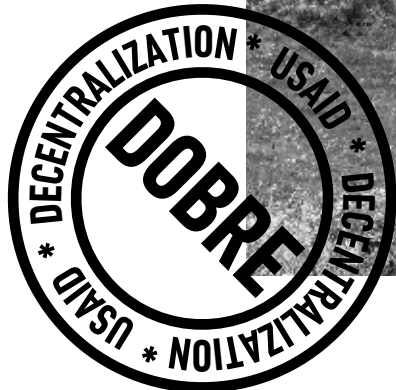


SUCCESS STORIES



HROMADA SUCCESSES HANDBOOK

FOREWORD

Decentralization in Ukraine, as in other countries, allows local communities to set their own priorities and make their more decisions about how their community will look and operate. It operates from the principle that local communities themselves know better what they need than someone in the Oblast or national capital. Over 200 years ago, American President Thomas Jefferson said, “The government closest to the people serves the people best.” This remains true and the decentralization reform in Ukraine emphasizes this.

In addition, by empowering local communities to set their priorities and make their own decisions, decentralization unlocks the ideas, creativity and potential of Hromada. DOBRE works in 50 OTG (soon to expand to 75) and we have already seen so many achievements in our communities. In Slobozhanska (Dnipropetrovsk Oblast), local youth decided to establish and operate a Youth Radio Station. They interviewed the US Ambassador to Ukraine for their inaugural programming.

Domanivska (Mykolayiv Oblast) youth developed an amazing multi-functional Co-working Space in an old theater. It provides not only cultural space for performances, but also co-working space for potential business start-ups, training space and space for special master classes in cooking and sewing. A small café they will operate contributes to sustainability.

In Terebovlianska (Ternopil Oblast), the community established a museum and an amazing Tourist Information Center. They have specialized tours develop and market them in several languages. They recently introduced a bike-sharing program for bicycle tourism.

Pechenizhyn (Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast) recently started a solid waste collection program with a heavy emphasis on recycling and a public education/information campaign.

Baikovetska (Ternopil Oblast) developed an Observatory to both promote the study of Astronomy but also encourage enthusiasts and visitors to come see and study the stars. And so many others.

This handbook highlights just a handful of the many achievements in a few of our Hromada. We could publish even more examples and will in the coming months. However, you can already see and sense the progress of our communities. Every time I visit a Hromada, I can see and feel the change. Although these various achievements show the diverse and individualized thinking of each community, they reflect a common theme. Decentralization clearly results in making life in communities better.

Please enjoy a quick tour of a few successes of our DOBRE partner communities around Ukraine. Decentralization is working. Decentralization is DOBRE!

Barry Reed,
USAID DOBRE Program Director



COMMUNITIES' SUCCESS STORIES HANDBOOK

This edition is about the development, experience and achievements of the USAID's Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) Program partnering communities, designed for use and distribution among civic activists, volunteers, stakeholders from unamalgamated communities and residents of amalgamated communities.

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Kyiv, 2018

SUCCESS STORIES

Askania-Nova is known in Europe by its biosphere reserve named after Friedrich Faltz-Fein, that was established in 1898.



FIRST ELECTIONS:
DECEMBER 11, 2016

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
2

AREA:
330,6 KM²

POPULATION:
5,704 PEOPLE



About 6 thousand people live in Askania-Nova community. The priority development of the local village amalgamated community is a formation of a healthy generation. Community resident survey showed an importance of creating conditions to preserve and strengthen public health, as well as sports activities are the priority and a key focus area of community work.

First of all, three stadiums were reconstructed and upgraded. Two of them are in the villages of Pytomnyk and Molochne. Time-damaged grounds were renewed, and several district and regional championships took place there recently.



Young football players at "Askania-Arena". September 2017

ASKANIA-NOVA

VILLAGE AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY

"People want to play on a quality grass cover, not in weeds and dust. I personally went through all these so-called "pitches" with injured elbows and knees often times when I played football. When people tend to do sports, you want to build for them. For example, a good and comfortable stadium," one of the initiators of the sports projects, Community Head **Vitalii Svintsitskyi** says.



"Askania-Arena" renovation. March-September 2017



The third stadium is located in the center of the community. Back in March of the last year, it was a wasteland, and as late as in September it turned into Askania-Arena. Community residents were actively involved into soil preparation, grass sowing, and plot establishment. Water for stadium was supplied from a fire water pond. Later plastic benches were installed, some more are expected to be installed in the nearest future. A total of about UAH 400 thousand were spent to upgrade the stadium, most of these funds coming from commercial farmers and residents of the community. The rest of the funds were allocated from the community budget. However, this is not the end as the stadium is still under reconstruction, although being already in full operation. The nearest plans are to equip a good locker room and to build playgrounds in the territory of the stadium. In 2019, it is planned to hold an all-Ukrainian football championship among partner communities of the USAID DOBRE Program at the local Askania-Arena.

At the very beginning community residents were skeptical about the realization of these ideas, claiming that upgrading processes will last forever. At the

beginning of the stadium construction, a lot of people said it is not going to happen. In the meantime, activists talked with the community residents, organized campaigns, sports festivals etc. And the stadium construction works continued. The great opening coincided with the birthday of the community, serving as a confirmation that nothing is impossible to a willing heart.

The rout of sports development is paved in all villages of the community by establishing playgrounds. Askania-Nova Football Academy for children and youth has different sports clubs, from dancesport to football and boxing. About 150 children attend this school. Athletics instructors also do classes in other villages of the community. A sports club with a gym and billiard room, equipment for table tennis and hockey are available for community residents.

A healthy lifestyle and sport are popularized in the amalgamated community also by conducting different events such as School Olympics, football championships for adults and children, races.

F.E. Faltz-Fein biosphere natural reserve. September 2017



SUCCESS STORIES



In a small village near Ternopil there is the first rural automated observatory, which makes it possible to observe galaxies from any point of Ukraine.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
OCTOBER 25, 2015

NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
5

AREA:
83,82 KM²

POPULATION:
6,592 PEOPLE

BAIKOVETSKA

VILLAGE AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY



Mykhailo Shemelia, Lozivska hub school physics teacher. June 2018

Students of Baikovetska Village Amalgamated Community have started studying astronomy long ago, but such an observatory was only a dream.

Several small portable telescopes served the community as a tool for exploring the starry sky. Over time, the contest called Astroquest was launched here, with whole families attending. The whole point of the game is that firstly, stargazing excursions are conducted for teams, with participants reproducing constellations in their drawings later. Such joint events are extremely uniting, and it's good they become traditional. The art of astronomy in Baikovetska is promoted by the physics teacher Mykhailo Shemelia.

For the first time he got interested in astronomy many years ago. Together with his colleagues from other schools, he attended different observatories to learn the way they work in practice. Now he implements his own experience in his native school and involves his students to explore the secrets of the universe.

About five years ago Mykhailo got acquainted with Ternopil astronomer Serhii Verbytskyi, and an idea came to his mind to create an observatory in his own village. And time showed this was not such a crazy one to do. Especially since astronomy is popular not only among students of this community.

"I remember my school years. We were told anything but things that were really interesting. This is why I think it is necessary to teach children something really interesting, something they need in their life. And I'm sure that the structure of the universe is interesting for everybody. Sometimes you lift your head up and wonder why it looks like this? It is necessary to intrigue children, make them read, wonder, explore, not just surf around the Internet," Mykhailo Shemelia thinks.

In December 2017, an idea to create a modern observatory on the basis of the Lozova village Hub School won the mini-grant contest of the USAID DOBRE Program. Thanks to the creation of this program and joint efforts of the community, one managed to build an observatory to host the telescope itself, and equip the observatory with the necessary educational materials. In June, community gathered for the official opening of the first rural automated observatory in Ukraine with a powerful telescope, modern computer equipment and educational practical materials. The telescope capacity allows observing even the most remote galaxies.

Children can attend astronomy school at the observatory as teachers for the school were already found. They also want to implement astronomical photography courses. According to Mykhailo Shemelia, not only children, but also their parents got interested in those activities.

In addition, the observatory can bring profit.

"An idea appeared thank to the community residents who love the space. Having joined the DOBRE Program, we have a telescope, and thanks increased income we have as a result of the decentralization reform, we built an observatory," Community Head **Anatolii Kulyk** tells.

A lot of guests from Ternopil oblast, and not only from there, come to Baikovetska to see stars up close. Now the community considers an idea to develop astronomical tourism on the basis of the observatory and arrange excursions. They also plan to open a hostel.

Lozova village observatory renovation. June 2018



At the same time, thank to remote access via the Internet, the community will be able to "sell" temporary access to use their telescope. Local astronomers will receive orders for researches. Mykhailo Shemelia is looking for scientists under whose guidance local students can do researches, and therefore, making their contribution to science and presenting their developments and findings in Ukraine and abroad.



Baikivtsi village. June 2017

SUCCESS STORIES



For a long time, Bashtanka district of Mykolaiv oblast has been known for its agrarian achievements. Actually, the district even owes its name to its agrarian history. However, new time and new people have come, and this area is in for another, more perspective future.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
DECEMBER 18, 2016

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
9

AREA:
773,85 KM²

POPULATION: 2
2,740 PEOPLE

Bashtanska Town Amalgamated Community appeared in the end of 2016. The ATC included 26 settlements. This is the largest community of Mykolaiv oblast with over 20 thousand people living here, making the most part of the whole population of Bashtanka district.

In the very first year of its work, community managed to involve UAH 50 million. It was subventions, investments, grants, funds of the State Fund for Regional Development and donors, in particular, the USAID DOBRE Program.

"Decentralization provided preferences that we only should take advantage of. Before, we implemented projects that cost UAH 100 thousand. Now operate projects worth millions. Before, we could only dream of UAH 50 million in a year," Head of the Bashtanska amalgamated community **Ivan Rubskyi** says.

Everyday work of people who develop projects, strategies and plans, left behind these amounts. The Investment Department was established in the community, which is responsible for the development of projects, ready to get funded. In Bashtanska community people believe that any community should start with the establishment of such a department. Now, four employees of the department have time not only to submit projects for all possible contests and grants, but also to help other active residents. You can see all four employees at their work places not so often as they go to study, share experiences in order to look for opportunities and interesting ideas for the community. According to Head of the Department Natalia Shaforost, they develop a lot of projects and do not miss any contest regardless of the amount of financing. Development of a small project takes several days. However, it takes up to half a year to develop larger projects.



Bashtanka City Council building

BASHTANSKA

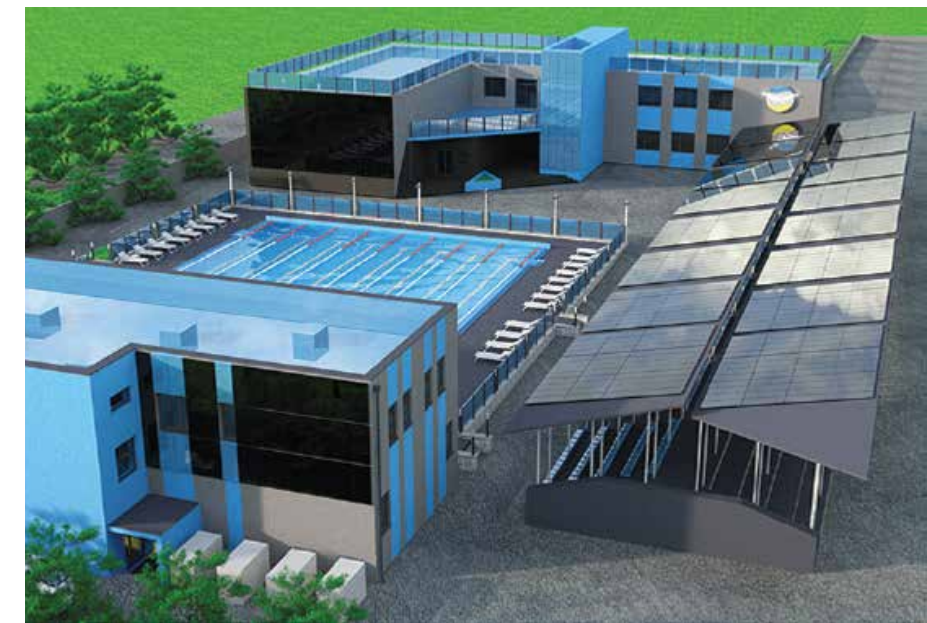
TOWN AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY

"We constantly look for opportunities to implement projects. They can be found even on Facebook, where different organizations write about their victories in grant competitions," Natalia Shaforost explains. **"However, you should not stop after the first refusal. Sometimes, there are requirements are extremely high as well as high level of competition. Out of a dozen of projects, only one may be accepted. However, we should continue studying, writing and submitting new applications."**

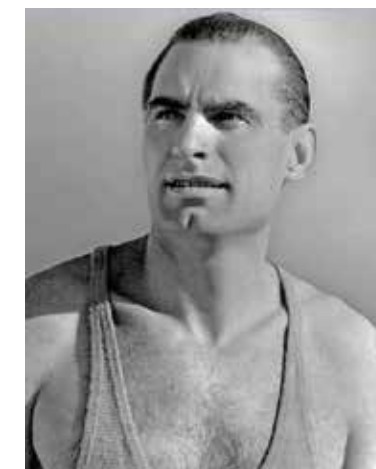
A vivid example of how attracted funds turn into real objects is the large-scale construction of the swimming pool. For a long time, Bashtanska Community has dreamed about its own swimming pool, as community residents are proud of their fellow countryman, "a king" of butterfly, 111-time swimming champion Semen Boichenko, who has set more than 20 world records. In the future, it is planned to create a professional training center and host international competitions here.

Another strategic step to attract funds to the Bashtanska Amalgamated Community is the development of a construction master plan that will give an impetus to attract investment and develop business. Master plan clearly delimits the community territory and allows investors to see possible investment sites and their intended purpose, to obtain a guarantee of their business development.

The community will not stop at the achieved sum of UAH 50 million. Bashtanska ATC not only sets a higher fundraising bar, but also plans to continue earning more money by means of its own revenues. This construction master plan provides for the industrial park area. This is a territory for the establishment of enterprises that will have a common infrastructure, but will be located in a way that will ensure the environmental impact control. By the way, representatives of local self-government saw such park in Poland during a study tour held under the USAID DOBRE Program.



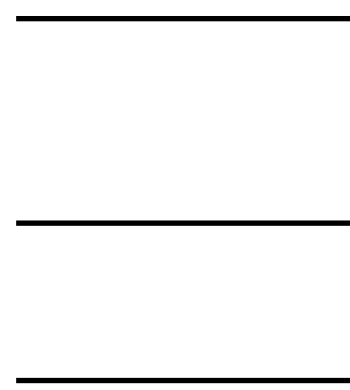
Swimming pool design project



Semen Boichenko, record-breaking swimmer (1912-1987)

"The trip gave us a big impetus, as we were afraid to create an industrial park. We thought it was pointless. Now we understand that industrial parks are the future of communities. We put most of the money we attract today into social facilities. Business development means new workspaces and additional revenues to the community budget," Head of the Bashtanska amalgamated community summed up.

Kirche building (1880-1890) that needs investments





For almost a year, basketball has been far beyond the limits of school sections in this community. Now, the whole families come to the modern basketball court to watch dexterity and accuracy. On September 23, 2017, a modern outdoor basketball court was opened in Bobrynetska community, renovated with the assistance of the USAID DOBRE Program.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
OCTOBER 25, 2015

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
2

AREA:
194,3 KM²

POPULATION:
11,739 PEOPLE

A survey, launched among students before deciding what kind of sports ground to build in the community, showed preference. Gender survey was expected to show what kind of sports children prefer the most, and what would be interesting for both boys and girls. So, students of 5th to 11th forms chose basketball.

The reconstruction of the basketball court in Bobrynets was carried out within the USAID DOBRE Quick Grant Program in early July 2017. Local residents actively joined in the project implementation by helping install fences around the court, basketball backboard racks, preparing the surface for new coverage.

"The basketball court symbolizes that dreams certainly come true. All you need is desire. The initiative came from those children who played on this court. Frankly, it was difficult to raise funds to realize this dream. But with the support of the DOBRE Program, we managed to do it," Head of the Bobrynetska community **Valerii Snizhko** says.

Basketball coach Volodymyr Neklesa mentions that basketball now is of interest not only for children but adults as well:

"Before, there were no conditions for training at all. Because of the old flooring, shoes tore very quickly, children fell down and got injured; it was very difficult to play," Volodymyr tells.

Now there are five children basketball teams of 10-15 children each in the community. Three teams of boys and two teams of girls. There is also "a veteran team" that includes 18 people. In addition, the whole families come here to train to throw the ball into the basket.

"After trainings at the modernized court, children acquired a taste of deserved victories, they became even more motivated. Last year, our players of 2003 year of birth won regional championship among couple of dozen of teams!" Volodymyr Neklesa adds.

BOBRYNETSKA

TOWN AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY



Opening of the Bobrynets basketball court. Bobrynets, September 2017

At the beginning of summer, the All-Ukrainian 3x3 streetball tournament took place in Bobrynets under the sponsorship of the Ukrainian Basketball Federation. This game is similar to basketball, but unlike it, tricks with the ball during the game and different slam dunks (kind of shots), use of body-checks and distractions are an integral part of the game. However, Bobrynetska community does not stop at All-Ukrainian championships. Soon, Bobrynetska community is expected to host a basketball camp which will bring volunteers from Kyiv and Los-Angeles.



Local basketball team training. September 2017.

SUCCESS STORIES



The multifunctional co-working center provides space for work and trainings, recreation and watching 3D movies, even a gym for fitness. Meanwhile, less than a year ago, it was 300 square meters of damaged premises. Thanks to joint efforts of Domanivska community residents, opportunities were found to reconstruct it, and once broken walls became a multifunctional space.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
DECEMBER 18, 2016

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
3

AREA:
225,04 KM²

POPULATION:
8,300 PEOPLE



Domanivka active citizens meet-up. June 2017

A community resident Svitlana Matvieieva had dreamed for a long time to create a comfortable coffee house or spacious fitness room in her village. Realizing that none of those are business projects and they will not bring profit here, she decided to go another way and tried to establish a social enterprise. Previously, she worked as an accountant in the district department of education. The meeting with Iryna Sviatchenko became a life-changing event for her as new head of the department showed Svitlana a world of civic activism, from project development to grants seeking. Their joint public organization, "Domanivka Village Community Development Fund", began its operation in 2014, two years before the community was amalgamated. Today Svitlana is Executive Director of this organization. She notes that after the creation of the Domanivska community, they have got more project opportunities as those from amalgamated communities are of a priority matter for international donors. Thus, activists take every opportunity to do something useful for people.

"My dream motivates me to create an interesting place that our community lacks now. I once wanted to open a coffee house or fitness center. But such business ideas would work in the city, not in the village. Then I thought about social enterprise and began to look for opportunities," Svitlana Matvieieva says.



Domanivka coworking center before renovation. January 2018

The first steps towards creation of the co-working center were taken by activists in Autumn 2017, and in April 2018, the project received support from the USAID DOBRE Program.

In February 2018 activists began making renovation with their own resources. Local entrepreneurs provided partial assistance. As the process went on, they had to learn how to lay tile, install several-meter mirrors, etc. Their team was not big. According to Svitlana Matvieieva, fellow villagers at first did not understand their organization's activities and why they were doing what they do. But now the co-working center is very popular, especially among children and the youth.

"If there are opportunities, you should use them. Nothing is impossible. Only one thing matters - whether you want to work or not," Svitlana Matvieieva believes.

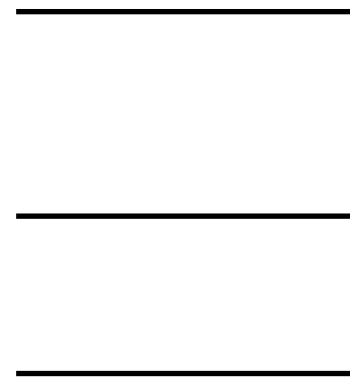


Domanivka coworking center after renovation. May 2018

Co-working project initiators are pleased that many children come to the center, even during breaks in between the lessons. They watch 3D movies and cartoons and discuss them. The co-working center open space is conventionally divided into zones: an office, a training room, a place for evening shows and movie screening, a fitness area, etc. There is a mini-coffee house where you can order tea and non-alcoholic cocktails. Earnings are spent to maintain and improve the premises. Now active residents of Domanivska community plan to create a kid-working center and entertaining zone for the youngest guests.



Domanivska community landscapes



SUCCESS STORIES

Districts like Mala Vyska, which are remote from large cultural centers, are usually considered to be provincial and lacking in prospects. But is it really so? Let's get a closer look at the experience of Malovyskivska Amalgamated Community, Kirovohrad Oblast.



**FIRST ELECTIONS:
OCTOBER 25, 2015**

**A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED
COUNCILS:
4**

**AREA:
231,83 KM**

**POPULATION:
13,607 PEOPLE**

SUCCESS STORIES

The community's population exceeds 13 thousand people. Over 700 children attend different hobby groups. However, children move beyond hobby groups – thank to their activity, they have grown to the realization of their own ambitious projects and active practice within the Town Council.

The most popular hobby groups are usually dancing and sports clubs. Malovyskivska community brings up champions. Among the best of them there are winners of All-Ukrainian competitions, champions of Ukraine, even a candidate for the national athletics team of Ukraine, and European judo champion.

In addition to the popular hobby groups, there are also robotics and aeromodelling clubs. Demonstration flights of aircrafts made by children accompany city festivals and are presented at exhibitions of different levels. Also, trainees of the group are proud of their historic project - a copy of the first aircraft made by a design engineer Oleksandr Kudashev back in 1910. Children are excited to tell guests how the aircraft works as well as about the life of its constructor, combining technical tasks with history.



Robotics and air modelling hobby group students of the Mala Vyska youth center. June 2018

MALOVYSKIVSKA

TOWN AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY

Recently, a media education club appeared here. Children prepare interviews with interesting and successful people of the community. The School Parliament has also started its work. This activity intensified when young and perspective Viktoriia Rumiantseva, who returned to her native town from an oblast capital, joined local children and youth center.

"When I returned I was afraid there would be no opportunities here, in a small town. But it's nothing like that. Life can be in full swing even in a small community, if there are those who are ready to go ahead. Children are motivated and ready to learn, and these are the youth that will turn into responsible people," Viktoriia Rumiantseva says.

Viktoriia managed to organize local youth and showed opportunities not only for their personal development, but also for the development of the whole community. Representatives of the school self-government left their offices and joined discussions at the Town Council, started preparing their own projects. For example, an environmental public campaign was organized by children alone. They started submitting their projects to different competitions. Particularly, upon children's initiative and with assistance of the USAID DOBRE Program, outdoor sports grounds will be constructed in the community as part of the program's youth component.

The youth of Malovyskivska community actively participate in educational events organized within USAID DOBRE Program, and not only as participants but volunteers as well. The Youth Meet-Up between the representatives of three partner communities of the program took place in Mala Vyska in autumn of 2017, with several trainings and discussions on the topic "Forming the Youth Policy in the community". Local activists were engaged in holding of the event.

In such a way, step by step, Malovyskivska community is overcoming stereotypes of "provincialism" and "lack in perspectives".



Viktor Perebyinis, head of the robotics and air modelling hobby group of the Mala Vyska youth center. June 2018



City beach on Mala Vys river. June 2018

SUCCESS STORIES



Merefianska Town Amalgamated Community, a partner of the USAID's Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) Program, created nine housing cooperatives and nine district committees of public self-organization bodies. Housing cooperatives serve 112 high-rise buildings, and district committees of public self-organization bodies serve 9,234 private residences.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
JULY 31, 2016

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
2

AREA:
99,5 KM²

POPULATION:
25,585 PEOPLE



Viktoria Kolinko, head of "Merefa-Tsentralna" housing cooperative. August 2018

The largest housing cooperative, including 50 houses, is called Merefa-Tsentralna. Viktoria Kolinko, who has been head of this housing cooperative for five years, tells that the cooperative has an inspector and engineer who works half-days, a payroll accountant, chief accountant and nine janitors. Residents pay contributions in the amount of UAH 2.86 per square meter of their apartments. Portion of the funds is put into the provident fund, and residents of each house make individual decisions on their use.

The managing board of the housing cooperative includes representatives of the houses who provide the direct communication with people.

In addition to its residents, Merefa-Tsentralna receives funds from the community within the program on housing cooperative support. Also, people here have learnt how to develop and win projects. **"Within three years of cooperation with different programs, we managed to additionally attract over UAH 7 million to repair the roof, replace windows in main entrances, insulate houses, renew electricity mains and install playgrounds," Viktoria Kolinko says.**

MEREFIANSKA

TOWN AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY

Also, housing cooperative network actively works with persistent non-payers and has even developed a special provision on the work with them. At first, such people are warned, and then they are offered assistance to execute the subsidy, provided with an opportunity to work out their debt in favor of the housing cooperative by painting, sweeping something etc. Subsequently, they are offered to make an agreement on debt restructuring, and then, as an extreme measure, they are summoned to the court. The provision also contains a clause on disconnection of debtors from utility networks serviced by the housing cooperative.

Another experience is the creation of district committees of public self-organization bodies.

"During a year, residents actively took part in the development of the provision on the work of a district committee of public self-organization bodies. In its turn, the executive committee of the Merefa Town Council provided legal consulting assistance regarding reflecting all the proposals and wishes of citizens in the document. Nine district committees of public self-organization bodies were created in the community, and leaders of the territories were found. In their turn, these people found heads of neighborhood committees. They are part of the managing board of the district committees of public self-organization bodies," Veniamin Sitov, Head of the Merefianska amalgamated community explains.

Head of the district committee of public self-organization bodies simultaneously holds a position of Amenity Department Inspector of the Executive Committee of the Merefa Town Council. Two handymen from the Amenity Department are assigned to each district committee. In addition to public work, heads of district committees undertake to perform economic duties in their territory. They control container yards, grass cutting, snow removal, street sanding in case of glaze ice, trees trimming, and solve other issues. Also, public self-organization bodies help lonely people who, for example, cannot independently cut the grass in their yards. Also, head of the district committee of public self-organization bodies, together with the social service, control the public safety.



Road renovation in Merefa. August 2018

Each school has a utility room where all materials and documents of the district committee of public self-organization bodies are stored. Active heads of neighborhood committees are financially rewarded.

Veniamin Sitov told that today, the community teaches district committees of public self-organization bodies to develop and implement projects on site improvements. They took part and won the regional mini-project competition called "Together to the Future", and the mini-project competition launched in the community. At the expense of these funds, they repair stairs, install skate parks and playgrounds, create lounges and alpine gardens.

"We managed to persuade residents of all high-rise buildings and private houses to join into the housing cooperatives and district committees of public self-organization bodies to directly involve into the improvement of their community. We created an efficient system that brings first positive results," Veniamin Sitov mentioned.



Merefa panoramic view. August 2018



SUCCESS STORIES

"Before doing something, ask people what they need" is a principle, according to which Novoukrainka Town Amalgamated Community of Kirovohrad Oblast activates and motivates its residents. If people not only look through the city improvement "reports", but involved in its development by offering their own ideas or by actual work, they feel way more responsible for their community and appreciate what they have done.



FIRST ELECTIONS:
MARCH 27, 2016

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
3

AREA:
347,8 KM²

POPULATION:
19,371 PEOPLE



Youth Parliament members at the Center for Youth Development Initiatives. Novoukrainka, October 2017

This is the main principle, leading Novoukrainska Community residents from the very beginning of its creation in January 2017. They started with preparing a strategy for community development, identifying topical areas for its development, and subsequently began submitting their own initiatives. Among those who were actively involved in the strategy development was the future Deputy Head of the community Liudmyla Bilokoz. Back then, she worked as a head of a hobby group and Deputy Director of the Children and Youth Creativity Center called "Zorit". She organized youth, who were back then interested in the decentralization processes. They came to ask their questions to the Mayor Oleksandr Korinnyi as they wanted to understand the essence of the reform and what can be done for the better of the community in conditions of decentralized governance model. Liudmyla's activity and her desire for change were noticed by the community head, who offered her the position of his Deputy on Regional Development and Investment.

Liudmyla has become an essential part of the local government, continuing projects' implementation according to the carved-in-stone community principle: ask people what they want, and involve them to implementation of their initiatives.

Such a model of civic engagement motivates people to be more active in a variety of initiatives – from starting a public organization, federation, to creating platforms for action. The Center for the Development of Youth Initiatives was recently reconstructed by the joint efforts of the community, getting support from the USAID DOBRE Program. The old premises were turned into a modern communication platform where activists, war veterans and the youth can gather to discuss their strategies and plan activities.

NOVOUKRAINSKA

TOWN AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY

"The Center for the Development of Initiatives stimulated our youth for new ideas. In his spare time, community head joins children to work with them as with his colleagues. Subsequently, we saw the results of such an open cooperation and decided to move this model to adults in order to prove that the local self-government is open to them as well. At the same time, we are looking for people who want to do something specific and useful. Together we will learn with them and involve them to the work we do," Liudmyla Bilokoz, Deputy Head of the community, says.

"United we stand, divided we fall" is not just a good slogan on the Novoukrainka town coat of arms, but also a philosophy of the community life. Novoukrainka holds a mini-project competition called "Government and community – together!" which allows residents getting funding for their projects from the community budget. One's own contribution to the development of the project idea is a prerequisite to participation. That does not only mean financial contribution, but also residents' participation in construction or promotional activities.

Thank to the mini-grant competition, activists have been building children and sports play grounds, creating appropriate conditions for household waste management, offering and implementing ideas for meaningful recreation and sports. For the past two years only, 14 projects were selected. The results of seven of them are already actively used by the community residents, and the rest will be implemented by the end of the year. Soon, the community will have a modern skate park, both for beginners and professionals. Novoukrainska community jointly implements the project with the support of USAID DOBRE Program as local youth won co-financing for the project's implementation submitting a grant proposal to the program.

The experience of conducting a mini-project competition shows that all created in cooperation does not require special protection, because residents themselves care about both safety and state of their own property. In addition, people see opportunities and results of their work. Residents mobilize their efforts even more actively for the development of their community, as they constantly feel their own significance in decision-making processes.

"BASKET" playground opening. Novoukrainka, September 2017





Marianopilskyi starostat. October 2017

SUCCESS STORIES



Pokrovska amalgamated community, USAID's Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) Program partner, today is a leader by implementation of dairy cooperatives. Thanks to internal and external investments, "Dobrobut Andriivky" and "Molocharske" agricultural cooperatives work in the community. Millions of UAH were involved in the development of the cooperative movement. Olha Krymova, former village head and now an investment specialist of the community, stood at the origins of the creation of the "Dobrobut Andriivky" dairy cooperative.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
DECEMBER 18, 2016

NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
3

AREA:
440,3 KM²

POPULATION:
17,130 PEOPLE



Vitaliy Tkach, manager of the training and demo farm "Molocharske". Oleksandrivka village, September 2017

"Dobrobut Andriivky" agricultural servicing cooperative was established in March 2010. We learned from similar experience in Vinnytsia oblast. We received assistance from the regional government in a form of a milk tanker truck and five milking parlors, which were given to people who had three or more cows. Households received milking parlors under the terms of co-financing. People did not believe in success, therefore there were no volunteers at first. But after the first families got the devices and felt the benefits, other households began to buy milking parlors," Olha Krymova says.

POKROVSKA

AMALGAMATED TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY



Olena Bud and Serhii Zakharchenko, members of "Dobrobut Andriivky" cooperative. Andriivka village, September 2017



Training and demo farm "Molocharske". September 2017

Today the cooperative includes 145 members, not only limited to Andriivka residents, but including residents of the neighboring villages and even districts of Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia oblast. Every day cooperative supplies about six tons of milk. Family mini-farms are developed here, with 6 to 24 cows in each. Cooperative consists of 11 families, mini-farms owners; eight of those are on the community territory. All the mini-farms have refrigerating systems to preserve the quality of milk, which is brought here within two hours after milking. In order to stimulate families to become members of the dairy cooperatives, they give brood cows for free to young families and those who do not have an opportunity to buy them. It is accepted that a newborn male calve stays at the household.

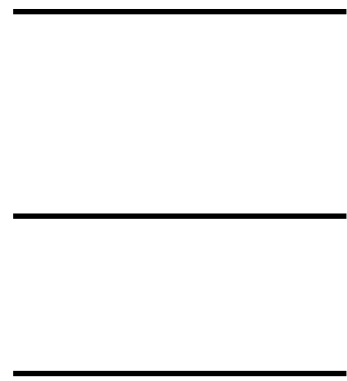
Another enterprise, "Molocharske Farm Enterprise" in the Village of Oleksandrivka, was established in 2012 by "Hospodar", association of agricultural servicing cooperatives with the financial assistance from the government of Canada. "Molocharske" is the only educational center for dairy farmers in Ukraine. This is a kind of a start-up with regular free trainings and consultations for small- and medium-sized milk producers from Dnipropetrovsk and other regions of Ukraine. Milk producers study different aspects of milk production here. "Hospodar" association has 176 members and managed to attract UAH 23 million of

investment funds to build a demonstration farm, buy cows and equipment. Canadian engineers designed a special unit with insulated roof for Jersey cows, brought from Denmark.

Advice from the Head of Pokrovaska community Svitlana Spazheva: "Cooperation partially solves the problem of employment. It also allows concluding agreements with large milk-processing enterprises, and therefore, offers more opportunities and guarantees for the cooperative members. Pokrovaska community is currently working on establishing a beekeeping cooperative. We applied to the USAID DOBRE Program for consulting and expert assistance. The point is to have a desire to work and develop and international organization will provide support."



Pokrovske settlement center. September 2017



SUCCESS STORIES



Prybuzhanivska village amalgamated community decided that all villages, comprising the community, should develop in the same way. Local youth began to develop projects and create new places and conditions for recreation and sports activities. Construction of playgrounds turned into a real holiday for the residents, with music and in family environment.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
DECEMBER 11, 2016

NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
5

AREA:
363,6 KM²

POPULATION:
8,077 PEOPLE

"I do my best to give my relatives, living in the village, an opportunity to develop in the same way as city residents," an activist, local Youth Council Head **Andrii Kravchenko** says.

He was born in Voznesensk. While being a student, Andrii and his friends began actively promoting sports and develop a new direction, called workout (street sports and gymnastic exercises) in neighboring villages. He started implementing his first project called "Workout" in his home city, and four years ago, he and his team came to Yastrubynove village with performance. He met his future wife there and in 2015 he moved there to live and work as a teacher of a local school. Subsequently, village which has become a native one for Andrii, joined Prybuzhanivska amalgamated community. Understanding that this is the place where his family lives, Andrii decided that it is a high time to look for like-minded people and create comfort for the whole community.

"I was not born in this community, but I'm eager for its development. I have a family and a kid. And I want my relatives feel comfortable in our community. Especially that we have possibilities, we can learn, develop projects, implement them, and we already see the results. It is an additional incentive and motivation," **Andrii Kravchenko** explains.



Andrii Kravchenko (second to the left) with his «Street Workout Voznesensk» teammates. Martynivske village, July 2018

PRYBUZHANIVSKA

VILLAGE AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY



Mykhailo Neliubov workout performance. Martynivske village, July 2018

Local Youth Council effectively works under Andrii Kravchenko's leadership – it advanced the initiative to construct playgrounds villages around community, and open leisure centers on the basis of houses of culture. Prybuzhanivska community has got support for realization of this project from the USAID DOBRE Program.

Village residents have joined and all together started creating comfortable conditions for their leisure, the youth became more active. Playgrounds installed, minor repairs of the premises were performed. Residents brought their own materials, installed benches, sand-pits and trash bins. Creative teams turned installation of playground in Dmytrivka into a real holiday. Local entrepreneurs provided sponsor aid for leisure centers, donating pictures, laptop, printer, table tennis, etc. Community members saw that problems can be solved together. In June of this year, four playgrounds and five leisure centers started working in the territory of the community. Another one is expected to be opened by the end of the year.

Playgrounds are never empty. "We did not even know that there are so many children in our village," locals joke. Leisure centers gather not only the youth, but also all the community members who come here to take a rest and have a lively time, as there are tennis, billiards, disco, cinema, etc. Former houses of culture started new life.

The next Andrii's step was the registration of a public organization called "Heart of the Active Youth". It was high time to take his cherished workout sports project from shelf. The idea was refined, and now it is implemented within the Local Initiatives for Community Development Grant of the USAID DOBRE Program. All the community villages are involved in its implementation. Initially, a demo workout performance was organized, and then two-month training for all volunteers, divided into teams, will be conducted. Winners of the final competitions will get a modern ground for the street workout to be constructed in their village.



Children playground in Dmytrivka village. June 2018

SUCCESS STORIES



The Lemuriiske Lake or the Dead Sea of Ukraine is located on the territory of the Prysivaska community. It has bright pink-colored waters and shores covered with white salt crystals that possess therapeutic effects.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
DECEMBER 18, 2016

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
4

AREA:
399,53 KM²

POPULATION:
5,002 PEOPLE



Nila Lunova, a green homestead owner. Hryhorivka village, June 2018

Every day about half a thousand tourists come here. Many of them are looking for the place near therapeutic water basin to spend the night. A decade ago, people started organizing so-called green homesteads here. They work on the principle of hostels as community residents equip rooms for guests in their own homes. Now, upon amalgamation, residents are more and more actively encouraged to open the green homesteads, promoting local infrastructure, and bringing additional income for people. At the same time, tourists replenish community budget as they use transport, buy necessary goods, food, medical and therapeutic local products at stalls near the Lemuriiske Lake.

Hryhorivka resident Nila Lunova has been hosting guests in her green homestead for about ten years. She says that it was an unemployment issue in the village so she decided to arrange a homestead for tourists, making profit out of it. The guesthouse is located in the same yard with the one she lives in. It has a spacious yard and comfortable rooms.

"The main thing is cleanliness and comfort. The hostess should also be welcoming for guests to feel themselves at home. In this case people will be pleased and will come to us again," Nila Lunova believes.

PRYSYVASKA

VILLAGE AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY

Local government organizes seminars, meetings and trainings to motivate more people for green tourism development. Now, Prysylvaska has about 40 homesteads of different levels, beginning from economy class to ones of a higher quality. Persuading local residents to engage in such a mini-business, local authorities consider self-employment and personal motivation as most important advantages, providing benefits both for themselves and the community.

Within the tourism infrastructure development program, a gym was equipped, which is attended by both community guests and the locals. Recently community renewed its emergency room, opened a pharmacy and established an ambulatory care clinic. Not only locals require medical network improvements, but also people who come visit Prysylvaska for health improvement reasons and therapeutic treatment.

Community is not going to stop here. In order to create attractive conditions for business development, the local council approved the lowest land rent rate in the area for 2019. Investors, willing to create business are promised to get a land plot and legal support with documents.

With the assistance of the USAID DOBRE Program, Prysylvaska develops a spatial planning that involves optimal use of land, in particular, outside of inhabited areas. Having defined potential investment sites, community will be able to become even more interesting and reliable for investors.



Lemuriiske lake salt deposits. July 2018

"The most important thing is the trust of people in this business. The more homesteads are established, the better the infrastructure gets. The most important thing for us is the fact of improvement, restoration of abandoned buildings, desire of people to provide services and territory improvements. In turn, it attracts tourists, investing us back in trade, business and service provision," Serhii Klishchevskyi, Prysylvaska community Head, explains.



Lemuriiske lake of Syvash Gulf. July 2018

SUCCESS STORIES



Young Ukrainians inspire local community development in Slobozhanska of Dnipropetrovsk oblast. Oksana Kryvoruchko and Mykyta Yatsun, two young activists from Slobozhanska community, mobilized young people in their community for what they both believed to be a good cause — opening a youth radio station to serve as a new media resource for residents while also teaching high school students journalistic skills. But the original idea has progressed into something far more extensive.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
OCTOBER 25, 2015

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
2

AREA:
166,4 KM²

POPULATION:
14,502 PEOPLE

In June 2017, Oksana was selected for the DOBRE DIY (Do It Yourself) Youth Forum in Dnipro, organized by the USAID's Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) activity. The youth forums held in amalgamated communities last year were designed to inspire young people to become changemakers and take leadership positions in their communities, equipping them with the skills to assess problems and opportunities, organize and plan projects, and make their voices heard. Kryvoruchko avidly participated, sharing her ideas with others and absorbing what her peers presented.

The idea of a community youth radio station came to Oksana at the forum. Upon return to Slobozhanska, she discussed this idea with her peers and received their support. "Previously, I did not really believe that youth was capable of significant changes in the community. The forum changed my perception. The main thing for youth is not the money, but the feeling of being involved," she recalls.

17-year-old Mykyta Yatsun, Oksana's peer and one of the project initiators and community's Youth Council member, tells that the project was so ambitious and interesting that it received support from one and all - the community residents and local deputies, with community head Ivan Kaminskyi backing as well.

"I was interested in this project from a mere technical side. In school I was responsible for events support and was a DJ. That's why I particularly interested in working with professional equipment, working live on-air, record and do program's editing together with my colleagues Sophia Hudkova and Kateryna Skakun, following broadcasting the ready-made products. The youth radio station project enables local youth to serve as media people," says Mykyta Yatsun.

Together young people secured co-funding from the local government, then submitted an application to USAID's DOBRE Program and received funding.

First radio interview with Marie Yovanovitch, the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, at Slobozhanska school #1. March 2018.



SLOBOZHANSKA

AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY

Senior students were involved in the preparatory work, participating in dismantling of old communications in the premises of the future radio booth. And subsequently, trying new equipment as the radio hosts and program authors. On March 29, 2018, the youth radio station had its first live broadcast. The station allows local voices, including young activists, to be heard, and helps young people to participate in responsible and free civic journalism.

The young efficiently performed their duties having recorded the first radio interview with the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, who opened the youth radio station.

"The most pleasing thing is that it was the youth who initiated and implemented this project. The radio station will help the youth try their hands at public journalism. We hope this experience will provide a possibility to create truly responsible mass media, and at the same time, will bring benefits to the community," Marie Yovanovitch said.

Community plans to expand the radio network further, building on existing journalistic extracurricular activities available for school students and delivering the voice and vision of young people to Slobozhanska decision makers.

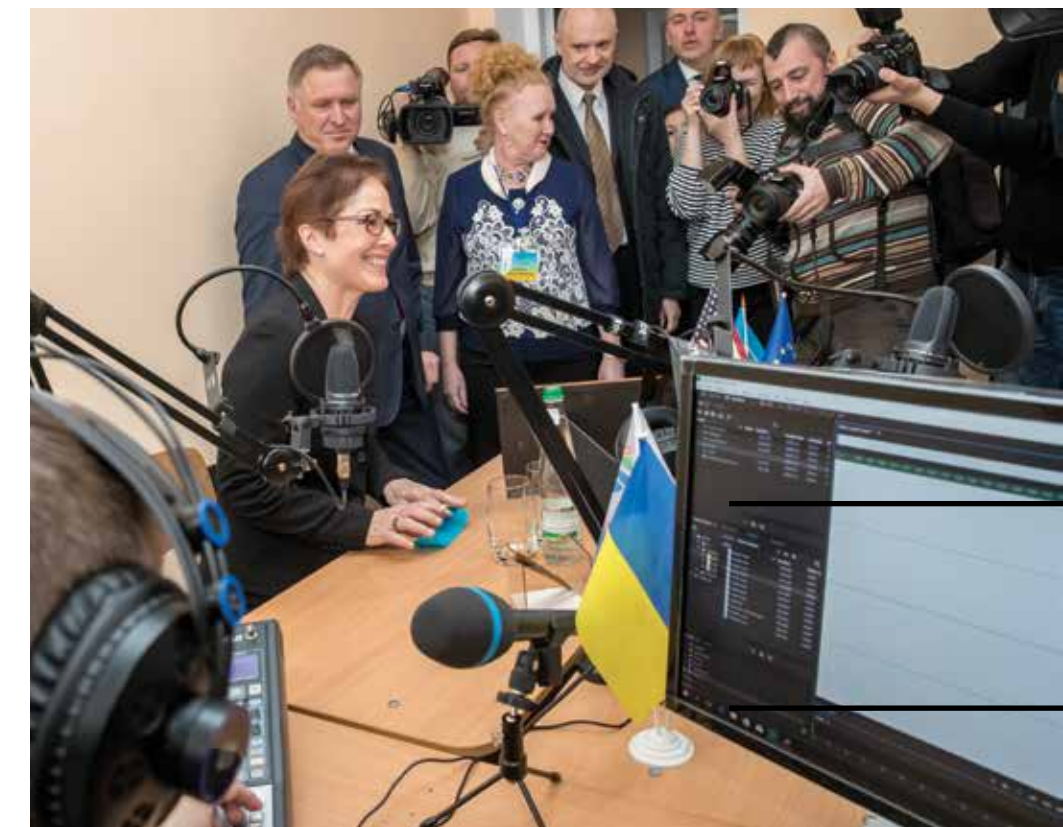
"After summer holidays, the radio will go on air during noon recesses. So far, it is going to be just news, but we plan to make interviews, different interesting sections," Mykyta Yatsun says.

Over time, they plan to connect the radio network to elementary school, and then to broadcast outside the school, at public transport stops, playgrounds and crowded places.

Engaging youth in local decision-making is one of the top priorities the community has set and the youth radio station serves as an essential means of citizen-government communication.



School students preparing to go on-air live. March 2018



School radio station booth. March 2018



Mykyta Yatsun and Sofia Hudkova on-air of the school radio station. March 2018

SUCCESS STORIES



FIRST ELECTIONS:
OCTOBER 25, 2015

**A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED
COUNCILS:**
14

AREA:
398,8 KM²

POPULATION:
30,229 PEOPLE

Two years ago travelers arrived to Terebovlianska Community only to visit the fortress, which is a branch of the Castles of Ternopil oblast reserve. They thought there was nothing more to look for there. However, this myth was soon busted by those who knew there lots of interesting things in the community.

Stepan Zelinskyi was born in Terebovlia. After graduating from one of Ivano-Frankivsk universities, he spend some time learning experience of successful practices in Poland, where he worked as a guide and learned languages. Years later, he and his wife came back to his native community to implement his ideas in tourism development. To do that, he needed to catch the interest of the residents, to show them the value of their territory. So they created Municipal Enterprise - Terebovlia Tourist and Information Center, which works on the excursion "menus" and community promotion for its guests.

"Our community has quite a rich history and architecture, something that other territories do not have. It is only necessary to make some efforts, marketing and create proper conditions. I felt sorry that the town lost tourists, and the community lost its money. I studied to develop tourism at home. I love my community and want to live here, and this is my motivation to work and look for new ideas," 27-year-old Center Director Stepan Zelinskyi says.

Stepan Zelinskyi, Director of the Terebovlia Tourist and Information Center, demonstrates souvenirs in a local museum. July 2018



TEREBOVLIANSKA

TOWN AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY



Main tourist attraction and the jewel of the community – an iron viaduct bridge near Plebanivka village. July 2018



Terebovlia city youth park. July 2018



New bicycles in the Terebovlia Tourist and Information Center. July 2018.

Together with a team of like-minded people, Stepan Zelinskyi began to research and present "cherries on the cake" for the tourists of Terebovlia. Now the tourist route map of the community includes 15 historical and architectural places of interest. However, everyone understands that in order to increase the number of visitors, it is necessary to develop tourist attractiveness of the area. The Tourist Info Center and a museum-workshop operate next to each other in a small building. With the assistance of the USAID DOBRE Program, an art space is prepared in the yard of the Center, serving as a platform for communication and outdoor cinema area. It is planned to create a Museum on a Tree nearby.

The idea is that there will be a cultural facility where tourists will be able to make any souvenir they like, visit a town history museum, see a huge sculptured tree that grows inside the building, taste local honey, learn about everything on their own, or take a guide. Or they will be able to rent a bicycle and ride suggested routes. And tourists will be able to find all this in one place. The official opening of the complex is scheduled for 2019, and the community expects it to attract a large number of tourists.

The idea to modernize museum exhibits belongs to its former employee and current Deputy Mayor Liudmyla Kolisnyk. Active work on the project began in November 2017, and it is currently being implemented.

There is more to come. Cycling excursions will soon appear in Terebovlia. Appropriate routes are developed by the specialists of the Center. With the assistance of the USAID DOBRE Program, 20 bicycles were purchased for Terebovlia Tourist and Information Center. They are planned to be used during competitions or bike rides, and they also will be rented to tourists for cycling or quests.

Terebovia panoramic view. July 2018



SUCCESS STORIES



Education is the key in the development strategy of Tsarychanska amalgamated community. In 2017, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education program was approved here. Several years ago, Tsarychanska secondary school, which serves as a local hub school, joined an experimental activity on the introduction of STEM education. The STEM project is unique as it provides a comprehensive and interdisciplinary connection between natural sciences, information technology, and engineering.

FIRST ELECTIONS:
DECEMBER 18, 2016

A NUMBER OF AMALGAMATED COUNCILS:
5

AREA:
453,5 KM²

POPULATION:
15,178 PEOPLE



Yana Ovcharenko, 11th grader of Tsarychanka school, demonstrates telescope. July 2018

General public, students, parents and representatives of local self-government, entrepreneurs, journalists and others joined the discussion of the Tsarychanska community own model of STEM education. Youth developed an educational and social project called "Youth of the Tsarychanska Community for the Future: Robotics for Education and Recreation". It was supported by the USAID funded DOBRE program.

Yana Ovcharenko, a student of the 11th form of Tsarychanska school and Head of the school self-government, said that thanks to DOBRE program, local youth had the opportunity to develop and implement their own project.

"From the first moment, the youth project was supported by the Head of the village Hennadii Sumskyi, and deputies. Our teachers also helped - school Principal Taisiia Rashevskya and Deputy Director for studies and pedagogical work Olha Blokha supported. Thanks to the project, our school received a real STEM center: two quadcopters, a powerful Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope with a computer-guided pointing, an interactive whiteboard, a laptop and a projector, a sky map, and car models. These are very important tools that we use in our today's studies," Yana Ovcharenko says.

TSARYCHANSKA

VILLAGE AMALGAMATED COMMUNITY



STEM-center opening. October 2017

Today, apart from computer competence and programming clubs, an aviation design club and STEM center, astronomy and robotics rooms operate at the school. Students are involved in different projects, from space exploration to studying their homeland.

The implemented youth project will help the community to raise the level of education of students. And the community will have its own benefits: local activists plan to use drones to monitor agricultural lands, control floods and fire safety in the community.

"I am convinced that today we need to support and invest resources in the education of our children. This is why our community has chosen the STEM education, which develops capacity for research, analytical work, experimentation and critical thinking," Head of the Tsarychanska Amalgamated Community **Hennadii Sumskyi** mentions.

Recreational area on Oril river. Turove village, July 2018



