

Tales of the brave

Youth projects empowering
young people from Ukraine



**Exhibition
catalogue**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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An exhibition of initiatives supported
by the European Youth Foundation

In 2025, we mark thirty years since Ukraine joined the Council of Europe – three decades of partnership grounded in the shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. This commitment has only deepened over time, and since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, supporting the country and its people has become one of the Council of Europe’s highest priorities. At the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth in October 2025, in Valletta, Malta, the youth sector reaffirmed that supporting Ukraine remains a key priority for the Organisation.

In response to the request of Ukrainian authorities and civil society, the youth sector of the Council of Europe launched a series of actions to support young people from Ukraine affected by the war. Among these was a Special call for youth projects through the European Youth Foundation designed to empower and assist young people facing the consequences of the war.

Between November 2022 and mid-2025, the EYF has funded 58 youth projects, providing over €900 000 in grants and directly engaging more than 4000 young people. Of the awarded youth initiatives, 30 projects were initiated by youth organisations based in Ukraine; 18 projects had an international dimension bringing together young people from across Europe and their Ukrainian peers; and 29 projects took place locally or nationally across Ukraine. All of the initiatives advanced the Council of Europe’s priorities for youth - peace, access to rights by young people, democracy promotion, inclusion of more vulnerable youth groups and the development of youth work.

These projects have had a transformative impact and empowered youth. They helped young people move from being passive witnesses of war to active citizens, shaping decisions that affect their communities and futures. They fostered resilience, solidarity, and hope, providing safe and inclusive spaces, psychosocial support and well-being, and opportunities to learn and lead.

Many projects also strengthened partnerships and networking opportunities, developed new educational and training resources, and inspired cooperation across borders with Ukraine. The Special call also created synergies with Lviv European Youth Capital 2025, with several projects implemented in or in partnership with the city.

This EYF exhibition presents 15 selected projects - a powerful reflection of the courage, creativity, and commitment of young Ukrainians and their peers from other Council of Europe member states. We invite you to explore their stories: to witness their challenges, their achievements, and the enduring spirit that drives them forward. The Tales of the Brave is more than an exhibition - it is a testament to youth resilience, solidarity, and the enduring power of democracy.

With heartfelt gratitude to all the young people and youth organisations who, through their work and courage, continue to stand for democracy, human rights, and peace!

Rights of youth in times of war

Organiser: **Public organisation Radekhiv Center "Youth Initiative"**

Place: **Lviv, Ukraine**

Grant awarded: **€14.810**

The Radekhiv Center „Youth Initiative“ helped 25 young Ukrainians affected by the war to stand up for their rights and get involved in creating local youth policies. Through a training on human rights, participants were empowered with skills and knowledge to be more involved in local projects. Even before the project wrapped up, they were already using what they learned to pursue education, or professional development goals.



"We have the right to the future! Even after losing a part of our body and soul because of the war."
(young participant)



Teenage club “Girls* can!”

Organiser: **NGO Feminist Workshop**

Place: **Lviv, Ukraine**

Grant awarded: **€14.664**

The NGO “Feminist Workshop” ran a safe and welcoming Youth Club space for more than 200 teens (ages 15-18) from the Lviv region, including those affected by the war, displaced teens, LGBTQIA+ youth, and girls. Through workshops, events, and 15 career advice sessions, participants learned about feminist values, equality, and human rights, while encouraging leadership and activism. The whole experience wrapped up with the “Coven Academy of Activism for Girls*,” helping girls boost their social skills and career goals.

“I feel a strong sense of community and acceptance for who I am. Thanks to these events, I can engage in activities I enjoy, but don’t have the opportunity to pursue them independently.”
(Angelina, 17-year-old participant)



“The teenage club is a wonderful community of people who share similar values to mine and who, even on days when I feel powerless, fill me with resources and the desire to create something new.”
(Marta, 16-year-old participant)



United rising to the new horizons

Organiser: **Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)/Kristliga Föreningen av Unga Män (KFUM)**

Place: **Stockholm, Sweden**

Grant awarded: **€15.000**

The NGO YMCA Central/KFUM supported 23 young Ukrainian refugees in Sweden through 14 workshops about leadership, mental health, public speaking, and cultural trips as part of the "United Rising to New Horizons" project. The young participants were helped to boost their confidence, communication skills, and emotional strength while making great friends and feeling more at home. After the project ended, they were inspired to pass on what they learned to their schools and friends.



"The mental well-being workshops helped me manage stress and emotions. I even shared what I learned with friends outside the project, and it helped them too." (young participant)



"I became more confident and open. Before, I was too shy to speak in front of others, but now I can share my ideas without fear." (young participant)



Transform the community - establish an effective youth council

Organiser: **Youth organisation Terne Bersha**

Place: **Pantaivka, Ukraine**

Grant awarded: **€15.000**

In spring 2024, the NGO Terne Bersha kicked off a Youth Council at the Pantaivka Settlement Council with 19 young people, including Roma youth. They ran workshops to break down stereotypes about Roma people and helped bring three youth projects to life: through creation of two youth-friendly spaces for young people, putting-up schoolkid signs near a risky crossing, and handing-out reflective equipment to almost 600 children, thus contributing to making the neighbourhoods safer for everyone.



Free and brave

Organiser: **NGO Education 360°**

Place: **Kyiv, Ukraine**

Grant awarded: **€15.000**

The Education 360° NGO organised a “Free and Brave Academy”, succeeding to develop key personal qualities among 30 IDP teenagers from the Kyiv region, offering psycho-emotional support and career guidance. Participants worked in teams, completed interactive tasks, and boosted their creative thinking. This helped them discover new approaches to solving life challenges.

“Investing in young people is an investment not only in the present, but also in stronger communities tomorrow.” (Rostyslav, head of the NGO Education 360°)



Youth anchor: civic engagement as a key to downturning brain drain from Ukraine

Organiser: **NGO 3.5 Percent**

Place: **Mukachevo, Ukraine**

Grant awarded **€14.960**

The 3.5 Percent NGO explored how participation in local community activities influences young people in the Zakarpattia region when deciding whether to migrate or stay. The NGO worked with 10 youth centers and brought together over 240 young people in focus group discussions and activities. Through this, young people picked up new skills, gained access to informal learning opportunities and found new ways to take part in civic life. This helped them feel more connected and less eager to move away. The final study looked at the reasons preventing young people from getting actively involved and proposed fresh ideas to reach and include diverse youth groups.

"We include representatives of different youth groups in the planning process, and this brings incredible results – young people feel like real partners, not just participants."
(Maria, participant and head of Tiachiv Youth Council)

"We introduced a mentorship system where successful local people share their experience with youth and this really works to retain talent in the region."
(Viktoria, participant and head of Bushtyno Youth Center)



Tales of the brave

Organiser: **Foundation for Holistic and Sustainable Development Windmill Tree**

Place: **Jelenia Góra, Poland**

Grant awarded: **€14.954**

The Foundation for Holistic and Sustainable Development Windmill Tree through the project "Tales of the Brave" brought Polish and Ukrainian youth together in workshops, hikes, meet-ups with writers, and fun interactive activities. These moments helped 20 young Ukrainian refugees and their Polish peers to open up, express their emotions, and grow more confident while sharing their experiences. Finally, the group created a book of stories they wrote and illustrated themselves, thanks to creative workshops on storytelling, acting, and drawing.



Art, youth and a shared path to peace

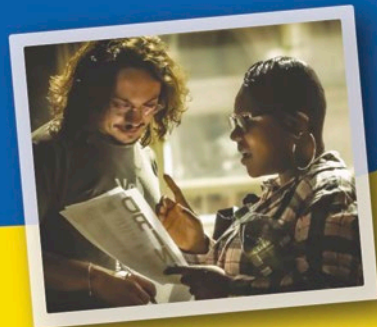
Organiser: **Youth organisation Opera Circus Limited**

Places: **Bridport and London, United Kingdom**

Grant awarded: **€15.000**

This 10-day cultural exchange in Bridport and London brought together 10 young Ukrainians and 19 young people from the UK for creative workshops, learning sessions, and cultural exchanges. Participants visited the House of Commons and universities in London, sparking conversations on democracy, peace, and mental health, with Ukrainian participants sharing their stories and promoting Lviv as the European Youth Capital 2025. The project boosted participants' confidence, leadership, and advocacy skills, inspired creative self-expression, and even sparked new projects and trainings back in Lviv.

"I felt like I could truly be myself and open up during the project. The sense of community felt very powerful and I learned much more about how to help myself and others dealing with traumatic events." (young participant)



"The trauma-attuned care and leadership session were extremely interesting and insightful and definitely something I want to explore more of." (young participant)



Youth trajectory: defined

Organiser: **Junior Chamber International Youth (JCI Youth)**

Places: **Kyiv, Bucha, Uman and Lviv, Ukraine**

Grant awarded: **€14.930**

The NGO JCI Youth ran a project called "Youth trajectory: defined" to help displaced Ukrainian youth get more involved in their communities by hosting 5 interactive workshops in Kyiv, Bucha, and Uman for 60 young people aged 14-25. Using a board game called "Youth Trajectory," participants learned about civic engagement, democracy, and social activism. The project wrapped up with a two-day Youth Forum in Lviv, where 30 of the participants received advance training in facilitation and networking.

"The topics of participatory budgeting and public hearings were of particular interest to me, as they open up opportunities for active participation of young people in local processes." (young participant)



"I received a lot of practical advice from like-minded people. Practical instructions and examples will help in the future to develop my own projects and successfully implement them." (young participant)



Summer school for young disabled women “LEADERKA”

Organiser: **European Network on Independent Living Youth (ENIL)**

Place: **Brussels, Belgium**

Grant awarded: **€25.000**

In July 2025, the Summer School for Women and Girls with Disabilities “LEADERKA” brought together 15 young disabled women from Ukraine and other EU candidate countries for a powerful training in Brussels on political participation and advocacy through the lens of disability justice and intersectional feminism. Over four days, participants built a supportive community, shared stories, and boosted their confidence and leadership skills. They also discovered tools and created connections that will help them to make a change in their community.

“I got confidence and clear practical suggestions from decision makers about how to become one of them.” (young participant)

“The project opened new doors and opportunities for me. It got me out of my comfort zone and gave me the power to speak up and to learn the basics of politics.” (young participant)



“Through this experience, I discovered that people with disabilities can create new stories, overcome fears and explore new opportunities, ideas and talents. As a person who is hard of hearing, I realised that I am capable of achieving anything, no matter how difficult my life is.” (Tekle, participant from Georgia)



Youth drives inclusion

Organiser: **NGO Molod Online**

Place: **Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine**

Grant awarded: **€12.600**

The NGO Molod Online ran the project "Youth Drives Inclusion" in Zaporizhzhia aimed at making the city more welcoming for young people with disabilities using the principle "nothing about us without us." The NGO brought together 25 young people for a few workshops that came up with real ideas for making the city more inclusive. This led to more youth getting involved through the youth council, where they can push for inclusive city planning, and create a space where vulnerable groups and activists can work together to fix community issues.

"To be honest, I had no idea how many details we overlook when planning something 'for everyone'. These two days were a real eye-opener! I particularly enjoyed the practical exercises on assessing accessibility - I immediately started looking at my neighbourhood in a different way." (young participant)



"This training gave me a whole arsenal of inclusive methods! I realised that inclusion is not about 'quotas', but about creating a space where everyone feels comfortable being themselves." (Iлона, participant)



Future and hope: bridging youth resilience across borders

Organiser: **World Student Christian Federation in Europe (WSCF-E)**

Place: **Luserna San Giovanni, Italy**

Grant awarded: **€25.000**

This international meetup brought together 21 young people from Finland, Italy, Georgia, Slovakia, Hungary, Netherlands, Lebanon, Armenia, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Ukraine to create spaces for dialogue on faith and spiritual resilience during wartime. The goal was to build community and solidarity while learning skills like psychological first aid and how to handle emergencies. Through this project, youth networks got stronger, giving young people affected by conflict a space to speak up, stand up for what they believe, and spread the message of peace.



"The training was a truly unique experience, allowing me to connect with people from parts of the world I had never encountered before. It highlighted the crucial role of engaging young people in peacebuilding, especially in conflict-affected areas." (Salome, participant)

"Within the framework of the programme, I would emphasise that every individual, as well as entire nations, can face life's challenges. What is especially important, however, is not only recognising and discussing these challenges but also taking consistent and ongoing actions toward resolving them. In my view, this is the only way to achieve both inner and outer peace in the future." (Adrian, participant)



Get ready for peace!

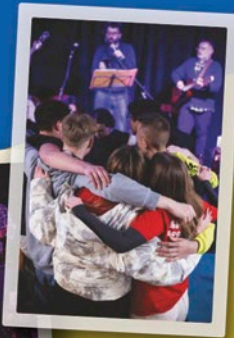
Organiser: **Youth organisation Aggregazione, Coscientizzazione, Movimentazione Sociale (ACMOS aps)**

Place: **Torino, Italy**

Grant awarded: **€14.200**

The NGO ACMOS aps hosted a 10-day youth exchange in Turin, Italy bringing together 18 Ukrainian students from Mykolaiv, Ukraine and 25 young people from Turin, to discuss topics like peace, democracy and nonviolence. The aim was to promote youth participation in political and social life through outreach in schools and public events. During the exchange, participants created a video sharing their stories and raising awareness about what it's like to be young in Ukraine during the war.

"We don't have an opportunity in Ukraine to frequently meet peers face to face. It's a really great and nice opportunity to create new relationships that maybe in Mykolaiv we don't have." (Dmytro, participant from Ukraine)



"These weeks that they are living together with us make us understand how unity can be one of the solutions – the strength that helps them cope better with the conflict. We also realise the actions we can take to provide further support for the difficult situation the Ukrainian population is facing now." (Lavinia, participant from Italy)



Environmental consequences of the war – monitoring and overcoming

Organiser: **Cooperation and Development Network for Eastern Europe (CDN)**

Place: **Sheptytskyi, Ukraine**

Grant awarded: **€ 25.000**

The Cooperation and Development Network for Eastern Europe, ran an international project in Sheptytskyi, Ukraine, where 25 participants from Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Serbia and Ukrainian youth aimed to study the environmental impact of the war in Ukraine and its links to democracy and human rights. Through talks and visits from local representatives, participants explored ways to boost environmental resilience and promote Ukraine's green recovery. The project inspired new cooperation between Ukrainian and European youth, resulting in three campaign plans addressing mining impacts, dam destruction effects, and environmental crime legislation.

"I was able to talk more about the impact of the war on the environment, why supporting Ukraine is important for Europe and the world, and also debunk some of the false claims Russia is trying to promote." (Natalia, participant from Ukraine)



"Through field observations and first-hand accounts, I gained unique insights into the resilience of Ukrainian society, the challenges of post-war reconstruction, and the urgent need to strengthen mechanisms of international solidarity and the enforcement of humanitarian law. This experience strengthened my commitment to international diplomacy, human rights, and environmental protection in conflict-affected regions." (Gala, participant from Spain)



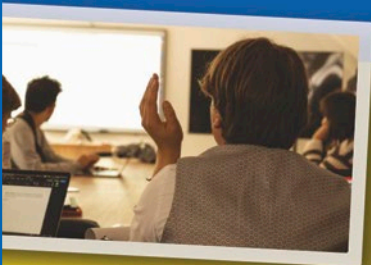
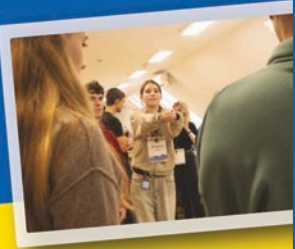
Rebuild Ukraine Ambassador Lab 2025 + Study visit to Ukraine

Organiser: **European Youth Parliament (EYP)**

Place: **Brasov, Romania**

The Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors Programme, organised by the European Youth Parliament, created a platform for young people to shape Ukraine's post-war reconstruction and the country's path towards EU accession. During the Rebuild Ukraine Lab attended by equal numbers of Ukrainian and European youth, 28 participants developed forward-looking proposals on economic, social, institutional and environmental recovery. They also went on a study visit to Lviv, which helped them add real-life insights to their proposals. The final Policy Paper, created from a youth perspective, will be shared with decision-makers in early 2026.

"For me, being part of the Rebuild Ukraine Ambassadors Project has been not only a chance to meet and connect with people with different perspectives, but also a chance to have a voice to express what I feel about how my country should be rebuilt, and to express it not only to my country, but also to Europe." (Nazarii, 20-year-old participant)



"As a returning Rebuild Ukraine Ambassador, it's truly an exciting and inspiring opportunity to work on the issues that matter deeply to me for the second year in a row, and to plan those vital steps of sustainable and inclusive reconstruction together with youth from all across Europe who care about Ukraine and show their dedication and incredible respect for our resilience and bravery." (Viktorii, 18-year-old participant)



The European Youth Foundation (EYF)

The European Youth Foundation (EYF) is a fund set up by the Council of Europe in 1972. The EYF provides financial and educational support to youth projects of youth organisations developed by, with and for young people, from the member states of the Council of Europe.

Every year, the EYF distributes more than 3.5 million euro to support around 150 youth projects, reaching out to over 15 000 young people.

The EYF supports local, national, and international youth organisations that share the Council of Europe's commitment to human rights, peace, and democratic participation. Whether they are planning a networking event, conducting research, developing online tools, or launching an awareness campaign, the EYF provides both financial support and educational guidance. EYF funded projects bring together young people from Council of Europe member states to learn from each other, build lasting connections, and work together on issues that matter to them and their communities.

For more information about the Special call in support of young people from Ukraine and to view the full list of approved projects, please consult the Special call page on the EYF website:

www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/2023-special-call-ukraine



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