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# THE STATUS OF THE YOUTH POLICY IN VOLYN OBLAST

Based on the survey conducted in 10 USAID HOVERLA partner communities in Volyn Oblast



## PREAMBLE

This document outlines the results of the research surveying the status of the youth policy in 10 communities of Volyn Oblast partnering with the USAID HOVERLA Activity: Boratyn, Vyshniv, Volodymyr-Volynskyi, Horokhiv, Zymne, Kivertsi, Lokachi, Liubeshiv, Rozhyshche, and Shatsk.

The survey was conducted using the open data available at official websites of the communities and the information provided by relevant local self-government officials.

The survey identified the level of youth representation in local public authorities, evaluated the efficiency of advisory bodies representing the interests of the youth. The authors reviewed the targeted programs for inclusion of the interests of the youth and developed recommendations on improving such programs in the USAID HOVERLA partner communities.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Art. 1 of the Law of Ukraine “On the basic principles of the youth policy” the youth are persons (citizens of Ukraine, foreigners and persons without citizenship) in the age of 14 through 35, who legally stay in Ukraine. According to Art. 2 of the mentioned Law, legislature related to the youth policy, includes the Constitution of Ukraine, the international treaties and agreements ratified by Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, other regulations covering legal relations in this area, and the above-mentioned Law.

The powers of local self-government in the area of youth policy are defined in the Law of Ukraine “On local self-government in Ukraine”. The joint goal of the youth policy is establishing an environment enabling self-fulfillment and revealing potential of the Ukrainian youth, building its autonomy and competitiveness, ensuring active engagement of youth in the public life (Art. 3 of the Law of Ukraine “On the basic principles of the youth policy”).

This document contains the results of the survey of youth policy implementation status in 10 USAID HOVERLA partner communities in Volyn Oblast and the recommendations for its development with possible further scaling-up to other communities of Ukraine.

## 1 THE LEVEL OF YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Late in 2020, the “Eidos” Center in Ukraine presented its “Political representation in local councils in 2010-2020 and political archetypes” research focusing on youth representation and the institute of political reputation in Ukraine. The research analyzed the data on the voting results in urban territorial communities with population over 100 000 (“large cities”) provided by the Central Election Commission. The following trends regarding the youth representation were noted:

- In 2020, the local councils of large cities became 1 year “older” versus 2015 – the average age of deputies increased from 42.8 to 43.8 years. In Lutsk, the capital of Volyn oblast, this indicator increased from 38 to 41 years;
- In 2020 the proportion of deputies of city councils in the age of 18-35 was 20%, while in 2015 it was 26% of the total number of mandates. The number of young deputies in the newly elected councils of large cities was 352, which is by 126 persons less than in 2015;
- In 2020, the number of deputies of large city councils in the age of 18-25 reduced significantly: by 66%, compared to the local elections of 2015. As a result of the previous local elections, 50 persons belonging to this age group, were elected deputies of large city councils, compared to only 17 in this election.

To identify the key issues of the social status and development of the youth in Ukraine, the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Ukraine conducted a representative sociological survey “The status of the Ukrainian youth 2021”, presenting, *inter alia*, the results related to public and political activity of the youth. According to the survey results, only 4% of the youth engaged in the work of political parties or political groups. Five percent of the respondents participated in political activity in the social networks / on the Internet. Less than 3% participated in debates with politicians. When responding to the question “Have you participated in the election in the recent five years?” more than 59% of young people answered “yes”, about 26% - “no”, about 13% answered “I was not yet 18 then”, and less than 3% chose the answer “I don’t remember”.

To assess youth representation in local government bodies in the USAID HOVERLA partner communities of Volyn Oblast, the proportion of youth in the deputy composition and among local government officials and employees was identified as of June 2022.

The average share of youth in the deputy composition of 10 partner communities was 16%. Based on the above-mentioned results of the survey conducted by the “Eidos” Center, we can assume that this rate is 4% lower than the average among “large cities” of Ukraine in 2020, and 10% lower than the value of this indicator in 2015.

The average proportion of youth among employees of the councils and their executive bodies in the 10 partner communities is 15%.

More detailed results are presented on Chart 1.

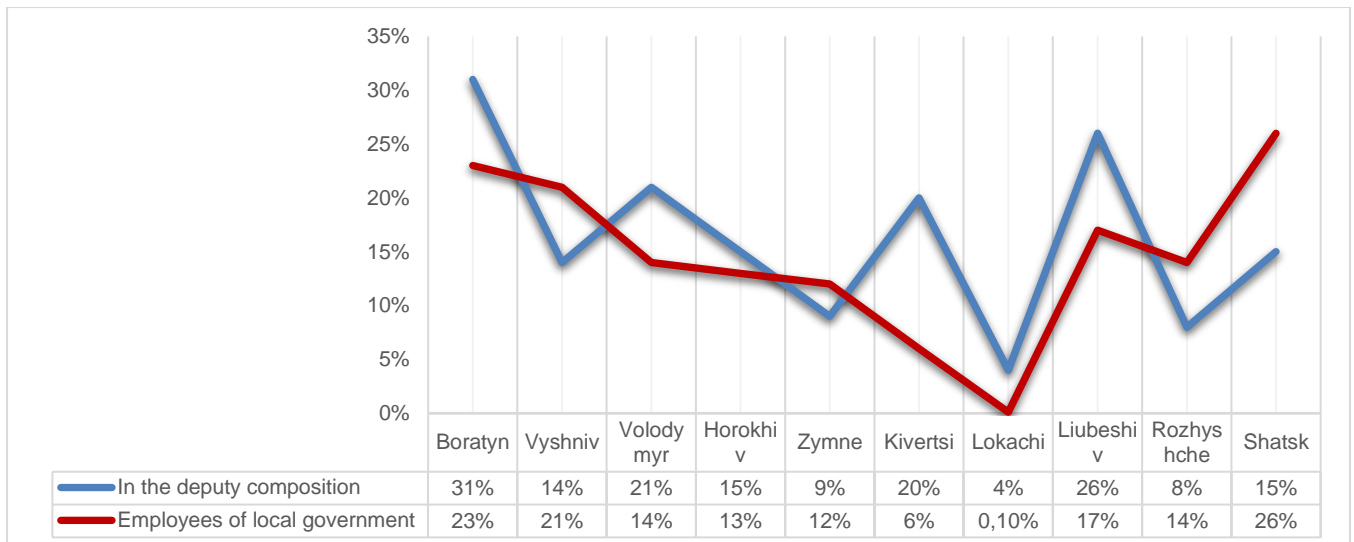


Chart 1. Proportion of youth in the local council and on employee payroll of the local councils and their executive authorities, Volyn Oblast

Chart 1 demonstrates that the proportion of youth in the deputy composition as of June 2022 is low (up to 15%) in 6 communities: Lokachi, Rozhys hche, Zymne, Vyshniv, Horokhiv, and Shatsk. In Kivertsi and Volodymyr-Volynskiy communities this indicator ranges from 16 to 25%. Two communities – Liubeshiv and Boratyn – fall within the 26-35% range.

Conclusions can also be made that in 6 communities (Lokachi, Kivertsi, Zymne, Horokhiv, Volodymyr-Volynskiy, Rozhys hche) the proportion of youth employed by local government is less than 15%. In Liubeshiv, Vyshniv, and Boratyn communities this indicator is in the range of 16-25%. The highest proportion of youth is employed by the local government of Shatsk community (26%).

The reasons for low level of youth representation in local councils can be low competitiveness of youth in the election process, biased attitude of the electorate towards young people, etc. Low representation of youth on staff of local governments can be caused by youth migration from the territorial community, poor employee incentives, etc.

## 2 REPRESENTATIVE BODIES AND INSTITUTIONS

The most common bodies and institutions representing the interests of youth in Volyn Oblast are civil society organizations, youth centers, youth councils, social services for family, children and youth.

The following organizations have experience in providing youth sector development services in Volyn Oblast:

- Civil society organization “The youth platform” (Lutsk) focusing on youth center development. Volyn Youth Center is an example of most effective youth center which is in high demand. It is an open space for work and leisure and for development of Volyn youth organizations. Today, in the context of full-scale war, “SpivDiia Hub Lutsk” was established in Volyn Youth Center, where internally displaced persons (IDPs) can receive assistance with accommodation oblast-wide, humanitarian assistance, psychological support, support in employment and support for IDP children.
- Civil society organization Youth Resource Center “The New Wings” (Novovolynsk) which aims at establishing conditions to reveal young people’s creative potential, facilitate establishment of open civil society in Ukraine. The Center serves as the base for several youth initiatives, organizes various youth events, brings together the efforts of the young people for project implementation in the field of the youth policy. The members of the organization are winners of several contests and nominations at the national level.

The Youth Council of Volyn Oblast State Administration operates in Volyn Oblast. The last statutory meeting on election of its members was held in August 2021. As of end of 2021, about 30 representatives of civil society organizations, youth councils of territorial communities, student councils of schools (colleges, academia, universities) were members of the Youth Council. There is a tab “Youth Council” on the website of Volyn Oblast State Administration highlighting news and events engaging youth and providing information about the Youth Council: minutes of meetings, regulations, etc. The information about meetings in 2022 is not available on the website. Most of the Youth Council members directed their efforts to ensuring humanitarian assistance to the military and internally displaced persons, and two serve in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In October 2021 a Youth Council of Lutsk Rayon Council was established. It consisted of 25 members who started with orientation on the work of the rayon council by visiting the meetings of commissions and sessions of rayon council. The information about any further meetings or achievements of the Youth Council is not available from open sources.

Youth Councils have been established in 7 territorial communities out of 10 (please refer to Chart 2).

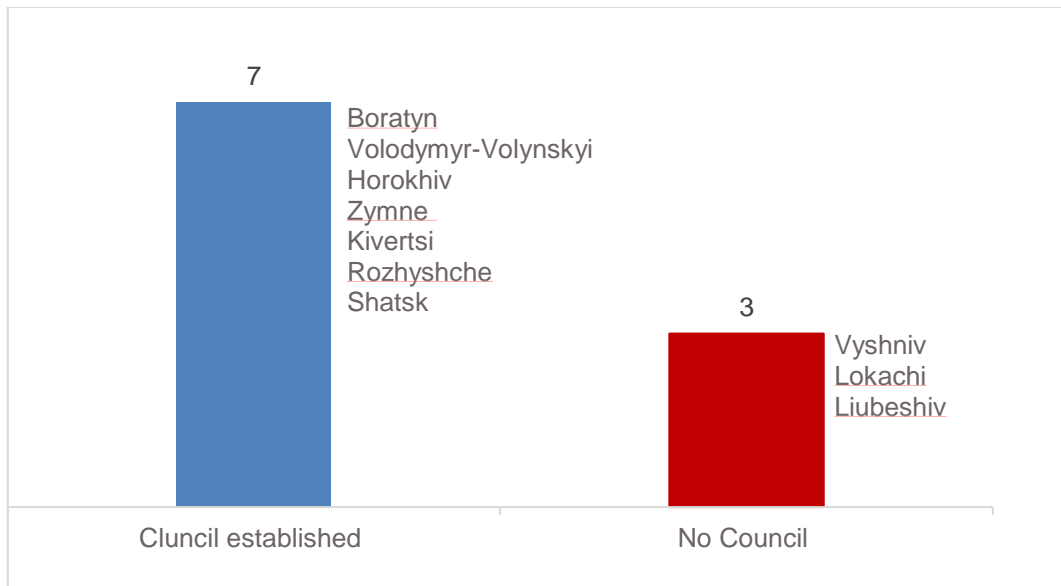


Chart 2. Youth Councils in the partner communities of Volyn Oblast

Despite that 70% of communities decided to establish Youth Councils, it is important that they are an effective tool, rather than just being established. Evaluation of the youth councils for their impact on decision-making by local governments, preparation and adoption of local development programs, monitoring of the quality of their implementation showed that most youth councils are ineffective.

*In Boratyn community* it is the Department of culture and youth policy of the village council responsible for youth policy implementation. There is no designated employee responsible for this field. The youth council was established at the end of 2021, however, its board election was not held. Student parliaments were established in 10 secondary schools. Civil society organization “Rural youth development foundation” is registered in the community (the village of Mstyshyn) and operates actively.

*In Vyshniv community* there is no designated employee responsible for youth policy implementation. No decision on establishing the youth council has been made. Student councils were established in 9 schools. Civil society organization “Our nice community” which indirectly works with the youth, is registered in the community.

*In Volodymyr-Volynskyi community* the Department of youth policy and sports of the Office on Humanitarian Issues in the local council executive committee is responsible for youth policy implementation. In 2021, youth council was established. Detailed information about it can be found [on the community website](#). Eleven student self-governments are active in the schools and universities of the community. A number of civil society organizations working with youth are registered in the community, including: municipal civil society youth organization “Reverse”, Youth Center “Creative World”, “The Shore of Hope”, “The Green Lighthouse”, “Creative Studio”, “Sports club Atlant”, municipal sports club “Liubart”.

*In Horokhiv Community* the Sector of youth and sports is covered by the city council’s Office of education, culture, youth, sports, social protection and healthcare. In April 2021, the youth council was formed and held 4 sessions during the year. Its

members were engaged in organizing events in the community and participated in the meetings of the youth council in Volyn Oblast State Administration. There is no information about the council's activities in 2022. Besides, 1 student council and 20 school self-government bodies operate in the community. Civil society organization "Youth space "Boom of the Ukrainian Youth"" is registered in the community.

The youth council *in Zymne community* was established in September 2018. Since then, the organization has gone through several stages of development. Currently no information about the council's activities is available. Student self-government bodies work in schools, their members participate in the events held in the community. Civil society organization "Zymne" which indirectly works with the youth, is registered in the community.

*In Kivertsy community* the youth-related issues lie within the scope of responsibilities of the deputy head of the municipal council and the humanitarian department of the municipal council. The youth council was formed in October 2018, and information about this is available on the community's website. Besides lack of any updates on the website, this council is one of the most active among the youth councils of HOVERLA partner communities: its members engage in community-based activities, receive delegations from other territories, initiate various events for the youth. Besides, 13 school parliaments operate in the community. Such civil society organizations as "Tiver Safety and Survival School", "Tandem Youth Space" do outreach work with the youth.

*In Lokachi community* the Sector of culture, youth and sports of the village council is responsible for working with the youth. No decision on youth council formation have been adopted. The student committee councils are established in 6 schools of the community, and student self-government body "Zlagoda" works in one school. There are no civil society organizations engaging with the youth on the territory of the community.

*In Liubeshiv Community* the youth-related issues lie within the scope of responsibilities of the Office of humanitarian policy in the municipality. No decision on youth council formation have been adopted. Student self-government bodies are established in schools. There are no civil society organizations engaging with the youth on the territory of the community.

*In Rozhyshe community* the Humanitarian department is responsible for youth policy implementation. In October 2021, the youth council was established; however, no information about its current activities is available. Student self-government bodies are formed in schools. There is the "City Life" youth space and civil society organization "The Youth Outpost" functioning in the community.

*In Shatsk community* it is the Department of education, youth and sports of the village council responsible for the youth issue. In January 2022, the youth council was established in this community. While no updated information about its activity is available on community's website, the members of the youth council participated in the number of events organized in the community. Besides, 11 student committees were formed and work in community schools. Such civil society organizations as "Shakovel", "ECO BUH", "Generation of changes" are registered in the community and interact with the youth.

## The “Youth Worker” Program

Lack of motivated and qualified experts within local self-governments or in other community-based organizations is one of the key barriers to systematic support of the youth and ensuring youth policy development in the communities. As a partial solution to this problem, in 2014 Ukraine started implementation of the national “Youth Worker” program supported by UNDP in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the State Institute of Family and Youth. According to the Program website, currently over 4000 youth workers have successfully completed their training.

A survey was conducted among local government officials in the 10 partner communities of Volyn Oblast to identify if there are any “Youth Worker” program graduates in the local governments. The survey results are presented on Chart 3.

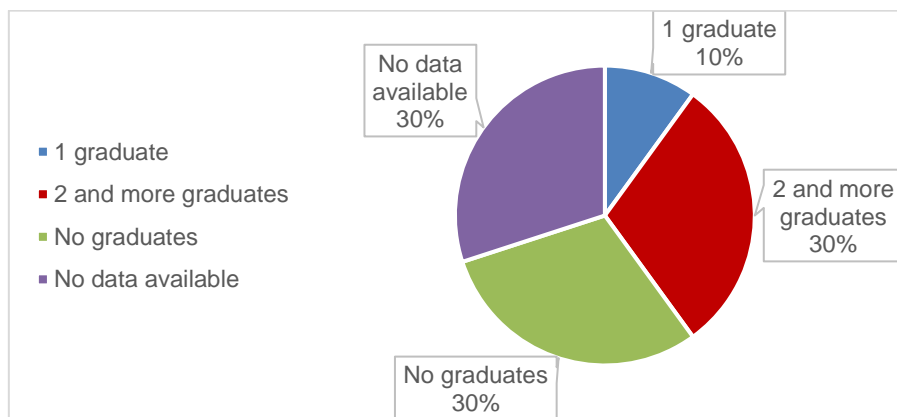


Chart 3. The “Youth Worker” program graduates in partner communities of Volyn Oblast

The survey revealed that there are persons trained under the “Youth worker” program, in 4 communities, including 3 communities where 2 and more persons were trained. In one community the trained person is a local government public official. In other 6 communities no one participated in the program or the responding local government officials do not have such information.



### 3 LOCAL PROGRAMS IN THE FIELD OF THE YOUTH POLICY

Development and implementation of local programs is one of the tasks of local governments. As of 2022, in each partner community of Volyn Oblast about 20 local programs were developed, on average.

“Oblast special program for national-patriotic upbringing of children and youth for 2021-2025” has been adopted in oblast.

It is worth noting that *any local program may address the interests of the youth*. A broad range of citizens can benefit from the implementation of the Community Amenities Program including the youth who could benefit from the service of cleaning the sidewalks, for example. The activities envisaged in the Culture Development Program or the Program to Support Individual Housing Construction, are also accessible to the youth.

Based on the statement above, it would be fair to mention that development of target programs in the field of the youth policy is not mandatory, and the interests of the youth are not necessarily better addressed in the communities where such programs are available versus the communities that do not have such programs in place. However, effective target programs can provide a number of advantages for youth development, and we will elaborate on that further on.

The other category of local programs in relation to the youth policy includes non-targeted programs which, however, *directly relate to the youth*. Such programs include: Health Improvement and recreation Program for School Students (Children), the “Gifted Child” program, the Special Program of National-Patriotic Upbringing of Children and Youth, etc. Certain populations within the youth age range can benefit from these programs, however, on practice they are mainly school children.

Some partner communities of Volyn Oblast have *targeted programs* in the field of the youth policy, and we will analyze some of them.

- Targeted social program “The Youth of Horokhiv Territorial Community for 2021-2025”

The program was developed by the sector of youth and sports of the Department of education, culture, youth, sports, social protection and healthcare of Horokhiv municipal council. This body is also the main implementer of the program. The total amount of funding planned for the program at the cost of the local budget, is 450 000 UAH for 5 years.

The program declares the need to establish the system for comprehensive support, formation and development of public activities facilitating self-identification and self-realization for the youth, ensuring legal, humanitarian and economic environment guaranteeing social formation of a young person.

The list of activities envisaged by the program, includes trainings for leaders of student self-government and teachers-organizers, **facilitating operation of the youth council**, arrangement of local culture, sports and recreation events, conducting sightseeing tours, engagement of youth in volunteer activities, **career**

**guidance and vocational orientation activities for the youth, activities related to civil defense.**

- Kivertsi Urban Community Youth Program for 2022

The program was developed and is implemented by Kivertsi municipal council. The total amount of funding planned for the program in the local budget, is 50 000 UAH. The program declares the need to create favorable environment for self-realization and creative development of every young person of Kivertsi urban community, unfolding the youth' innovation potential in all areas of social life of the city.

The list of activities envisaged by the program, includes intellectual recreational activities, events for safe and healthy lifestyle, training activities, the contest of youth initiatives. No funding is envisaged for a large number of activities proposed in the program.

- The “Initiative Youth” Program for 2020 – 2022 of Boratyn village council

The program was developed and is implemented by the Department of social and economic development of Boratyn village council. The total amount of funding planned for the program in the local budget, is 120 000 UAH for 3 years.

The program envisages the activities to be conducted **on annual basis, such as the contest of local development initiatives among the youth of the community** to strengthen public spirit and youth development through assigning and paying one-off allowances to school children and students of Boratyn who are most distinguished in the fields of science, education, art, sports and public activity, facilitating the development of Boratyn community.

The program envisages organization and arrangement of the contests of local initiatives, however, no mechanism to control their further implementation was proposed.

- “The Youth of Shatsk Community Council” Targeted social program for 2021 – 2025

The program was developed and is implemented by the Department of education, youth and sports of the community council. The total amount of funding planned for the program in the local budget, is 395 000 UAH for 5 years.

The main goal of the program is setting the system of comprehensive support, formation, and development of youth public activity for its self-identification and self-realization. The information on events, budget and sources of funding is not available on the website.

Thus, for the purpose of the analysis, the local programs adopted by partner communities of Volyn Oblast can be grouped into three categories by their impact on the youth policy (Chart 4).

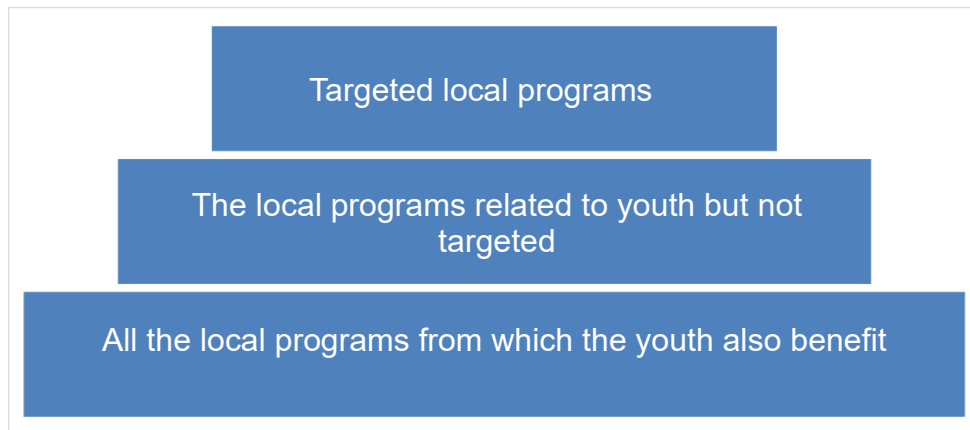


Chart 4. The local programs by their impact on the youth policy

In considering all the local programs from which the youth, alongside other stakeholders, can benefit, the main task for local governments authorities is to identify the level of impact, which the implementation of these programs has on certain groups, including the youth, and further on ensuring the interests of the youth are addressed in local program design and implementation.

**A specific challenge** of design and implementation of local youth programs is that the **majority of planned activities target high school students**. In this case the interests of young working adults are not addressed, as the programs targeting this group are few in HOVERLA partner communities.

To improve the quality of design and implementation of targeted local programs in the field of the youth policy, it is necessary to:

- Develop programs with youth engagement (possible engagement includes focus groups, interviews, collection of proposals, etc.)
- Ensure proper communication and informing the youth about the available local programs, including posting full information about the programs on community websites
- Apply individual approach in program design, not overloading them with general terms, following the principle that the content of the program must be clear even for the youngest residents of the community
- Include only feasible activities which can be supported with proper budget
- Ensure proper public reporting of the results of program implementation

## 4 IDEAS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE COMMUNITIES

Successful implementation of the youth policy is crucial not only at the national but at the local level, as it affects most areas of local self-government.

The partner communities of Volyn Oblast cooperating with the USAID “HOVERLA” Activity, see working with the youth as an important aspect of local development. The range of ideas is quite broad and versatile, including:

- supporting the activities of the youth councils and civil society organizations working with youth at the community level;
- arranging contests of youth initiatives;
- arranging training for youth on relevant topics, sharing experience with other communities;
- professional development and training for local government officials and youth workers responsible for youth outreach activities at community level;
- long-term and comprehensive mentor support of youth policy implementation locally;
- technical support and equipping youth hubs, etc.

Some communities already work of the projects in the field of the youth policy, for example:

- Horokhiv community developed a project proposal “HorokhivHUB: modern information and communication space for community residents.” Besides establishing a hub for young people, the project envisages scaling up the good practice of applying participatory governance mechanisms at the community level.
- Rozhyshe community strives to implement the “SMART LIBRARY” Project to turn the library into modern public space for the youth and all community residents.
- Volodymyr-Volynskyi community plans to implement the “Accessible Gym” project envisaging creating a gym in the Municipal Center of Physical Health of the Population.
- Vyshniv community aims to “decentralize” sports and recreation. The “Active Recreation – Healthy and Successful Community” project envisages the creation of 8 hubs for sports and recreation even in the most remote settlements of the community.
- The project proposed by Lokachi community, focuses on cultural recreation of the youth and envisages holding a number of cultural events. For this purpose, the community plans to procure dismountable stage and sound equipment to organize the youth and other groups of residents around the cultural life of the community.