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Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine

Final Project Report 2015 – 2018



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PROJECT: Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine

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- Output 1 – Effective monitoring system established
- Output 2 – Effective local governance structures capable of addressing urgent recovery needs are functioning
- Output 3 - Reconciliation and restoration of social cohesion among communities, and between communities and the authorities

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATC	Amalgamated Territorial Community
ATO	Anti-Terrorist Operation
CAB	Citizens' Advisory Bureau
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GCA	Government Controlled Area
IDP(s)	Internally Displaced Person(s)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGCA	Non-Government Controlled Area
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PC	Public Council
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
RPA	Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment
RPP	Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme
SCORE	Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index
UAH	Ukrainian hryvnia
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USE	UN SCORE for Eastern Ukraine

Introduction

The outbreak of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine negatively affected the country's socio-economic and political development, significantly reduced the level of social cohesion and, most importantly, disrupted local governments' capacity to effectively address public needs. Social fragmentation, prejudices, regional divides, and low levels of trust in authorities and institutions existed long before the crisis but have been considerably aggravated by the ongoing conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

The situation was exacerbated by military action, which increased the feeling of insecurity in the population, especially among persons living near the 'contact line'.

Around 1.7 million people have moved out of the conflict-affected area, with over 800,000 now residing permanently in the Government Controlled Areas (GCA) of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. An estimated two-thirds of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) are women and children, who were forced to leave their homes in search of safety and better livelihood opportunities¹. Therefore, addressing the needs of IDPs by providing them with advisory support for registering their places of residence, facilitating their integration into host communities, obtaining social benefits and pensions, and receiving psychological help remains one of the key priorities to address on an ongoing basis.

Moreover, the conflict resulted in a geographic relocation of regional administrations, as the new civil-military administrations for Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were re-established in cities in the government-controlled areas (Kramatorsk and Severodonetsk respectively). In light of this, the most pressing issues requiring urgent action have been consolidation of governance structures, and strengthening their administrative and institutional capacities to more effectively address socio-economic and security challenges and provide timely and quality public services.

¹ UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview, available at: <https://bit.ly/2Jgf9>

Moreover, as the regional administrations are continuing to operate as civil-military administrations under special legislation, and lack elected institutions in the form of Oblast Councils, enhancing their everyday interaction with citizens and civil society continues to be an essential issue to be addressed. As local government is the level closest to citizens, increased public participation in local policy making is required, as well as monitoring of policy implementation.

It should also be noted that women are disproportionately affected by the conflict due to persistent gender inequality and discrimination, and entrenched gender stereotypes that emphasise men as protectors and heroes, and on women as caring supporters.

The lack of adequate social support services has resulted in an increased burden on women for the care of children, the sick, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and other family members. This situation has required the local authorities to immediately address the needs of women and members of vulnerable groups by providing them with high quality public services and, most importantly, by developing sustainable mechanisms to ensure their inclusion in the development and implementation of local policies.

The armed conflict, along with socio-economic challenges, the deficit in governance structures, gender inequality, and the lack of avenues to engage youth in local action have diminished social cohesion, which was already weak from years of divergent and politically charged narratives and wide pre-existing divides between political elites and the general public.

Introduction

Therefore, advocacy and investment continues to be needed in a narrative that gives the local population hope of a brighter future and proposes ways of maximizing opportunities to mobilize people and ensure the support of affected communities for further reforms.

Strong emphasis must be placed on launching dialogue among youth residing in different areas of Ukraine to speak to one another, strengthen bonds, explore similarities and overcome stereotypes, in order to enhance social cohesion and coexistence at a critical time for Ukraine and its future.

To address the aforementioned critical challenges and to support governance and reconciliation in crisis-affected communities, the UNDP has implemented the “Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine” project that was financially supported by the governments of Sweden and Switzerland. The project’s fundamental objectives were to provide expert and technical assistance for building capable, accountable and responsive local governance institutions in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to effectively address grievances generated by the conflict, and to enhance social cohesion by improving the quality of relationships among various social groups and between the general public and state authorities.

To this end, the project’s interventions were built around the following concrete outputs:

- 1. Establishment of an effective monitoring system** that helps to estimate the scale and depth of the crisis to form the needed basis for targeted development interventions and monitoring of their effectiveness;
- 2. Expert and technical assistance to building effective local governance institutions** not only to guarantee a speedier reconstruction and ways for economic recovery, but to ensure continuous delivery of high quality and inclusive public services to local communities and improve the public trust towards their capacity in providing protection of peoples’ rights and interests by ensuring that systemic consultation mechanisms are in place and operational;

3. Provision of support to reconciliation and restoration of social cohesion among communities as well as between communities and the authorities to guarantee greater social inclusiveness, civic participation, inter-communal tolerance as well as social mobility as a basis to equality of opportunity.

The project was integrated into the comprehensive UNDP Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (RPP), a unifying programmatic framework for six development projects funded by seven international partners.

The RPP was designed to combine efforts across several areas, and successful implementation of the programme itself is contributing greatly to mitigating mounting risks, and managing increasing challenges in the areas most affected by the conflict.

Setting a long-term, integrated agenda for strengthening governance capacity at regional, district and local levels makes current recovery interventions more robust, sustainable, inclusive and responsive; contributes to restoring trust in government and rebuilding legitimacy; and further enhances social cohesion and senses of security in affected communities, thus reducing potential for conflict.





Output 1

Effective
monitoring system
established

Efficient planning, monitoring and evaluation are vital for addressing development needs by establishing clear links between past, present and future initiatives. Having effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place can help extract lessons learned that could be used for programmatic fine-tuning, reorientation and future planning. The value of a monitoring system is that it supplies data and insights not only on trends in project progress itself, but also on broader economic and social development in the regions that will allow the longterm impact of interventions to be evaluated.

Achieving development results is much more difficult than often imagined, especially in a fragile and frequently changing conflict environment. Large-scale programmes, projects and massive financial resources are not enough to ensure that development outcomes that will result in improvement of people's lives will ultimately be achieved. The quality of the interventions, their design, how well the resources are planned and whether they truly reflect the real state of affairs are crucial factors behind a project's successful implementation.

Bearing this in mind, this project has designed and established a **special monitoring system to:**

- Receive objective data from and assessment of the situation

in eastern Ukraine to design actions reflecting the needs of local counterparts, ranging from local authorities to civil society organizations but, most importantly, to ordinary citizens and vulnerable groups who continue to suffer the most from the ongoing armed conflict in eastern Ukraine;

- Update, prioritize and sequence recovery interventions on a regular basis as the situation evolves;
- Obtain regular feedback on progress made towards achieving project goals and objectives; and
- Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions to determine the extent of the changes made and realign actions to ensure sustainability of the results in order to enhance local governance structures and restore social cohesion.

The project monitoring system was established on the basis of the initial **Vulnerability and Risk Assessment** to obtain accurate baseline data for monitoring overall perceptions of the existing problems among Ukrainians and the population's vulnerability in the crisis (Please see Annex 1, Vulnerability and Risk Assessment).

The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine has had a direct and severe impact on social cohesion, public security and the rule of law – as

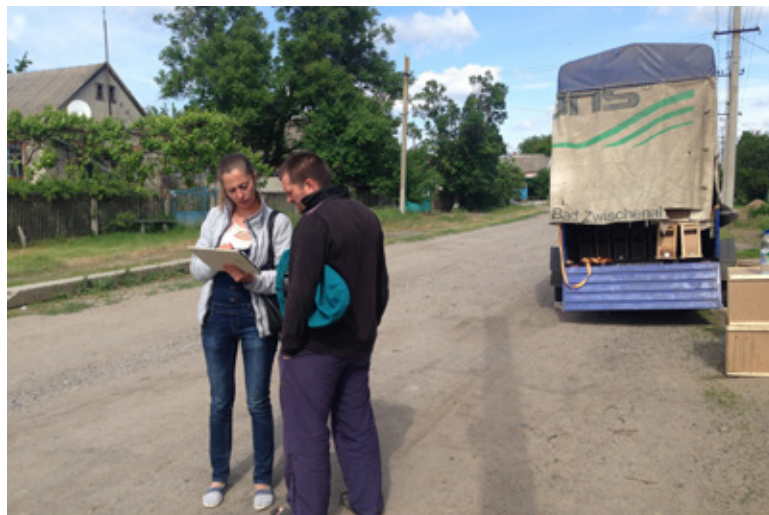
determined by the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPA) conducted jointly by the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank Group, in partnership with the Government of Ukraine. Displacement, fear and increasingly low levels of confidence are widespread social problems and hardships of those living in the conflict-affected areas. While social fragmentation, bias, regional disagreements, and low levels of trust in authorities and institutions existed before the crisis, they intensified because of the conflict, particularly in the most crisis-affected regions of Donetsk and Luhansk.²

Surveys on the **Vulnerability Risk Assessment** for Ukraine were conducted by GfK Ukraine, with financial support from UNDP's "Strengthening Ukraine's Emerging Modernization and Innovation" Project. Those results helped to create an initial monitoring system for the "Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine" Project by establishing reliable baseline data, which in turn helped to identify the needs and target areas for its interventions.

² Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment available at: http://www.un.org.ua/images/documents/3737/V1-RPA_Eng_Vol1.pdf

To better understand the context and ensure effective planning for enhancing and restoring social cohesion among various groups, the project supported the use of a comprehensive analytical assessment tool, the **United Nations Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine (USE)**, based on the methodology of the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE), developed by the Cyprus Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD) and UNDP. The SCORE Index has been previously used in a number of conflict contexts elsewhere to more precisely assess the level of social cohesion and to subsequently develop the most appropriate interventions to boost cohesion and propensity for reconciliation.

As mentioned above, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine negatively affected and put considerable pressure on the ability of local governance structures to address socio-economic challenges and meet public needs. For a better and more complete understanding of this issue, the project, in co-operation with Pricewater-




SCORE interview process, May 14, 2017.
Photo: UNDP Ukraine

house-Coopers LLC (PwC), as a benchmark and the starting point for a monitoring system to design project activities aimed at fostering inclusiveness, responsiveness, transparency and accountability in the local governance structures. The data obtained have served

USE is an inter-agency initiative, jointly implemented by three UN entities – UNDP, IOM and UNICEF. The first and second waves of the USE survey were funded by the UN, with a financial contribution from the EU. The “Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine” Project, funded by Sweden and Switzerland, supported early piloting of the survey and subsequent regional stakeholder consultations. USE results were also used to monitor the long-term effects of development interventions within the framework of UNDP’s Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme.

I. Vulnerability and Risk Assessment



The “Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine” project began in 2015, when the situation required an immediate response combined with a comprehensive approach to recovery, reconstruction, and peacebuilding that had to be flexible, adaptive and responsive to the evolving needs of local population. Because of the instability of the situation, regular and accurate monitoring was required of how Ukrainians perceived their problems by Ukrainians and how vulnerable the population was in the persisting crisis. Thus, the information received and analysed through the Vulnerability and Risk Assessment played an important role in ensuring well-informed decision making, not only by the project itself but also by the Government of Ukraine and other international partners involved in implementing activities related to recovery and peacebuilding, restoring local governance structures and enhancing social co-

hesion severely disrupted by the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Moreover, the research was also instrumental in providing reliable data on socio-economic vulnerability and related institutional capacities in Ukraine. The study aimed to identify risks and vulnerabilities in Ukrainian society, and to determine the factors that can worsen the situation in the country.

The total sample for each wave constituted of 5,000 respondents including, IDPs living in collective settlements (500 respondents), IDPs living in separate households (500 interviews), the population of the government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (1,000 respondents each), and the general population of Ukraine (2,000 respondents). The survey included two waves: the first wave of the survey was carried out in June-July 2015 and the second wave in November 2015: this en-


abled the changes that took place during this period to be assessed and the interventions to be adjusted to achieve a greater impact.

Major findings of the assessment

The Vulnerability and Risk Assessment highlighted the following strategic focus areas that have formed the basis for project's targeted assistance:

- Low level of trust in the work of central and local authorities. The residents of the government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were most often concerned about the inefficiency of the central authorities of Ukraine (48 per cent mentioned this problem) and the vulnerability of the general public to arbitrariness from the state authorities (45 per cent). During the second wave of the survey the importance of the problem of the general public being able to influence the situation in the country increased from 20 per cent to 35 per cent. Unlike the general Ukrainian population and IDPs, this target audience was concerned about Western interference in Ukrainian affairs (25 per cent) rather than about Russian interference in Ukrainian affairs (17 per cent). The proportion that trusted the mayor/ head of the village council increased from 19 per cent to 24 per cent. The level of distrust in the mayor/ head of the village council and the local council fell, but still the plurality of citizens distrusted these institutions. These findings suggested for a need for stakeholders to be assisted to restore governance structures, provide overall policy guidance, mobilize human and financial resources to address the existing challenges and establish public feedback mechanisms;
- Low satisfaction among the respondents with public services provided meant that most respondents, especially IDPs in collective settlements as well as IDPs in separate households were not inclined to approach public institutions such as the Pension Fund (20 per cent and 19 per cent respectively) and other public institutions. The data provided indicates that the crisis has negatively affected the very ability of the public institutions to provide the social services needed because of the absence of relevant standards and the ongoing lack of civil servants. The situation was further exacerbated by shortages of space and technical equipment to cope with ever-increasing demand for social services and protection, not least because of the high influx of IDPs;
- The proportion of Ukrainians who indicated tension between locals and IDPs in their settlement fell from 18 per cent to 14 per cent. However, the share of those who agreed with the statement that "IDPs have different values from those of people from our region" increased from 29 per cent to 33 per cent. Although a plurality of IDPs reported positive attitudes towards host communities (43 per cent of IDPs in collective settlements and 44 per cent among IDPs in separate households), the proportion of IDPs who reported negative attitudes increased (from 8 per cent to 14 per cent and from 7 per cent to 12 per cent respectively, while others reported neutral attitude or could not answer). The percentage of IDPs in separate households who reporting certain offences or harassment from local residents increased from 29 per cent to 37 per cent. These numbers suggest an urgent necessity for the project to engage in interventions that would facilitate and create open dialogue platforms between IDPs and host communities, and in general between various groups in the society, especially youth who as the future generation should talk, trust each other and participate in community development.

II. Eastern Ukraine Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index



As mentioned above, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine had a highly negative impact on social cohesion, which in many ways serves as a glue to hold societies together and is fundamental in community mobilization and development. Project interventions to strengthen social cohesion in conflict-affected areas of Ukraine were designed using an evidence-based approach, informed thanks to the support provided for preparing the UN Social Cohesion Index for Eastern Ukraine (USE).

The USE is a sophisticated analytical tool designed to improve understanding of societal dynamics in the five eastern oblasts of Dnipro, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia. USE helps to identify strategic entry points for policies and programmes that contribute to strengthening social cohesion. USE is jointly implemented by three United Nations agencies: UNDP, UNICEF, and IOM.

The first USE wave, which was completed in October 2017, captured the views of some 10,000 people residing in the five oblasts. Specifically, it comprised a face-to-face survey of 5,300 respondents members of the general public; a school survey of 3,300 pupils in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts; 72 in-depth interviews; and a face-to-face survey of 1,500 people residing in the non-government controlled areas who commute to the government-controlled areas across the five checkpoints in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Major findings of the assessment: The results obtained give the overall indicator of social cohesion in the five eastern oblasts of Ukraine at 6.6, above the theoretical median score of 5 out of 10. The essence of this outcome is disclosed through its components: friendly relations with neighbours, social exclusion and openness to different groups of

society.³ At the same time, the level of non-violent civic engagement activity is very low in all eastern oblasts, with an average value in the region of 0.3.

Analysis of the results identifies three main reasons for the low level of citizen engagement.

The first is the continuing widespread beliefs among inhabitants of eastern Ukraine that the authorities do not involve citizens in decision-making processes and do not properly respond to the needs of citizens. The second is lack of information (i.e. citizens are not well informed about what decisions are taken by local councils and other local authorities). The third is that people believe social activism takes a lot of time.

Analysis of the level of trust in authorities and social institutions makes it easier to understand why people are reluctant to participate in policy- and decision-making. Despite the fact that people trust local authorities and social institutions much more than central authorities, the level of trust in the authorities is generally low. Distrust in authorities can discourage people from interacting with the institutions representing them and working for them.

This analysis suggests that social cohesion is ensured by close neighbourly relations, while in the broader institutional space of communities, people are not ready to be active, do not believe in their ability to influence decisions and do not feel the need for citizen participation.

These findings have served as a benchmark for identifying and prioritizing interventions to enhance social cohesion. The social cohesion work stream has also provided opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing to improve the understanding and perception of communities across Ukraine about other communities (East-West Dialogue). It has also stimulated and informed the overall discourse on the country's future development.

The line of work included the following major areas:

- **Fostering cooperation and exchange of best practices** between various groups and authorities as a key prerequisite for mutual contacts and dialogue on challenges to societal development;

- **Building networks and facilitating inclusive dialogue platforms** among different actors, especially youth, to build better social ties and strengthen tolerance and respect for diversity – a key determinant of conflict resolution and peace-building. This was especially important in a situation characterized by fragile intercommunal trust, lack of a sense of belonging and a disinclination to engage in civic participation;
- **Launch of a grant scheme to support various civil society initiatives** to enhance social cohesion and build trust in and within communities;
- **Development of conflict-sensitive communication strategies** and plans to communicate positively regarding tolerance, reconciliation and recovery and to build public trust in the work of local authorities; and
- **Enhancing youth civic engagement** through programming that recognizes its role as peace ambassadors, including support for development of youth leadership skills, civic education, human rights training and volunteerism.

³ Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index for Eastern Ukraine, Social Cohesion and a Sense of Belonging. Available at http://use.scoreforpeace.org/files/publication/pub_file/13/SocialConnectednessAndBelonging_UKR.pdf (in Ukrainian)

III. PwC assessment of the institutional capacities of sub-national governmental administrations

Support for local governance and local government functions in conflict-affected areas of eastern Ukraine is critical, not only to guarantee faster reconstruction and economic recovery and continuous delivery of social and other services to local communities and IDPs alike, but also to improve public trust in the capacities of the authorities to play their role of ensuring protection of the rights of citizens, including the most vulnerable, and reducing inequity between Ukrainian regions. Improved state-society relations remain the best contribution that local governance can make to recovery and peacebuilding.

To identify strategic entry points for interventions on governance constraints at both oblast and municipal level and to help restore and improve their functionality for policy making, general administration and service delivery, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC (PwC) was tasked with:

a. assessing the oblast and municipal governments' current functions, institutional structures, staffing needs, desired capacities, and local budgets (including analysis of expenditure and needs, as well as revenue sources and fiscal issues); and

b. identifying areas for improvement related to internal operations and customer service. PwC gathered data for this analysis by interviewing employees and reviewing internal documentation.

Major findings of the assessment

In its assessment, PwC identified a number of findings which, if not addressed, could have affected the administrations' abilities to meet their goals and fully address the needs of their employees and clients in the post-conflict context.

They include the following:

- Increased inflow of IDPs to the two oblasts generates a need to build substantial capacity to offer real-time quality services;
- Limited access to essential public and administrative services is a developing problem in the two oblasts and is one of the reasons for the chronically tense atmosphere in society;
- Fragmentation of hard infrastructure near the 'contact line' makes it not sustainable to use;
- Cities in the Anti-Terrorist Operation Zone face a number of challenges with their economic development and so the situation in them is not the same as elsewhere in the two oblasts;
- Recovery efforts at local level are focussing mainly on immediate needs rather than following a strategic approach;
- Insufficient focus on business community involvement puts stable regional economic development at risk;
- The lack of long-term thinking among administrations prevents a realistic development approach and leads to incoherent resource planning;
- Poor asset management results in financial and operational ineffectiveness among local government authorities at both power levels;
- Calculation of budget transfers does not consider all the implications of decentralization reform and current needs in the two oblasts caused by the ongoing conflict;
- The lack of a structured approach to building dialogue with communities enhances the power distance between local government and the general public;
- On-going decentralization reform is empowering communities but is increasing administrative uncertainty at local level;
- Non-formalized internal procedures and policies lead to discretionary powers and unjustified utilization of resources;
- The transition to new electronic procurement and reporting systems is uneven and faces a number of technical, procedural, and administrative issues;
- Local administrations are underperforming because of ineffective organizational structures and lack of human resources and material assets;
- The predominance of formal, written means of communication between government levels undermines its effectiveness.

This information was used not only to assess the current state of the target administrations but most importantly to identify areas for project interventions and potential improvement. (Please refer to Annex 2 for the full PwC report).

Key output achievements

The project began in eastern Ukraine in 2015 under continuing heavy security constraints, and faced shortages of information and entry points with regards to the development agenda. Nevertheless, through the project a monitoring system was designed and baseline data obtained on local governance issues as well as on social cohesion through the conducting of surveys and assessments. The Vulnerability and Risk Assessment, the United Nations SCORE for Eastern Ukraine (USE) and the PwC assessment of the institutional capacities of sub-national governmental administrations have each played crucial roles in ensuring that project activities were not designed on an ad hoc basis but were needs-based, and geared towards achievement of sustainable and nationally owned results.





Output 2

Effective local
governance
structures capable
of addressing urgent
recovery needs are
functioning

The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine led to the need for urgent humanitarian as well as development interventions. In addition to the loss of thousands of lives, the displacement of millions of civilians, and the destruction of critical infrastructure and essential livelihood opportunities, the conflict negatively affected the very ability of the local governance structures to effectively address pressing public needs. According to 2015 Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPA), conducted with the support of the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank, half of all local administrative buildings in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts have suffered some level of damage, and some infrastructure in areas very close to the 'contact line' have been destroyed completely. Apart from infrastructural damage, the crisis has also led to a significant decrease in civil servants (in some instances, only 20 per cent of staff positions are filled; in other cases, a one-third of the staff are present in the oblast administration, and city councils and oblast administrations only have 78 per cent of the staff they normally require).⁴

This has had disproportionately serious consequences for poorer households, the displaced and other vulnerable and conflict-affected groups that require critical services, whether social, administrative, legal and or psychological aid. The situation was further exacerbated by shortages of space and equipment and the complete reallocation of administrative offices from the areas worst affected by conflict, leaving behind a large number of people in need of protection.

As mentioned above, the conflict also led to reallocation of regional administrative centres. Administrations were split between those that remained in the NGCA under the control of the de facto authorities in Luhansk and Donetsk, and the new civil-military administrations under the Government of Ukraine. This has put them under immense pressure to rapidly build institutional frameworks to address the societal and conflict-related challenges as well as participate in national public reform processes, including decentralization.

The hardship and challenges the state institutions have faced in delivering social services, in restoring government infrastructure and assets, and in mobilizing financial and human resources to meet the urgent recovery needs have resulted in a lack of public trust in the work and credibility of the governance structures. The situation was further worsened by the lack of citizen-state interaction, due to the absence of consultation mechanisms and dialogue platforms through which civil society institutions can participate in needs assessment, planning and implementation of recovery responses, promote public interests and contribute in a democratic manner to decision-making processes.

To address these major challenges, the project designed the following intervention logic, leading to a series of achievements and systemic changes.

⁴ Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment available at: http://www.un.org.ua/images/documents/3737/V1-RPA_Eng_Vol1.pdf

1. Ensuring the accessibility of social services to address pressing needs

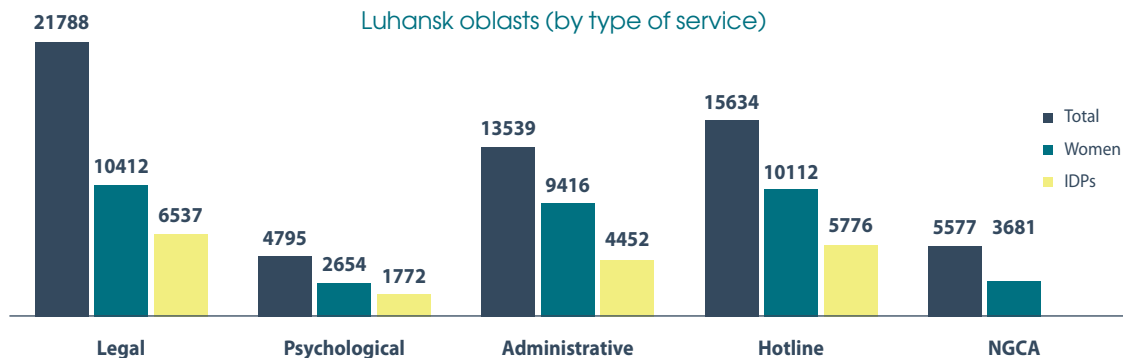


Urgently supporting the efforts of local authorities to provide essential social services lay at the core of alleviating the suffering of conflict-affected persons and rebuilding citizens' trust in state institutions. The adverse effects of conflict-inflicted damage are disproportionately borne by poorer households, the displaced, and other vulnerable and conflict-affected groups. Continuous provision of the most needed social services was therefore essential for societal normalization and stabilization of crisis-affected areas, and to create the conditions needed for further development.


Key achievement

Establishment and operational support for the functioning of seven Citizens' Advisory Bureaus (CABs) to fill a gap in the capacity of Ukrainian authorities to provide administrative, psychological and legal aid services to the population in need. To date, the Centres have provided over 55,000 services and organized a series of field consultations in remote locations along the 'contact line', covering 285 cities, towns and villages in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Number of consultations provided by CABs in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (by type of service)



2. Enhancing local authorities' interaction with civil society to further advance public needs



As mentioned above, local government is the level closest to citizens and this proximity should lead to an enhanced level of citizen participation in local decision-making processes. However, despite the relatively high number of civil society organizations registered in eastern Ukraine (1,500 in Donetsk Oblast and 1,999 in Luhansk Oblast), evidence on the ground pointed to limited interaction with local authorities, whether in the joint development of programmes, amendments to certain by-laws or proper monitoring of their implementation and the issuing of follow-up recommendations. The conflict resulted in further dramatic decrease in civil society cooperation with the state institutions, as exemplified by the absence of an institutional basis in the form of the elected officials or Oblast Councils that existed prior to the conflict.

This situation led to an urgent necessity to rebuild the formal channels of citizens' engagement in local decision-making processes, with a particular focus on advancing the interests of the most vulnerable groups affected by the conflict. Local development planning processes that are based on inclusive dialogue and promote transparency will facilitate trust between local authorities and communities.

Key achievements

- The project contributed to the implementation of Ukraine's National Strategy on Civil Society Development 2016-2020. This was reached through expert support to Donetsk Oblast Administration in launching an action plan for the development of the civil society sector at the oblast level. The action plan includes a series of activities aimed at enhancing civil society's cooperation with the local authorities;



Brainstorming session of Mariupol PC members on building effective partnership with local authorities, April 2017, Mariupol. Photo: UNDP Ukraine

- Support was also provided to Luhansk Oblast Administration to elaborate its Regional Programme on Civil Society Development 2017-2020, which also includes an action plan with concrete activities, responsible parties and budgetary expenses. The Programme served as another important impetus towards strengthening civil society's constructive and structural interaction with the authorities to transmit public interests. (Please refer to Annex 3 to see the Programme's full text)
- Support was provided for the establishment and further functioning of Public Councils (PCs) in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to:
 - Serve as consultative and advisory bodies to foster citizens' participation in the development and implementation of state policies;
 - Increase public oversight of the activities of the executive bodies in the targeted communities;
 - Prepare and submit proposals to local self-government bodies on major issues of public concern, including public opinion on draft by-laws and local development programmes under discussion as well as on how to combat corruption; and
 - Maintain regular dialogue with the public to keep it informed of PC activities and receive further feedback.

Public Councils' achievements in Donetsk Oblast



24	fully functional and capacitated PCs capable of constructively engaging with the local authorities on matters of public concern and interest;
481	active PC members selected on the basis of clear selection criteria and procedures;
201	women members to encourage their better participation and inclusion in the public policy agenda;
51	commissions created by the PCs to tackle thematic issues;
79	socio-economic, policy and development programmes reviewed;
65	consultations held with the wider public to discuss various socio-economic concerns and community development;
312	recommendations developed and submitted to local executive institutions to take further actions reflecting public needs and interests.

Public Councils' achievements in Luhansk Oblast



15	fully functional and capacitated PCs in a position to constructively engage with authorities to promote public concerns;
203	active PCs members selected on the basis of clear selection criteria and procedures;
91	women members to encourage their better participation and inclusion in the public policy agenda;
17	commissions created by the PCs to tackle thematic issues;
60	socio-economic, policy and development programmes reviewed;
30	consultations held with the wider public to discuss various socio-economic concerns and community development;
141	recommendations developed and submitted to local executive institutions to take further actions reflecting public needs and interests.

3. Support to addressing governance gaps in eastern Ukraine

The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine created massive challenges with regard to building an efficient system of governance capable of addressing a number of urgent recovery issues, in the socio-economic, environmental, budgetary, land, housing and energy fields among others. The following set of major challenges were faced by all local governance structures:

- Lack of staff and difficulty employing personnel competent to perform the expected tasks;
- Poor and obsolete material base (e.g. information technology hardware and software) for effective delivery of public services;
- Restricted local budgets (falling revenues and the additional expenses related to IDPs);

- Overburdened administrative and social services as a result of the conflict (IDPs and so on); and
- Outdated local socioeconomic development strategies that did not reflect the current realities.

To address these major drawbacks and close the governance gap, the project engaged a number of experts in various areas to immediately support the work of both oblast and municipal administrations.

Key achievements

- Engagement of 11 advisors at Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast Administrations to address governance gaps with regard to information management, legal matters, decentralization, European integration, international cooperation and issues related to governance transparency and accountability.
- Engagement of 33 experts to 15 municipal councils in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts on strategic planning, energy, human resources, budgeting, housing, public relations, fundraising, legal issues, investment and other issues.
- Assessment of the institutional capacities of Luhansk and Donetsk Oblast Administrations as well as 15 municipal administrations to identify and analyse governance structures. The assessment was followed up by elaboration of a concrete set of key recommendations on:
 - organizational restructuring of the targeted municipal administrations in line with the organizational plans developed;



Local Governance Forum, Sviatohirsk, November 2017.
Photo: UNDP Ukraine

- introducing evaluation tools to assess the quality of the social and administrative services delivered;
 - formalization of the procedure of strategic planning and developing results-oriented strategic plans;
 - introduction of a project-based approach within administrations. To ensure practical implementation of the aforementioned recommendations, it was also advised that comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of strategic and operational tasks be introduced based on concrete indicators, responsible parties, actions taken and actions required; and
 - localization of the Sustainable Development Goals to align local development programmes to the international development agenda.
- Expert support for updating Regional Development Strategies of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts followed up by elaboration and adoption of implementation plans that outline concrete actions, responsible parties and budgetary resources required.

Activity-based Reporting

Activity 2.1. Support for the establishment and further functioning of Public Councils in conflict- affected areas of eastern Ukraine

Creation of the civil-military oblast administrations in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts was coupled with the dismissal of regional-level elected Councils. This created a huge gap in public interaction with the authorities. Moreover, despite the overall high number of registered civil society organizations (CSOs) in Donetsk (1,500) and Luhansk (1,999) oblasts, only 12.7 per cent of them are active CSOs which are able to fulfil their key functions, i.e. provide services, conduct advocacy and public monitoring and control, and preserve civic values and social capital development (in particular, trust and mutual support) between members of the community and society.

These “active” CSOs are limited in their advocacy and monitoring work by the lack of quality standards for citizens’ participation at the local level.

Thus, in designing its activities, the project heavily emphasised launching systemic and institutionalized cooperation between civil society actors and local authorities. This has resulted in the following:

- Expert support to Donetsk Oblast Administration to elaborate, adopt and implement a Regional Action Plan for implementation of Ukraine’s National Strategy on Civil Society Development 2016-2020. The Plan includes a concrete set of activities aimed at fostering civil society interaction with the authorities in planning, adoption and monitoring of regional public policies;

- Expert support was also provided to Luhansk Oblast Administration to develop its Regional Programme on Civil Society Development for 2017-2020. This programme includes a number of essential measures aimed at consolidating civil society institutions to actively engage in building effective, transparent and accountable governance structures in Luhansk Oblast. The programme also includes an assessment of the cost of implementation (2,610,000 UAH);
- Expert support to targeted hromadas (local administrations) to develop statutes to serve as basic documents governing the community's interaction with the local authorities and other territorial entities. These statutes are in line with the Constitution of Ukraine and comprise a set of mechanisms and instruments for civic engagement in developing local policies, including participation in public hearings, submission of individual appeals and collective petitions as well as e-petitions. To date, such a statute has been developed for Myrnohrad city (Please see Annex 4 for the full text of the statute).

These documents have come to serve as important illustrations of regional and local authorities' commitment to engage public organizations in the design and implementation of local policies, contributing to their legitimacy in the eyes of the public. In this regard, PCs have played a leading role in identifying and bringing forward public interests for the creation and implementation of socio-economic programmes and projects.

To date, 39 PCs have been created with 684 members across Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. With active support from the project they have been able to elaborate and submit more than 400 recommendations to local authorities on public policy matters, ranging from education to infrastructural development to environmental issues.

Please refer to the map below with presence of PCs in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Donetsk oblast has 24 PCs under the Donetsk Oblast Administration: Avdiivka Local Council, Bakhmut Local Council, Dobropillya Local Council, Druzhkivka Local Council, Kostyantynivka Local Council, Kramatorsk Local Council, Lyman Local Council, Myrnohrad Local Council, Novogrodivka Local Council, Pokrovsk Local Council, Selidove Local Council, Sloviansk Local Council, Bakhmut Rayon State Administration, Dobropillya Rayon State Administration, Mangush Rayon State Administration, Nikolske Rayon State Administration, Oleksandrivka Rayon State Administration, Sloviansk Rayon State Administration, Velikonovoselkivka Rayon State Administration and Yasynuvata Rayon State Administration.

Luhansk oblast has 15 PCs under Luhansk Oblast Administration: Rubizhne Local Council, Severodonetsk Local Council, Bilokurakine Rayon State Administration, Billovodska Rayon State Administration, Kreminna Rayon State Administration, Markivska Rayon State Administration, Milove Rayon State Administration, Novoaydar Rayon State Administration, Novopskov Rayon State Administration, Popasna Rayon State Administration, Stanytsya-Luhanska Rayon State Administration, Starobilsk Rayon State Administration, Svatove Rayon State Administration and Troitske Rayon State Administration.

Public Councils



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



Sweden
Sverige



Swiss Cooperation Office Ukraine

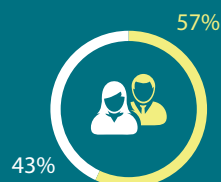
*Public Councils are consultative and advisory entities created to foster citizens' participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policies.

With UNDP support, Public Councils have been created or initiated in 39 communities in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

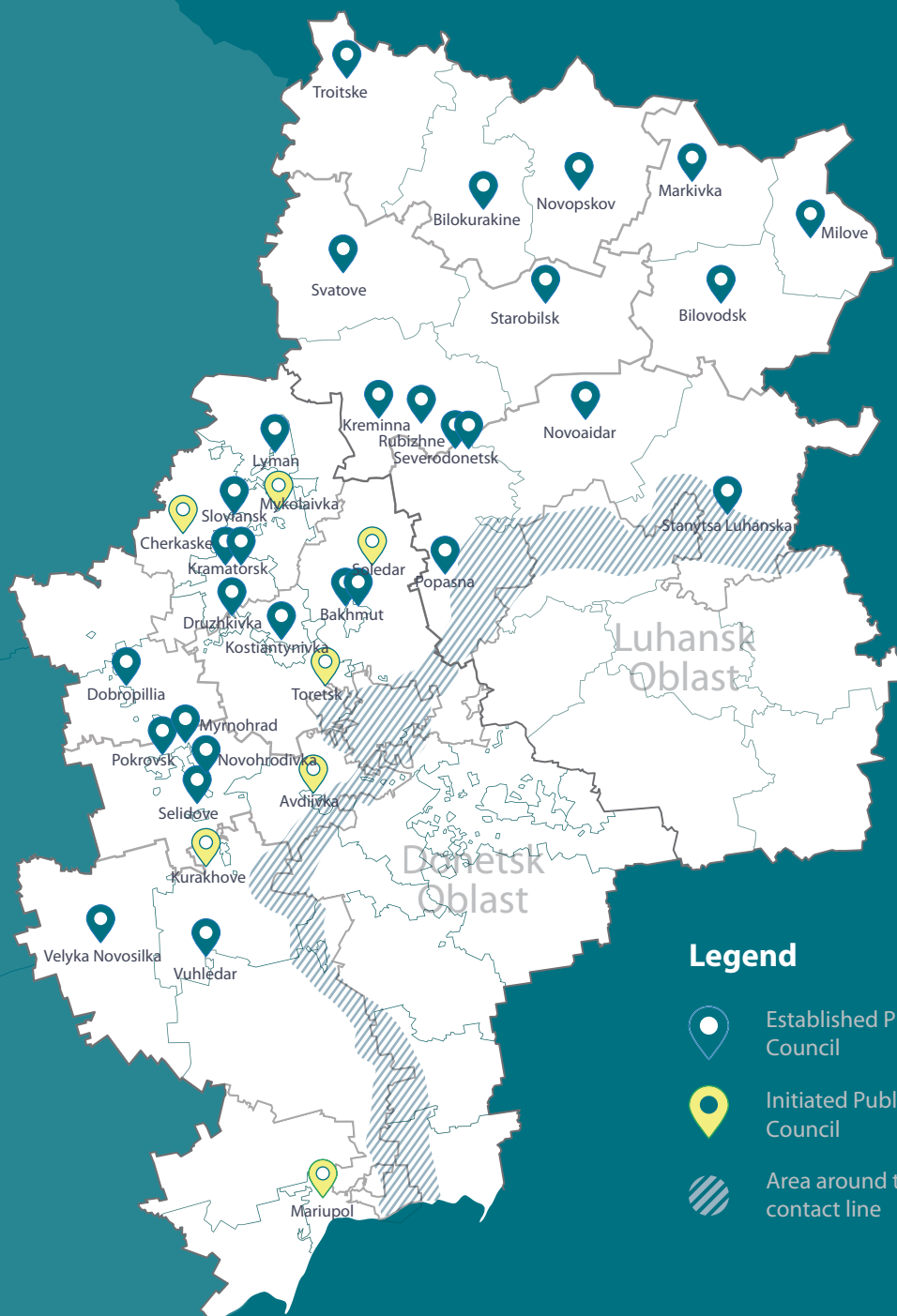


39
communities

Public Councils comprise 684 members of civic organizations (43 per cent women).



684
members
of civic
organizations



Best practices in the work of PCs

As mentioned earlier, the PCs have generated and submitted over 400 recommendations to local authorities covering various area of public interest. As an example, the Selidove PC facilitated the construction of a playground for children. This was achieved by creating an innovative online participatory budget approach through which the project received the highest number of votes from residents and thus received funding from the local authorities. Druzhkivka PC facilitated implementation of multiple projects, including the establishment of water purification systems in schools, storage reservoirs for drinking water, street lighting and other important initiatives.

These success stories resulted in growing trust in the work and activities of PCs that continue to serve as important communication bridges between the authorities and community members. PCs have proved themselves to be reliable partners in the eyes of the local governmental counterparts due to their capability to constructively bring forward public views and interests.

These achievements were preceded by the provision of large-scale support from the project in two major areas:

1. Institutional support for the work of the PCs; and
2. Capacity building interventions increase the effectiveness of the work of the PCs.

Institutional support

Institutional support provided for the work of PCs included:

- **Development and adoption of PC regulations.** The regulations are the fundamental documents governing and systematizing the work of PCs. Under these, the PCs serve as consultative and advisory bodies to promote public participation in the development and implementation of local policies, exercising public control over the work of executive institutions and serving as communication channels between the citizens and the authorities in place. The regulation also includes rules on composition and membership of the PCs.

- **PC standing order.** The standing order is a key document that includes the rules and specific procedure for holding PC meetings, including drawing up the agenda, considering questions, adopting decisions on the basis of a simple majority vote and other procedural aspects that contribute to systematizing the work of the PCs.

- **Annual work plans of PCs.** The project also facilitated the development of annual work plans for PCs. The work plans set out a detailed plan of activities to be undertaken by PC members in the coming year and serve as a monitoring tool for evaluating progress. As an example, the annual work plan of Bakhmut Public Council comprises 29 activities to be implemented in 2018. The major activities include discussing the city's demographic situation, budget, progress in implementing the state programme on improving the well-being of persons with disabilities, combating crime and a number of other no less important issues of public interest.

- **Monitoring system.** The project supported the development of a system to regularly review the status, progress and level of cooperation between the targeted PCs and local authorities. The monitoring system is built around the following indicators: 1) Number of active commissions launched to deal with specific issues; 2) Procedures in place; 3) Statutory documents adopted; 4) Existence of a work plan; 5) Number of meetings and protocols; 6) PC websites that regularly disseminate information for public use; 7) Number of recommendations generated by PCs; 8) Number of recommendations adopted by local governments in their documents/policies; and 9. Number of consultations and level of cooperation with local government institutions.

- **Informational exchange/public outreach.** In supporting the work of the PCs, the project placed strong emphasis on fostering inter-institutional exchange among them by launching regular dialogue platforms to discuss ongoing issues and share best practices. The project also created and administers a dedicated Facebook group that brings all the PCs together under one umbrella to quickly share news and developments on the most pressing issues.

Capacity building interventions

The official establishment of Public Councils in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts required a series of capacity building activities to be held to increase their effectiveness as agents of change, voicing public concerns and bringing needs to the attention of public authorities. To achieve this, special training modules were designed focussing on the following areas:

- Timely and proper planning of activities to meet public needs and demands;
- Theoretical and practical aspects of the existing legislative framework governing public interaction with the authorities;
- Development of regulations to govern the work of PCs and their practical application;
- Human resources management;
- Launch of targeted commissions to deal with particular issues of public concern; and
- Elaboration and follow-up promotion of recommendations for the attention of the local authorities.

The programmes for the training also included in-depth sessions with the members of the PCs on the role and work of local-self-government structures, consideration and adoption of programmes, design of local budgets to meet public needs, projects affecting the livelihoods of communities, issues related to regulatory policy and entrepreneurship, and statutes of territorial communities with a focus on the mechanisms for civic participation in decision-making processes.

Through a series of capacity building activities, participants further enhanced their skills on effective communication with the public, use of social marketing tools and introducing innovative tools to increase public oversight of the performance of local authorities (including Prozorro, Dozorro, access to electronic registries and e-petitions).

The total number of participants in training sessions was 596, of whom 419 were women.

Significantly, all the capacity building interventions involved both PC members and representatives of relevant local government structures, and resulted in increased interaction and establishment of trusting relationships. This led to open discussions, constructive criticism and elaboration of more than 400 recommendations for the attention of local authorities.

In 2017, the project facilitated the launch of a large-scale Forum entitled “The role of local governance structures and civil society institutions in the decentralization process”. The Forum involved discussion of the progress of implementing the National Strategy on Civil Society Development, the prospects of the ongoing decentralization process and best practices of community-based socio-economic development in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The Forum concluded with the adoption of a joint Resolution by 160 participants of whom 89 were women (see Annex 5 for the full text of the Resolution).

Study tours and exchange visits

To learn the best international and national practices for enhancing constructive and systematic engagement between civil society and the authorities, the project facilitated a series of exchange visits involving members of PCs and authorities from the targeted communities. In total, the project launched 14 study tours, to Lutsk, Lviv, Krakow, Ivano Frankivsk, Tallinn, Odesa, Poltava, Sumy, Dni-pro, Kharkiv and Katowice. They involved 182 women and 99 men.

Examples

Tallinn, Estonia, 23 September 2017 – 3 October 2017

Estonia is known as a good example of a country that has established effective and interactive platforms with its citizens on public policy matters. The study visit exposed the participants to see how the interaction takes place in practice, what mechanisms are in place, and how were they developed and implemented through the years. Participants learned in detail about:

- the competencies of the local authorities at Tallinn city level;
- the mechanisms for civic participation in the development of by-laws, city strategies and programmes as well as formulation of the budget to ensure that they envisage and address public needs and interests;
- city programmes on cooperation with public organizations and attracting investment; and
- use of various innovative and e-governance tools to encourage better and faster public interaction with the authorities.

Katowice, Poland, 15 June 2018 – 24 June 2018

During the study visit, participants familiarized themselves with Poland’s system of local governance, with mechanisms for public interaction with the authorities concerning public policy development, budgetary processes and provision of social services, as well as with programmes to enhance the capacity of local government staff. The visit was further accompanied by several visits to various locations, including the Centre for Support to Civil Society Institutions.



Participants of the joint meeting of PCs of Donetsk, Luhansk and Lviv oblasts, July 2017. Photo: UNDP Ukraine

Activity summary

To enhance and systematize civil society interaction with the local authorities, the project facilitated the establishment of PCs as consultative and advisory bodies to foster civic participation in the development and implementation of state policies.

PCs were equipped with their own Regulations, governing their objectives and tasks and also increased their potential through a series of capacity building interventions, including study tours to Estonia and neighbouring Poland.

These interventions systematized the work of the PCs and led to the development and consideration of more than 400 recommendations by local authorities in targeted communities.

Activity-based Reporting

Activity 2.2 Support for the establishment and further functioning of Citizens' Advisory Bureaus to provide services to population affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine

The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine negatively affected the very ability of the local authorities to provide administrative and social services to the population in need, especially the most vulnerable groups, including IDPs and women. According to the Ministry of Social Policy, there are approximately 1.5 million IDPs, mostly women, children and elderly. Behind these numbers, are the lives of many individuals, confronted with enormous difficulties in sustaining livelihoods and obtaining legal, administrative, psychological and social support.

Given this situation in place, urgently support for the efforts of local authorities to provide essential social as well as administrative services is key for alleviating the suffering of conflict-affected persons and rebuilding public trust in state institutions.

The adverse effects of conflict-inflicted damage are disproportionately borne by poorer households, the displaced, and other vulnerable and conflict-affected groups. Continuous provision of the most needed social services was thus essential for societal normalization and stabilizing crisis-affected areas, and for creating the conditions needed for further development.

This was reached via establishment and operational support to seven Citizens' Advisory Bureaus (CABs) that over the course of their activities provided 55,756 services to persons in pressing need of assistance. CABs also organized a series of field consultations in remote locations along the 'contact line', covering 285 cities and villages in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.



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Citizens' Advisory Bureaus



Institutional support to CABs

The CABs were established with the primary purpose of providing administrative, legal and psychological assistance to persons affected by the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine. The issues for which assistance is provided include, but are not limited to:

- **Legal and administrative assistance:** registration of subsidies, registration of land plots, inheritance, registration of ownership of mobile and immobile property, forced eviction of persons, obtaining IDP status, violations of labour rights, and mediation;
- **Psychological assistance:** psychological counselling in cases of family conflicts, problems with children, depression, stress, difficulties in child-parent relations, autism, a child's deviant behaviour, childhood hyperactivity, dependency problems, post-conflict trauma and others; and
- **Advisory support** to citizens on mechanisms for opening public organizations, initiative groups, and development and submission of various socially driven projects to foster civic engagement in community development.

Seven CABs are operational in the following locations:

1. **Mariupol CAB** is managed by Beregynya Public Foundation and covers 50 settlements including Blyzhne, Donske, Mangush, Mirne, Novotroitske, Olginka, Orlovske, Pokrovske, Rybinske, Vinogradne, Volnokhova and others;
2. **Kramatorsk CAB** is managed by Fond Razvitiya Obshestva (Community Development Fund) and covers settlements including Bilenke, Druzhkivka, Konstantynivka, Toretske, Veselyi, Yasnogorivka and others;
3. **Sloviansk CAB** is managed by START and covers smaller settlements such as Bilbasivka, Lyman, Siversk and others. In 2018 alone, more than 3,600 services were provided to persons in need, including more than 400 IDPs;
4. **Vuhledar CAB** is managed by Priazovye Semiya Charitable Foundation. In 2018 alone it provided services to more than 900 IDPs;
5. **Severodonetsk CAB** is managed by Grazhdanskaya platforma (Civic Platform) and, besides the city of Severodonetsk it covers settlements including Borovenki, Bulgakovka, Kreminna, Nevskie, Rubizhne and others;
6. **Novoaidar CAB** is managed by Obshestvennaya Sluzhba Pravovoi Pomoshti (Public Service for Legal Assistance). In 2018 alone it provided advisory services to 2,353 persons in need, including 1,137 IDPs concerning registering places of residence, obtaining social benefits and pensions and psychological assistance;
7. **Novopskov CAB** is managed by Tsentr Podderzhki Obshestva" (Centre for Community Support) which, over the course of 2018, provided more than 4,000 advisory services.

Regulation of CABs

CABs operate under a specially designed regulation that determines their mandate, objectives and tasks. Under this, “CABs provide legal, psychological and administrative advisory services on a free-of-charge basis to citizens in need regardless of their ethnicity, social status and religion and are guided by the Constitution of Ukraine”. (see Annex 6 for full text of the Regulation of Mariupol CAB, an example regulation). CABs also have special card on which they record all the details of provided advisory services to enable tracking of their exact quantity and type. In its future interventions, the project is planning to carry out a satisfaction survey regarding the advisory services provided.

Code of Ethics

The project also supported the CABs to corporately develop a detailed Code of Ethics to help their employees to interact with beneficiaries with honesty and integrity. For example, in line with the Code of Ethics, CAB lawyers cannot defend the opposing interests of two or more parties and must in the provision of services remain always tactical, sensitive and highly professional.

The Code of Ethics also provides a set of guiding rules for CAB psychologists that, given the nature of their work, should comply with principles of confidentiality and create conditions for the beneficiaries to feel comfortable and keen to openly share their concerns in order to obtain best assistance (Annex 7, Code of Ethics)

Capacity building interventions

To raise the capacity of CAB employees to provide high-quality administrative, social and psychological advisory services, the project designed and implemented a series of capacity building interventions that included the following:

- Series of workshops on “Standardization of the processes and launch of a unified network of services”, that have enhanced knowledge and skills of its participants on legislative framework of CAB activities, development of work plans, development and adoption of CAB regulations, interaction with relevant local authorities as well as methods for evaluating the quality of services provided;

- The project also organized series of trainings for CAB employees on “Building effective public communication channels and competencies”. The trainings increased the capacity of CAB employees to constructively interact with the beneficiaries, the local authorities via relying on relevant communication tactics, usage of non-verbal communication means. To foster public visibility of their activities, participants also went through special sessions on public relations, including interaction with mass media representatives, design and launch of public outreach campaigns via proper identification of objectives, messages as well as tasks. Special session was also dedicated to the usage of social media channels to promote CAB activities and reach wider audience in need of assistance.



Activity summary

The conflict in eastern Ukraine heavily undermined the ability of the local authorities to provide high quality and timely services to persons in need, especially IDPs and women. This necessitated the urgent creation of a mobile mechanism that could provide social, administrative and psychological assistance to residents affected by the conflict. To address this issue, the project established and operationalized seven Citizens' Advisory Bureaus that have together provided 55,756 high quality advisory services.

To institutionalize their activities, the CABs were also provided with separate Regulations governing their objectives, mandate as well as a Code of Ethics outlining set of guiding ethical rules for CAB employees in interacting with advisory service recipients.

Provision of high quality advisory services was also preceded by a series of workshops resulting in increased capacity of CAB personnel to carry out expected tasks.



A Citizens' Advisory Bureau in Mariupol.
Photo: UNDP Ukraine / Anastasia Vlasova

Activity-based Reporting

Activity 2.3 Close the governance gap and enable transition to lasting governance structures

As mentioned earlier, the conflict created massive challenges to civilian governance structures in the government-controlled regions of eastern Ukraine, leading to deterioration in social relations and trust, political and economic processes and ultimately to a sharp decrease in security and the quality of life. Regional governments have also been relocated from their former facilities in Donetsk and Luhansk cities to cities in government-controlled areas such as Kramatorsk, with each administration under immense pressure to deliver the needed services with reduced capability and limited resources.

Before the project interventions, local governments in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were struggling with lack of competent personnel to address the issues at hand, physical infrastructure that was poor and obsolete for effective service delivery, and outdated local socio-economic development strategies. The situation was further exacerbated by enhanced pressure on local governments because of devolution of power and responsibility from the central authorities and increasing demand from citizens and civil society institutions to be more accountable and transparent and to ensure their participation in the decision-making processes.

To address these challenges, the project's support included the following major areas:

1. Advisory and expert support to local administrations in line with PwC recommendations resulting in:

Eleven advisors being hired for oblast administrations in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts

Luhansk oblast advisors:

- An advisor on mass media, the appointment of whom resulted in making the Luhansk News newspaper fully operational with circulation of 50,000 copies. Under the senior leadership of the Advisor, the newspaper played one of the lead roles in covering the issues facing IDPs. Continuous advisory support was provided to the regional administration on building constructive partnership with mass media sources: this resulted in increased coverage of the work of local authorities and the Agency on Regional Development. In addition, the local administration also signed an agreement with 15 local

media on tackling information deficits in the two oblasts;

- An advisor on international cooperation and European integration, who has played a lead role in the development of an action plan to implement Luhansk Oblast's Regional Development Strategy 2020 and facilitated development of new project ideas to be potentially financed by the European Investment Bank;
- An advisor on legal issues and decentralization to facilitate the ongoing reform process in Luhansk Oblast. Under his supervision, more than 40 public awareness-raising activities on the decentralization reform agenda have taken place in targeted communities in Luhansk Oblast. Advisory support was also provided to improve educational, medical and social systems at oblast level;
- An advisor on agro-industrial development has worked in close collaboration with the Oblast Administration Department of Agriculture. Continuous expert support was provided to analyse the existing regional programme for agricultural development and to ensure its ongoing implementation. The current situation concerning the Oblast's land plots was also analysed, and recommendations were

provided to address identified gaps. A memorandum of cooperation was also signed with a number of agricultural companies operating in the Oblast;

- An advisor on ecology and environmental protection who has carried out an ecological audit and issued recommendations on addressing problems identified related to waste management, water resources, air emissions and storage of hazardous materials;
- An advisor on public relations worked in close cooperation with the Department of Information at the oblast administration, provided regular analysis of the media landscape and issued recommendations on improving delivery of timely, quality information to the public on the work of the authorities. Under his supervision, the public visibility of the administration has increased dramatically with coverage of its activities not only in regional but also in national media sources, including Radio Free Liberty, UA TV and Rudana. Advisory support was also provided to improve public visibility in social media, which have become an important source of information for many conflict-affected men and women.



Working meeting of Donetsk and Luhansk oblast advisors and experts, September 2016

Donetsk Oblast advisors:

- An advisor on cultural issues, who has developed and presented a concept on United Cultural Space for Donetsk Oblast;
- An advisor on agro industrial issues has participated in elaboration of a regional programme on the economic development of rural areas of Donetsk Oblast;
- An advisor on informational and internal policies oversaw the elaboration and adoption of the Donetsk Oblast 2020 regional programme for the

development of civil society and its communication strategy;

- An advisor on public procurement worked in close collaboration with the First Deputy Governor of the Oblast, providing recommendations and guidance to ensure transparency in public procurement. Under his supervision, procurement procedures were created for the Oblast Administration Department on Education and Science, the Department of Health and the Department of Ecology. Consultations were also provided to the Depart-

ment of Economic Development on handling public inquiries on public procurement matters;

- An advisor on internal policies oversaw the development of an oblast-level Strategy on the Development of Internal Policies, in cooperation with civil society.

At the request of the Oblast Administration, the project also facilitated engagement of additional advisors on ecology and environment as well as an advisor on economic development and decentralization.

Thirty-three experts hired for targeted communities in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to close the most urgent governance gaps in the following areas

- Regulatory of local governments and legal support for their activities:
 - Development of methodical recommendations and draft documents (council regulations, conflict of interest, clearer procedures for performing notarial actions, by-laws);
 - By-laws on human resources management, conducting functional analysis, job descriptions (Bilokurakine amalgamated territorial community (ATC), Novopskov ATC);
 - Development of guidelines for registration of places of residence, and registration of real estate rights.
- Public relations:
 - Methodological recommendations developed for organizing and holding press conferences, regulation on media accreditation, job description of the press secretary, template for press announcements, press-releases (Druzhkivka);
 - Procedure developed for holding public consultations, regulation of the public council (Kramatorsk).
- Energy management and energy efficiency:
 - Concepts developed for energy efficient cities for Vuhledar and Cherkaske ATCs;
 - Development of energy efficiency passport, recommendations for launch of energy management department, and monitoring of energy consumption by local state institutions at request of Sloviansk authorities, Donetsk Oblast.
- Housing sector:
 - Development of a package of documents to create a separate structural unit for interaction with the Association of Owners of Apartment Buildings (Lysychansk ATC);
 - Concept for the development of housing and public utilities (Svatove, Popasna);
 - Guidelines developed for calculating tariffs in the housing and utilities sectors (Bilokurakine ATC).

2. Regional Development Strategies

To contribute to sustainable development in the two oblasts, the project provided support for the development of the Donetsk Regional Development Strategy 2020 and the Luhansk Regional Development Strategy 2020 (Annexes 8 and 9). Both Strategies set out mechanisms for prospects for diversification of the regional economy, improving the quality of social services, reforming local governance, and building a secure society governed by the rule of law. The Strategies also define the relationship between various levels of government and are also intended to coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders to manage change in all areas of public life, including:

- Rehabilitation and development of critical infrastructure and ensuring its stable operation;
- Strengthening the capacity of local authorities to provide quality services using innovative technologies, in the context of nationwide decentralization reform;

- Economic recovery, creation of jobs and transition to sustainable development; and
- Creating favourable conditions for living and peacebuilding.

The strategies have also set out mechanisms to ensure public monitoring and evaluation of implementation by civil society.

3. Integrated platform of internet portals of local executive authorities and local self-government bodies in Donetsk Oblast

The platform is a new, full-fledged information resource with modern design and expanded functionality for various categories of users. The web platform:

- provides interested parties with complete and structured information about Donetsk Oblast (history, demography and statistics);

- provides full and convenient access for citizens to information about the activities of Donetsk Oblast Administration;
- contains content that is adapted to the needs of persons with visual impairments;
- ensures that potential investors have access to information about the investment potential of Donetsk Oblast (a holistic picture of the development of the oblast's economy and individual industries that need investment, an investment passport of the oblast and a map of the oblast's infrastructure development); and
- provides citizens with access to information on public services, including administrative services, and, in the future, the possibility of receiving such services online.

Link to the portal: www.donoda.kitsoft.kiev.ua (test mode)

4. Public awareness campaign on decentralization

With the aim of informing the public about the ongoing decentralization reform process in Ukraine, the project has organized a series of television programmes entitled "Time of Opportunities". The participants in the television programmes included key national and regional stakeholders engaged in decentralization reform (including the Prime Minister and the Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine), who have explained its details, benefits and challenges to viewers. (Please see Annex 10, which contains links to the programmes).





Output 3

Reconciliation and
restoration of social
cohesion among
communities and
between communities
and the authorities

The conflict in eastern Ukraine has significantly reduced social cohesion, which had already been weak after years of divergent and politically charged narratives, and widened pre-existing divides between elites and the population. Therefore, advocacy and investment in a narrative that gives the local population hope and identifies ways towards a brighter future still remains essential to mobilize the public and ensure the support of affected communities for reforms.

Weak social cohesion – the quality of the relationship between groups in society and between people and institutions, as well as the sense of social belonging – also originates from low citizen engagement and activism, and poorly developed dialogue platforms between various groups and especially the conflicting parties. As mentioned above, to measure the scale and depth of the problem, the project relied on data provided by two waves of Vulnerability and Risk Assessment conducted in 2015 as well as the UN SCORE for Eastern Ukraine (USE). The data was utilized to enhance and complement monitoring and evaluation tools by providing relevant data and measuring the impact at both the outcome and output level, primarily for Component 3 (Community Security and Social

Cohesion) of the Action but also to inform programme design and monitoring and evaluation for the other components. USE provides both descriptive and predictive analysis by using statistical modelling techniques and a robust participatory methodology to: a) measure levels of both social cohesion (the extent to which co-existence between individuals in a society and the institutions that surround them is harmonious) and reconciliation (the propensity for groups in conflict to come closer); b) track the levels of these two outcomes over time; and c) on the basis of the data generated, formulate evidence-based policy and targeted programmes that respond more precisely to strengthen levels of social cohesion by addressing the root causes of conflict and preventing the emergence and/or relapse of conflict in affected communities.

The key findings emerging from this first round of surveys were that:

- the overall levels of social tolerance are moderate, with an average score of 5.6 in Donetsk Oblast and 5.4 in Luhansk Oblast (where 0 indicates high intolerance towards minority and marginalized groups, and 10 indicates full acceptance of minority and marginalized groups by all members of society). While there are no significant differ-

ences between men and women, those differences exist between groups with different income levels, education and age. Young people, as well as those with higher incomes and levels of education, tend to be more socially tolerant towards persons from minority and marginalized groups;

- levels of active citizenship and civic engagement are particularly low in both oblasts – with an average score of 3.7 in Donetsk Oblast and 4.1 in Luhansk Oblast. It was also revealed that persons over 60 years of age are significantly less engaged in socially related activities than those below 40 years of age (with scores ranging from 2.6 to 4.5 respectively). The general inertia could be explained by a common view among the local residents that authorities neither seek to include citizens in decision-making processes, nor are particularly responsive to citizens' demands. A second important reason is a lack of information (i.e., citizens have limited knowledge about the issues on the agenda of local councils and those of other authorities). Finally, though of lesser importance, people find civic engagement to be too time-consuming compared to other aspects of life (e.g., work, family time and so on);



Workshop for Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion, Sviatohirsk, June 2018. Photo: UNDP Ukraine / Artem Getman

- the level of neighbourhood support – the extent to which one feels supported by and can rely on neighbours for support – across the two oblasts is moderate, with an average score of 5.1 in Donetsk Oblast and 5.3 in Luhansk Oblast. A demographic breakdown of the data showed that the highest levels of neighbourhood support are found among the older population (i.e., 60 years of age and above) and the most economically disadvantaged members of society (i.e., those who do not have enough money even for food).

These major findings have served as a benchmark for properly identifying and prioritizing interventions with regards to enhancing social cohesion. The social cohesion work stream has also provided opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing between different communities in Ukraine to improve their understanding and perception of each other (east-west dialogue). It has also stimulated and informed the overall discourse on the country's future development.

The line of work included the following major areas:

- Fostering cooperation and exchange of best practices between various groups and authorities as a key prerequisite for mutual contacts and dialogue on societal development challenges;
- Building of networks and facilitation of inclusive dialogue platforms among different actors, especially youth, to build better social ties and strengthen tolerance and respect for diversity, a key predominant for conflict

resolution and peacebuilding. This was especially important in a situation characterized by fragile intercommunal trust, lack of a sense of belonging and a disinclination to civic participation;

- The launch of a grant scheme to support various civil society initiatives to enhance social cohesion and build trust within and between communities;
- Development of conflict-sensitive communication strategies and plans to communicate positively regarding tolerance, reconciliation and recovery and build public trust towards the work of local authorities; and
- Enhancement of civic engagement of youth through programming that recognizes its role as peace ambassadors, including support for youth leadership skills development, civic education, human rights training and volunteerism.

Key achievements

- The establishment of Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion to ensure that there was space for in-depth engagement and collaboration between CSOs, civic activists, government entities and law enforcement bodies to promote social cohesion and tolerance in conflict-affected communities;
- More than 550 community members have strengthened their skills and capacities for social cohesion and reconciliation through participation in workshops and study visits;
- Seventy-seven civil society initiatives were supported to strengthen social cohesion in crisis-affected communities in eastern Ukraine;
- A Concept Note has been prepared on the Civil Society Hubs Network in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in consultation with civil society representatives and in line with the needs of local communities. Civil Society Hubs will help maximize the network's effect, and empower communities through various activities focused on inclusive dialogue, civic mobilization, engagement and project management; and
- Development and follow up support for the implementation of the Luhansk Oblast Communication Strategy that has contributed to enhancing openness, accountability and transparency in the work of governmental institutions.

Activity-based Reporting

Activity 3.1.
Support local
dialogue
and trust
building within
communities
and between
them and the
authorities
through public
consultations
and hearings

Facilitation of exchange visits to enhance social cohesion and build social ties

To rebuild relationships and trust in communities impacted by the conflict, the project facilitated inter-communal dialogue platforms. In this respect, technical aid was provided to conduct a series of exchange visits to central and western Ukraine, with the overall aim of identifying bottom-up solutions to common challenges in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

The visits involved around 400 individuals (65 per cent women, 35 per cent men) drawn from civil society, NGOs/CSOs, local and regional authorities, private enterprises, local and regional mass media, volunteers and young activists from both oblasts, who exchanged best practices on

enhancing social cohesion and deepening inter-communal dialogue. This has also resulted in the development of joint action plans for further collaboration.

In supporting dialogue platforms, special emphasis was placed on youth as agents of change, who can play a leading role in rebuilding social ties and tolerance in the conflict-affected communities. For this purpose, the “Discover Donbas” exchange visit programme (hosted by Teple Misto Urban Space in Ivano-Frankivsk) was conducted, with the participation of 25 young activists from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The exchanges enabled the sharing of best practices and peer-to-peer learning, strengthening social cohesion in Ukrainian society and bringing together good practices of social entrepreneurship in Ukraine.

The visits also enhanced the capacity of its participants to design and launch youth-led civic education initiatives, that remain vital for young peoples' empowerment and active participation in decision-making processes, be it at community, local or national levels.

Promoting the role of civil society institutions in enhancing social cohesion

Enhancing the role of local civil society institutions for the promotion of social cohesion and rebuilding of social ties was at the forefront of project's interventions. Civil society organizations must be well placed to implement important activities to redress grievances, build peace and promote tolerance. They can also play a supportive role by leading local community consultations and developing various mechanisms for civic participation in decision-making processes, advocate on behalf of vulnerable groups and promote social integration and cohesion.

To effectively reinforce this role of civil society institutions, the project undertook the following key interventions:

Grants scheme to support civil society initiatives

The project supported the implementation of 77 civic initiatives to enhance social cohesion, reaching out to approximately 300,000 residents of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The list of supported projects included mobile theatres for conveying positive messages about tolerance and respect for diversity, the installation of children's playgrounds, cultural festivals, outdoor gyms, urban greening and many others. The projects were chosen based on their relevance to the priority areas announced in the call, clear objectives and target group, sustainability, and the previous experience of the applying organization. In evaluating the proposals, commission members also considered the principle of value for money. (See Annex 11 for more information on the initiatives supported).

Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion

Special Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion were established to ensure a space for in-depth engagement of and collaboration between CSOs, local authorities and law enforcement bodies for social cohesion and promotion of tolerance in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Each group comprises local representatives of CSOs, UNDP local mediation course participants and local activists. The project held regular consultations with both groups, and thereby received expert opinions and guidance for further promotion of social cohesion and tolerance in conflict-affected communities.

The Advisory Groups suggested the following major areas of work:

- Support for various activities that could potentially promote closer ties and exchanges between communities in the targeted oblasts of Ukraine and other parts of the country, including the launch of cultural events, games, sports and cultural exchanges not only for youth but also for older people;



Development of recommendations to boost social cohesion in Luhansk Oblast by Advisory Group members. Photo: UNDP Ukraine

- Development of multifaceted courses with special teacher training in educational institutions at different levels on non-conflict communication techniques (together with the Ministry of Education, the “new Ukrainian School” and “media literacy”);
- Systemic outreach activities to improve the level of legal culture (values, behaviours, dialogues and so on) of the population, introduction of legal education courses into the educational process. Dissemination of positive examples of court decisions (ready cases) to remove stereotypes of the inactivity of the judicial system for protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens;
- Support and creation of Schools of Leadership (agents of change) and “Ambassadors for Peace”, especially among youth;
- Support for positive image programmes covering areas close to the ‘contact line’;
- Awareness-raising campaigns that would demonstrate positive examples of civic engagement to support the operation of political mechanisms;
- Increased awareness of the work of courts and executive bodies through dissemination of positive practices, successful stories, and court decisions; and
- Increased openness and oversight of in the authorities, and involvement of CSOs in decision making.

The suggested recommendations have formed the basis for planning project activities.

Mapping of public organizations

Before the project interventions, civil society institutions in Luhansk Oblast were characterized by weak inter-institutional cooperation for developing and implementing various projects. To address this issue, the project mapped the public organizations operating in Luhansk Oblast and launched a single online resource platform (www.ndo.lg.ua), which is actively used and supported by the oblast regional administration. More than 20 organizations were given access to the platform, they publish information on the implementation of their initiatives and on a regular basis, increasing not only coverage of their activities but also potential cooperation with other organizations working in the same area.

The platform is therefore intended to increase the amount of publicly available data on the work of civil society groups and the donor community in the two oblasts, and should ultimately result in increased public awareness and more active involvement in tackling development challenges in Luhansk Oblast.

To further support development of a strong and active civil society sector in the two oblasts, a Concept Note on the Civil Society Hub network in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts has been prepared in consultation with civil society representatives.

Civil Society Hub are expected to maximize the network effect and empower communities by means of various activities focused on inclusive dialogue, civic mobilization, engagement and project management. According to the Concept Note, Civil Society Hub will serve as:

- Platforms for collaboration of civil society actors within the given Oblast;
- Information platform for projects of civil society actors in the Oblast;
- Platforms for cooperation between civil society and local, regional authorities;
- An instrument for institutional development and empowerment of civil society and capacity building of local NGOs, volunteers and youth by providing access to training, workshops and development of skills in the following areas:
 - a) Community empowerment and social cohesion; and b)
 - Enhanced community security and advocacy for vulnerable groups;

- Provision of consulting services and outsourcing in accounting, legal issues, public relations, fundraising and advocacy (involving online consultancy);
- Space for civil society actors' activities, internal and external events; and
- Cultural and creative space targeting vulnerable groups.

A Hub will be established in the premises of Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University.

Activity summary

To enhance social cohesion in the conflict-affected communities of eastern Ukraine, the project facilitated intra-communal and regional dialogue platforms and created special Advisory Groups on social cohesion to receive and implement expert advice to rebuild relationships and trust. Moreover, 77 civic initiatives on social cohesion were implemented following a competitive selection process targeting approximately 300,000 residents of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Activity-based Reporting

Activity 3.2. Support to youth platforms

In its activities, the project placed one of the key emphases on engaging with youth and equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to be aware of and promote social cohesion and tolerance in their communities.

This has been achieved through facilitation of a series of discussion platforms, in which representatives of youth organizations can speak to each other to break down stereotypes and become socially responsible citizens who recognize that diversity and tolerance within Ukrainian society is one of the key prerequisites for the country's stable development. In this regard, a series of activities were undertaken by the project:

Promotion of volunteerism among youth

On International Volunteer Day in 2016, marked every year on 5 December, two workshops were held for volunteers in Severodonetsk (Luhansk Oblast) and Kramatorsk (Donetsk Oblast), bringing together activists, youth and NGO representatives, who had expressed the need to involve volunteers in their work. More than 90 participants (50 per cent women) took part in training sessions, discussions, film screenings, and an NGO fair. The two workshops also raised awareness of the various forms of volunteering, enhanced the potential involvement of young people in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the lives of their communities, and enabled local NGOs to effectively engage volunteers in their peace and development work.



Winners of the Youth Debate Tournament, May 2018.
Photo: UNDP Ukraine

In addition, in cooperation with UN Volunteers, the project brought together 160 youth representatives from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (75 per cent women) to design grassroots solutions to their specific economic and social challenges, and provide insights into economic opportunities, business development, community mobilization, human rights and protection against gender-based violence. The 'Together for the Future' Forum enabled its participants to exchange views and ideas, network and create new partnerships in a bid to stimulate social mobilization of these two commu-

nities. The Forum provided a forward-looking plan that engaged those directly affected by, and subject to, the issues discussed. This helped to steer the country in the direction of gender-neutral and violence-free environments. As such, it was important to include individuals who are directly affected by the issues highlighted in the discussion.

The topics discussed included:

1. Young People, Women and Economic Challenges;
2. Young People and Women in Community Mobilization; and

3. Protecting the Rights of Young People and Women.

This was the first time that women and young people from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts had been given the opportunity to talk about the issues that they face every day, and to raise possible solutions they have identified.

As a result, the Forum participants provided a set of recommendations for the design and implementation of volunteer projects in their communities.

Youth debates

Debating is an important activity for youth to develop leadership and communication skills to prompt a variety of youth-led positive social changes. Special methodology was developed for public debates and put into practice successfully. Some 20 trainers were taught how to conduct the debate tournament. Within one month, the trainers had created and coached teams. A round of debates was held in May 2018 involving 48 young innovators from Donetsk Oblast (70 per cent women) and 32 from Luhansk Oblast (80 per cent women).

The School of Public Debates comprised two modules: three days of training on “Public Speeches and Debate Skills. SCORE Index and Organization of Public Debate on its Results” for 20 people; and a public debate on “The SCORE Index and its Impact on Promoting Cohesion and Social Unity in Communities”. In total, 80 people participated in this initiative, including schoolchildren and teachers from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, representing the cities of Sloviansk, Druzhkivka, Kramatorsk, Mykolaivka, Severodonetsk and Evsug.

The qualifying round for the final debate tournament was held on the following topics: “This government will increase the level of social cohesion”, “This government educates tolerant youth”, “This government will form a culture of peace”, “This government will prepare ambassadors of peace”, “This government will build intercultural dialogue”, and “This government will build bridges”.

As a result, the youth agreed on the following ideas:

- ongoing educational programmes on intercultural communication, respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, human rights, and the importance of fostering dialogue between different groups;
- training of “Ambassadors of Peace” in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to promote peace, protection of human rights and the core European values, who would contribute to the further development of both oblasts; and
- further capacity building interventions to provide young people with knowledge, skills and tools to effectively promote social cohesion, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and improved lives in their communities through educational activities (summer camps, youth leaders’ schools, creative youth labs and debates).

These ideas are instrumental for establishing a forward-looking plan and discovering what will ensure Ukrainian youth’s full support, cooperation and participation in the recovery process. The debates have also demonstrated that certain topics related to tolerance and social cohesion activate the consciousness of young people, who during the debating process analysed the ongoing situation and offered their own vision of how tackle the challenges in a non-violent manner.

Youth and employment

The Career Guidance Portal for Youth (www.mycareer.org.ua) was supported by the project. The portal was created by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in partnership with UNDP and has been included in the National “Youth of Ukraine for 2016-2020” Programme. The website provides an opportunity to young people to pass a usually expensive but in this case free-of-charge test, helping them to choose a profession based on areas of interest and skills. After the test results are received, young people are offered the contacts of nearby qualified career guidance experts, who can provide free-of-charge test interpretation and advice.

The platform is intended to be a place where state institutions such as the State Employment Service, the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth Employment Centres, the Federation of Employers of Ukraine, top Ukrainian employers, human resource practitioners and relevant NGOs can interact with youth, post jobs and offer training opportunities, volunteer assignments, internships and graduate programmes to ensure smooth transition from education to the job market.

The platform is used by young men and women from Crimea and other non-government-controlled areas of Ukraine. Users can receive guidance on higher education, exchange programmes and employment opportunities in Ukraine and abroad. Reintegration into the Ukrainian labour market will only serve to improve social cohesion and economic recovery within the country.

A Regional Youth Employment Forum was organized and conducted in Kramatorsk in May 2017. Around 300 participants received information about career opportunities and took part in interactive activities.

To further promote youth employment, the project participated in implementation of the “Young Workers of Ukraine” national training and certification programme. The programme is aimed at ensuring adequate levels of knowledge about the priorities, trends, and challenges of youth policy and youth work while fostering democratic transformation. The programme comprises three levels of training: Basic, Specialized, and Training for Trainers. Since 2016, 19 training sessions have been conducted in several locations across Ukraine. The Project financially supported two “Youth Worker” training sessions in Donetsk Oblast on 15-18 September 2016 in Sviatohirsk with 25 participants (more than half women) trained. Additional training was conducted in Kremenna on 13-16 October with 20 participants (50 per cent women).

A series of workshops entitled “Peace and Justice” were held between February and April 2017 in Donetsk Oblast, and in November 2017 in Luhansk Oblast.

Three two-day workshops in Donetsk Oblast attracted 60 children (55 per cent girls, 45 per cent boys) and six workshops in Luhansk Oblast brought together 130 activists (31 per cent women, 69 per cent men) including persons with disabilities and IDPs. The workshops promoted values of tolerance, peace and justice among children and their parents through the art of animation. The final training session in Mariupol was live streamed to reach out to the broader public. As a result of the working group discussions, an analytical report was prepared with recommendations to focus more on the following areas: the media, promotion of social cohesion, reconciliation, tolerance and civic activism, which were used as a basis for the organization of activities. The workshop attracted coverage from local mass media as well as German media (Deutschlandfunk),⁵ thereby allowing the efforts in Ukraine to reach beyond national borders and potentially spark new partnerships. Additionally, a series of training events on capacity building was organized at 10 youth platforms in Donetsk Oblast. Around 220 young people took part in this training in March-April 2018.

⁵ Available at: https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/ostukraine-zerrissene-heimat-zerrissene-menschen.1773.de.html?dram:article_id=381094

Recommendations on extra-curricular activities in schools

Recommendations for an extra-curricular programme entitled “Steps to Mutual Understanding” for schools in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the 2016/17 school year, were elaborated and submitted for the attention of both Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast Administrations.

In addition, the project facilitated development of Guideline on Social Management in schools as a form of civic engagement. As a follow up, the project conducted five two-day project-writing training sessions for teachers and schoolchildren in January 2017, in Kramatorsk, Pokrovsk and Mariupol (all in Donetsk Oblast), and in Severodonetsk and Svatove in Luhansk Oblast. The training sessions attracted 110 young innovators from Donetsk Oblast (half of them women) and 55 from Luhansk Oblast (60 per cent women) who were educated on drafting and implementing socially oriented project proposals. As a result, 14 project proposals were financially supported by the project, including installation of outdoor gyms, and sports and recreation grounds.

Meanwhile, the play “He Is My Sister” featuring Ukrainian theatre stars was performed in Kramatorsk and Severodonetsk in eastern Ukraine in February 2018. The play took its audience on a journey from disrespect and condemnation to tolerance and friendship giving a fresh perspective on social stereotypes and showing the fundamental essence of human relationships. As mentioned earlier, the play, through the prism of comedy, cast light on serious societal matters embracing diversity and a respectful attitude to each other. Around 1,500 people watched the play in both locations. This was followed by a series of television discussions on tolerance, respect and empathy in a fragile environment by UNDP tolerance envoys as part of the #Reinvent Respect campaigns.

School of Ambassadors for Peace

In August 2018, the project also launched a School of Ambassadors for Peace for teachers at higher educational institutions, vocational and secondary schools of both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Some 25 School participants strengthened their competencies on conflict resolution, mediation, nonviolent communication and dialogue facilitation.

The training modules included separate sessions on human rights and intercultural dialogue. As follow up, participants at the Ambassadors for Peace school conducted seminars for more than 1,000 teachers and students in their local communities to convey important messages received and share skills acquired (please see Annex 12 for the informational brochure to Ambassadors for Peace).

Activity summary

The project actively worked with and engaged youth in enhancing social cohesion, tolerance and respect for diversity by facilitating exchange visits and building inclusive venues to openly discuss and share best practices. Additional efforts were made to address employment of youth through the launch of a career guidance portal. To contribute to building civic activism in youth, a series of recommendations were developed for extra-curricular activities in schools and submitted for the attention of both oblast administrations.

Activity-based Reporting

Activity 3.3. Support to local level mediation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding

Mediation in conflict resolution

The conflict in eastern Ukraine requires working mediation mechanisms in place that are capable of resolving disputes in a non-violent manner. Given the fragility of the situation, the project took a number of steps to establish these mechanisms at local level to prevent conflicts and contribute to further peacebuilding. For this purpose, the “Insider Mediation” approach was pioneered in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, aimed at reducing tensions and hostilities between various groups at community level. “Insider Mediation” can best be described as a process of conflict resolution by conflict insiders, who are capable of affecting and positively transforming it.

Using this approach the project increased the capacities and skills of 85 mediators, who were equipped with mediation tools and techniques for the promotion of non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms in their communi-

ties using a culture of dialogue and constructive negotiation. As a result, 47 local micro-projects on mediation were designed and implemented, making a tangible contribution to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in their communities.

To boost social cohesion and strengthen social ties, on May 26, 2018 the project supported the Runday rally in 10 Ukrainian cities nationwide. The rally brought together some 500 people who, in addition to promoting a healthy lifestyle, were able to encourage more solidarity, peaceful coexistence and equal opportunities for all in their communities. It has also resulted in increasing public awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular about two goals particularly relevant to Ukraine - Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities, and Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Moreover, Runday initiatives were launched in five new locations, including Kramatorsk, Mariupol,

Severodonetsk, Kharkiv and Kolomyia. Runs in these and other locations now take place every Saturday, with growing number of participants (100 at each location).

Mediation in decentralization reform process

Since the beginning of the decentralization reform in Ukraine, many communities have been facing issues with amalgamation due to tacit conflicts between different stakeholders at local and district levels. These conflicts impede further amalgamation and

put the whole decentralization reform on hold.

To address this issue, the project has piloted mediation activities in selected hromadas to facilitate the amalgamation process and ensure that it is carried out without conflicts. Initially, the project conducted a sociological survey in village councils in the pilot communities to measure residents' attitude towards the reform.

As a follow up, three mediation workshops were held in Mykolaypillya, Torske and Bilokuzmynivka where the potential benefits of amalgamation were presented

and discussed in detail. Following the meeting the participants were willing and ready to engage in further constructive discussions.

Activity summary

In addressing the ongoing conflict, the project engaged in promoting non-violent conflict resolution mechanisms through the provision of training to "insider mediators" in target communities. Additional mediation efforts are also being undertaken to further enhance the ongoing decentralization reform process in eastern Ukraine.



Public presentation of the brandbook for Luhansk Oblast, July 2018. Photo: UNDP Ukraine

Activity-based Reporting

Activity 3.4
Assist the authorities at the local, district and oblast levels to develop conflict-sensitive communication strategies and public awareness approaches to promote positive messages in society

The media community plays a key role in the formation of public opinion.

Their ability not to be highly politicized and report objectively, especially in conflict settings, is essential for building public trust, social cohesion, harmony, mutual tolerance and respect for diversity.

Therefore, in its activities, the project placed a strong emphasis on working with and engaging the media community to positively communicate on tolerance, reconciliation, and recovery and to facilitate broad-based participation in community-level dialogue with the following major undertakings:

Conflict-sensitive communication strategies

Effective communication with the public is a fundamental aspect of an open government that keeps its population well informed of its activities and establishes various consultation mechanisms. To this end, the project has supported the Luhansk and Donetsk Oblast Administrations to develop conflict-sensitive communication strategies.

As part of communication strategy development, three studies and surveys were conducted:

1. Identification of the population's value orientations and the public image of Luhansk Oblast, involving 1,270 respondents;
2. Identification of Luhansk Oblast's unique characteristics (expert analysis, interviews with 21 experts in various fields);

3. Analysis and monitoring of 19 media outlets on the nature and content of information related to Luhansk Oblast.

Meetings and roundtable discussions were also held with representatives of local governments, NGO activists, journalists and bloggers in Kramatorsk, Sloviansk and Mariupol in November and December 2016 to discuss findings and gather their feedback. The discussions also resulted in the elaboration of recommendations, including the launch of a Communications Office in Donetsk Oblast (Kramatorsk) to provide informational and logistical support for Ukrainian and foreign journalists.

The project also provided support to Luhansk Oblast Administration for the implementation of its communication strategy that was adopted on 7 June 2018. The following major results were achieved:

- Brand Book of Luhansk Oblast, available at: <http://brand.lg.ua/download/1-brendbuk-luhanshchyna-moya.html>;
- Brand website of Luhansk Oblast, available at: <http://brand.lg.ua/>
- Promotional video materials on various hromadas, available at: <http://promo.brand.lg.ua/> and



Presentation of Luhansk Oblast's draft Communication Strategy, April 2018. Photo: UNDP Ukraine

A travelbox VR for Luhansk oblast, available at: <http://www.brand.lg.ua/portfolio/9-luhanska-oblast-persha-v-ukrayini-shcho-rozroblyla-unifikovanyy-brend-i-vykorystala-v-yoho-promotsi.html>

These materials are aimed at overcoming conflict grievances by creating a positive image of an oblast that should be characterized by mutual tolerance, respect for diversity and openness. (see Annex 13, Luhansk Oblast Communication Strategy).

Training courses on effective communication campaign tools were also organized for local journalists, civic activists from conflict-affected areas of eastern Ukraine on issues of human rights, access to justice, decentralization, gender equality, inclusive education, security issues and combating domestic violence.

Members of Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion also took part in the training, expanding their network with other active community members. As a result of project's interaction and capacity building interventions with local media representatives, 24 information campaigns and communication products were implemented.

Activity summary

The project worked actively with the media community and designed conflict-sensitive communication strategies for Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts to further build public trust, social cohesion, tolerance and respect for diversity in conflict-affected areas.

Conclusion

The ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine heavily undermined the ability of the state to address the needs of the public. This resulted in a massive decline in social cohesion, generating distrust towards the local authorities, feelings of insecurity and growing pressure to leave places of residence in search of better livelihood opportunities. Women were disproportionately affected by the conflict because of persistent gender inequality and discrimination.

The situation was further exacerbated by the inability of the local authorities to provide high quality and inclusive services to persons in need, especially IDPs who required urgent assistance to register their places of residence and obtain social and other benefits to sustain their livelihoods.

Meanwhile, as a result of the conflict local and regional authorities have faced severe difficulties closing the existing governance gaps with regard to developing sound socio-economic, ecological, cultural, youth, public relations policies and to setting out further vision and mechanisms for sustainable development.

In addressing these challenges, comprehensive support was provided to regional and local authorities in the form of immediate expert assistance by filling governance gaps and improving capacity for recovery planning. To ensure longer-term development, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts have been equipped with Regional Development Strategies until 2020, which have comprehensive action plans that are ensuring their practical implementation.

The establishment of and operational support to seven Citizen Advisory Bureaus resulted in the provision of high quality and inclusive psychological, administrative and legal services to more than 55,000 conflict-affected men and women, including IDPs and residents of non-government controlled areas of eastern Ukraine.

The conflict also resulted in a significant decline in civil society's interaction with local authorities, leading to ever-growing distrust in the work of governmental institutions. This has been effectively addressed by the establishment and operationalization of 39 Public Councils (PCs) with 684 active members that have become an essential communications bridge between the public and the authorities, be it in the planning, developing or monitoring public policies.

Over the course of the project, PCs have monitored and provided advisory and expert support to numerous programmes and brought more than 400 recommendations to the attention and further action of authorities, leading to increased public trust in their work, as evidenced by the USE.

As the country is still experiencing low levels of social cohesion, the project interventions were built around facilitating a range of discussion platforms between various groups and, most importantly, conflicting sides. These have resulted in readiness and willingness to constructively engage and openly talk with each other.

Special Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion are now in place and have played a leading role in providing expert guidance and support to project interventions to enhance social cohesion and promote tolerance and respect for diversity, the basis for Ukraine's further sustainable development. Resources were invested in youth with the intention of building a generation of active citizens willing and capable of taking responsibility and contributing to democratic development of their communities and regions, and their country at large.

In its interventions, the project worked hand in hand with local authorities, community members and civil society organizations by meeting and adopting to their needs and demands.

The project proved itself to be a reliable partner capable of providing technical assistance to the authorities in their ongoing efforts towards peacebuilding and reconciliation in crisis-affected communities by building effective governance structures and fostering a sense of national ownership of the entire process. This trustworthy partnership and the project's crucially important achievements will be an excellent starting point and a solid base for upcoming projects.

Lessons learned

- A coordinated and integrated approach is essential for avoiding overlaps between different interventions and ensuring consistency with national and regional policies. Continuing with effective coordination, clear division of tasks and timely information sharing among the United Nations agencies involved in implementing this project is key to meeting the needs of national stakeholders. In this regard, provision of support to further build the capacity of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts to strategically oversee project interventions was a key tool behind meeting the stated objectives;
- The Citizens' Advisory Bureaus have proven to be a helpful innovation for providing on-demand advice, referrals and legal aid services. However, because they are seen as temporary service providers and because they are by their nature and purpose 'non-governmental', they are facing sustainability issues;
- A public outreach campaign on the decentralization process proved to be an important undertaking for raising people's awareness of the reform process and gaining public support. Outreach activities must take place in the future on the project's key undertakings;



- People-to-people exchanges have proven useful for individuals active in the interventions to gain out-of-region exposure and experience. Structured, well-prepared and moderated visits to other regions of Ukraine seem to have been beneficial for changing attitudes and mind-sets.
- Activities that have involved building dialogue within local communities have proven helpful and have, to some extent, not only improved community security and social cohesion but also governance and the economic situation. It is thus important to continue facilitating such dialogue processes in the future.
- In general, there is an opportunity for more intensified work (in particular in relation to strengthening dialogue, participation and feedback/control mechanisms) with local communities to strengthen civil society participation to enhance security and cohesion. Efforts should be extended along and near the 'contact line' where the majority of such training and the addressing of issues are needed.

Results Framework

for the “Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine” Project

OUTPUT 1: EFFECTIVE MONITORING SYSTEM ESTABLISHED

Indicator	Baseline	TARGET (2017)	RESULT (2017)	Target (2018)	RESULT (2018)	Source
Reliable baselines are established at the project onset, allowing monitoring of progress against objectives	No [2016]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Desk review, Project records, USE survey
Accurate and up-to-date information and analysis are available from the key locations	No [2016]	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Desk review, Project records
Recommendations are developed and used for programme operations and advocacy on an ongoing basis.	No [2016]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Desk review, Project records

OUTPUT 2: EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES CAPABLE OF ADDRESSING URGENT RECOVERY NEEDS ARE FUNCTIONING

Indicator	Disaggregation	BASELINE	TARGET (2017)	RESULT (2017)	Target (2018)	RESULT (2018)	Source
Number of functioning Public Councils		23 [2016]	23	31	31	39	Desk review, Project records
Number of recommendations from Public Councils that were implemented for infrastructure rehabilitation, enhancing livelihoods, responding to humanitarian needs and building social cohesion		108 [2016]	50	150	150	195	Desk review, Project records
Number of functioning CABs in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts		4 [2016]	5	5	7	7	Desk review, Project records
Number of consultations provided by functioning CABs (including hotlines)	Total	7,804 [2016]	16,000	23,622	16,000	32,134	CAB records and administrative data
	Women	4,292 [2016]	8,000	14,538	9,000	21,282	
	Men	3,512 [2016]	8,000	9,084	7,000	10,852	
Number of towns and villages covered by CAB services in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts		4 [2016]	28	174	28	285	Desk review, CAB administrative data
Number of representatives of local authorities and community leaders who adopted experience from other regions on successful amalgamation and decentralization practices	Total	0 [2017]	75	58	75	149	Trip reports, Feedback forms, Project records.
	Women	0 [2017]	40	31	40	105	
	Men	0 [2017]	35	27	35	44	
Number of representatives of local authorities and community leaders who adopted experience from other countries on successful amalgamation and decentralization processes	Total	0 [2017]	25	54	25	20	Trip reports, Feedback forms, Project records.
	Women	0 [2017]	15	35	15	11	
	Men	0 [2017]	10	19	10	9	

OUTPUT 3: RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION OF SOCIAL COHESION AMONG COMMUNITIES, AND BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND THE AUTHORITIES

Indicator	Baseline	TARGET (2017)	RESULT (2017)	Target (2018)	RESULT (2018)	Source
Number of mediators trained and equipped with mediation tools and techniques	0 [2017]	40	48	30	37	Training feedback forms
Number of initiatives on mediation by trained local mediators supported	0 [2017]	5	9	10	38	Initiatives/ ideas proposals, selection protocols
Number of community members that strengthened their skills and capacities for social cohesion and reconciliation through workshops and study visits	299 [2017]	120	410	100	177	Trip reports, Feedback forms, Project records
Number of communication strategies and communication campaigns implemented by trained local media representatives in eastern Ukraine	0 [2017]	5	12	5	12	Initiatives/ ideas proposals, selection protocols, media monitoring
Number of people reporting increased confidence when dealing with tension factors (men/women, youth, teenagers)	0 [2017]	300	2,400	200	330	Project records

Provisional financial data

as of October 2018

Donor: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Project Title: Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected Communities of Ukraine

Output/Project ID: 00093279, 00093367, 00093368

OUTPUT	Donor	Initial budget, USD	Expenses 2015, USD	Expenses 2016, USD	Expenses 2017, USD	Expenses 2018, USD	Budget utilization, USD	Budget utilization, %
Output 1. Effective Monitoring system established	SIDA	71,500	4,947	1,493	0	0	6,439	9%
Output 2. Effective local governance structures capable of addressing urgent recovery needs are functioning	SIDA	817,593	36,975	472,624	90,210	454,268	1,054,077	129%
Output 3. Reconciliation and restoration of social cohesion among communities, and between communities and the authorities	SIDA	882,146	62,017	117,903	97,988	413,784	691,692	78%
Project Management	SIDA	552,475	99,436	162,735	9,290	332,716	604,177	109%
GMS (8%)	SIDA	173,748	16,248	60,127	15,799	96,195	188,369	108%
Foreign Exchange Gain and Loss	SIDA	52,083	0	0	0	0	0	0%
TOTAL		2,549,544	219,622	814,882	213,287	1,296,963	2,544,754	100%

NOTE: Data contained in this report is an extract of UNDP financial records and subject to change. The accounting period is an open period and data from some accounting processes may not have been processed. Financial data above is provisional.

Donor:	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Project Title:	Restoration of Governance and Reconciliation in Crisis-Affected (SDC) Communities of Ukraine
Output/Project ID:	00093279, 00093367, 00093368

OUTPUT	Donor	Initial budget, USD	Expenses 2015, USD	Expenses 2016, USD	Expenses 2017, USD	Expenses 2018, USD	Budget utilization, USD	Budget utilization, %
Output 1. Effective Monitoring system established	SDC	77,500	677	3,531	0	0	4,207	5%
Output 2. Effective local governance structures capable of addressing urgent recovery needs are functioning	SDC	494,000	14,020	91,164	359,563	174,021	638,767	129%
Output 3. Reconciliation and restoration of social cohesion among communities, and between communities and the authorities	SDC	692,025	48,550	88,985	325,722	117,076	580,333	84%
Project Management	SDC	274,500	10,753	35,635	267,868	415	314,671	115%
GMS (8%)	SDC	123,043	5,920	17,544	76,256	23,319	123,039	100%
	TOTAL	1,661,068	79,920	236,858	1,029,409	314,830	1,661,018	100%

NOTE: Data contained in this report is an extract of UNDP financial records and subject to change. The accounting period is an open period and data from some accounting processes may not have been processed. Financial data above is provisional.

