



ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN CITIES

BY JOINT EFFORTS



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



ORGANISED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ASSOCIATION MEMORANDUM MADE
BY THE ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN CITIES AND THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND
REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

VOLUNTEER MAIL



The Congress

Le Congrès

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

FOREWORD

The competition “Stories of Invincibility and Co-Action in Communities in Time of War” was held in 2022 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 Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

Nine winners in the following categories were selected by the judges from among 200 entries from municipalities all over Ukraine: “Youth Engagement”, “E-Governance” and “Cohesion”. There was also a Grand Prix for the overall winner.

The awards were presented on 11 May 2023 as part of the “marathon” dedicated to Open Governance Week: Empowerment of local communities through citizen engagement in the recovery process.

The hope is that the stories recounted in this Guide will be of use to other municipalities in fostering greater civic engagement by introducing non-discriminatory practices at local level.

We are grateful to the Armed Forces of Ukraine for affording communities not only protection but also the opportunity to continue delivering vital services to the local population.

We are grateful to the communities for their invincibility, to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe for their co-operation, and to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for supporting the initiative.

Oleksandr SLOBOZHAN

**Executive Director of the Association of Ukrainian Cities,
PhD in Public Administration**



NOVOVOLYNSK CITY COMMUNITY

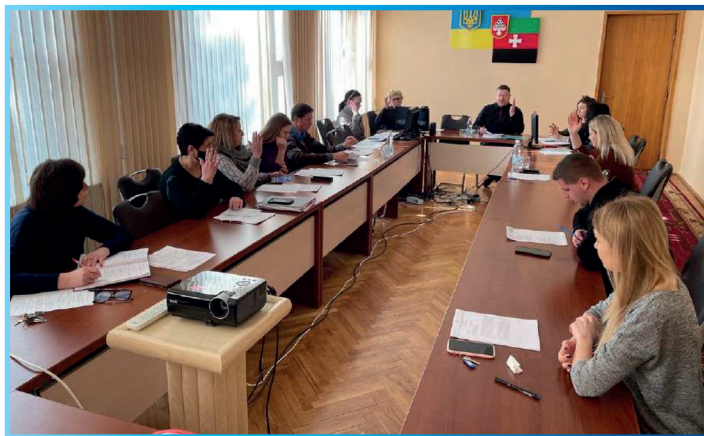
VOLYN REGION



Since the outbreak of the war, the community has rallied together and organised the information service at the checkpoint and road signs, the 24/7 IDP Support Centre, the information point in the city council, Novovolynsk HELP Logistics Centre, and a 24/7 hotline.

The executive committee of Novovolynsk City Council put together teams who worked on a rota to provide round-the-clock support, registering IDPs, assessing their needs and forwarding information. As the IDPs arrived and were registered, local residents brought food, clothing, mattresses, pillows and other aid. Residents who were willing and able to host people arriving from areas of active hostilities made themselves known to the IDP Support Centre. The new arrivals were registered at the Centre straightaway. Initially, registration was done on paper but in March 2022 the process was digitalised with the help of IDPs from Kyiv. Digital registration is still ongoing today.

Novovolynsk SOS Chatbot providing information and advice for IDPs. The user is given access to the themed Telegram channel and, after registration, to the chatbot, enabling them to quickly obtain the contact details of municipal institutions, access to medical services (e.g. haemodialysis), information on eligibility for state aid and financial assistance under non-governmental programmes, job vacancies and the various types of help available from the Employment Centre and the Mental Health Protection Centre, advice on how to protect themselves from human trafficking, explanations from the Ministry of Social Protection of Ukraine on the laws on social protection of IDPs, details of opportunities for families with children as regards local clubs, Ukrainian language and history courses for IDPs. The chatbot can also be used by those wishing to volunteer in the local community.



Kyivstar helped create the multi-channel hotline with automated forwarding to various relevant services and initiatives depending on the request.

There are also tours for business people interested in investing in the local area. The tours are organised by city council staff together with local entrepreneurs in response to requests from potential investors, and include visits to possible sites, discussions on the terms and conditions of co-operation and opportunities to talk to local entrepreneurs.

IDPs are integrated into the community on the principle that they represent an asset for the city, rather than a problem.

25 February 2022 – still in progress



BORATYN VILLAGE COMMUNITY

VOLYN REGION



“Social cohesion centred on youth development and cultural heritage preservation” is the central idea behind the initiative implemented in August and September 2022, which included creating a youth centre at the Prosvita People’s House in Ratniv Village, implementing an awareness-raising campaign and engaging local residents in activities to foster social cohesion.

In an effort to build a stronger sense of community and create opportunities for young people, a youth group in Boratyn set up the non-governmental organisation “Think and Act UA”. The first step was to initiate a constructive dialogue between representatives of the authorities, businesses and active local residents. With this in mind, they embarked on the joint task of creating a new youth centre. Boratyn Village Council allocated the premises, the old cloakroom in Prosvita People’s House, and arranged for electrical wiring to be installed. The renovation work was carried out not only by local residents, but also by young people from different parts of Ukraine since the NGO “Think and Act UA” joined the youth exchange project VidNOVA:UA.

In addition to working at the facility, the young people had an opportunity to get to know



one another during their free time, familiarise themselves with the local community and share experience. Thanks to the initiative, another place for young people to meet was created in Boratyn. Most important, all these activities led to close, constructive communication between local residents about development issues while at the same time helping to increase youth participation in local affairs, foster a sense of community and preserve the region’s traditions and historical and cultural heritage.

🕒 August and September 2022



SHATSK URBAN COMMUNITY

VOLYN REGION



The initiative implemented in Shatsk brought various stakeholders together to address a pressing need that had arisen during martial law: to purchase a vehicle for the military of Shatsk Territorial Community. Several entities teamed up to raise funds for the vehicle: local self-government bodies (Tourism and Promotion Department of the Community Development Centre, Shatsk Town Council), young people (bloggers and activists), volunteers and local entrepreneurs. Everyone had their part to play. The entrepreneurs provided services and goods, which were then used as lottery prizes. The young people acted as initiators and promoted the lottery on social media. The volunteers raised funds and eventually purchased the vehicle. The staff of the Tourism and Promotion Department registered participants, compiled the list of lots and prepared material for social media. Lastly, the bloggers and the Department conducted the lottery and handed out prizes to the winners. The initiative was implemented on the basis of open governance principles, through dialogue between young people and officials.



As a result of the initiative, local self-government bodies adopted a new approach: using social media to communicate with the local population. The fact that the online lottery was broken down into thirty lots (goods and services donated by local entrepreneurs), with lottery tickets priced at UAH 50, each helped to make the goal achievable. The money needed to buy the vehicle was raised in six days. The lottery was conducted on the Facebook and Instagram pages of the Shatsk Tourism and Promotion Department.

The initiative was promoted through a video of the Kupala Night celebrations at a nearby lake.

The video, which was jointly produced by the lottery organiser and proactive young people, highlighted the beauty of the lake and the surrounding area and also the need to protect it. It attracted more than seven thousand views in a week.

In total, we managed to raise UAH 81 700 in six days through donations and the sale of 1 030 lottery tickets. The Volkswagen Transporter T4, which was sent to the front line for use by the 14th Mechanised Brigade, was purchased from the funds raised.

🕒 June to August 2022



NOVOARKHANHELSK URBAN COMMUNITY

KIROVOHRAD REGION



INVINCIBLE UKRAINE Photo Project: Ukrainian outfits, professional photos, meet-ups, general morale-boosting and charitable donations for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. A woman from Novoarkhanhelsk and a man from Kharkiv, who were behind one of the key concepts of the project, namely enabling local residents to get to know one another, were engaged as photographers. The images were created by the project participants themselves who were invited to borrow the Ukrainian costumes kept at the community centre.



The first mural appeared. It showed a girl wearing an embroidered shirt and a circlet of flowers against a backdrop of fields and sky, and a couplet from the anthem of Novoarkhanhelsk Community. Through the image, the artists sought to convey their love and respect for their homeland with yellow ears of wheat and green grass. Young people were involved in the process of creating the mural: students from Kyiv university, local residents and IDPs. Later on, storks, a symbol of peace, were added.



Eco Meetings at Syniukha. The project was initiated by four young families from Kharkiv. The village council supplied bin bags to those participating in the clean-up,

and arranged for a tractor with a trailer to remove the rubbish afterwards. The project participants collected bottles, plastic bags, containers and other rubbish and sorted it on the spot.

🕒 February 2022 – still in progress



BILOHORODKA VILLAGE COMMUNITY

KYIV REGION



Bilohorodka has become a staging post along the Road of Life for between 50 000 and 70 000 (estimates vary) people evacuated from the adjacent communities. They were met by the team of volunteers set up via the Telegram channel and group. On 2 March 2022, when the evacuations began, a database was created, giving the contact details of Bilohorodka residents eager to offer individuals and families a warm bed for the night, a hot shower and a wholesome breakfast. In total, 16 000 evacuees were hosted via Telegram.



Where there were additional needs, people received help via Telegram to help them prepare for their onward travel. Telegram was used to assemble teams of volunteers to build defences and fortifications. Adults and children, cats and dogs were rescued, and permits to drive during



the curfew issued where necessary. Targeted delivery of humanitarian aid and transportation of those unable to get to the bus collection point on their own was co-ordinated. The Telegram channel and group have proven a powerful means of communicating with the local community. The group was also used as an advertising platform for local businesses. It was particularly useful for those businesses which resumed operating during the defence and after the de-occupation of the Kyiv region.

There is a separate chatbot (https://t.me/yourbusinessguide_bot) where entrepreneurs can post about their businesses free of charge and offer goods and services. There is also a channel where employers can post local job vacancies (https://t.me/bilohorodka_work). There are plans to expand and improve existing services. In particular, there is a separate channel for internally displaced persons, of whom there are around 5 000 registered and living in Bilohorodka.

🕒 February 2022 – still in progress



ROZDILNA CITY COMMUNITY

ODESA REGION



In order to cover as many people as possible, the online survey was unverified and anonymous, with no personal data collected. The findings were made public and presented to those living in the streets and lanes which it was proposed to rename. Almost 3 000 people took part in the survey, out of a total pre-invasion population of around 32 000 for Rozdilna as a whole.

When casting their votes, the respondents were not required to comment on each and every street and lane: they were at liberty to vote for or against whichever of the thirty-five propositions they wished. The survey findings and diagrams can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3LUwBUB>. The next stage was offline consultations in each street to be renamed.

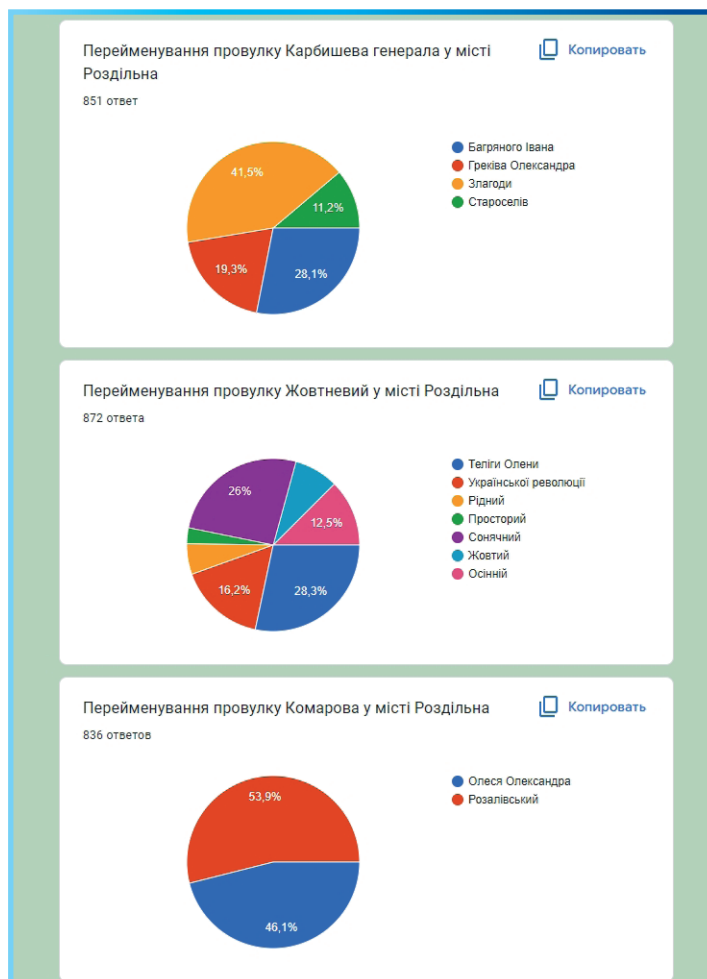


Following the field consultations (<https://bit.ly/3Ruk2QZ>), Rozdilna City Council working group produced a summary of the findings of the survey conducted among the residents of the streets and lanes concerned. In 40% of cases, i.e. or fourteen out of thirty-five place names, the views of these residents coincided with those of the wider population of Rozdilna. At its ordinary session on 22 September 2022, Rozdilna City Council resolved to rename the streets and lanes in the settlements of Rozdilna City Territorial Community based on the official records of the field consultations (further details can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3fxu5HE>).



The City Council gained practical experience of introducing e-governance and, encouraged by the outcome of the exercise, intends to create a full-scale portal with respondent verification to gauge public opinion on any matters of interest to the community that might arise in the future.

🕒 May to September 2022

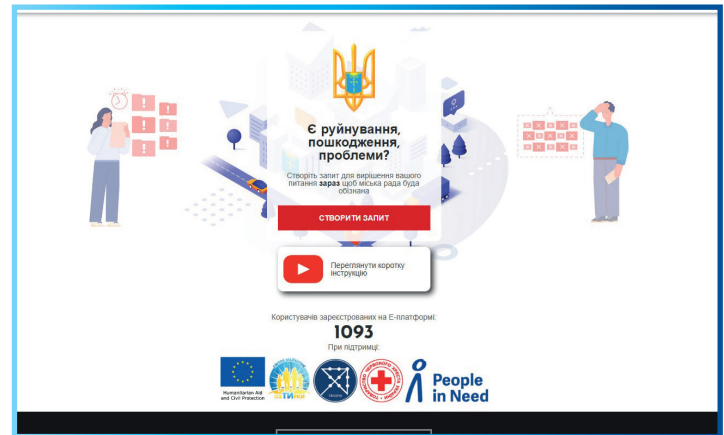


OKHTYRKA CITY COMMUNITY

SUMY REGION



The E-platform for Communication with Okhtyrka City Council is a service similar to the Diia portal but, unlike Diia, it operates at local level, addressing local matters. Every resident of Okhtyrka whose home has been damaged or destroyed by the war can complete a simple form and submit a claim via the E-Platform for Communication with Okhtyrka City Council. The claim is processed and forwarded to funds,

A screenshot of the mobile app interface. The header reads "Е-ПЛАТФОРМА КОМУНІКАЦІЇ З ОХТИРСЬКОЮ МІСЬКОЮ РАДОЮ" (E-Platform for Communication with Okhtyrka City Council). A form field for "Назва організації" (Organization name) is shown with a checkbox "На даний момент, без роботи" (Currently, no work). Below, "КРОК 4:" (STEP 4) includes a "Вікно" (Window) dropdown menu, radio buttons for "Однокамерне" (Single-story), "Двукамерне" (Two-story), and "Балконне" (Balcony), and input fields for "100" and "200". Radio buttons for "- м" and "- см" are also present. "КРОК 5:" (STEP 5) includes a prompt to "Додати фотографію об'єкта" (Add object photo) with a note: "Це на 90% збільшить ймовірність того, що вашу заявку розглянуть серед перших (До 4 фото):" (This will increase the probability of your application being reviewed among the first ones by 90% (Up to 4 photos)).

patrons and charitable organisations with which Okhtyrka City Council has established co-operation, for the purpose of securing targeted compensation for damages.

Thanks to the platform, Okhtyrka City Council is already working closely with the following organisations: Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, People in Need, Medair, Save the Children, Bright Future Okhtyrky, the International Committee of the Red Cross in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, the French NGO ACTED, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Renaissance Foundation and Proliska.

Okhtyrka City Council is doing its utmost to help each and every resident of Okhtyrka in these difficult times. Website link: <http://epko.org.ua/>

🕒 August 2022 – still in progress



**Е-ПЛАТФОРМА КОМУНІКАЦІЙ
З ОХТИРСЬКОЮ
Міською Радою**
☰

Розміри:	Висота: 160 см Ширина: 190 см
Тип дверей:	Вхідні
Адреса:	Корсунь НП 1
Прізвище:	Ніна Іванівна Матвієнко
Телефон:	+380(66)011-39-02
Соціальний статус:	Пенсіонер,
Місце роботи:	На даний момент, без роботи
Фото:	

- Підтверджую видалення
 ВИДАЛИТИ

ЗАПИТ #89 (Вікно)
🕒 Чекає на обробку

Рубрика:	Пошкоджене майно
	Багатоповерхівка
Що пошкоджено:	Вікно
Склопакет:	Однокамерне
Розміри:	Висота: 160 см Ширина: 190 см
Адреса:	Корсунь НП 1
Прізвище:	Ніна Іванівна Матвієнко
Телефон:	+380(66)011-39-02
Соціальний статус:	Пенсіонер,

MELITOPOL CITY COMMUNITY

ZAPORIZHZHIA REGION



The humanitarian centre “**Right-Here Open Space**” was opened in Zaporizhzhia on 17 June 2022. The team of single-minded people includes local government and NGO officials and business representatives. The purpose of the initiative is to tackle wartime challenges based on open governance and social cohesion. To date, the Centre has helped more than 8 500 persons in total. Every day, some 100 IDPs are issued with humanitarian packages containing food, personal hygiene

and children’s items. Everyone receives a regular package over several weeks, and more than 17 000 have been distributed so far. The Centre’s current tasks include working with businesses, the public and foreign partners to provide warm clothing, blankets, heaters and other essential items to IDPs.

3D Dimension of Educational Sustainability in Melitopol

Melitopol in Zaporizhzhia Region has been occupied by Russia since the start of the full-scale invasion. Local secondary schools have been under Russian control since mid-March 2022. The education department of Melitopol City Council and local secondary school staff



have become the driving force of efforts to counteract the hijacking of the education system amid the extremely difficult conditions of martial law. They managed to complete the academic year and issue educational records to all pupils, to start the new academic year 2022/2023 using remote learning in 100% of general secondary schools, and to develop the city-wide platform for online education: <https://do.mlt.gov.ua/>

🕒 March 2022 – still in progress



ODESA CITY COMMUNITY

ODESA REGION



The “Donor Odesa” project seeks to ensure that the blood donation needs of health care facilities are met promptly, and to raise awareness among Odesa residents and get them working together to counter Russian aggression. Communication is carried out by means of digital solutions via the “Donor Odesa” Telegram channel, where information on donor blood needs as well as on how to become a donor, the benefits of donorship etc. is posted on a regular basis. Anyone wishing to donate blood can complete the registration form, which is then used by the project volunteers to gather together a certain number of donors with the necessary blood group on a specific date. Not only does this help to prevent the long



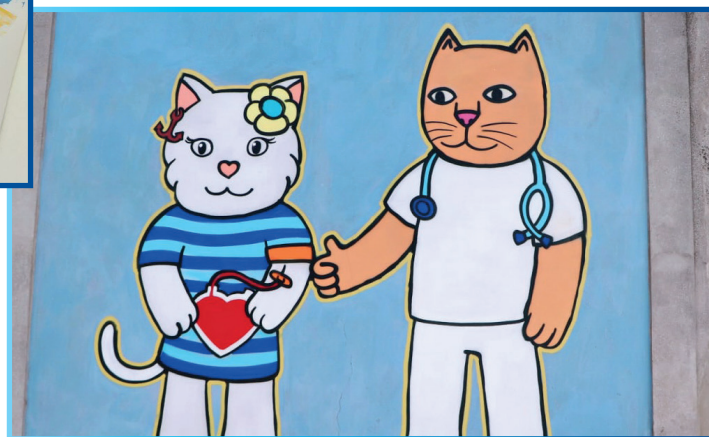
queues that inevitably form if you just post a public appeal for blood donations, but it also ensures that the human resources and capacities of the health care system are used in a rational and efficient manner.

The project’s activities also include outreach work: a large photo exhibition dedicated to blood donation, talks on donorship for young people, and small-format posters advertising donorship displayed around the city.

The project mascot, the donor kitty, was created, and the project branding and merchandising products to be issued to donors as proof of participation were developed with the help of an Odesa-based artist famous for her patriotic cat designs, Yuliia Podmohina. Also, the large mural supporting blood donorship was created in Odesa by volunteers.

A number of citizens and socially responsible businesses are actively involved in the “Donor Odesa” project. Several blood donation campaigns were organised by staff of the companies concerned as a team-building exercise, to demonstrate corporate social responsibility and support for volunteering. More than 1 800 donors who have donated more than 800 litres of blood for those fighting to defend Ukraine and other citizens have been involved via the project since the beginning of the war. Given that one donor saves at least two lives, more than 3 500 lives have been saved in total thanks to the “Donor Odesa” project.

🕒 February 2022 – still in progress



KHMELNYTSKYI CITY COMMUNITY

KHMELNYTSKYI REGION



VOLUNTEER MAIL



The **Volunteer Mail** project was launched the day after the invasion, on 25 February 2022. It involves delivering mail to communities in eastern and southern Ukraine, where Ukrposhta and Nova Poshta are not operating due to the hostilities. In addition, volunteers offer media and legal support as well as other services. The oldest volunteer, who picks up parcels every day, is over 65. Many of the Volunteer Mail team members are

young people: entrepreneurs, students and even schoolchildren and... models! There are around twenty of them. Fifteen or so of the volunteers are members of Khmelnytskyi city, regional and district councils, which helps to ensure good communication with the authorities and comprehensive project support from local government. Indeed, the project owes much of its success to this co-operation between the public and the authorities.

Volunteer Mail delivers everything except alcoholic beverages. That is the basic principle of the scheme. As well as parcels sent by Khmelnytskyi residents to family members who have remained in the area of hostilities or who are defending the country on the front line, the volunteers deliver parcels to military units (tactical ammunition, plate carriers, uniforms,



army boots, generators, fuel, camouflage nets, tents, blackout film for dug-out shelters, clothing, medicines, personal hygiene products etc.). When it gets cold, Volunteer Mail delivers potbelly stoves and thermal underwear to the military. Examples of more unusual assignments include delivering windscreens to eastern Ukraine and towing back an off-road vehicle for repairs, or helping homeless animals (one of which even took up residence in the Volunteer Mail office).

🕒 25 February 2022 – still in progress



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