EMPOWERING MUNICIPALITIES AND CITIZENS OF UKRAINE

SELECTED INSIGHTS INTO U-LEAD CONTRIBUTIONS
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Since Ukraine’s decentralisation reform started in 2014, villages, settlements and towns have become important players in developing the country. Local self-government (LSG) bodies have been appointed new functions.

Municipalities have greater abilities to make decisions that are closer to the realities of citizens. That also means they bear more responsibility and are more accountable for what happens at the local level. Amalgamated hromadas (AHs) today act as pioneers of a new understanding of developing the country.

Visit most AHs and the people involved all have their stories to tell. Stories of how people can lead better lives in their home towns and villages.

Stories of new approaches that make life worth living are available in hromadas. Stories of achievements by residents of communities they could not have managed before 2014. As Petro Kiyashko, head of Veselivska amalgamated hromada, says, “Nobody wants the past back!”

Given their new relevance and role, LSG bodies and their representatives need capacities to fulfil these new responsibilities – efficiently and accountably. Funded by the European Union and the member states Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Poland and Sweden and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida), the multi-donor U-LEAD with Europe Programme plays a key role in building and establishing the required capacity for Ukraine. With its office in Kyiv and 24 regional offices in all the country’s oblasts, the Programme works to strengthen all those implementing the decentralisation reform.

As the following stories show, the reform touches upon all aspects of everyday life – from visiting a local general practitioner to applying for passports to heating schools to bicycling safely from one town to another. U-LEAD with Europe contributes to the implementation of this reform. After all, with greater local insight and responsibility comes greater local commitment and development. Both in terms of economic growth and sustainability.
Since 2014, the Government of Ukraine has been pursuing far-reaching reforms that are transforming local self-government across the country for the benefit of citizens by:

- Enabling voluntary mergers of around 12,000 towns, villages and settlements into larger local government units called amalgamated hromadas (AHs). These AHs are in a better position to provide high quality services and promote local development.
- Transferring decision-making powers to AHs over education and healthcare (sector decentralisation), income and spending (fiscal decentralisation) as well as other responsibilities.
- Facilitating and financing social and economic development at the regional and local levels, including through the State Fund for Regional Development.

U-LEAD with Europe supports this agenda. We are a partnership of the government and the international community to support establishing multi-level governance – the ways in which government bodies at all levels are organised, work together and engage with civil society – that is transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of citizens. U-LEAD, launched in 2016, is financed by the European Union and its five member states Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Poland and Sweden.

THE U-LEAD WITH EUROPE PROGRAMME HAS TWO MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance capacities of key stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels to implement the regional policy and decentralisation reforms (GIZ). This includes vertical and horizontal coordination throughout Ukraine, as well as support to sector decentralisation and reform communication.
- Empower amalgamated communities (hromadas) to deliver high quality administrative services to citizens, contributing to the ongoing decentralisation reform in Ukraine (Sida). The Programme supports up to 600 Administrative Service Centres to live up to the expectation of citizens. Through the EGOV4UKRAINE project, it develops IT solutions that help provide the services concerned.

The Programme's budget for 2016-2020 totals EUR 102 million.

U-LEAD with Europe works in all oblasts of Ukraine through 24 regional offices. The head office is located at the House of Decentralisation in Kyiv.

U-LEAD WITH EUROPE IMPLEMENTS MEASURES IN DIFFERENT AREAS:

U-LEAD provides nationwide trainings and counselling services to enhance communication and management competencies of public officials at the local, regional and national levels. At the same time, U-LEAD with Europe offers demand-driven and targeted trainings to local officials, while promoting budgetary transparency.

U-LEAD with Europe delivers this through its network of regional offices in all 24 oblasts of Ukraine. The U-LEAD team includes a wide variety of experts who support hromadas in becoming effective and capable, delivering high quality municipal services and facilitating local and regional development.

U-LEAD supports establishment and modernization of Administrative Service Centres, as well as training for their staff and involving residents in decision-making at the local level, which leads to better local administrative service delivery and greater quality of life for Ukrainian citizens.

Finally, exchange and networking across all levels of government is promoted. Awareness raising and dialogue activities aim at actively involving civil society and citizens in the reform process.

THE SELECTED SUCCESS STORIES HIGHLIGHT HOW U-LEAD WITH EUROPE CONTRIBUTES TO THE DECENTRALISATION AND REGIONAL POLICY REFORMS, BRINGING POSITIVE CHANGE TO COMMUNITIES IN UKRAINE.
Around 4,000 outpatient clinics and 12,700 health posts in rural areas require better facilities to handle the needs of citizens. Healthcare services often lack the quality of service in larger towns. Facilities lack equipment and funding, medical staff need opportunities for advanced training, basic first aid medicines are in short supply. In rural hromadas particularly, people have lost trust in their local physicians. Instead, they choose to travel long distances to cities – for the simplest of tests or advice. The law of Ukraine on improvement of accessibility and quality of healthcare services in rural areas intends to solve problems in rural healthcare that have not been addressed for decades.

In the age of decentralisation, amalgamated hromadas operate healthcare facilities in their own territory and now bear the responsibility of enabling access to quality healthcare for their citizens. In addition, the reform is designed to modernise governance and finance in Ukraine’s health system. To ensure successful introduction of reforms, local self-government bodies and healthcare providers need to work together in planning and managing the primary healthcare system.

U-LEAD with Europe helps strengthen municipalities in their ability to manage local healthcare facilities. It also promotes learning platforms for peer-to-peer exchanges. In 2018, following an official request from the Ministry of Health, U-LEAD with Europe contracted a group of six regional coordinators to support the healthcare reform in ten regions (Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Rivne, Vinnytsia, Volyn, Zakarpattia, Zhytomyr and Kyiv Oblasts). The Programme also created a regional support network for primary healthcare, training 120 AH leaders and chief physicians at public healthcare facilities.
ENABLING A BETTER QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

BACKGROUND
Hnizdychivska AH of Lviv Oblast was established in October 2015.

57.6 sq. km territory
Seven settlements with 6,332 people.
Healthcare system:
One family outpatient clinic and three health posts.

CHALLENGES
Need for better financial management in local healthcare facilities.
Low quality of health services.

When doctors serve patients and know them personally, this has a positive impact on medical consultation.
Dariya Pankiv, Director of the Hnizdychiv Clinic

SUPPORT
In January 2018, representatives from Hnizdychivska AH took part in training in ‘Management of Primary Healthcare Institutions within the Reform of the Healthcare System’ organised by U-LEAD with Europe.

With support from U-LEAD with Europe, healthcare managers in AHs developed a strategy for transitioning to the ‘Money Follows the Patient’ model. The mechanism allots money or budgets to hospitals or clinics based on the number of patients they admit instead of distributing a blanket budget.

RESULTS
The ‘Hnizdychiv Outpatient Clinic of General Practice of Family Medicine’ was established as a communal non-profit enterprise on 7 May 2018.

Hnizdychivska AH was the first hromada in Lviv Oblast to sign an agreement with the National Health Service. The clinic now receives money when patients and doctors sign a declaration of treatment under the Money Follows the Patient model.

The communal non-profit enterprise now provides primary healthcare services to AH residents with three family doctors, two dentists and a gynecologist working in the clinic.

By March 2019, about 4,000 declarations had been signed between patients and family doctors. Cumulative revenues amounted to over UAH two million; above median for the oblast.
For Ukraine’s rural communities, the simple task of setting back short distances from A to B can pose an everyday challenge. Many roads in Ukraine need urgent repairs. Not everyone has a car. Public bus timetables can be erratic. Some villages are also completely cut off from public transport. A lack of pavements on country lanes makes walking by the roadside dangerous, especially for young children. Finally, with older cars still on the roads, pollution is also a real issue.

So, what is the solution? Sustainable mobility. In plain English: Cycling. It is one of the most climate-friendly forms of transport we know. Almost anyone can afford a two-wheeler. On top of that, it has a positive impact on quality of life and health. It is an excellent way of getting around small towns and even between settlements. With a bike, it’s easy for people to visit and catch up with each other, making life in rural communities and small towns more attractive, safer and social. Cyclists can reach places of leisure and community meeting points in the hromada any time. It even helps create a community of like-minded people with similar interests and problems to discuss. You may not see it like this, but cycling potentially encourages community development and can even add a boost to local economy by requiring new infrastructure.

U-LEAD with Europe and the Kyiv Association of Cyclists launched the initiative ‘Green Light for Cycling in Hromadas’ promoting cycling as a cost-effective, healthy and ‘green’ mode of transport. The activities of the initiative included bike-to-school campaigns and planning workshops with AHs to develop bicycle-friendly environment.
**Support**

The ‘Green Light for Cycling in Hromadas’ initiative supported by U-LEAD with Europe and the Kyiv Association of Cyclists (AVK) helped the AH authorities, NGOs and citizens develop a cycling masterplan, a bicycle path map and an execution plan. One of the schools in the AH was involved in the bike-to-school campaign, which included providing bike racks, cycling and road safety training for children and an advertising campaign for cyclists and drivers to encourage safer traffic behaviour.

Bicycle campaign in hromadas is a great idea with a specific purpose. However, desire itself is not enough, it is necessary to develop the bicycle infrastructure, and today it is possible, since decentralisation has given hromadas the necessary financial resources.

**Results**

Koriukivska AH is now developing its local cycling infrastructure. The road service department in the hromada is including cycling paths in road surface repairs and is building new parking bays for bikes.

Also, the AH budget for 2019 includes UAH 200,000 for installing bike racks next to hospitals and schools.

50 children were trained in cycling safety. Five local civic activists now work as mentors for similar cycling safety classes in other schools.

The AH administration has approved cycling safety classes for children twice a year.

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**Background**

Koriukivska AH in Chernihiv Oblast was formed in December 2016.

606.95 sq. km territory

Nine settlements with 17,273 people.

**Challenges**

- Poorly developed public transport network makes cycling an attractive option in the hromada.
- AH residents, especially schoolchildren, are exposed to traffic risks when cycling.
- Need for developing bicycle infrastructure to make riding safer.

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**Results**

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**Hennadii Zubko,**
Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine
Around the world, governments are increasingly turning to the private sector to provide services in the fields of energy and power, transport and water that used to be delivered by the public sector. There are various reasons for including businesses in establishing public and social infrastructure projects and facilities.

The private sector can meet the shortfalls in public investments that can hamper project progress. By working with specialised companies, the state can guarantee greater efficiency in project delivery and operation. And, depending on the sector, private enterprises also have better access to state-of-the-art technology.

As indispensable as this model has become, risks must be taken into consideration. Good practice partnerships take all three groups of stakeholders into account: the public, the private sector and the local administrations. The parties involved should also take the long term into perspective, including sharing risks and management effectively. Likewise, proper legal frameworks are needed to prevent unsolicited projects from being agreed upon and the potential for corruption.

New to Ukraine’s local self-government landscape, public-private partnerships (PPPs) are long-term contracts, reliable relationships. Traditionally associated with large infrastructure projects, they now need a shift in mindset to accommodate for smaller projects too.

Proper project development is needed to ensure that the PPP is a win-win situation and benefits businesses, local self-government and citizens.

The Regional Development Policy and Action (RDPA) advisory group of U-LEAD with Europe supports cities, AHs and municipalities in developing and managing PPP projects in Ukraine.
BRINGING LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND BUSINESS TOGETHER FOR CITIZEN SERVICES

BACKGROUND

The cities of Zhytomyr and Truskavets, Dolynska and Trostyanetska AHs wanted to introduce and manage PPP projects and extend the range of local services.

CHALLENGES

The need to put institutions and authorities in a better position to implement PPPs locally.

SUPPORT

The advisory group for Regional Development in Policy and Action (RDPA) of U-LEAD with Europe selected four pilot hromadas: Zhytomyr, Dolyna, Truskavets and Trostyanets.

In November 2017, all signed cooperation agreements with RDPA.

Participants received training and consulting from experienced PPP specialists (local and international experts).

RESULTS

The cities of Zhytomyr and Truskavets, as well as Dolynska and Trostyanetska AHs have planned PPP projects and done all feasibility studies. They identified strengths and weaknesses, their potential technical and economic conditions.

The municipalities have trained specialists to develop PPP projects and establish long-term partnerships between authorities and business entities.

In 2019, Truskavets selected a private partner to work on providing healthcare services in the local hospital. Accommodated in one floor of the hospital, the company will establish a centre for minimally invasive surgery in urology, gynaecology and proctology. The contract will last 25 years.
According to statistics, 40% of all fires break out in rural areas\(^1\). However, most rural hromadas are far away from rayon or oblast centres where state emergency responders are traditionally based. Rescue services need to cover long distances and take time to respond to emergencies. Public safety is therefore one of the key issues in Ukraine’s decentralisation reform, transferring responsibilities to hromadas to manage their own emergency response facilities.

U-LEAD with Europe supports local safety plans. Its initiative contributes to strengthening the capacity of local self-government bodies in civil protection and improving emergency management, with a special emphasis on the creation of voluntary fire brigades.

Since January 2019, U-LEAD with Europe has supported 30 AHs in six oblasts. The measures are aimed at 60 local decision-makers from these AHs that have already started training in good practice safety measures based on the Polish experience. Over 360 volunteer firefighters have been trained by September 2019.

\(^1\) Analysis by Ukrainian Civil Protection Research Institute
FROM EMERGENCY TO SAFETY IN 15 MINUTES

BACKGROUND

Mykhailivska AH in Zaporizhzhia Oblast formed in April 2018.

CHALLENGES

Poor access to emergency services. The State Emergency Service units are too far from the AH’s distant settlements. It can take up to one hour to reach emergencies.

The region has a high fire hazard level. In the south of the country with fields and fertile soils, Mykhailivska AH is advancing in agriculture, yet is very much exposed to wildfires.

Until September 2017, when the cooperation agreement between the Mykhailivka and Lyutserna village councils was signed, there was no working fire station in the village of Mykhailivka. The hromada could only address the issue of fire safety following first local elections.

SUPPORT

Apart from consulting, the Programme experts supported the newly reorganised communal enterprise ‘Local Fire Brigade’ in preparing and submitting application for the GIZ ‘Support to Ukraine in Emergency Management’ project.

> From the very moment of amalgamation, the Programme specialists literally spent days and nights with us.

Alla Korol, Head of Mykhailivska AH

RESULTS

From the ‘Support to Ukraine in Emergency Management’ project, Mykhailivska AH received a new fire truck, uniforms and equipment for its fire brigade.

The AH provides annually almost UAH two million of its own funds for the communal enterprise ensuring 13 jobs. Also, after a study visit to Poland and learning from the Polish volunteer firefighting experience, Mykhailivska AH now plans to establish volunteer fire brigades in the villages of Novoandriivka and Bohatyrivka.

Local Fire brigade rescues property of hromada and local farmers and villagers from serious damage. They reach any site in less than 15 minutes and extinguish the fire without involving the State Emergency Service units.

Fire brigade specialists also run emergency drills for AH residents and at local schools.
If there is one field of everyday life that requires local attention, then it is waste management. Most recent Ukrainian statistics show that 366 million tonnes of waste were generated in 2017. Of that, the country collected around 11 million tonnes of household and similar waste. Per person that adds up to 265 kg of rubbish annually¹.

Municipal solid waste management is also fairly basic. In Europe, 60% of all domestic rubbish is recycled, in Ukraine only 3% to 8%. Up to 90% and more of solid waste ends up in landfills and unauthorised dumps. Recycling household waste is both a problem and a priority for Ukraine. In early 2018, Ukraine resolved to start sorting household waste into three types: for reuse, disposal and recycling. Best managed locally, many hromadas have begun taking waste management into their own hands to care for their own clean environment. In addition, the country has committed to European standards of waste management and climate action.

Against the backdrop of Ukraine’s decentralisation reform, regional waste management is considered an essential task to be tackled by AHs. Thanks to the reform, AHs now have the power and the financial and administrative resources to address issues of household waste management on the ground. Additionally, sustainable waste management supports local economic development with the possibility for local self-government bodies to treat and see waste as a raw material for generating energy and establish recycling plants that create jobs and additional income.

Until the end of 2019, U-LEAD is implementing an initiative for upgrading municipal waste management in AHs. Three regional workshops on waste management were already held in Dnipropetrovsk, Volyn and Zhytomyr Oblasts with 226 participants. On study trips to Slovenia, AHs have been able to see good practices in action for themselves. Following the training, 36 AHs are developing and will implement local waste management plans.

CHANGING THE MINDSET ON RECYCLING WASTE IN UKRAINE’S HROMADAS

BACKGROUND
Illinetska AH of Vinnytsya Oblast was established in May 2016.

CHALLENGE
Environmental contaminants resulted from a weak utility network and a problem of garbage dumps in the AH neighbourhood.

SUPPORT
In Vinnytsia U-LEAD with Europe worked with local municipal service specialists to attract investments and draft concepts for efficient use of waste to improve local environment. In 2020 Sustainable Development Strategy of Illinetska AH, the campaigns of ‘Green hromada’ and ‘Illintsi without litter’ stated as top priorities.

The beginning of the decentralisation reform became a tipping point for us, allowing us to solve our waste issue. Without the reform, we would never have the resources to address this challenge by ourselves.

Volodymyr Yashchuk,
Head of Illinetska AH

RESULTS
The AH invested UAH 22 million in landscaping: UAH 9 million from the city budget and UAH 13 million from the Environment Protection Fund.

Launched late 2018, the communal company ‘Dobrobut’ sorts ten types of solid waste. Together with the urban greening unit, it provides jobs for about 120 people. Illinetska AH allocated UAH 12 million from its own budget to establish the waste sorting facility. As a result, all 20 unauthorised garbage dumps have been eliminated, and the land is now used by a greening unit to plant apple gardens in an area of five hectares.

In the next step, the AH installed 39 collection points for domestic waste. And then, with support from local CSOs, held a local campaign to engage people in the hromada into taking greater responsibility for the environment.

Illinetska AH also talks about its experiences. People from Vinnytsia Oblast and other places visit Illintsi to learn from their waste management initiative and now plan to launch similar sorting plants.

In turn, Illinetska AH has received funding and is preparing to kickstart a secondary recycling line, which can make waste sorting a profitable enterprise.
An Administrative Service Centre (ASC) is a place where a wide range of services can be provided – a convenient ‘one-stop shop’. One of the main aims of ASCs is to ensure access for everyone in the municipality to services provided by local self-government bodies, a challenge all too familiar to many residents in Ukrainian villages and settlements, difficult to reach by road and also far away from AH centres where public services are available.

U-LEAD with Europe supports creation or modernisation of ASCs. During the Inception Phase from 2016 to 2018, 26 AHs were selected through open competition to pilot models and approaches to administrative service delivery. They are further scaled up within the Roll Out Phase, where up to 600 well-functioning ASCs will be established. By supporting rural AHs and small cities, the Programme contributes to making administrative services closer to all citizens.

Environmental consideration is also taken seriously when building public facilities. As key administrative buildings in hromadas, ASCs should set standards, minimise carbon emissions and improve energy use wherever possible. Therefore, in the frame of the Inception Phase, new ASC premises were built using both eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient technologies that meet European environmental standards. ASCs are in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #11 - to make communities and cities more inclusive, safe and sustainable.

Our international partners provided us with a great opportunity, and now our residents receive high-quality administrative services in a new energy efficient building. We are very inspired and will keep striving to implement advanced projects like this.

Ivan Ihnatyev, Head of Mykolaivska AH
UKRAINE'S MOST ENERGY EFFICIENT SERVICE CENTRE IS IN MYKOLAIVSKA AH

BACKGROUND
Mykolaivska AH of Sumy Oblast was established in December 2016.

CHALLENGE
Use energy efficiency approaches to save budget for maintaining administrative facilities in hromadas.

SUPPORT
A new modern ASC, considered the most energy efficient administrative building in Ukraine, was opened in Mykolaivska AH in March 2018 with support from U-LEAD with Europe.

The centre was built from scratch in less than five months. Almost 100 administrative services are available for more than 10,000 hromada residents. This also includes people with disabilities and people with children as ASC is fully accessible and equipped with a children's corner.

RESULTS
Various state-of-the-art solutions went into building the ASC from scratch, allowing it to reach one of the highest energy efficiency classes, “B”. Its walls reach the same insulation and energy saving levels as a two-metre brick wall. The combination of an air/water pump with underfloor heating is highly efficient, and up to 95% of all warm air is re-used.

Thanks to green technologies and eco-friendly building materials, the hromada can save over four times in heating and ventilation costs compared to a usual building.

Mykolaivska’s ASC was also built to ensure that all residents can access an open place where they can meet their local and governmental officials and obtain administrative services. The ASC is accessible for all residents, including people with disabilities and parents with baby strollers.
Many public buildings in Ukraine – schools, hospitals, clinics, administrative offices to name a few – are old constructions, in poor state and in desperate need of repair. Their energy efficiency, systems for heating, hot water and electricity technologically are outdated. Despite introducing energy efficiency, even new buildings fail to comply with international standards. Energy consumption is therefore often unnecessarily high, putting a strain on municipal budgets.

With hromadas afforded the ability to make direct investments in local infrastructure, new opportunities are arising for energy-saving measures in public buildings. To support hromadas in monitoring and analysing energy efficiency, identifying how to decrease consumption and taking concrete steps, U-LEAD with Europe introduced a regional initiative on energy savings.

Aimed at increasing the capacity of 30 selected AHs to manage their energy needs, reduce their energy consumption and make budget savings, the initiative’s activities include training in energy management and mentoring in developing their own Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP).

The municipalities can appoint energy efficiency managers who are certified to write reports on energy consumption and savings. They help point out the benefits of energy efficient policies, for example, by establishing inventories of buildings, planning and implementing investments.

Besides own revenues from taxes, hromadas can acquire additional funds for investing in sustainable energy with the assistance of Ukraine’s State Fund for Regional Development (SFRD).

As one of the most important funding mechanisms for local development, the fund is set to finance projects to the tune of UAH 11.8 billion in 2019. Hromadas receive money and then contribute an amount on top to make projects happen. U-LEAD supports AHs in writing project proposals to the SFRD to apply for financing for energy efficiency measures and projects.

“Developing alternative energies and conserving resources are steps into the future. We should understand that the earth’s resources are limited, and it is necessary to look for alternatives to these sources of energy.”

Oleksii Diachenko, Deputy Head of Vesele Village Council on Economic Development and Investment, Veselivska AH, Zaporizhzhia Oblast
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR AMALGAMATED HROMADAS

BACKGROUND

Veselivska AH of Zaporizhzhia Oblast was established in October 2015.

Nine settlements with 12,564 people.

438.34 sq. km territory

CHALLENGE

Outdated infrastructure inherited from Soviet 1980s.

Lack of hands-on expertise in energy efficiency.

SUPPORT

The hromada’s representatives have taken part in over nine workshops and seminars on energy efficiency, and U-LEAD with Europe selected the municipality as part of its initiative for supporting energy efficiency and energy management systems in AHs.

Oleksii Diachenko, Deputy Head on Economic Development and Investment of Vesele Settlement Council, and Ihor Kryvko, local secondary school principal, visited Brussels as part of the Peer-to-Peer initiative of U-LEAD with Europe and the European Committee of the Regions. Oleksii learned from European partners about how to introduce modern energy-saving technologies and efficient energy management and was also trained by U-LEAD to become a certified energy efficiency manager. Ihor learned how to improve the school building. With support from the partner city of Rakvere, Estonia, Veselivska AH created an action plan for sustainable energy development.

RESULTS

Almost UAH 10 million was invested in improving the energy efficiency of a local school building. Veselivska AH had successfully prepared a project that received a grant from the State Fund for Regional Development to deploy energy-saving technologies in Vesele secondary school (with a total budget of almost UAH 9.4 million, including UAH one million from the hromada’s own budget), leading to an almost 30% decrease in energy consumption over three years.

A 29-hectare land plot was allocated to construct a UAH 360 million solar power station in the hromada.
The decentralisation reform in Ukraine has given municipalities and amalgamated hromadas new functions, decision-making roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis their citizens. However, restructuring power also means recipients of new responsibilities need the knowledge to fulfill their roles and act in accordance with their new powers. Besides direct capacity development measures through the training and consultancy the U-LEAD with Europe Programme provides, real-life exchanges and cooperation also play a crucial role in moving forward together. Inside Ukraine, hromadas share experiences they have gained. Local authorities can also cooperate with peers outside Ukraine, and inspiring examples from EU countries can play a key role.

In 2015, the European Committee of the Regions set up a task force to work with national partners, including the Ministry of Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine. The goal is to intensify partnership relations and provide both political and technical support to achieve good governance at all levels. The objective of the task force is to promote exchanges of good practices. Hence, the Peer-to-Peer initiative was started to build partnerships between local and regional authorities in the EU and Ukraine, share experiences and foster regional development.

The initiative selected two regions in Ukraine and two regions in the EU, three amalgamated hromadas and three EU cities as partners. Throughout 2018, the peers cooperated on sharing and integrating good practices in their municipalities and regions in rural development, tourism and local economic development, energy efficiency and improvement of social and cultural offerings and activities. A total of 71 participants took part in study visits.
EU AND UKRAINE. LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER. AS PARTNERS AND PEERS.

BACKGROUND

Five peers representing two oblasts of Ukraine and two EU regions, three AHs paired with EU municipalities:
- Veselivska AH – City of Rakvere, Estonia
- Chemerovetska AH – Zarasai municipality, Lithuania
- Shyrokivska AH – Barleben municipality, Germany
- Kharkiv Oblast – Wielkopolska region, Poland
- Khmelnytskyi Oblast – Szabolcs Szatmár Bereg county, Hungary

CHALLENGE

Shortage of required expertise among key decentralisation drivers at the regional and local level in Ukraine.

SUPPORT

Together with the European Committee of the Regions, U-LEAD with Europe developed a concept for peer-to-peer cooperation with Ukraine.

Through the pilot initiative, U-LEAD with Europe ensured technical and financial support for selected Ukrainian peers. Capacity development in study visits and internships enabled Ukrainians to benefit from the experience of EU peers.

Lessons learned from study visits turned into strategies for local and regional development in five fields:
1. Energy efficiency
2. Education and cultural space improvement
3. Rural development
4. SME development
5. Tourism development

RESULTS

Chemerovetska AH now has a comprehensive strategy for developing culture, a library space and tourism from 2019 to 2023. The AH also has a project ‘Hromada for people’ and ‘Women’s club of local self-government.’

Shyrokivska AH held three Business Dialogue meetings with small- and medium-sized enterprise partners from the city of Barleben in Germany. The AH now offers good support for local companies and continues to hold regular forums with these businesses.

In Khmelnytskyi Oblast, the medieval castle of Medzhybizh was restored and various folk festivals were held as part of the strategy for developing tourism.

Who is the best teacher? A peer!
Benedikt Herrmann, Member of the Support Group for Ukraine, Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine

After we saw what even small municipalities can do for their businesses in Barleben in Germany, we see how important is to be there to support companies and their interests.
Denis Korotenko, Head of Shyrokivska AH, Zaporizhzhia Oblast
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