Military personnel, war veterans, and their family members go to the **“By your side” veterans' space** for help and receive basic legal, social and psychological services. It is a great achievement that residents of other communities also come for help.

April 2023 — in progress



KRYZHOPIL SETTLEMENT COMMUNITY

VINNYTSIA REGION

CENTRES OF INTERACTION
AND SUPPORT FOR VETERANS
AND THEIR FAMILIES



“The programme to support small and medium-sized enterprises in the Kryzhopil Territorial Community for 2021–2027” provides for measures to provide financial assistance to veterans and their families to start or develop their own businesses in the Kryzhopil Territorial Community.

Kryzhopil Settlement Council was among the first in Vinnytsia region to decide to support veterans and their families to start or develop their own businesses, as the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia led to significant negative consequences, including for the development and growth of entrepreneurship.

In 2024, in order to support veterans and their families and help demobilised veterans integrate into civilian life, overcome the pain of loss, and find new strength for life, family members of fallen Defenders of Ukraine were provided with financial assistance to start their own businesses:

UAH 50,000 for each of the two veterans supported, and UAH 20,000 for the wife of a fallen soldier. Two more war veterans will also receive funding.

In order to ensure that the Defenders of Ukraine and the families of the fallen (deceased) Defenders of Ukraine are aware of their social guarantees, the Department of Social Protection and Health of the Kryzhopil Settlement Council approved the Roadmap for Veterans and Families of the Fallen (Deceased) Defenders of Ukraine.

Social cohesion measures to facilitate the reintegration of veterans, their families, and the families of the deceased are also carried out on the basis of the **community’s institution “Centre for the provision of social services of the Kryzhopil Settlement Council”**:

- psychological support: organisation of group activities and individual counselling aimed at overcoming stress, anxiety, and psychological trauma;
- social events: organisation of meetings, sporting events, cultural events and holidays, which helps to create a supportive environment and strengthen the sense of community;
- professional support: providing counselling and support in job search, use of professional skills and retraining, which helps to find new opportunities for career development;

- medical care: providing access to medical care, including physical therapy, psychotherapy and support in managing chronic diseases;
- social services: providing assistance to solve life problems, such as finances and family relationships.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

In 2024, five families of disabled persons with group II disabilities as a result of the war received social adaptation and recreation services at a recreational facility in Khmilnyk, Vinnytsia region.

The unique project of the Christian Rescue Service “Giving Hope to Mom”, which provides a comprehensive approach to recovery and includes physical rehabilitation, psychological assistance, restorative procedures and the opportunity to communicate with those who understand the pain of loss, implemented in co-operation with the Kyiv City Centre for Assistance to ATO Participants, enabled the mothers of five fallen Ukrainian Defenders to take part in a six-day rehabilitation programme in Kyiv.

The services and support provided facilitate the social integration of veterans, helping them to return to civilian life by creating opportunities for communication with other veterans, families and community members, as well as reducing the sense of alienation and isolation.

🕒 January 2024 — in progress





The “**Social Adaptation Space**” is the next step in the Lozova community to provide veterans with all necessary services.

The **Lozova City Council** first approved the Social Support Programme for Veterans back in 2016; in 2021, the Labour and Social Protection Office established a department called the Centre for Combatants, headed by a Defender of Ukraine; in 2024, it was among the first in Kharkiv region to introduce the institution of veteran assistants. Since March 2024, the assistants, who belong to the category of combatants or their family members, have been advising veterans on a peer-to-peer basis on the possibilities of obtaining guarantees, benefits, social, educational, rehabilitation, recreational, psychological and other services, preparing documents for assistance in other institutions and organisations, informing them about professional adaptation, organising recreation in sanatoriums and resorts, and helping veterans to transition from military service to civilian life.

The partners, UNDP with the financial support from the European Union, organised the Social Adaptation Space together with the Lozova community to support veterans, their families, and the families of the fallen defenders.

In order to create a modern rehabilitation centre that will meet the growing need for rehabilitation services, design and estimate documentation for the overhaul of the rehabilitation department was developed and approved, which will increase the ability to provide rehabilitation services in the following areas: cardiorespiratory rehabilitation, musculoskeletal rehabilitation, neurological rehabilitation, trauma rehabilitation, and psychological rehabilitation.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

The newly created Space has a first contact area, rooms for group and individual work, and a children’s room.

For the convenience of veterans, representatives of the Lozova Centre for Social Services and the Centre for Free Secondary Legal Aid provide services in the Space. The group work room hosts events with veterans’ NGOs, training sessions and meetings with relatives of prisoners of war, missing

or deceased defenders. Community leaders and experts from the regional or national level are involved in discussions of issues relevant to veterans.

Physical rehabilitation services for veterans and combatants are provided at the Lozova Territorial Medical Association with the support of charitable foundations and organisations, including the International Development Agency for Regional Development GLOBEE NGO and the People's Self-Defence Lviv NGO.

In 2024, almost 1,200 people received consultations in the Social Adaptation Space.

🕒 March 2024 — in progress





e-Ternopil is an open governance system that has become an innovative solution of the Ternopil City Council to maximise the involvement of residents in the life of the community.

The **Ternopil City Council** has created an open governance system to improve interaction between the authorities and the community through digital instruments.

A key element of the system was the creation of the e-Ternopil Resident Portal (e-ternopil.gov.ua) — an interactive platform that provides residents with handy and up-to-date access to services and the opportunity to participate in the life of the community.

The main features of the platform are:

- submission of electronic requests and appeals.

Citizens now have the opportunity to submit electronic requests, appeals and letters to the Ternopil City Council online, as well as track the status of their consideration in real time and receive a response on the Portal;

- electronic polls and discussions.

Citizens are involved in the decision-making process through electronic consultations and polls. In 2024, a dozen polls were conducted, with thousands of citizens participating and leaving more than 500 comments and suggestions. The ideas received were taken into account, for example, in the creation of a new route network for the city and the organisation of traffic flow plans;

- online access to administrative services.

Citizens can lodge applications for administrative services, receive responses online, and monitor the status of their processing, which saves time and effort.

A special feature of the platform is its integration with the e-Ternopil mobile application, which is used by more than 100,000 citizens (out of a total population of 228,000). This makes it possible to submit applications, appeals and requests even from your sofa at home, at any time of the day. In general, a request or appeal to the city authorities can be submitted in record time — 1 minute!

Key achievements and implementation milestones

Community services have been digitised, which means that residents no longer need to visit institutions physically, and can conveniently receive services remotely.

Community residents are involved in its governance, thanks to interactive polls and discussions, the opinion of citizens is taken into account when making important decisions.

The system ensures transparency and accessibility of governance in the city, promoting openness of processes, public trust and effective use of digital technologies.

e-Ternopil has become an effective instrument of interaction between the authorities and the community, demonstrating a modern approach to governance and citizen participation in the city life.

 January 2024 — in progress





The “**Ecosystem for Civil Society Institutions**” aims to support and increase the participation of citizens in resolving urgent issues of city development.

In 2024, the **Kyiv City Council** implemented the strategic project “Ecosystem for Civil Society Institutions (CSIs)”, which combines various instruments and resources, creates a comfortable environment for CSOs, and strengthens their role in shaping the city’s strategy and addressing vital issues.

The Ecosystem provides civil society institutions with support, resources and a platform to engage with the city authorities and each other.

The main components of the Ecosystem are:

- Vcentri HUB — a network of communal open public spaces, that provide CSIs with access to modern equipment, training programmes, expert advice, and networking opportunities.

They have become centres for civil society development where NGOs hold meetings, trainings, and seminars;

- the electronic register of CSOs is a digital platform that ensures transparency and accessibility of information on the activities of CSIs in Kyiv.

The register allows tracking the projects and achievements of organisations, which contributes to the trust of citizens. Registered CSOs get the opportunity to use the city’s services on a one-stop shop basis: simplified access to participation in city competitions, the ability to promote their projects and book Vcentri HUB premises in one click;

- the Top-100 Award is an annual award that recognises the most successful projects of Kyiv CSOs.

This initiative encourages innovation, increases the visibility of organisations, and helps to attract new partners. The winners receive recognition and the opportunity to present their projects to a wider audience;

- project competitions for CSIs are a mechanism of financial support for their initiatives aimed at resolving urgent community problems.

The competitions promote the development of innovative ideas, engage citizens in the active life of the city and stimulate the development of civil society.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

There are already five open public spaces in Kyiv, and by 2027, the network will be expanded to 10 to ensure equal access to the resources of the spaces for citizens of all districts of the city.

CSIs have permanent access to city services, use the premises for conducting various events, discussing draft decisions of the city council and meeting with important people.

Participation in the city life and open governance is encouraged by the Kyiv City Council, decisions are developed by the whole active community, and projects of the community's participatory budgeting are implemented.

The city budget funds the best projects that implement innovative ideas and ensure the development of civil society.

The **“Ecosystem for CSIs”** is a modern instrument for the development of civil society that unites the efforts of city authorities and civil society organisations to deal with important issues of the city, creates conditions for effective co-operation, stimulates innovation, increases trust and engagement of citizens, and contributes to the sustainable development of Kyiv as an active and united community.

🕒 January 2024 — in progress





Open city: a new format of public hearings was created as an accessible, interactive and inclusive platform for discussing important community development issues.

The **Vinnytsia City Council** has implemented a new level of modern format for organising and holding public hearings, maximising the involvement of community residents in decision making, increasing transparency of governance and building effective communication between the authorities and residents.

Key elements of the innovation.

Use of the social network Facebook and the Vinnytsia City Council's YouTube channel to broadcast the public hearing process online, where residents can read the agenda of the public hearing, submit their suggestions and comments on the projects, and join the discussion in real time via video broadcast or chat. All comments and suggestions are considered when reviewing projects, and the materials are publicly accessible, which promotes transparency.

A video recording of each event is accessible for viewing afterwards.

A hybrid format for residents' participation in public hearings enables simultaneous offline public hearings in several locations and online on several platforms, which allows to reach the maximum number of stakeholders and even those who cannot attend physically. This significantly increases accessibility and engages more participants. Interactive instruments include visualisation of graphic and other visual materials simultaneously with the video broadcast of public hearings to ensure a better understanding of the issue under consideration.

Inclusiveness is ensured by choosing adequate venues that allow access to the discussion for people with reduced mobility.

Preliminary public education sessions through social media, local media and information stands, where residents receive detailed information about the projects to be discussed and can ask questions to experts, take place before the hearings.

All the results of public hearings are published on the Vinnytsia City Council's web portal along with a report on the suggestions and recommendations taken into account. Decisions are made

based on the results of voting and citizens' opinions, thus increasing the transparency of the process and public trust in the authorities.

Achievements:

- increased citizen engagement — the number of participants in public hearings increased by 35% over the previous year;
- improved communication — about 80% of the surveyed citizens stated that they feel better informed about the decisions of the local authorities;
- implementation of the initiatives taken into account — more than 50% of the suggestions submitted during the hearings were taken into account in the final decisions.

Key achievements and implementation milestones

The experience of the **Vinnysia City Community** shows how innovative approaches to organising public hearings can significantly increase the level of trust between the authorities and the community, ensure transparency in governance, and make decision making more democratic. An important component of this approach is ensuring barrier-free participation, which enables equal conditions for all citizens of the community, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups.

Barrier-free participation involves choosing appropriate locations for public hearings, implementing technologies for online participation, and providing support to participants. This approach allows not only for the involvement of more citizens, but also creates a sense of equality and mutual respect in the process of discussing important issues. This format can be successfully adapted by other Ukrainian cities to increase the inclusiveness and effectiveness of public hearings.

🕒 January 2024 — in progress



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