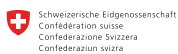




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Hometown Associations in 12 steps



Migrants are an important resource for the development of their native communities.

The Hometown Association (HTA) is a way of contributing to local development, in a well structured, efficient, systematic and needs-based way.

HTA is a voluntary association of all those who were born in a Moldovan community, but live and work outside that community, either in Moldova or abroad and wish to support their community of origin and contribute to its local development by all possible means.

* * *

If you:

Have something to offer to your community?

Want to engage in meaningful activities for your community?

Want to gather people around great ideas?

Then:

You can be part of a Hometown Association in your community!

Where to start from? What are the steps? How will you do it?

Here you will find the key steps and actions that will have to be taken to launch a viable and efficient Association.



Hometown Associations can be established at the initiative of the local administration or of the natives, but is always led by the natives who migrated and wish to contribute to the development of their community of origin.

Step 1. **Convene a meeting of natives**

Why: It is necessary to convene a meeting with all the members, both to mobilize the natives and to consult them on the local priorities.

When: There are three periods when the natives usually return home (Easter, Christmas and in August).

Who: Ideally, the meeting is announced together by the migrants and the mayor.

How: Through an announcement using all available communication channels (telephone, email, skype, social networks, personally, etc.).

The announcement: Will include logistic details, goal, agenda, list of the Local Initiative Group (LIG) members and will promote the first joint initiative (where appropriate).



To ensure support at the preparation stage, it is necessary to appoint an individual as a contact point in charge for migration issues (a volunteer from the mayor's office personnel or from the community).

The participants: Key people among the natives, including famous migrants, dynamic personalities or leaders, as well as people interested to contribute to the development and to mobilize their efforts. It is recommended that key people from the community (priest, school director, social worker, etc.) also participate in the meeting. Make sure that people of all ages, men and women alike are invited to the meeting.

A **Local Initiative Group (LIG)** can be created to provide guidance and counseling for the planning of the HTA meeting and to mobilize other natives. The LIG can consist of 2-3 natives, active members and 2-3 key people from the local community, men and women.

Step 2. **Ensure coordination and transparency**

After the meeting is convened, it is important to transmit a convincing message to the natives of the community – both those who live in the country and those who live abroad. The key message is that the community and the local administration want the development of the village/town and are looking for an honest and productive cooperation.

The two key words to achieve this are: **coordination and transparency.**

Coordination: From the beginning of this effort, both the migrants and the local public authorities must learn how to work in a coordinated way. This will increase their confidence and will provide sufficient resources to efficiently manage the HTA activity and their projects. Thus, all the steps initiated by one party must be communicated and discussed to the other party and the decisions must be taken jointly.

It is important that there is a person who will ensure permanent communication and will monitor all the necessary aspects – **one individual in the local public authority in charge for migration.**

Transparency helps build confidence with natives on the long run and increases their commitment to get involved and support the community development.

How do we achieve this? Through the participation of migrants (women and men, of different ages and professions) in decision making process, regular information, organization of events and joint activities dedicated to migrants and involvement of natives at all stages of local planning.

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Step 3. **Build communication platforms**

To make sure that the actions are open and transparent and people who live outside the community want to engage, they must see, hear and know about the idea of creating the HTA and about each activity implemented or planned. To this end, modern techniques will be used, communication platforms will be built and will be made accessible to the public.



It is recommended to immediately launch a page of the HTA on a social network (e.g. Facebook or Odnoklassniki) and transform the communication with natives in a tradition (repeatedly and in a structured manner).

Step 4. **Promote and raise awareness**

To make sure that the invitations reach their destination and to motivate more people to attend the HTA launching meeting, start a small campaign on social networks and post pictures of the community, announcements and posters. Don't forget to directly contact the natives.



It is recommended to transmit personalized invitations to all the natives invited to the HTA meeting.

Step 5. **Make a list of natives**

A contact list will make it easier to contact all those who wish to maintain link with the community of origin. The list must contain at least the last name, first name, country of destination and a contact of the person (email, telephone, skype, viber, etc.).

Rule! The data collection is voluntary. Data is provided only if the person agrees to provide it and will not be used for any other purposes or transmitted to other people.



The data is collected through personal relations, online forms, interviewing, regular update of the database.

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Step 6. Establish contact with “champion” migrants

Champion migrants are well known in the country enthusiastic people able to motivate other people with strong connection and generators of important resources, able to allocate sufficient time for a responsible engagement and to sponsor specific activities.

Step 7. Identify the local leaders and community representatives

The local leaders are the contact people from key organizations who must engage: the priest, school director, social worker, police officer, library manager, agricultural leaders, local or district NGO representatives, international partners (where appropriate), business people and media representatives.



The real engagement of local leaders, champion migrants and community representatives will help legalize the initiative and ensure its sustainability.

Step 8. Identify the community needs

To **identify the priority needs** of the community in a participatory way, it is suggested to **hold a meeting** with local leaders, community representatives and migrants (either those who are in the country or online participants for those who are abroad) to address their main challenges and specific needs. It is necessary to ensure the participation of all the key groups within the community so that the views of all those present are presented (women, men, vulnerable people, children, young people, people with disabilities, etc.).

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Step 9. **Develop an Action Plan**

The planning of actions includes short time intervals and specific actions to achieve clear and detailed objectives. Develop the action plan for one year.



It is recommended that the draft action plan is developed by the **person in charge for migration** in close collaboration with the LIG and the migrants.



If there is a Local Social-Economic Development Strategy approved in the community, it will underpin the local priority consultations and the action plan of the HTA will take into account the strategy provisions.

Step 10. **Hold the HTA launching meeting**

You need to be clear about what organizational form the established association will have. The HTA can have two forms: (1) officially registered as an NGO; (2) organized as an informal group.

Describe which one of these better suits your goals and is more adequate from the perspective of the available resources.

At the meeting, a number of subjects can be addressed, including: the existing local priorities and problems and the possible solutions, the role of partnerships between the mayor's office and the natives, the goal of an HTA, planned joint actions, identification of joint projects that will be implemented and the necessary funds, etc.

At the meeting, it is recommended to (1) **decide** on the organizational form of the HTA; (2) **establish** strict monitoring rules for the projects that will be implemented; (3) **appoint** a person in charge for fundraising activities; and (4) **send** to all the participants the minutes of the meeting written by the secretary, asking for opinions and/or confirmation of the minutes.

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After the meeting, it is extremely important to inform the whole population about the meeting and the taken decisions, including online.

Step 11. **Implement the projects**

You have launched the HTA and can operate now. There are 6 types of projects that can be implemented by the HTA.

- Infrastructure projects
- Entrepreneurial or business start-up projects
- Tourism promotion
- Twining of communities
- Educational projects
- Healthcare projects.

Obviously, these are only guiding indications and we encourage you to explore your own visions and possible initiatives of community development with the meaningful engagement of the natives, including those who are abroad.



To ensure the successful implementation of the following stages, it is necessary to follow some basic rules. There are three key principles that will contribute to the successful implementation of the projects in the next stages of HTA operation:

- Transparency;
- Accountability;
- Visibility.

Permanently monitor the following: direct and indirect project beneficiaries, broad participation of the natives, ongoing consultation of the natives and efficient use of funds.

Step 12. **Project finalization**

Congratulations! You have proven that migrants can be an important resource for community development.

The finalization of a project is a crucial stage that must be capitalized and celebrated.

Impact assessment is the analysis of HTA's achievements, experience evaluation and reflections on the performance.

Sustainability refers to two key areas: **availability of funding** and **institutionalization of partnerships**. Both are essential for the existence and stable operation of the HTA.

The sharing of practices and lessons learned with other actors can be very useful for the local authorities and migrants from other communities and regions that establish their own HTA.

The HTA activity does not stop here. Use the model described here to initiate and implement new projects that will contribute to the sustainable development of Moldovan communities.

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"The Diaspora is an important resource. We are over 400,000 Moldovans abroad. If we can collect 10-20 Euros per month from only 20% of people, we could implement good development projects our country might benefit from".

**Migrant from Moldova,
Interview respondent**

This product is a summary of the **Guide for the creation and consolidation of Hometown Associations for local authorities and migrants**

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