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2022 Annual Report Intercultural Cities Network of Ukraine 15 December 2022



The opinions expressed in this document are the responsibility of the author Dr. Kseniya Rubicondo, Coordinator of the Intercultural Cities Network of Ukraine and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe. Cover photo: EU Delegation to CoE post 28 Feb 2022

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Summary

Since February 2022, members of Intercultural Cities Network of Ukraine (ICC-UA) have been through some very difficult, life-threatening times and the challenges are not over. Yet, the ICCUA cities stay courageous, motivated, united and unbreakable. They are committed to pursuing their intercultural engagement and the implementation of innovative urban intercultural policies, in line with the strategic goals and priorities defined in the Intercultural Strategies and Plans adopted by each city member of the Network.

These goals include: ensuring equality and participation, ongoing collaboration and exchange between cities; advancing intercultural competence skills and implementing the Antirumours approach; sharing best practice and creating more opportunities for intercultural mixing, direct communication and dialogue; promoting minority rights and diversity of languages, including those of indigenous people; developing strategies and strengthening policies that foster equality, diversity, sustainability and inclusion in the modern urban environment.

Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, in open violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and international law, has altered the ICC-UA Network plans for 2022. Yet, despite the challenges of the war and very critical situations that every Ukrainian city is facing daily, the Network continued to operate uninterrupted throughout the year. Acts of solidarity and mutual support between ICCUA members are plentiful. The ICCUA cities were also among the first to host large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and to deliver humanitarian aid to those who needed it most.

Despite the emergencies and critical tasks Ukrainian cities have to cope with, the challenges of ruined infrastructure, limited power supplies and communication, local ICCUA coordinators gathered online five times this year. Moreover, Ukrainian ICC cities have managed to implement a number of local initiatives of intercultural nature, demonstrating their capacity and commitment to intercultural values and policy principles under any circumstances. Some of these local projects were enabled by the very valuable support of ICCUA's partner-city from Norway, ICC Stavanger.

In addition, three pan-Network initiatives were implemented this year:

1. *Elements of Evidence* project focused on collecting stories about intercommunity interaction in Ukrainian ICC cities and identifying examples of 'interculturality in action' in critical times.

2. A series of *Art Therapy* initiatives were implemented in Ukrainian ICC cities with the assistance of the national coordinator and financial support of the ICC partner city Stavanger (Norway). Trainings, focus groups, artistic actions and workshops for unaccompanied minors, women, youth, children and internally displaced families with particular focus on minorities and persons with different cultural backgrounds were designed



and delivered in face-to-face and on-line format in cities in order to provide psychological relief, to help stress and challenges of the current situation in Ukraine.

different areas of the them cope with

3. A *pan-Network action in support* of one of its members, the city of Sumy, located in the very north-east of Ukraine, which endured a heavy impact of the war, but withstood with dignity. On the occasion of Sumy City Day on September 2, the ICCUA Network produced a video conveying the messages of solidarity, appreciation and support to Sumy and its people who were unshakably defending their city, their free country, their values and liberties.

ICCUA members also joined the commemoration of International Migrants Day on 18 December 2022 by sharing their social media designs, banners and photos through social media accounts and websites at the ICCUA Network and at the ICC Global level.

ICCUA members recognize that the conditions and needs of their communities in the next six months are likely to differ from the previous six months as the war shifts to one of protracted nature. It is very important that ICCUA member cities are ready to adapt to them. They cannot do it alone. As communities that support IDPs, who make up about 15% of their populations, they require a sustained response. As ICC Programme members, they need strong, direct and sustained support from the ICC Global and from the Council of Europe, whether through technical assistance, targeted grants, or involvement in international ICC initiatives where Ukrainian cities could become partners in ICC inter-city projects, to keep their intercultural commitment, maintain their intercultural proficiency and spirit, as well as to ensure their long-term self-reliance.

Network coordination

The ICC-Ukraine members had a very promising start to 2022. During the first two months of 2022, ICCUA Network members continued to work closely together and in collaboration with the national coordinator to implement the intercultural policy approach as a means to realize the benefits of diversity in their communities. After making significant progress in implementing the ICC Antirumours approach in 2021, with the support of the ICC grant for ICCUA network activities – namely, key rumors and prejudices towards cultural diversity were mapped and classified, three webinars on the ARS methodology were conducted, alternative narratives were designed and published by ICCUA cities, ARS visions of success for each city were developed, a cross-network communication campaign and analysis of the impact of the Antirumours approach in Ukraine were completed, – in the year 2022, ICCUA member cities agreed to focus on scaling up the implementation of the Antirumours policy not only in their communities but also regions.

The first annual meeting of the ICCUA local coordinators was held on February 16 , 2022 with the aim of discussing priorities, planning annual activities of the ICC-Ukraine network, and identifying new opportunities and avenues for effective implementation of intercultural activities in 2022.

This was done taking into account the geopolitical situation in Ukraine, which introduced a significant degree of uncertainty into the daily life and functioning of the ICCUA cities and their administrations, making long-term planning more difficult. Please check the [Report of the ICCUA Local Coordinators Meeting](#) on February 16, 2022 for more details. An annual Action Plan for 2022, containing a number of joint all-Ukrainian intercultural initiatives, was prepared and shared with the ICC Programme . In February 2022, the national coordinator also submitted a proposal for an ICC Programme grant to support the activities of the ICCUA Network in 2022.

Four out of several dozen actions in the ICCUA 2022 Activity Plan were implemented by 24 February:

- 22 Jan** Unity Microphone. Pan-Network ICC event in commemoration of historic Reunion of Ukraine lead by ICC Team Pavlohrad.
- 3 Feb** Official Publication of [the ICC Strategy of the City of Lutsk](#) as part of development program of the local government for 2022-2025
- 16 Feb** First annual ICC-UA coordinators meeting in commemoration of the Day of Unity of Ukraine.
- 21 Feb** Pan-Network event on the occasion of World Mother Language Day celebration lead by ICC Teams od Sumy and [Melitopol](#)

The other planned activities of the network were unprecedentedly interrupted by the military invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign European state, by the Russian Federation, in open violation of international law, cooperation and diplomacy. Despite the violent invasion, the emergencies and critical challenges the ICCUA communities are facing daily, the Network gathered five times online this year. These meetings were necessary to keep the connection and the spirit up but also to discuss challenges, find solutions, coordinate actions, design projects and make joint decisions about the network's strategy with very limited resources that the network had this year (as the ICCUA application for Network Activities Grant in 2022 was not awarded) and ever growing demand for local humanitarian and intercultural actions.

It has been a more than a challenging year for the ICUA in many aspects, but the member cities have managed to implement dozens of local initiatives of intercultural nature - including in other communities of Ukraine that have become "new homes" for those ICCUA members who had to flee the occupation, - demonstrating their capacity and commitment to intercultural values and policy principles under any circumstances. Besides, two major pan-Network projects – *Elements of Evidence* and *Art Therapy* series – and a network-level support action were carried out. More details about the activities in the section below.

Throughout the year, the ICCUA national coordinator liaised with various authorities, international organizations and ICC Global members in order to obtain financial and humanitarian support for ICCUA member cities. The first to respond was the ICC city of Stavanger, Norway, which provided financial support to the members of the Ukrainian network for the implementation of local initiatives aimed at addressing the most pressing needs of their communities on the project basis.. This act of solidarity was also followed by some support from ICC Mexico City and friends from ICC cities of Lublin and Montreal.

The ICC Programme responded to the war in Ukraine by convening [an extraordinary meeting on 4 March](#), which was attended by the ICCUA national coordinator who updated the Global Network on the situation in Ukraine. ICC members adopted a Declaration of Solidarity with Ukraine and agreed to share information on initiatives they are undertaking to support the people of Ukraine in this challenging time. A dedicated page was set up by the ICC Programme' website to provide regular updates on the actions taken by ICC members around the world in support of Ukraine.

The national coordinator continues to facilitate interaction between the members of the ICCUA, the members of ICC Global and the ICC Programme secretariat. As one of the outcomes, an ICCUA partnership with the ICC Stavanger, Norway, was established. With the support of Stavanger, five local projects with an intercultural focus were implemented in ICCUA cities. Next, the on-line connectivity of the Ukrainian network was enabled in 2022 with the support of ICC city of Mexico, which contributed to the procurement of the relevant technology licence. The solidarity work with Montreal and Lublin is in the form of resource gathering and important exchanges between ICCUA national coordinator and representatives of these cities on the challenges arising from the current situation in Ukraine, as well as on identifying effective ways and types of support that can be provided.

Four representatives of Ukrainian ICC cities of Melitopol and Vinnytsia participated in two events supported by the ICC Programme: the [5th Placemaking Week Europe](#) in Pontevedra, Spain, 27-30 September and a [media training](#) on promoting intercultural narratives in difficult times in Strasbourg, France, 27-28 October 2022.

The ICCUA national coordinator continues to work with the national and other authorities promoting intercultural strategy and principles, as well as seeking support for the ICCUA members during these critical times. For example, she took part in four meetings of the [“Local governments unite for welfare and peace”](#) online marathon dedicated to exchanges between Ukrainian local leaders and international counterparts that gathered more than 1000 participants from all continents. She was also a speaker during the Forum [“Intercultural policy: conflict and displacement”](#) organised by the Mexico-Czech Republic friendship group of the Chamber of Deputies of the Mexican Congress.

Activities and Communication

Today, ten months into the full-scale war in Ukraine, some 8 million Ukrainians have fled the country, and an additional 7 million are internally displaced. This represents a displacement of nearly one-third of the country's population, making it one of the largest human migration crises in the world today. Including those displaced, injured or otherwise affected by the war, more than 17.7 million people, or nearly a quarter of the Ukrainian population, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

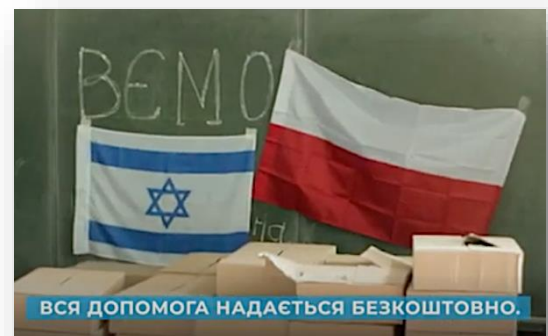
The member cities of the Intercultural Cities Network of Ukraine were among the first to host large numbers of internally displaced persons and to deliver humanitarian aid. They do their best to provide housing, food and other essential services and humanitarian assistance, although their facilities are not always large enough or adequately equipped to meet the growing needs of their increasing populations, and their communities and infrastructures experience continuous military threats and attacks from the aggressor country.



The highest density of internally displaced is found in our cities-members (and their regions) of Pavlohrad (20 per cent of the city's population and between 100,000 and 195,000 people in the region), the city and region of Vinnytsia (15 per cent of city's population and 75 - 100,000 people in the region), Odesa and region (between 75-100,000 people in the region), followed by Lutsk and Sumy (50 – 75,000 people in the region).¹ As IDPs continue to arrive daily and require some time for registration, their actual number in these cities is however much higher.

Despite the challenges of the war and very critical situations that every Ukrainian city has to face on a daily basis, the members of the ICCUA have always stood together and the Network functioned uninterruptedly. Acts of solidarity and mutual support between ICCUA member cities are plentiful.

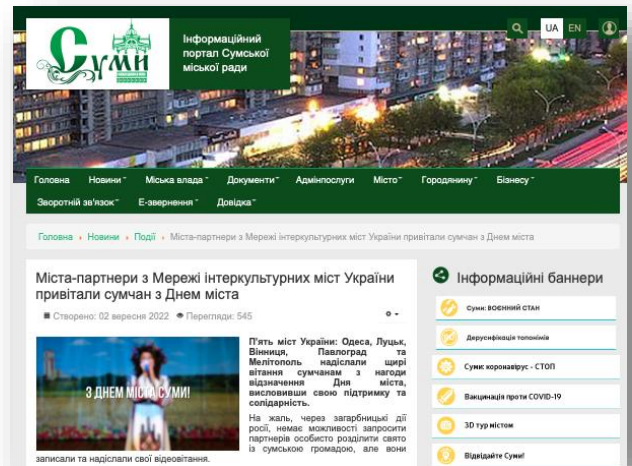
Many examples of such actions can be found in the *Elements of Evidence report*, resulting from the Network's project with the same name, which contains stories of inter-community support collected in Ukrainian intercultural cities since March 2022. These narratives illustrate how culturally diverse communities of these cities, with deeply rooted intercultural values, continue to cope with and withstand the harsh realities of war together, by helping each other, by addressing the basic needs of those who have lost everything or had to flee, regardless of their ethnic origins or religious beliefs.



¹ [IOM: Ukraine Internal Displacement Report](#), Nov 2022

Another example is a pan-Network initiative in support of its member Sumy, located in the very northeast of Ukraine was implemented. On the occasion of Sumy City Day on September 2, the Network members together with the national coordinator produced a video conveying their messages of solidarity, appreciation and support to Sumy and its people who were unshakably defending their city, their free country, and their liberties.

"The whole world bows to the strength of your spirit, your unwavering commitment to human values and your immense love for your country. Sumy is the city that withstood! It is the city that continues to live and to make plans for the future. And it will realize them very soon under a peaceful sky!" - read one of the messages.



Continuous communication is maintained between the national coordinator and the member cities by all possible technological means. None of the ICC-UA team members, except in the occupied territories, has left Ukraine. They have remained on the ground, in their diverse communities, where they are much needed today, offering support to the most vulnerable, to displaced and injured.

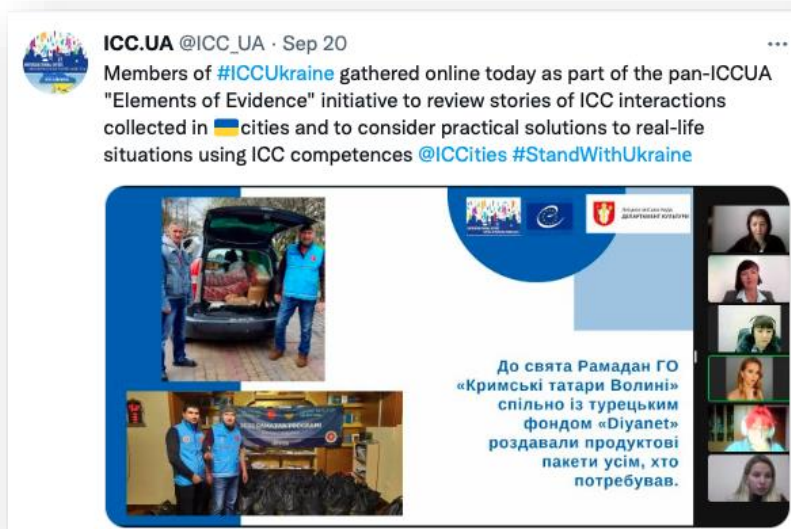
Ukrainian ICC cities also joined the commemoration of the International Migrants Day on 18 December 2022 by sharing their social media designs, banners and photos through social media accounts and websites at the ICCUA Network and at the ICC Global level.

FB cover-page design
by ICC Odesa



Pan-ICC UA project *Elements of Evidence*

Two major projects have been implemented at the Network level this year. One of them - “Elements of evidence” - focused on collecting stories about intercommunity interaction in Ukrainian ICC cities and identifying examples of ‘interculturality in action’ during the time of crisis.



An online event was organized with cities’ representatives and coordinators on 20 September 2022 to discuss the collected narratives and identified challenges. The national coordinator prepared a report presenting the project results and conclusions.

At the request of ICCUA members and in order to ensure the visibility of the ICC network and to promote Ukrainian intercultural cities as peaceful and inclusive communities, the national coordinator also published an article titled “[Ukraine: Sustaining Inter-community Ties](#)” featuring a selection of these intercultural narratives with an independent publisher [Social Europe](#), whose mission is to help strengthen democratic practice by contributing to the public policy discussions addressing the most pressing political, economic and social issues of the day.

Positive intercultural stories of the *Elements of evidence*-initiative focused on valuing diversity, promoting inclusion and preventing discrimination are regarded by the ICCUA as a way to reduce the impact of fake news or hate expressions against individuals or groups in the media as well as everyday society life. These intercultural narratives were disseminated through official ICCUA cities’ webpages, social media, local media, ICCUA Twitter, Facebook, shared with humanitarian hubs, psychological assistance units, volunteer centres and educational institutions targeting different audiences including internally displaced and youth.

Cross-Network *Art-therapy* initiatives

A series of *Art Therapy* initiatives were implemented in Ukrainian ICC cities with the assistance of the national coordinator, the most recent of which took place in Lutsk and Vinnytsia.

Trainings, focus groups, artistic actions and workshops for unaccompanied minors, women, youth, children and internally displaced families with particular focus on minorities and persons with different cultural backgrounds were designed and conducted in face-to-face and on-line format in different areas of these cities since April 2022 in order to provide psychological relief, to help them cope with stress and challenges of the current situation in Ukraine.



Pavlohrad



Vinnytsia

A series of 28 *Self-Care is...* focus groups and art therapy trainings have been conducted in Vinnytsia over the past four months for the local community and displaced people, including national minorities and unaccompanied minors. Professional psychologists and psychotherapists worked with over 800 people, releasing their creative potential and restoring their emotional stability by introducing participants to different languages, photography, dance, song writing and drawing.



With support from the ICC Stavanger, Norway, the city was also able to organize a *Set-up Start-up* initiative for locals and internally displaced of different age groups who lost their jobs or dream about creating their own business

 Інтеркультурні Міста України (ICC-UA)

Сьогодні [#ICCukraine](#) ділиться з міжнародною спільнотою [#ICCCities](#) приємною новиною з [#ICCVinnytsia](#) 🇺🇦 про втілення дводенного воркшопу "Start-up Set-up" для трьох груп місцевих та переселених жителів, що мріють відкрити власний стартап чи втратили роботу під час війни. Воркшоп було проведено завдяки підтримці наших друзів з ICC Stavanger 🇳🇴 Щиро дякуємо 🙏🙏 @kommunen, Dag Mossige, Ingrid Hauge Rasmussen!!! [#StandWithUkraine](#)

 **ICC.UA** @ICC_UA · 3s

[#ICCukraine](#): a 2day workshop "Start-up Set-up" was made possible [#ICCVinnytsia](#) 🇺🇦 for 3 groups of locals & internally displaced who lost their jobs during the war or dream of starting their own SMEs thanks to our friends from ICC Stavanger 🇳🇴 @kommunen @HaugeIngrid!!! @ICCCities @coe



Odesa



ICC.UA @ICC_UA · May 31

With the support of the ICC city of Stavanger (Norway), the Municipal Theatre of Odessa #ICCUkraine @ICCCities has launched musical initiative "Creative Force". The musicians organize open-air concerts for IDPs, volunteers, military and the city's population #StandWithUkraine



ICC.UA @ICC_UA · Aug 23

UN chief Antonio Guterres visited Odesa #ICCUkraine & its port, where grain exports flow after a long blockade. I was happy to show Mr. Guterres our Opera House that works during the war as a symbol of our resilience & our desire to live in peace, says Odesa Mayor @ICCCities @CoE



ICC.UA @ICC_UA · Nov 10

#ICCUkraine The cities of Odesa 🇺🇦 and Venice 🇮🇹 sign a cooperation agreement | Le città di Venezia e Odesa firmano un patto di collaborazione @ICCCities @coe #StandWithUkraine Video: 📺
facebook.com/722202656/video...
barbaraganz.blog.ilsole24ore.com/2022/11/07/le-...



Sumy

Spontaneous returns and movements into and within Ukraine continue on a daily basis. It is important for ICCUA cities, especially in the long term, to enable an environment for safe returns, recovery, and local integration for those who cannot return to their hometowns. Many of those returning to areas that are not their traditional place of residence in Ukraine have lost social ties, economic services and infrastructure. ICCUA cities are working with the national government as well as local and international partners to leverage their significant multisectoral capacity in order to address housing recovery, economic and social revitalization.

Along these lines, the City of Sumy started its work on *re-Building an Intercultural City* in December 2022. Learning continues to be the light for its community, where, despite the power outage, a weekly course series is being conducted to improve intercultural competencies and skills for more targeted ICC policy design and projects implementation.

 **Інтеркультурні Міста України (ICC-UA)**

 **ICC.UA @ICC_UA** · 2s

Friday night, another blackout. But as the saying goes "Learning is the light" Weekly course series "re-Building an intercultural city" starts in ICC Sumy 🇺🇦 to improve intercultural competencies & skills in ICC program/policy formation. We are unbreakable! #ICCUkraine @ICCities



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Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Programme

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Lutsk



Melitopol

Since the beginning of the war, many residents of Melitopol, along the municipal administration and a number of Melitopol organisations and businesses, have moved to the city of Zaporizhzhia, the nearest municipality and a regional centre of the Zaporizhzhia region. Melitopolers carried their intercultural perspective with them and today they continue to work on implementing intercultural actions in their host city, Zaporizhzhia.

Conclusions

Looking ahead, ICC-Ukraine members recognize that the conditions and needs of their diverse populations in the next six months are likely to differ from the previous six months as the war shifts to one of protracted nature. It is very important that ICCUA member cities are ready to adapt to them. They cannot do it alone. As communities that support IDPs, who make up about 15% of their populations, they require a sustained response. As members of ICC Programme of the Council of Europe, they need strong, direct and sustained support from the ICC Global and the Council of Europe.

Ukrainian ICC cities have been and remain the bridges through which European values and principles reach Ukraine. It is crucial to maintain the integrity of these bridges today and to provide much-needed direct local support to the communities of these cities, as it is there that the most vulnerable remain today, those who, for financial, medical or other reasons, have not been able to escape the atrocities of war.

This support can be provided whether through technical assistance targeted grants (with a simplified structure and application conditions), or through involvement in international – ICC, intercity or other – initiatives, where Ukrainian cities could become project/program partners. Today, it is hardly possible for any ICCUA city to take the lead in an international initiative, as, for example, Melitopol did in 2020 acting as a lead partner in an ICC intercity grant project with Ballarat, Australia. Today partnering with other ICC members remains the most stable and necessary option for Ukrainian cities. This will help them to withstand the challenges of the war, to keep their intercultural commitment, to maintain their intercultural proficiency and spirit, as well as to ensure their long-term self-reliance.

#StandWithUkraine