



Funded by
the European Union



SUCCESS STORIES AND BEST PRACTICES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS DURING THE WARTIME

We would like to introduce you to the seven projects implemented by Ukrainian civil society organizations under the UNDP project "EU4Dialogue: Strengthening Ukraine's Resilience to Respond to the Immediate Needs of Central and Local Authorities and the War-Affected Population", which is implemented with the financial support of the European Union.

We express our sincere gratitude to everyone who, whether in large cities or small villages, works daily to improve the lives of the communities severely affected by the Russian invasion.

These stories, which could also be called "success stories" or examples of civil society activities in Ukraine, will be of interest to representatives of non-governmental organizations, local governments, international organizations, civic activists, and any other individuals and legal entities working in the field of community development and reconstruction.

The opinions, conclusions, or recommendations are those of the authors or compilers of this publication. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme, or other UN agencies.

Read more about the activities of civil society organizations [here](#).

Foreword	4
-----------------------	---

Stories:

Nº1. Developing STEM and educational innovations amid war	7
Nº2. What are the coordinates of the successful community?	21
Nº3. "I dream of rebuilding Donetsk": the story of a twice IDP from the Donetsk region	33
Nº4. Together to a safe haven	47
Nº5. Libraries as centers for informal learning for IDPs in Lviv	63
Nº6. Building a community: Forced to flee front-line towns, newcomers to Poltava Oblast village find ways to develop their new home	75
Nº7. Bicycle Patrol 2.0: Strengthening safety and accessibility in Zaporizhzhia	89

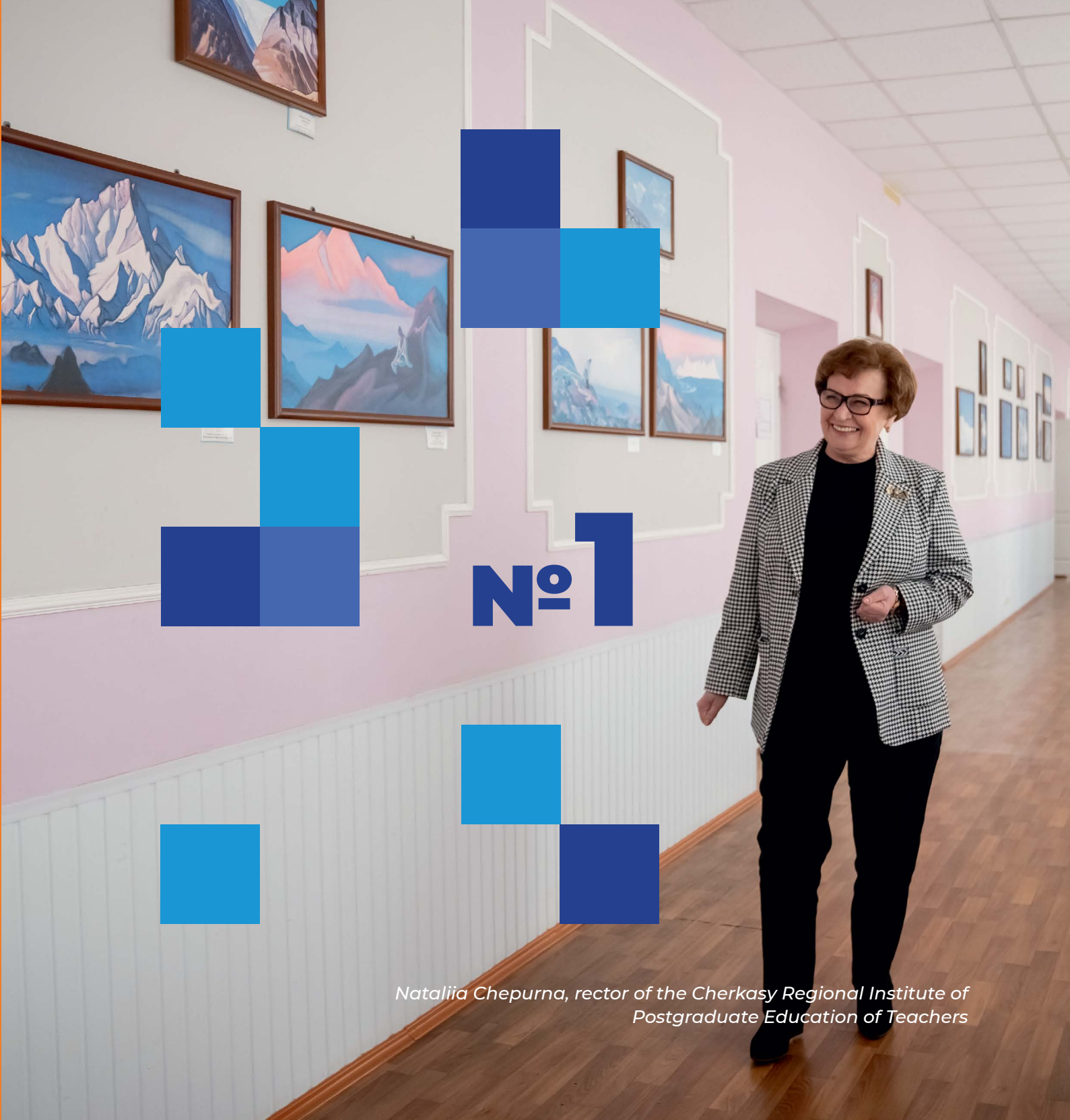
FOREWORD

Civil society organizations were the first to respond to the crises caused by the full-scale Russian invasion, providing life-saving assistance to affected communities and advocating for their interests. Despite all the difficulties, they have remained resilient, flexible, and committed to people in need.

UNDP, together with its partners, is actively working with civil society organizations to increase the country's resilience and further recovery. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the EU-funded project "EU4Dialogue: Support to Conflict Transformation in the South Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova" was adjusted to address the most urgent needs of war-affected Ukrainian communities. The projects of the civil society organizations featured in this collection were supported under this programme.

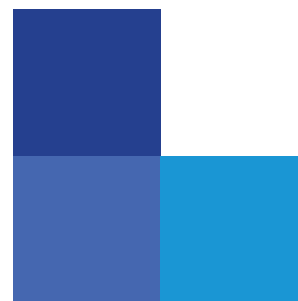
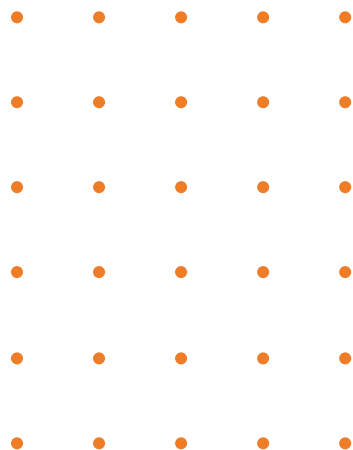
In total, since 24 February 2022, 39 civil society initiatives have been supported within the project "EU4Dialogue: Strengthening Ukraine's Resilience to Respond to the Immediate Needs of Central and Local Authorities and the War-Affected Population." They aim to improve community living conditions, facilitate socio-economic development, and restore human capital. Behind these short phrases are tens of thousands of people, including internally displaced persons, who have been helped to settle in a new place, realize their professional potential, and integrate into local community life.





No 1

Nataliia Chepurna, rector of the Cherkasy Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education of Teachers



DEVELOPING STEM AND EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS AMID WAR



Obtaining a quality education in Ukraine has been a tough task for years. First, in 2020, the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic: smartphones and laptop screens had to replace the usual desks and textbooks in schools and universities as Ukraine, along with other countries, entered a period of lockdown and working from home.

Two years later, Ukrainian education, which had not yet fully adapted to the dramatic technological changes brought about by the pandemic, faced the onslaught of full-scale Russian invasion and war, which brought with it air raids, missile strikes, and blackouts.

Many students had to flee the country. According to UNICEF data, more than two million of Ukraine's roughly seven million children have become refugees and fled abroad with their parents, while about three million more children have become internally displaced within the country.

Under such conditions, how can a proper learning environment be maintained, and how can children be encouraged to become interested in math, English, sciences and humanities?

The "Skills of the Future" educational hub, located at the Cherkasy Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education of Teachers' STEM Learning and Training Centre, has found answers to these tricky questions.

Three years ago, Nataliia Chepurna, the rector of the Cherkasy Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education of Teachers, met Anton Dziuba, who, together with a group of like-minded educators, has been implementing STEM learning in Ukraine since 2016. Together, Chepurna and Dziuba decided to set up a STEM education centre.

Dziuba says providing children with a STEM education is critical for Ukraine's future, as this approach integrates the natural sciences and humanities, providing the kind of well-rounded education needed in the modern world. "If a child has a talent, we need to uncover it," Dziuba says. "A child can do anything. They may not be interested in programming, but they can program. STEM means learning via cases."

With the onset of full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, children and parents had to relocate from the worst affected areas to safer places in Ukraine. The Cherkasy Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education of Teachers and its STEM Centre began working with IDP children and supporting teachers in organizing the educational process. The challenges of the war showed them they needed to set up a space where new community residents and their children could be helped to gain a quality education and competencies for the future.

Developing STEM and educational innovations amid war

So seven months into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in September 2022, the Educational Initiatives Foundation charity organization, headed by Dziuba, opened its "Skills of the Future" educational hub at the STEM Centre in Cherkasy, supported by the EU4Dialogue project of the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The new educational hub has laptops that teachers can use to run practical exercises, ranging from creating presentations to programming robots. IDP children got free internet access and opportunities to use modern technology for learning. The educational hub is now a platform where internally displaced persons — schoolchildren, students, and their parents — can receive educational services and acquire digital competencies. More than 200 people study here every month.



Anton Dziuba, Chairman of the Board of the Educational Initiatives Foundation charity organization



The "Skills of the Future" educational hub

If a family with multiple children has only one laptop or no devices for studying, they can work on computers in the educational hub. Local pupils and students come here together with displaced children.

"WE ALSO HELPED TEACHERS IN THE FRONTLINE AREAS TO COMPLETE THEIR ANNUAL CERTIFICATION,"

says Chepurna

"BY THE BEGINNING OF THE SUMMER OF 2022, MORE THAN 3,500 TEACHERS FROM DONETSK, LUHANSK, KHERSON, AND OTHER REGIONS WERE ABLE TO IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS REMOTELY."

If students have internet connection problems during online classes, Chepurna said the centre's trainers have recorded webinars for them.

"They published them on the website so that they would be available at any time," she says. "And for pupils in grades 1-11, the team recorded video fragments of lessons lasting 10-15 minutes in all school disciplines."

The STEM Centre also has a 3D printer, Lego sets, various drones, and a unique construction set for building a robot that can perform specific tasks.

STEM trainers Oleh Tkachenko and Yevhen Kachkar conduct their lessons in a computer studio furnished with a multimedia whiteboard, video cameras, and laptops. The trainers, who are now vital team members of the Cherkasy educational hub, bring a unique perspective to the STEM Centre team, derived from the time they spent serving in the State Emergency Service of Ukraine.

Kachkar, who joined the team in 2018, said the State Emergency Service of Ukraine now uses a range of modern technologies, including firefighting robots.

"Robots help in demining," Kachkar says. "I'm adapting my previous experience and applying it here at the STEM Centre."

Developing STEM and educational innovations amid war

With the support of the EU and the UNDP, the centre's trainers received equipment and comprehensive training, including training on organizing and managing big events.



A multimedia classroom for educational activities

Tkachenko, who joined the team in October 2022, says he used to showcase the work of the SES during firefighting and disaster relief.

"Now I help to develop digitalization at the centre; in particular, we're exploring new technologies to implement remote education. I train teachers who want to move their lessons online using laptops and smartphones."

Yulia Zorya, who has worked at the Cherkasy Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education for Teachers for five years, coordinates the work of the STEM Centre's trainers.

Zorya said that

**"ALTHOUGH THE PROJECT
PRIMARYLY CATERS TO IDPS,
EVERYONE IS WELCOME AT
THE CENTRE."**

"For example, a mother read an ad somewhere on the street and called us, saying, 'I have an eight-year-old son, but we're not internally displaced. Can we come?' I answered that of course they could!"



Yulia Zorya, the STEM Centre's coordinator, in a conversation with journalist Marharyta Lubkova

"When launching this project, we realized that in a full-scale war, we must first help those who have suffered," Zorya says.

"You can get the feeling that someone next to you doesn't have the basic opportunities that almost everyone used to have. You recognize that people need help, so you give as much as you can."

Supporting the local host community

While the centre plays a pivotal role in supporting displaced children, it also offers its resources and learning opportunities to the local host community. The educational hub has grown into a vibrant meeting point, where local students and pupils can get together, collaborate, and engage in learning beyond the confines of a traditional classroom setting.



The STEM learning and training centre of the Cherkasy Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education of Teachers

The centre's dedicated team carefully curates groups according to age, interest, and skill level, ensuring that each student receives the most suitable and enriching educational experience. The engaging learning environment at the centre nurtures creativity and innovative thinking: children have the opportunity to assemble robots, work with construction sets, and immerse themselves in cutting-edge technology with virtual reality goggles.

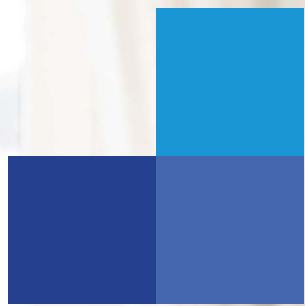
Access to these resources and learning opportunities is entirely free. This inclusivity reaffirms the centre's commitment to fostering an equitable learning environment, where financial constraints do not hinder the quest for knowledge and skills. In this way, the centre not only aids in sustaining the educational journey of displaced students, but also serves as a significant educational asset to the local community.

The teams at the Educational Initiatives Foundation and the STEM Centre at the Cherkasy Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education of Teachers believe that STEM education is something that reveals talents, gives children the opportunity to play in the modern world, and at the same time learn physics, biology, mathematics, Ukrainian language, and other important subjects.

"It is in our area of expertise to analyse the activities of our colleagues from Cherkasy and give feedback," said Dziuba. "Via training, we've also managed to help the hub's coaches. Our key task is to ensure the sustainability of the project and the quality of the trainers' work. We want the hub in Cherkasy to become a powerful digital educational centre."



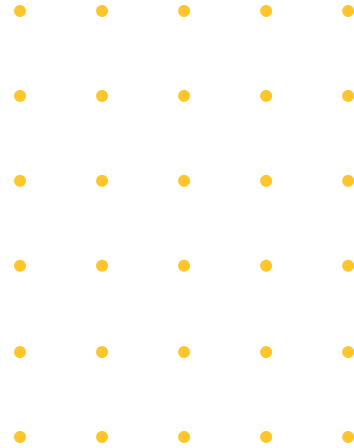
The STEM learning and training centre



№2



Tetiana Hotsuliak in a conversation with journalist Marharyta Lubkova in the office of the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community"



WHAT ARE THE COORDINATES OF THE SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY?



What are the coordinates of the successful community?

An NGO in the Novoushytska hromada (community) of Khmelnytskyi Oblast, with the support of the EU4Dialogue project of the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has opened a social laundry and thus brought together internally displaced persons and locals.

When trying to save yourself and your family from the occupation, you don't think about a bed with an orthopedic mattress and don't drag a washing machine with you. You take everything you can and pack it into a small suitcase.

We decided to visit a community that had opened a social laundry for internally displaced persons. This place has become a cozy, safe space where people do their laundry and find new friends and support.

"THIS PROJECT IS ABOUT PEOPLE, NOT WASHING MACHINES,"

says Tetiana Hotsuliak, the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community" co-founder



Tetiana Hotsuliak, the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community" co-founder

**What are the coordinates
of the successful community?**



Social laundry in the village of Zahrodske, and Nova Ushytsia urban town settlement of the Novoushytska territorial community in Khmelnytskyi Oblast

The GPS navigation led us to the Novoushytska territorial community in Khmelnytskyi Oblast, which unites 58 villages, the village of Zahrodske, and Nova Ushytsia urban town settlement. Tetiana Hotsuliak, the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community" co-founder, was waiting for us here.

Before the full-scale invasion, the team had been promoting children and youth comprehensive development. They held various events and organized hikes, including hiking routes along the Dniester River.

"When I worked at a college — my first job — I spent much time with young people aged 16-18. I always felt they were underestimated and not paid enough attention. I wanted to contribute to developing these girls and boys. As it turned out, these children will become fully launched if they get proper knowledge and skills in this period," says Tetiana. "However, the invasion forced us to radically change the direction of our work and implement projects to support IDPs."

With the support of the European Union and UNDP in Ukraine, under EU4Dialogue program, the NGO team opened a social laundry in Nova Ushytsia for internally displaced persons living in small villages in the community.

What are the coordinates of the successful community?

"In the beginning, when we discussed the coming laundry, we were thinking more about how to meet the basic needs of newcomers and help in everyday life. But shortly after the opening, we realized that the socialization of people was the core. Even though they must make an appointment for a certain time, they come with their families and stay for three to four hours to talk to like-minded people," says Tetiana.

There is a washing machine and a dryer in the Novoushytske Village Council's Social Services Center. Two more washing machines are in the dormitory of the Novoushytske lyceum. In addition to the appliances, both premises have everything necessary for washing, drying, and ironing. These services are free of charge for internally displaced people and socially vulnerable groups.

"In the center, we distribute humanitarian aid, provide social services, and do laundry. The IDPs are like family; here, something is always going on! Therefore, this project is about people, not washing machines," assures Tetiana Hotsuliak.

The NGO team faced numerous challenges in starting the social laundry.



*Tetiana Hotsuliak, the
NGO "Coordinates of the
Successful Community"
co-founder*

"I thought this was probably our most unsuccessful project. From the beginning, we faced ongoing problems," says Tetiana Hotsuliak. "We believed the whole thing was pretty much effortless, the budget was minimal, and we expected neither renovation nor any events."

In the summer of 2022, the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community" budgeted funds for washing machines, small appliances, and a salary for the person to oversee the laundry. In reality, it took three weeks to find three matching washing machines.

What are the coordinates of the successful community?

"As soon as equipment for the laundry was ready for installation, the sewer broke, and we asked the village head for help as reporting deadline was approaching. The head allocated funds from the local budget, and soon after, they began replacing collectors and repairing pipes," says Tetiana Hotsuliak.

The long-awaited moment finally arrived: everything was fixed, the laundry room was set up, and invitations were sent. Five minutes before the opening, the air raid siren goes off.

"People came, but we couldn't let them in and asked them to go to the shelter and wait until it sounded all-clear. It felt as if everything was against us," Tetiana recalls with a smile. "We opened the social laundry in the presence of the village head and local authorities. The raid lasted for three hours. Since then, there have been no more troubles."

"IT IS CRUCIAL FOR US TO WORK NOT ONLY FOR IDPS BUT ALSO FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES,"

says Tetiana Hotsuliak, the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community" co-founder

One of the unique features of the social laundry is its exceptional availability for people with disabilities. The facilities are equipped with not only wheelchair ramps but also specially designed restrooms and places for rest.

"It is crucial for us to work not only for IDPs but also for people with disabilities. For example, my friend's son has severe cerebral palsy: although Denys can't walk, he actively helps his parents," says Tatiana Gotsulyak.

"I REMEMBER COMING TO WORK; EVERYONE WAS SHOCKED, STUNNED. I JUST STOOD THERE WITH THOSE ORANGES IN MY HANDS."

Tetiana Hotsuliak, the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community" co-founder, about the beginning of the full-scale invasion

24 February 2022 is the day the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community" co-founder associates with oranges.

What are the coordinates of the successful community?

"I was not ready for the invasion; I did not believe it. I got up on Thursday morning, dressed, and went to the market to buy some oranges. Because it's a tradition: I always buy oranges in winter. Immediately my sister calls and cries hysterically: "Where are you? Are you running home to our parents in the countryside?" Tetiana Hotsuliak recalls that day. "I remember coming to work; everyone was shocked, stunned. I just stood there with those oranges in my hands."

After nearly a week of uncertainty, the team gets back to work. Someone with diabetes needs needles for injections; someone needs medicines after surgery. We ought to get it done. Someone was collecting aid for IDPs. Someone was delivering food by truck. Some picked newcomers up, and others resettled them.

"DESPITE THE PROBLEMS, LIFE GOES ON,"

says Tetiana Hotsuliak, the NGO "Coordinates of the Successful Community" co-founder

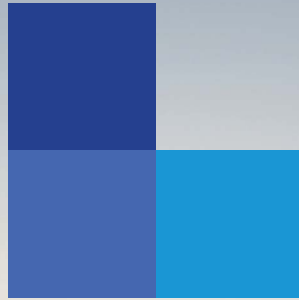
"In this way, we managed to overcome apathy and internal burnout pretty quickly, which helped us a lot," admits Tetiana.

"I am extremely grateful to my team for everyone's role. Someone calms me down; others run to make arrangements. Someone quietly does their job, and someone does more than they should. Despite the problems, life goes on."

Tetiana believes that Ukraine will be totally different after the victory: free as well as strong.

"Of course, it will not be easy for everybody. But I think Ukraine will change. People will start appreciating things they may not have noticed earlier: family, home, children, a piece of bread, and electricity. A peaceful, quiet sky. Victory will give an impetus, an inspiration to quickly restore everything and make it better. It will be difficult in the first years. However, by working together we will be able to make a country where people will want to come and stay," Tetiana is convinced.

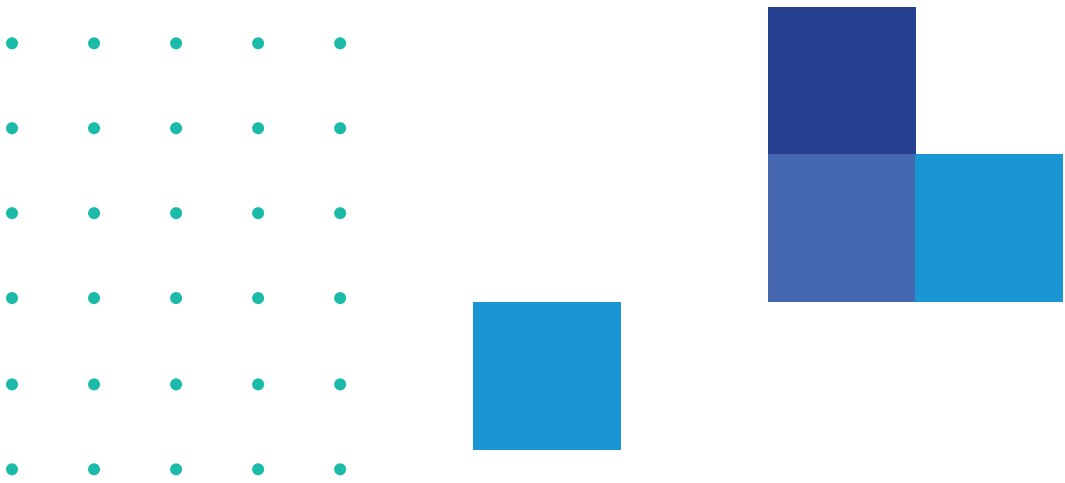
So, what are the coordinates of the successful community? Is it where you were given a safe haven, or where you help people yourself? Everyone will find the right answer in their hearts. "The key is to never give up," believes Tetiana Hotsuliak.




№3



Iurii Davydenko, the head of the NGO "Zahody," on the beach of the "Camp over Zbruch" near Khmelnytskyi



**"I DREAM OF REBUILDING
DONETSK": THE STORY OF
A TWICE IDP FROM THE
DONETSK REGION**



"I dream of rebuilding Donetsk": the story of a twice IDP from the Donetsk region

Iurii Davydenko was forced to start his life from scratch for the second time. In 2014, he moved to Mariupol, leaving occupied Makiivka. And in 2022, he and his wife managed to escape from besieged Mariupol. The NGO "Zahody" ("Events") was founded in Mariupol by Iurii and his friends, also IDPs from the Donetsk region, and now continues to help internally displaced persons in the west of Ukraine. "Zahody" is restoring and equipping an abandoned children's camp in Khmelnytskyi Oblast, which will become a rehabilitation center for war victims and internally displaced people.

**"I'M AN IDP TWICE. WHO WILL
HELP ME BUT MYSELF?"**

says Iurii Davydenko

Iurii Davydenko was involved in camping since childhood: as a child, he was a frequenter of summer camps, and as an adult, he worked as a leader in camps in Mariupol for three and a half years. Now Iurii and the NGO "Zahody" team are restoring and equipping an abandoned children's camp in Khmelnytskyi Oblast.



Iurii Davydenko, the head of the NGO "Zahody," in the renovated recreation room in the camp

"I dream of rebuilding Donetsk": the story of a twice IDP from the Donetsk region

"My first summer camp was in Sviatohirsk when I was seven. Then I went to different sanatoriums and traveled to Crimea and Mariupol. It was in Mariupol that I liked the most, so from the age of twelve, I went only there. The camp was a break from learning and working in the vegetable garden. You meet people, socialize, and plunge into the different life," Iurii shares his childhood memories.

Thanks to the support of the EU and UNDP, NGO "Zahody" renovated the ground floor and utility rooms in the basement of the camp. Now it's where one can work, hold various events, and even live for several months. The renovated camp has modern furniture, a bomb shelter, a generator, heating boilers, and satellite internet.



*Iurii Davydenko
shows the new
heating boilers*

"You can help yourself when you do something for other people. I'm an IDP twice. Who will help me but myself? Who will give me a place to live or support me in a rehabilitation center if I 'go crazy'? Where should I go? My team and I are doing what we all need," says Iurii.

The NGO "Zahody" team does its best to turn the former children's camp in the Khmelnytskyi region into a comprehensive rehabilitation center for internally displaced persons and war victims.

"Every good camp should combine an interesting project and comfortable infrastructure harmoniously. Now it's cozy here. There is a sense of security, and nothing can cause additional suffering during the war, and that's the main thing," says Iurii Davydenko. "There is a need to rehabilitate the civilian population, volunteers, and veterans. However, we are fully aware that we are not a rehabilitation organization. A team of professionals, e.g., psychologists, and rehabilitation specialists, will be engaged to work with us as soon as we set up the infrastructure," says Iurii Davydenko.

"I dream of rebuilding Donetsk": the story of a twice IDP from the Donetsk region



Lurii Davydenko, the head of the NGO "Zahody," inspects the new beds in the camp

After graduating from the Donetsk Oblast Military Lyceum with honors, Lurii Davydenko prepared to compete for a job in the local executive service. But the partial occupation of the Donetsk region in 2014 forced him to move to Mariupol. Lurii affectionately calls it "the city of buses," where he felt at home again. In the corridor of a Mariupol dormitory, he and his friends founded a non-governmental organization.

"We thought for a long time about how to name our student association. Our team had representatives from all universities in the city, so we wanted one short name to reflect what united us. We asked each other what we were doing. And the answer was the same: we organized events," recalls Lurii Davydenko, head of the "Zahody" NGO.

Three of the six founders of the "Zahody" NGO were internally displaced persons. Even back then, the team was involved in integrating IDPs and helped those who came from other places.

It was only in 2019 that Iurii managed to visit his parents' home in Makiivka, Donetsk Oblast, where he spent his childhood, for the first time in five years.

"It was my last chance to come there. Until 2014, I considered Makiivka my home. At twenty-one, I decided to leave the occupied hometown and said goodbye to everything left there", says Iurii Davydenko.



Iurii Davydenko, the head of the NGO "Zahody," is standing by the window in the camp

"WE LEFT WITH THE IDEA THAT WE NEEDED TO GO SOMEWHERE FAR,"

recalls Iurii Davydenko

The full-scale invasion caught Iurii's family in Mariupol, and he did not want to leave. In addition to civil society work, he organized holidays and large-scale events, opened a coffee shop, and supported the development of startups. In 2020, Iurii became a deputy of the Mariupol City Council.

"I think I needed to go through it all. Mariupol was my home, where I had many friends, almost all of whom had left. I am still in touch with some of them, yet there are people I don't even want to text. It was my home, Mariupol, it was."

In mid-March, Iurii and his wife were evacuated from Mariupol, first to Dnipro for a few days and then to Mukachevo in Zakarpattia.

"In occupied Mariupol, we lived in a vacuum and didn't know what was happening. The occupiers told us they already took Dnipro, and we left with the idea that we needed to go somewhere far. That's how we ended up in Mukachevo," Iurii recalls.

In Mukachevo, Iurii and other IDPs began actively volunteering and sending aid to Mariupol. Once, they managed to deliver medicine and food, but the next time they lost contact with the driver of the humanitarian aid truck and thirty other volunteer drivers for more than a month and a half. Since then, Iurii no longer believed that he would be able to help the people of Mariupol who remained there.

The NGO "Zahody" team opened a representative office in Mukachevo, one of the cities farthest from the war zone. Some of them also moved to Khmelnytskyi.

"There are a lot of Mariupol residents in Khmelnytskyi whom we told about the hub and housing in Mukachevo, and they instantly suggested starting something similar here. Since part of our team was already in Khmelnytskyi, we opened another hub," Iurii says about the organization operating between the two cities.

The head of the NGO is very proud of his team, as he knows that such impressive results would only have been achieved with coordinated interaction.

"I dream of rebuilding Donetsk": the story of a twice IDP from the Donetsk region

"I am very grateful to all my team members who work for the result. None of this would have happened without Petrovych, Artur, Kolia, Iehor, or Halia. Yes, I raised funds, I reported, and I checked everything. But the team implements this project, and together we can do anything," Iurii Davydenko assures.



*Iurii Davydenko in one of the renovated rooms
in the "Camp over Zbruch"*

Walking around the camp, we shortly find ourselves on the banks of the Zbruch River. A red cat is circling nearby and jumps into Iurii's arms without hesitation. It seems like they have known each other for ages. Iurii pets the cat and tells us about his family.

"MANY PEOPLE WANT TO REBUILD DONETSK AFTER DE-OCCUPATION,"

says Iurii Davydenko

"We have two cats in our family; one is also red. He symbolizes our married life, and I have no one else besides them," Iurii admits.

He is confident that Ukraine will become one of the most remarkable countries in Europe after the victory.

"I am so excited by the projects we are running and know what some of our colleagues are working on. It's so impressive," assures the head of the "Zahody" NGO.

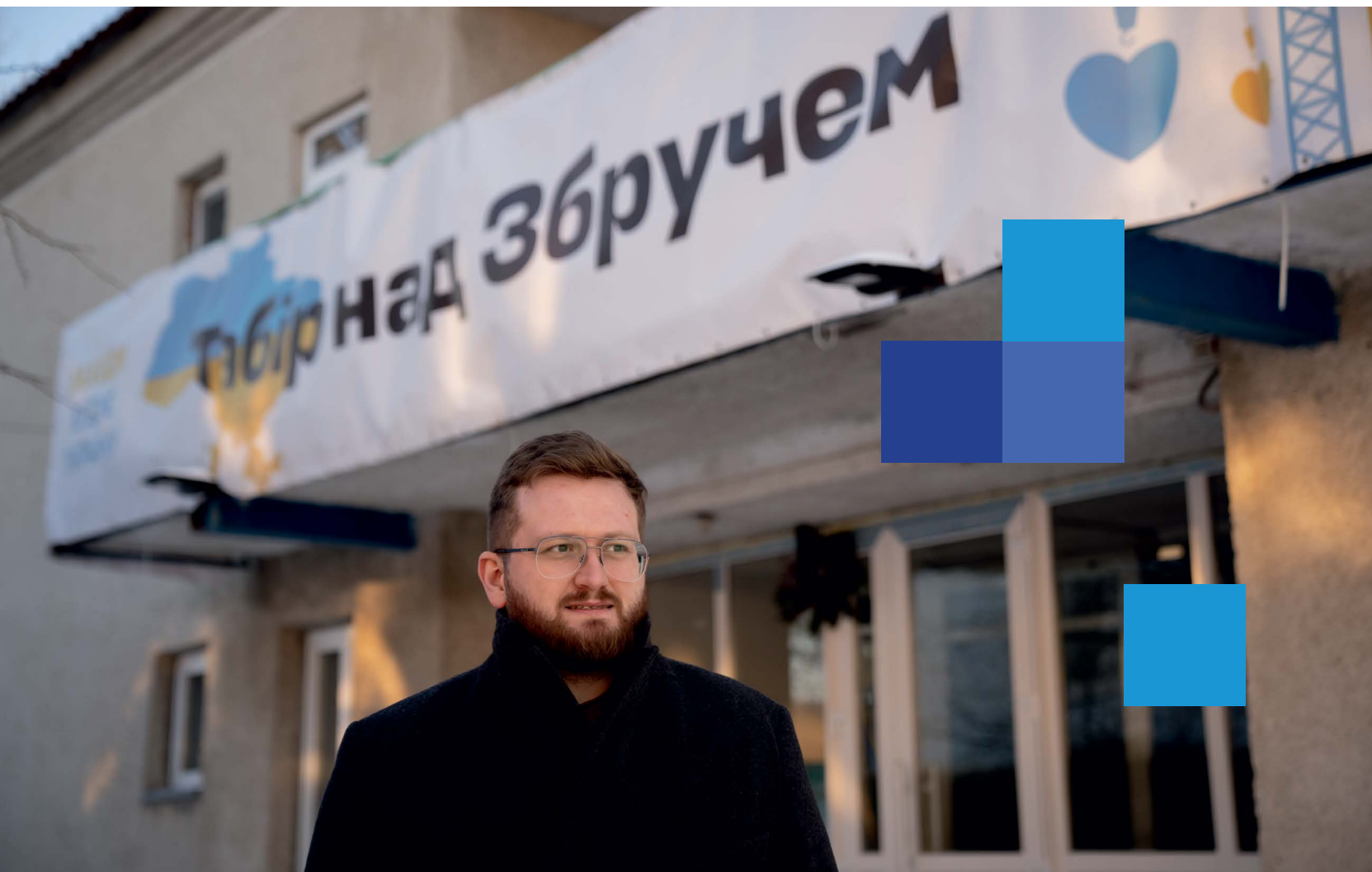
The NGO team plans to train those who want to return home and participate in restoring destroyed cities and communities. "Zahody" has developed a project management, advocacy, and communication training program.

"I dream of rebuilding Donetsk": the story of a twice IDP from the Donetsk region

"This is a major problem for many people I know who have great ideas but don't know how to put them on paper. They want to do it, but they just can't. We sit down and work together. And then this person wins a grant and implements the project," Iurii shares his experience.

Iurii dreams of returning there and rebuilding the infrastructure for the community when Donetsk is liberated from the occupiers.

"Many people want to rebuild Donetsk after de-occupation. I was quite surprised by this, and I thought I was the only one, but it turned out that many of my friends also want to return there," admits Iurii Davydenko. "I still have an apartment and relatives in Donetsk, and I want to live there and see my father more often than once a year."

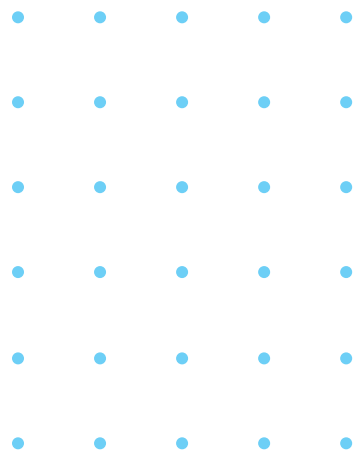


*Iurii Davydenko, the head of the NGO "Zahody,"
at the "Camp over Zbruch" entrance*



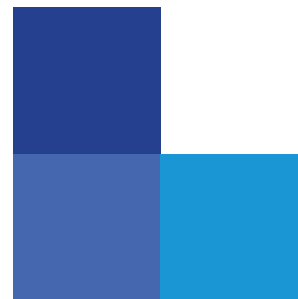
№4

Potapov's family in a shelter in the former school in village Vasylivka of the Ladyzhyn community together with Liudmyla Ravliuk, Head of the NGO "Together for Successful Business" (center)



TOGETHER TO A SAFE HAVEN

**A STORY ABOUT SUPPORT FOR IDPS
IN THE LADYZHYN COMMUNITY**



On 24 February 2022, the lives of Ukrainians changed forever. Millions of people went to the country's west, looking for shelter. Very soon, local communities became overburdened, providing at least basic living conditions for the newcomers. Many of them lost everything and were pushed into the unknown. NGOs helped the state to overcome these challenging social circumstances mostly with accommodation and basic necessities for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

**"PEOPLE WE WERE ABLE TO
HELP ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT
RESULT OF MY WORK,"**

says Luidmyla Ravliuk

Liudmila Ravliuk, 46, the head of the NGO "Together for Successful Business," leads us carefully to one of the shelters in the Ladyzhyn community of the Haisyn district in the Vinnytsia Oblast.

Soon, we reached a former school idle for several years as children went to another school in the neighbouring village.

Dmytro, 9, from Vuhledar, Donetsk Oblast, who has lived in this shelter with his younger brother Demian and their parents for a week, runs out to meet us. There is some firewood on the veranda of the former school that the boys' father prepared in the morning. It is warm in the rooms where the family lives. The brothers run barefoot along the corridor, opening each door out of curiosity. They are holding soft toys that Liudmyla gave them.

"WE DO LIKE IT HERE. MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT THE CHILDREN ARE NOW SAFE."

Dmytro Potapov, father of Dmytro and Demian



Dmytro Potapov and his son in the shelter's kitchen in village Vasylivka, of Ladyzhyn community

The family did not want to leave their home. Dmytro volunteered a lot, helping to deliver humanitarian aid to women and children in Vuhledar. One day, during the shelling, he was wounded in the leg and had to retreat and search for a safer place for the whole family.

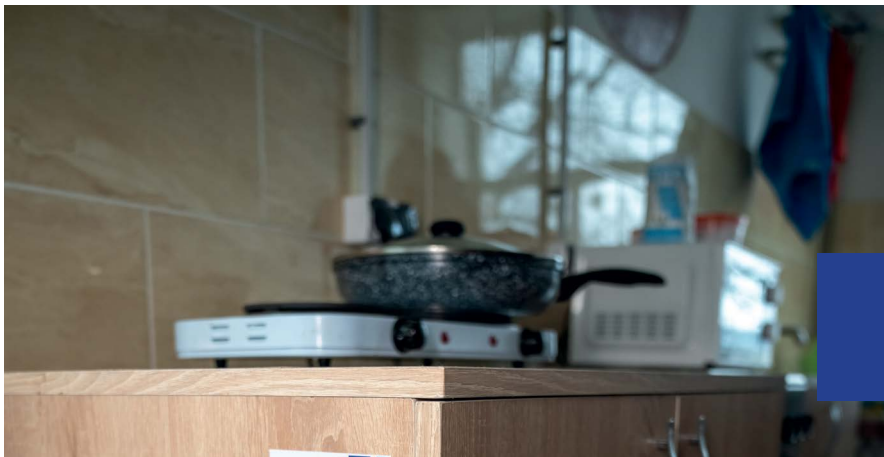
"People deprived of their homes and jobs found strength and came to our community. They did not go further; I can't imagine myself walking in their shoes. These people deliberately stayed in Ukraine and now adapt to new conditions. They dream of returning and are waiting for their homes to be de-occupied," says Liudmyla.

Thanks to the financial support of the EU and UNDP, the NGO "Together for Successful Business" is setting up two shelters in the Ladyzhyn community. Another shelter in the former kindergarten, "Vinochok," is in the village of Hubnyk, Ladyzhyn community of the Haisyn district.

"We bought furniture, some basics, mattresses, and blankets, and now we are about to sign a contract with a supplier of home appliances. This building was renovated and equipped at the expense of the city budget," says Liudmila Ravliuk.



Liudmyla Ravliuk, Head of the NGO "Together for Successful Business"



Shelter's kitchen



Delivered mattresses, blankets, pillows, bed linen, and sets of pots and pans for new members of the community



Sleeping places in the shelter

Mattresses, blankets, pillows, bed linen, ironing boards, and sets of pots and pans were recently delivered. Soon, new members of the community will live here.

"People we were able to help are the most important result of my work. We gave the children a thousand sweet gifts on Christmas Eve, and we heard "thank you" a thousand times. It was the most precious gift I received in my life. This way, I make my contribution to our victory. I do what I can do in my place with the available resources," says Liudmyla Ravliuk.

**"ON 24 FEBRUARY, MY
DAUGHTER WOKE ME SAYING
THE WAR HAD STARTED. I WAS
UNABLE TO GRASP IT FULLY",**

says Liudmyla Ravliuk

The NGO "Together for Successful Business" was founded in 2020 and worked with small and medium-sized local enterprises mainly by providing consultations on financial reporting.

Since 24 February, the NGO has provided comprehensive support to internally displaced people.

"On 24 February, my daughter woke me up saying the war had started. I was unable to grasp it fully", recalls Liudmyla. "I used to write grant applications at work and suddenly have lost this ability. For the first time, I couldn't write anything for about a week, not even a simple sentence on social networks."

At the beginning of March, Liudmyla came across a Facebook post with information about the grant competition to support internally displaced persons in Ukraine announced by the EU and UNDP. The deadline was two days away, and Liudmyla applied on the very last day.

"I once saw how hot meals for displaced people were served in a local cafe; all the villagers were helping, some carried potatoes. I would cook potatoes once every two weeks, not a fan of them at all," smiles Liudmyla. "But I am indeed keen on writing applications for financing. With the support of the EU and UNDP and the first grant, we engaged 50 volunteers who worked all day long and cooked more than 11,200 hot meals for the displaced people."

At the same time, the NGO arranges various integration activities for IDP children: master classes, creative workshops, and quizzes. Most of the events are held in the administrative building of the Ladyzhyn Arboretum. When it got warmer outside, they moved to the park's summer theatre for a paper show.

"This paper show brought them so much joy! Almost 14-year-old teenagers were as happy as smaller kids, a surge of positive emotions. We arranged a soap bubble show in the summer theatre and invited children's animators," says Liudmyla Ravliuk.

"FOR TWO MONTHS, WE LIVED WITHOUT ELECTRICITY AND COMMUNICATION."

Svitlana Virkun from Kherson Oblast

Svitlana Virkun, 38, from the Kherson Oblast brought her children to the Ladyzhyn Arboretum in the spring, and the April rain was a downpour. Svitlana hurried to pick up her youngest daughter Zhenya from class and left her umbrella at home. She asked Liudmyla Ravliuk to let her wait out the rain and began to help the organization actively.



Svitlana Virkun is volunteering for the NGO "Together for Successful Business". She provides psychological support and helps with organizing events and sorting and distributing humanitarian aid

"Svitlana was six months pregnant when we met her," Liudmyla recalls. "She immediately started helping us, bringing children whose parents could not attend our workshops. When newcomers from the Kherson region arrived in Ladyzhyn, she instantly brought them to us, identifying them amazingly. She drove alone, leaving the baby behind, through fields and unknown villages without paved roads. Even in the rain, she went through the field with nothing but a direction."

Svitlana was fond of military uniform and math since childhood and worked as a military accountant before the full-scale invasion. By February 2022, she lived in a military town in the Kherson region that was occupied very quickly. Svitolana was pregnant with her third child at that time.

"For two months, we lived without electricity and communication; there was not even sugar. We charged our cell phones in the car. But the car was hidden so that it would not be taken away, like others, especially diesel ones," says Svitolana. "I waited for bread next to some guys for six hours. And when the bread finally arrived, these guys wouldn't give me the way. Everyone is affected by the war, they said."

In April, the Virkun family managed to evacuate, and they immediately went to Ladyzhyn, because Svitolana knew someone there.

**LIFE GOES ON, AND WHEN YOU
REGRET A STEP, YOU LIVE IN THE
PAST. BUT WE MUST LIVE TODAY
AND MOVE FORWARD,"**

says Svitolana Virkun from Kherson Oblast

The most precious thing Svitlana Virkun managed to take from home and always keeps to herself is her class E license for drivers. Before the full-scale invasion, Svitlana's husband worked as a truck driver, and she dreamed that one day they would become a couple that works and travels together.



Svitlana Virkun in a car before leaving the office of the NGO "Together for Successful Business"

"I believe a woman should not be afraid of difficulties and be equal to men. A class E license for drivers was my long-standing dream, and I got it just before the invasion. Therefore, it was so important for me to keep it," says Svitlana with her precious driver's license in her hands.

In Ladyzhyn, Svitlana combines volunteering with maternity leave. She provides psychological support and helps the NGO "Together for Successful Business," organizing events and sorting and distributing humanitarian aid.

After the victory, Liudmyla and Svitlana dream of rest and travel.

"The place where you are now is the best place your guardian angel has chosen for you in the heavenly office. I wouldn't change anything, and I don't regret anything. Life goes on, and when you regret a step, you live there. But we must live today and move forward," Svitlana Virkun believes.



Liudmyla Ravliuk and Svitlana Virkun near the office of the NGO "Together for Successful Business"



№5

*URBAN Library, Branch library No. 8, Lviv Centralized
Library System for Adults*



LIBRARIES AS CENTERS FOR INFORMAL LEARNING FOR IDPS IN LVIV



Libraries as centers for informal learning for IDPs in Lviv

According to the City Council, more than 200,000 internally displaced persons moved to Lviv in the first four weeks after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Many lost their homes, family, friends, and jobs. Soon after these people had found refuge, they started looking for a safe environment and employment. Since March 2022, the non-governmental organization "Merezha Centriv Edukatsii" / "Network CE" ("Network of Education Centers") has focused on supporting internally displaced persons as Viktoriia Furhalo and Anastasiia Nechyporenko founded it four years ago to introduce systemic non-formal education in Lviv. Thanks to the EU4Dialogue grant from the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Merezha CE" is turning Lviv libraries into informal centers for acquiring new knowledge and starting a new profession for IDPs.



Viktoriia Furhalo, co-founder of the non-governmental organization "Network CE"

"NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IS AN EXCELLENT WAY OF SOCIALIZING AND PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION,"

says Viktoriia Furhalo, the co-founder of the non-governmental organization "Merezha Centriv Edukatsii"/ Network CE

Three air raid sirens went off in the morning in the heart of Lviv, and then, the all-clear sounded. Many people crowded the city center to give their last honors to the fallen Ukrainian defenders.

Viktoriia Furhalo, the co-founder of the NGO "Network CE" who also works in the "City Institute," a communal organization run by the Lviv City Council, meets us by the entrance to the Lviv Town Hall at the Market Square.

"There were many IDPs in our city after the invasion, and all these people needed to integrate into the local community. Many of them came to Lviv for the first time. For us, it is crucial to maintain the concept of a city that learns at every step," says Viktoriia Furhalo.

Viktoriia Furhalo and her colleague Anastasiia Nechyporenko founded the NGO "Merezha Centriv Edukatsii" ("Network CE") in 2021 to introduce systemic non-formal education in Lviv. After the full-scale invasion, they focused on supporting internally displaced people. "Network CE" runs various training courses in Lviv libraries, from first aid courses to foreign languages and graphic design. Thus, libraries have turned into centers for informal education.

"We believe that non-formal education is an excellent way of socializing and promoting social cohesion. Some of our courses are attended by people who run their businesses and unemployed immigrants from the job center. They work together in groups, create joint projects and communicate and help each other after finishing our courses," says Viktoriia Furhalo.

In the summer of 2022, the NGO received support from the EU4Dialogue project, funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme. In the project's framework, despite the lack of electricity and frequent air alarms, the team managed to hold seven courses, six webinars, 48 speaking club events, and a festival. More than a third of the participants were internally displaced persons.

"This is our first cooperation with UNDP," explains Viktoriia Furhalo. "We instantly realized that their principles resonate with our activities as we read about this grant programme on their website. I am happy that people without a job or motivation often get employed after finishing courses run by us. Thanks to this cooperation, we also developed a program for legal support, especially for displaced people."

"I COULD NOT SAY A SINGLE WORD DURING THE FIRST LESSON; I WAS TOO TIMID. WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE TEACHERS AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS, I STARTED TO IMPROVE,"

says Kseniia Moskalenko

Kseniia Moskalenko is 17 years old and a first-year student at V. I. Vernadsky Taurida National University [based initially in Simferopol, Crimea, now relocated to Kyiv]. She was born in the village of Kalynove, Donetsk oblast, which is now constantly shelled. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Kseniia has lived in a modular town in Lviv and now attends English language courses at the "Network CE."

"Thanks to 'Network CE' I improved my speaking skills, which is very important. I could not say a single word during the first lesson; I was too timid and aware that my English was not perfect. Still, with the support of the teachers and other participants, I started to improve," says project participant Kseniia Moskalenko.



The team of the NGO "Merezha CE" — Viktoriia Furhalo, the co-founder, project managers Solomiia Oleksiichuk, Dmytro Shevchenko, Iaryna Kasprivska

One of the "Network CE" centers is near the modular town where Kseniia lives. She needs English for her future work in the hospitality industry.

"The labor market is currently in crisis. Many people are losing their jobs, and many are leaving the country. Non-formal education will help to adapt to these dramatic changes quickly. One can acquire new professions and social skills," stresses Viktoriia Furhalo. "Individual success stories inspire me the most. For instance, some people get immediately employed during a design course. There are cases when one person saved another's life after our first aid courses. What could be better in your work than a saved life?".

There are wall-mounted shelves where each book is in its place and niches with pillows and light blankets for cozy reading; soft multi-colored chairs and armchairs, which we used to see in coffee shops rather than libraries. There's lots of light, greenery, and space.

Ten years ago, the library concept in Lviv has been changed. It is no longer a book collection that scares visitors away with dust, creaky floors, and post-Soviet "charm."

Viktoriia Furhalo first saw the library being used as a venue for informal education in Germany. She firmly believes modern Lviv libraries are the best place for exchanging ideas and learning with adults and children.

"University libraries in Germany are great for studying. The concept of non-formal education suits libraries best; it is a powerful resource," says Viktoriia Furhalo.

During 2022, nine out of forty-four Lviv public libraries have become centers for informal education as a part of "Network CE."

"At the first meeting, I usually ask our students which of them has been to a library before. As a rule, 80 percent admit they came for the first time. After finishing our courses, graduates return to libraries with their children and families. We use the available technical base of libraries for non-formal education to conduct training there. This way, we don't need to build educational centers from scratch and save money and resources," says Viktoriia Furhalo.



Olha Kitura, trainer in a psychology course at "Network CE"

**"IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO
BE USEFUL. I FIND MEANING IN
LIFE WHEN I AM NEEDED. I FEEL
I AM IN THE RIGHT PLACE —
THIS GIVES ME THE STRENGTH
TO LIVE ON,"**

adds Olha Kitura

We meet Olga Kitura in the URBAN library, part of "Network CE". Before joining Viktoriia Furhalo's team, she was the head of the Center for Mental Health at the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky Hospital. She has taught psychology within a non-formal education programme for several years.

"I texted Olga on Facebook once and offered a pilot course within our activities. We chose the most experienced for our pool of trainers, and I knew she often participated in public events and festivals. Together, we developed a course in practical psychology," says Viktoriia, reminiscing about how she first met Olha.

Volunteering and teaching Olha Kitura combined with medical practice. Putting on a white coat, she transforms into a psychiatrist with 15 years of experience.

Being a military spouse, Olga Kitura holds her front coordinating art therapists who work with children in the Lviv oblast within one of the NGO "Merezha Centriv Edukatsii"/ Network CE projects.

"It was an incredible volunteering experience. We always aimed to make a true holiday for kids, and they were happy and asked when we would come again. Although the work was very intensive, their words are the most valuable gratitude for us," says Olha.

After the victory of Ukraine, Olha Kitura plans to continue working at the hospital and combine it with teaching.

"It is important for me to be useful. I find meaning in life when I am needed. I feel I am in the right place — this gives me the strength to live on," adds Olha Kitura.

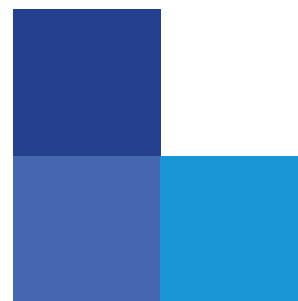
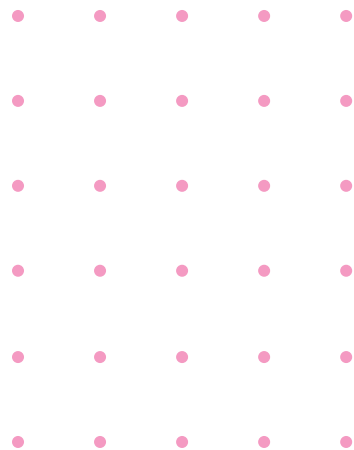


The team of the NGO "Network CE" — Viktoriia Furhalo, the co-founder, project managers Solomiia Oleksiichuk, Dmytro Shevchenko, Iaryna Kasprivska



№6

*Community members get to know each other
by playing board games*



BUILDING A COMMUNITY:

**FORCED TO FLEE FRONT-LINE TOWNS,
NEWCOMERS TO POLTAVA OBLAST VILLAGE FIND
WAYS TO DEVELOP THEIR NEW HOME**



Building a community: Forced to flee front-line towns, newcomers to Poltava Oblast village find ways to develop their new home

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine triggered one of the most extensive and rapidly developing crises of forced displacement in history. Millions of people have fled their homes, and hundreds of communities in Ukraine have faced the challenges of accommodating new residents, mutual adaptation, and overcoming prejudices.

The village of Khomutets in Poltava Oblast, a settlement with Cossack roots, was one of the places that opened its doors to IDPs. The most prominent local architectural sight is the ancestral estate of the Muravyov-Apostol family descendants of Ukrainian Hetman Danylo Apostol. During the large-scale war, several dozen internally displaced persons have moved to the village.

Tetiana Krasko, originally from the village of New York in Donetsk Oblast, was one of those who came to Khomutets in May 2022. She was to be housed in a college dormitory, which has become a new home for many IDPs from Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Luhansk oblasts, but had trouble finding it. Tatiana finally reached her destination after getting lost and twice missing the right turn (the road signs had been removed for security reasons).

Serhii Shynkarenko, the director of Khomutets Professional College, who has headed the institution since 1995, came out to meet her. Tired after a long day at work, he saw an unfamiliar car from his window.



Tetiana Krasko, head of the NGO "Studio of Public Women's Initiatives," in the village park

"I was looking for a job, as we'd found ourselves in a horrible situation: we were forced to leave our home," says Krasko .
"I remembered 2014 when we sheltered the first internally displaced people in New York. By chance I met a woman from Myrhorod District Council, and she shared Serhii's contact with me. That's how I ended up in Khomutets."

Building a community: Forced to flee front-line towns, newcomers to Poltava Oblast village find ways to develop their new home

Since Krasko's hometown is close to the front line, it has been under constant shelling since 2014. For three years, the residents of New York accommodated IDPs from other locations, arranged shelters, and received humanitarian aid. In 2018, Krasko took part in a UNDP study tour to Chernivtsi for people from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, which provided her with new experience and knowledge of the work of non-governmental organizations. That same year, she and her fellow villagers founded four NGOs: a youth organization, a women's organization, an educational organization, and an organization of older people.

But Krasko hadn't expected the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The war took away her home, her community development projects, and her "Studio of Public Women's Initiatives" NGO team, which almost disintegrated. When she arrived in Khomutets, Tetiana noticed that the internally displaced people who lived in the dormitory did not communicate with anyone, not even with each other. To remedy this, she initiated the "IDPs as a Resource for Community Development" project, supported by the EU and UNDP.

Over the past six months, Khomutets residents and IDPs have organized events such as "Collective Impact," "Health Fair," and "Bike Ride" as part of the "IDPs as a Resource for Community Development" project, and have set up a shared space for communication in the dormitory. And with the support of the EU and UNDP, the dormitory was renovated and furnished.



A community member uses a hedge trimmer during the renovation of the village park

The community became especially united when residents and IDPs worked shoulder to shoulder to improve Khomutetskyi Park, the "pearl of the village." Among other restoration activities, participants planted trees for a future "Victory Garden."

Building a community: Forced to flee front-line towns, newcomers to Poltava Oblast village find ways to develop their new home



The common space at the dormitory

One of the project's main achievements was to set up a joint Coordination Council in 2023 (during the "Collective Impact" event), which drafted a roadmap for the development of Khomutets. The community has become much more active due to improved communication and interaction between different actors: the college, secondary school, club, church, etc.



Valentyna Arshynova, the director of Khomutets secondary school

One day Tetiana received a call from an unknown number. It was Valentyna Arshynova, the director of the local secondary school.

"I KNOW YOU HELP EVERYONE HERE, SO PLEASE HELP THE STORKS AS WELL,"

Valentyna said, sounding anxious

"During a bad storm, a nest was torn down, and a stork chick fell out of it," Tetiana recalls with a smile. "The birds needed to be fed. I had never helped storks before. We raised funds and bought fish together. And when the rescued storks flew away, the villagers and I naturally continued our cooperation."

"Our school also functions as a local community centre. This means that we actively unite all community members around us," says Valentyna.

When Tetiana Krasko learned about this distinctive feature of the school, she invited Valentyna Arshynova to join efforts and implement the "IDPs as a Resource for Community Development" project together, including holding a "Collective Impact" event at the school.

"I truly believed in it. The event was huge and extremely valuable," says Valentyna, speaking about her cooperation with the renewed team of the "Studio of Public Women's Initiatives" NGO, headed by Tetiana. "We met the IDPs. They, in turn, took a fresh look at our village and our life. Later, we developed a joint action plan to support the college dormitory, where more than 80 IDPs lived at the time."

"We wanted to integrate IDPs into the local community more fully, to make them feel more secure, to give them a sense of home," recalls Oksana Licherep, a project manager who joined the team of the "Studio of Public Women's Initiatives" NGO after the full-scale Russian invasion.



Community initiative group members at the village park

Building a community: Forced to flee front-line towns, newcomers to Poltava Oblast village find ways to develop their new home

A survey was conducted in Khomutets in 2023, and one of the key questions was: "Would you host IDPs as you would your relatives?" Initially, local residents were cautious about IDPs. But shared activities within the project united the entire community.

"The IDPs used to not even interact with each other," says Tetiana. "Everyone was left alone with their thoughts. At first, these people were afraid of making new acquaintances, but later they became friends with each other and the locals."

The project also provided lighting for the school's basement — used as a shelter for students during air raid alarms.

"Children would run to the shelter, and the lights would mostly go out during an air raid," says Valentyna Arshynova. "There were days when pupils sat in the dark for hours. The project provided us with a portable charging station with solar panels. This is very important for the children."

According to the latest data, almost 2,500 people live in the village of Khomutets. Serhii Shynkarenko, the director of the Khomutets Professional College, says that more than 250 IDPs now have jobs here. In particular, the IDPs work in the transportation and food sectors and grow fruits and vegetables on land plots allocated to them by the locals.



Serhii Shynkarenko, the director of Khomutets Professional College, at the new garden that was planted as part of the project

Building a community: Forced to flee front-line towns, newcomers to Poltava Oblast village find ways to develop their new home

"For our village, internally displaced persons positively impact the development and dynamics of our rural life," says Shynkarenko.

Meanwhile, psychologists from Khomutets College provide emotional support to IDPs, organizing cultural events and art therapy to improve their mental well-being.

Khomutets has come to life again, and so did the Muravyov-Apostols' Palace, which was used as a backdrop for a themed photo shoot held for local women and IDPs. The pictures now decorate the renovated common space in the dormitory.



Photos of local residents in the dormitory common space



№ 7

A police bicycle patrol in Zaporizhzhia



BICYCLE PATROL 2.0: STRENGTHENING SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN ZAPORIZHZHIA



Bicycle Patrol 2.0: Strengthening safety and accessibility in Zaporizhzhia

Parks, squares, fountains, pedestrian areas — anywhere that is hard to reach by car — can be especially unsafe if there is no police bicycle patrol in the city. Zaporizhzhia may be one of Ukraine's biggest industrial towns, but it is also known for its vast green recreation areas: the city's Khortytsia Island alone covers 23.5 square kilometres.

To make this vast area more accessible to police patrols, "Spilno Hub," an NGO in Zaporizhzhia, is helping to develop the city's bicycle infrastructure. Thanks to the support of the European Union and UNDP in Ukraine, in 2023, the organization supplied the local patrol police with new bicycles and all the equipment needed to launch more regular bicycle patrols.

We met with Iryna Serhienko, the head of the Public Relations Department of the Patrol Police Department, in the Zaporizhzhia's Voznesenivskyi Park. The "Spilno Hub" NGO approached her with a proposal for cooperation.

Every year, from April to September, the police bicycle patrol goes out on 12-hour shifts in the daytime. Police officers cover many kilometres on their bikes during the day, so these vehicles require careful maintenance, repair, and spare parts replacement.



*Iryna Serhienko, head of the Public Relations Department
of the Patrol Police Department*

**"IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOUGH
TO LAUNCH MORE BICYCLE
PATROLS WITHOUT THE HELP OF
"SPILNO HUB."**

Iryna Serhienko, head of the Public Relations Department of
the Patrol Police Department

Bicycle Patrol 2.0: Strengthening safety and accessibility in Zaporizhzhia

"Safety is crucial for me in this job — the safety of our citizens and children," says Serhienko. "I want every child on the streets of our city to feel safe. This is a priority for each of my colleagues and me, and that's why we work for it. At first, it was quite scary. But when you see people's eyes shining with gratitude, it encourages you. That's why I want to work and stay here in Zaporizhzhia," Iryna says.

"After all, who else can do it, if not us?"



Police bicycle patrolmen show off their new bicycles

In the early summer of 2022, the police approached "Spilno Hub" with a request that it help repair bicycles to continue patrolling hard-to-reach places in the city.

"This year, out of ten bicycles, the bicycle patrol had only three in use," says Iryna Shevchenko, manager of the Velopatrol 2.0 project and member of the "Spilno Hub" NGO. "We suggested applying for an EU and UNDP grant together and purchasing new bikes, instead of repairing the old ones. At the same time, we increased their number to 12."

Until 2022, Iryna Shevchenko was the head of the organization's branch in Melitopol, where she had lived for more than 10 years. "Spilno Hub" worked in cities in Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Donetsk regions: Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Melitopol, Berdiansk, Sloviansk, Druzhkivka, etc.

"I communicated with the Melitopol bicycle patrol last year and the year before," says Shevchenko. "Spilno Hub' trained, equipped, and launched the patrol in Melitopol and Berdiansk. In Zaporizhzhia, we joined the support of the local bicycle patrol later." "In early 2022, we had a strategy session and made plans for the whole year. Unfortunately, none of them were achieved: full-scale war broke out a few weeks after our session."

Shevchenko's family lived for a month in Melitopol after it fell under Russian military control. In the spring, they evacuated to Zaporizhzhia, where Shevchenko became actively involved in the work of her organization's local branch. But in October 2022, when massive attacks and shelling began all over Ukraine, Shevchenko, pregnant at the time, was forced to pack up all her belongings and move to Odesa Oblast, where she had been born and spent her childhood.

"I lived for a month under occupation and witnessed everything with my own eyes," Shevchenko says. "We went through a lot, including evacuation. We saw the occupiers and talked to them. We saw what they were doing to our like-minded (pro-Ukrainian) people. There are still people going missing. Nothing good is happening out there."

Shevchenko combines her public activities with work in the IT sector. Cycling is her main hobby — she participated in the Ukrainian amateur cycling championships in 2021.

"My husband and I had two old bicycles, and one day we felt like going for a ride somewhere," says Shevchenko.

"We realized it was a cool way to spend time together. Later, we joined the local cycling community in Melitopol: we rode on weekends, became interested in cycling competitions, and started participating in bike rides. We joined in any cycling projects whenever we could."

From the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the NGO, which had previously been involved in developing local democracy and bicycle infrastructure, began to help the State Emergency Service and the blood donation centre.

"Part of our team, just like me, came from Zaporizhzhia," says Shevchenko. "I coordinated procurement and tenders remotely, with the help of my assistant Viktoriia, who is now in Kyiv. Pavlo and Liliia, who stayed in Zaporizhzhia, helped a lot with the bike patrol project."

We also talked to Pavlo Voskoboinikov, the "Velopatrol 2.0" project assistant, in Zaporizhzhia. He organized the supply of bicycles and all their components to the patrol police as part of the project supported by the EU and UNDP in Ukraine.

"THANKS TO ALL THIS, THE BICYCLE PATROL CAN DO THEIR JOB SAFELY,"

Pavlo Voskoboinikov, "Velopatrol 2.0" project assistant and member of the "Spilno Hub" NGO in Zaporizhzhia

Bicycle Patrol 2.0: Strengthening safety and accessibility in Zaporizhzhia

"First of all, we bought bicycles and police equipment," says Voskoboynikov. "We purchased comfortable clothes, shorts, polo-neck shirts, and raincoats. Since we noticed that patrol officers always carry a tablet and a first aid kit, we also provided handy bags that can be attached to the bike frame."

"We included basic equipment: headlights, flasks, pumps, chains, spare cameras, and anti-puncture gels. We also bought power banks, because police officers work on a tablet all day. Thanks to all this, the bicycle patrol can do their job safely."



Project assistant and member of the "SpilnoHub" organization Pavlo Voskoboynikov talks to journalist Marharyta Lubkova in Zaporizhzhia

Voskoboinikov joined "Spilno Hub" in 2019 when his son was more grown up and he had more time. Voskoboinikov combines his social activities with working at a bank. When he saw he had the opportunity to contribute to the development of cycling infrastructure, he joined in the project. This is the fourth year Voskoboinikov has been actively involved in all "Spilno Hub" events and projects.

"We've been supporting the bicycle patrol for a long time — it's a great way to improve our safety," says Voskoboinikov. "We have such beautiful recreation areas in the city, like Khortytsia Island, Dubovyi Hai, and large park areas where you can't even drive a car. And now the bike patrol can get to places where a regular patrol would not even be able to go."

Zaporizhzhia Police Bicycle Patrolman Hennadii Volkov is 30 years old. He says he learned to ride a bike practically before he could walk. He patrols park areas and the island of Khortytsia with his colleagues on their bikes.

"Our main task is crime prevention," says Volkov. "We show that we're there for you, and that you can turn to us for help. People often ask us to show them the way to places, and other things. We also work as patrol police in various bicycle routes in the city."



Patrolman Hennadii Volkov

**"WE SHOW THAT WE'RE THERE
FOR YOU, AND THAT YOU CAN
TURN TO US FOR HELP."**

Hennadii Volkov, police bicycle patrolman

The "Spilno Hub" team is committed to restoring and improving cycling infrastructure in the cities where the organization's branches are located. In Zaporizhzhia, they collaborated with the city programme and strategy for the development of cycling infrastructure, and before the invasion of 2022 they had funding for a project to build the first section of a safe bike lane in the city.

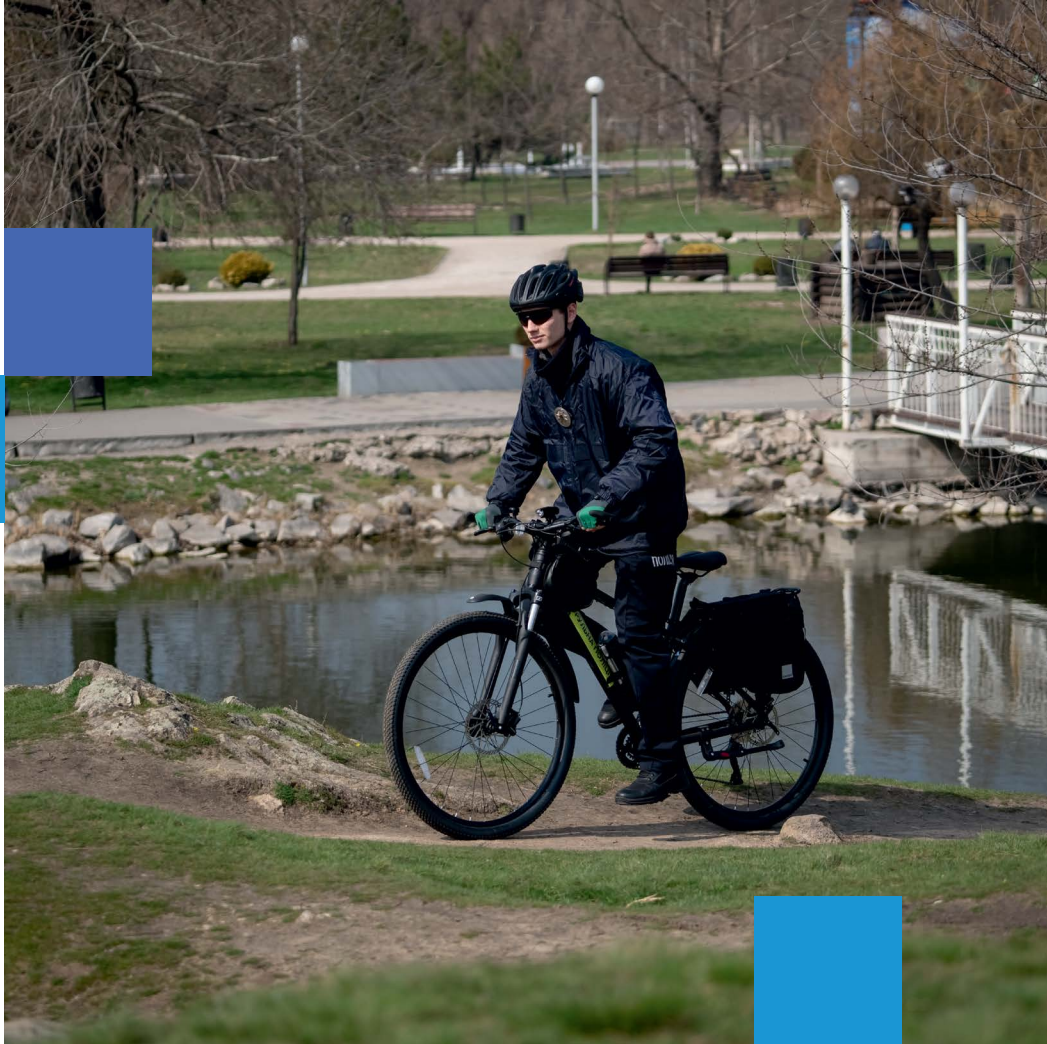
In partnership with the bicycle patrol of the Zaporizhzhia Patrol Police Department, "Spilno Hub" also planned to hold the Light Up the Night campaign in October 2022. Due to the massive shelling of Zaporizhzhia by the Russian armed forces, it was forced to postpone it to early November.

During the campaign, the bicycle patrol stopped cyclists, attached reflectors to their bicycles, and stressed the importance of using these devices in the dark.

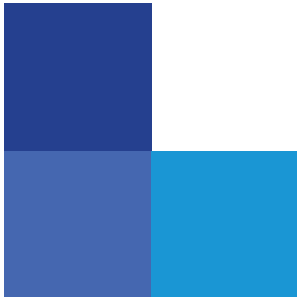
"You're much less protected on a bike," says Shevchenko. "All children would ride bikes if the roads were safe. We miss Melitopol very much, and we want to return there. We have plans to improve things there as well."

**"I HAVE A SON GROWING UP, AND
I DON'T WANT HIM TO HAVE TO
WALK ALONG OLD, BROKEN-UP
SIDEWALKS."**

"It's important to transform the city so that not only cyclists but also pedestrians and other road users feel comfortable in it," says Voskoboynikov.



A police bicycle patrol in Zaporizhzhia



Texts:

Marharyta Lubkova

Photo:

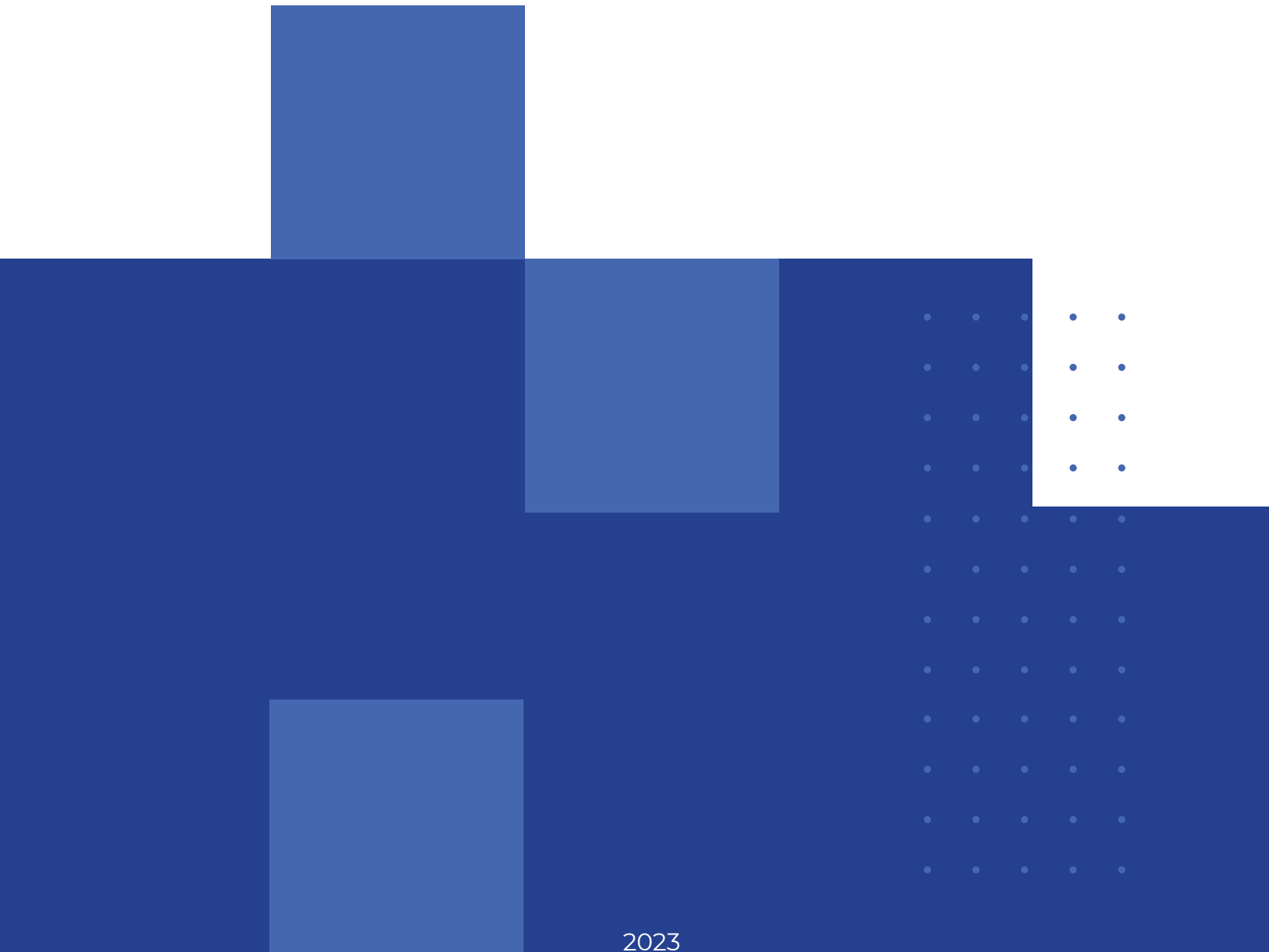
Artem Poznanskyi

Pavlo Malyovanyi

Design:

Mykhailo Hirniak





2023