



PROJECT STORIES

A collection of works that
presents the human but also
animal dimension of the projects
implemented by Programme

2022

WELCOME

With great pleasure, we present the stories of selected projects implemented under the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 collected in this publication. Projects are not just indicators, budgets, reports and payments. Although these are inseparable elements, above all, each project contains specific ideas, values and dreams of people implementing them, as well as the stories of those who benefited from their implementation.

We want to bring some of them closer to you through „Project stories” – a series in which we present the human, but also animal, dimension of our projects. The cycle was introduced prior on our Programme website. Now, to collect works from year 2022 in one place, we have prepared this brochure and warmly encourage you to read.

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My „SHTETELE...”

Research and revitalization of urban folklore as the main element of festivities in former Jewish townships

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 46 027.17 EUR PBU co-financing 41 424.45 EUR

Lead beneficiary State Institution of Additional Education “Children and Youth Creativity Center of Barysaŭ District” (BY)

Project partners “Teatr Latarnia” Foundation (PL)

A gentle dawn
to the rhythm of ordinary days,
on Sundays a safe trip to the river
and a whisper in the bushes.

And the bread smells in the bakery,
the horse bows its head over the oats.
For those in love, heaven is enough,
just someone whistles softly.

The town of Belz,
mein shtetele Belz ...

The famous song „Belz Town”, written in 1932 for an American performance, like no other text reflects the atmosphere of the „shtetl” (Yid. „shtetele”) – many small towns of the borderland, in which until World War II the majority was a Jewish community. Neighbouring other nationalities: Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian and even Tatar, it gave these towns a unique colour. Long chalats, Hasidic hats, Shabbat candles, benevolent „Shalom”, cheerful „Mazzal tow!”, the sounds of a klezmer band and the bustle of a Jewish inn... Belz, Tykocin, Orla, Izabelin, Nowogródek, Ziembin, Borysów, Lubcz, Śmitowicze, Krynki...

There were 10.000 people, there were 12 large tanneries – describes Krynki of his childhood Józef Panasiuk.

A Jew, when he went on the road to sell some goods, did not eat or drink until he traded. When he earned a few zlotys, then he ate breakfast, drank coffee – recalls with a slight admiration another inhabitant of this town, Eugeniusz Dąbrowski [1].

World War II and other events of the last century, as well as the migration of rural inhabitants to cities, caused the shtetls to disappear from the borderland landscape, and with them urban folklore, traditional rites, songs and games that united a diverse, multi-layered and multi-religious urban community. Today, Jewish urban folklore is poorly known and difficult to access, which has been exacerbated by the mass emigration of Jews and the closed nature of this community.

Fortunately, contemporary ethnographers and cultural activists from the Programme area study and promote folklore, as evidenced primarily by the development of the traditional dance movement, the publication of folk songs, the formation of musical ensembles, as well as the creation of ethnographic communities and the organization of festivals related to traditional Belarusian-Polish culture.

These thoughts and experiences were the basis of the ShtetlFest project “Research and revitalization of urban folklore as the main element of festivities in former Jewish townships”. Its leader is the State Institution of Additional Education “Children and Youth Creativity Center of Barysaŭ Raion” in Belarus, and the partner on the Polish side - the „Teatr Latarnia” Foundation from the Podlaskie Voivodeship. The project assumes the creation of an international SHTETLFEST BY-PL route, which will cover 6 former Belarusian-Polish Jewish shtetls, promoting the material and intangible legacy of Jews. Project partners organise field research to identify and collect ethnographic material in the form of films and photographs. The results of the research will be used to design the „Shtetl Fest” handbook, containing high-quality visual, textual and audio materials, which will be used to promote the trail. The project also includes discussion meetings, workshops of Yiddish songs and Jewish dances, and every year, an event titled „Shtetl Folk Fest” promoting the trail will be held in a different place. Thanks to it, you will be able to immerse yourself in the atmosphere of „shtetl” for a while ...

It’s been so many years,
harmony is playing again,
the clouds are floating away,
the world goes on again [2] ...

More about the *ShtetlFest* project can be found [here](#).

ALICJA WOSIK-MAJEWSKA

[1] Source: Youtube, channel „Bagnówka”

[2] Fragments of the song „Miasteczko Belz” („Mein Sztetele Belz”), which in fact tells not about the town of Belz, now located in Ukraine, but about the city of Bielce (Yid. Belc) in today’s Moldova. The author of the original text was Jacob Jacobs, the music was composed by Alexander Olshanetsky. The author of the Polish version of the text is Agnieszka Osiecka, well known Polish songwriter. (source: Wikipedia)



How the cycling and history became one hobby

Introduction of a new bicycle route along with a mobile application „VeloFort” through the forts of the Brest Fortress

HERITAGE/ Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 56 566.00 EUR PBU co-financing 50 869.80 EUR

Lead beneficiary Local Charitable Foundation “Brest Fortress Development Foundation”(BY)

Project partners Digital Culture Institute Foundation (PL)

Who as a child hasn't read a book about Pippi Longstocking, full of optimism and unwavering faith in the good things in life? The wonder girl with good heart always in a good mood. Exactly the same association comes to mind when you meet Alina Dzeravianka, the hero of the VeloFort project. Perhaps, this is how Pippi could be as an adult - full of optimism and friendliness, actively developing creative cultural projects.

Alina Dzeravianka is graduated cultural project manager, having studied and worked for several years in Moscow. However, at the end of 2012, she came to Brest by invitation to develop the potential of the famous Brest Fortress. This work fascinated her so much that in 2013, Alina finally fell in love with the city and decided to move here. Since that time, a non-profit organization - the Brest Fortress Development Foundation - has been established to accumulate all the work.

What was amazing after my stay Moscow was the ability to ride a bicycle everywhere. Even though the infrastructure was not well adapted, the city itself was suitable for cycling. From that point my passion for bicycles came.

So Alina has become an active cycling enthusiast, riding a lot, not only around the city, but also on cycling trips. On one of these trips along the Greenvelo route, almost 200 km were covered in 3 days from Terespol to Włodawa and it turned out to be an interesting experience and travel idea.

It is no secret that for many people the Brest Fortress is the main attraction of the city of Brest. It is not only a significant historical place for the citizens, but also a kind of tourist „must have” for travelers. However, not many people know that the Brest Fortress is not limited to the territory of the memorial. The fortification sites, conceived back in the second half of the 19th century as a common defensive line, are much more extensive and cover today the territory of two countries - Poland and Belarus. In total, the forts today are about 20 sites that have been preserved in different condition.

Alina and her team have been researching the fortress and its forts for several years, which includes both fieldwork and archive research. One significant result was the book Atlas of the Brest-Litovsk Fortress, published in 2017. In 2016-2017, the Foundation's team studied, among other things, the state of forts in Poland and their specific features. For example, many forts are privately owned, some are museums, and others are simply interesting sites with their own history.

At first, you don't understand much about the past when you enter the city, but it is discovered gradually, layer by layer. At first, you don't understand much about the past when you

enter the city, but it is discovered gradually, layer by layer. And over time, there is a desire to share that knowledge. It's all become very interesting - Alina shares her impressions.

Over time, the Foundation accumulated a lot of information on historical sites, and Alina and her team came up with an idea to do bike tours through the forts in Brest on purpose. Young people often came to these bike rides, responding to the event on social media, looking for an interesting combination - a bike ride and a historical tour. Sometimes groups of amateur cyclists 50+ also came on tours, and then it became clear that the fort's sites were of interest to different audiences.

Cycling around the Brest fortifications and the surrounding areas is an unusual symbiosis of active tourism and immersion in the history is increasingly attracting locals and travelers alike. It turns out that the forts of the Brest Fortress offer big potential for bringing people together and developing tourism. A large layers of heritage from several centuries is in the direct vicinity - both in the city itself and in its surrounding areas - says Alina Dzeravianka.

It didn't take long to find a partner in Poland - an acquaintance at one of the conferences with the Digital Culture Institute Foundation from Lublin helped. Alina met Magdalena Kawa there, a member of the foundation's board, also an amateur cyclist who knew little about the forts but very experienced and enthusiastic about the idea of promoting active historical tourism.

The 10 key sites were chosen - five in each country. In the Belarusian part of the route, they are located throughout the city, where the main sightseeing is the 5th Fort Museum, the only museum of its kind in Belarus where a new exhibition opened in 2021. In Poland, 2 of the 5 sites are museums: the Powder Magazine in Kobylany and the Intermediate Barracks - there are fixed exhibitions and temporary exhibitions. Most of the other sites can only be viewed from the outside or photographed. Visitors can find out more about their history with the help of an audio guide.

In the consequence, a cycle cross-border route around the forts came into being - combining the sites of the forts and the surrounding barracks into a two-day cycling route of 70 km in Brest in Belarus and Terespol in Poland, which will tell the story of their creation. Within the project, the cyclists can download a mobile app as well as an audio guide on historical photos and explanations in three languages (Polish, Russian and English).

The message of the project is that the Brest Fortress is not just a memorial complex, but a cross-border site with two rings of forts. It is a part of our common heritage, and we would like to raise the profile of these sites and show how they can be used, what you can see, and at the same time promote active, educational recreation - says Alina Dzeravianka.

More about the **VeloFort** project can be found [here](#).



A Beam of Hope

The Borderland of Equal Chances

SECURITY / Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services

Project budget 2 219 412.00 EUR PBU co-financing 1 979 412.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Step by Step Association for Help to Disabled Children (PL)

Project partners Public Organization Association of Disabled Children, Their Parents and Friends "Dawn of Hope" (UA)

For me, it's not just a project, it's my life!

Alla Andrushchuk, the initiator of The Borderland of Equal Chances project BEC, shares her touching story, which began long before the project was written.

Alla is the mother of four children, two of whom have serious health issues. The eldest daughter was diagnosed with abrasion of hip joints caused by a birth injury, which was discovered only in her high school. Being a university student, she lost the ability to walk, waiting for several years for a complex surgical operation.

When I was in my forties, I was expecting the birth of my youngest son and was absolutely confident that everything would go well this time. Unfortunately, it wasn't the case. When the boy was born he could not breathe on his own. Doctors were pessimistic about his chances of survival preparing me for the worst. But, by some miracle he began to inhale and swallow, gradually he was able to move and eat. On day 14th, he was disconnected from the devices.

Nevertheless, that trauma had serious impact on boy's health. He was not developing properly. Alla consulted numerous doctors, visited more than ten sanatoriums and rehabilitation centers. These efforts brought out the results – at the age of 7 the boy made his first steps. It was a great achievement. The eldest daughter, who was 25 at that time, after the surgical operation, got to her feet again. A lot can be said about the way Alla and her kids went through to achieve that, but to put it shortly, the sleepless nights, utmost exhaustion and extreme mood swings – from complete lack of hope to happiness – all these were with Alla through these years.

At one particularly difficult moment, when we were expecting the operation of my eldest daughter, and the younger girl had her fifth pneumonia in a year, I promised that, if all went well, I would dedicate my life to the children like my own.

At that time, Alla started to communicate with other parents of children with special needs. She saw that only parents truly understand problems of their children. In 2012, together with alike thinking parents, she created the charitable fund 'Live with Hope' and in 2015 - the Society of Children with Disabilities 'Dawn of Hope'. They together organized fundraising to provide medical treatment and other assistance to the children and tried to attract peoples' attention to their problems.

However, what Alla really wanted was a comprehensive solution. She was searching for the new opportunities, participating in the international events. Her first project with Polish partners was an effect of contacts gained during the Eastern European Initiatives Congress in 2013. During the study visit to Poland, she was able to see how children with special needs got the treatment and rehabilitation, how the education and support is provided to them. The contrast between what she saw and what she had at home was dramatic! But that experience tremendously affected her perceiving of opportunities.

Finally, one unexpected meeting changed her life. During a visit to the Association for Children with Disabilities 'Step by Step' in Zamość (Poland), she met an amazing woman and a wonderful doctor - Maria Król. When it turned out, that Alla lived in Kremenets (Ukraine), Maria told her the story of her family - before the II World War, Maria's mother also lived in that city. Besides common roots, both women are mothers of children with special needs. This is how their cooperation started. In the consequence, specialists of the Association 'Step by Step' came to Ukraine, or Ukrainian children were sent to Poland for treatment. Subsequently, together they managed to prepare the project which is now being successfully implemented under the PBU Programme.

The idea of the project is quite ambitious, especially for the Ukrainian side, not only in the region but for the whole country. The center for children and youth with disabilities is being built in Kremenets, which is meant to provide rehabilitation, education and socialization for 100 persons at the same time!

These children are fully dependent on their parents, who are dreaming that their children will become more independent, able to master a profession and interact with other people. That is why it was so important to open a school in our center.

Another centre will come into being in Zamość and will be able to accommodate 28 adults suffering from motor, mental, speech, sight and hearing disabilities. In addition, the project's partners will organize staff trainings and exchange of experiences for 50 therapists from both countries.

Alla dreams also to organize eco-workshops, during which one would be able to master professional skills as well as to set up a social enterprise where young people would have an opportunity to work. Another idea is to have a temporary residence home for children with special needs and their parents.

We wish that one day all her dreams and plans will come true.

More about the BEC project can be found [here](#).

OLENA ZUBRYTSKA



Carpathian starry sky

Carpathian Starry Sky

HERITAGE / Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of natural heritage

Project budget 66 100.00 EUR PBU co-financing 59 490.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Institute of Development of Carpathian Region (UA)

Project partners Association for Innovation and Technology Transfer "Horizons" (PL)

I knew there was a beautiful sky here, but I was absolutely delighted when I saw it. I never imagined that it could be so magnificent...

Matthew is in his thirties, a salesman in mining and industrial Silesia, where he could only dream of a clear, starry sky. The dream was so strong that for a few months he decided to give up everything and come to the Bieszczady Mountains. There, near Połonina Caryńska, he hired himself out to... grazing sheep and cattle.

It was the first time in my life I had seen sheep at close range, and here I was given 330 sheep and 50 cattle to look after. I am from a big city – 200 000 people – and here I was able to give up electricity, water, telephone coverage, people. The nearest shop was 9 kilometres away. It happened that I lived alone in these remote glades. It was dark, because we had no electricity every day, and no running water either.

In return for these 'inconveniences' Matthew could fulfil his dream – all night long he could observe the starry Carpathian sky uncontaminated by smog and the lights of civilisation: – *I used to get up for sheep at 5-6 a.m., and still I could spend half a night observing and taking pictures. And I will tell you frankly, I did not wake up tired or sleepy because of that, it even gave me energy.*

As it turns out, there are thousands of such astronomy and astrophotography enthusiasts. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to find good places to pursue their passions. The lights of big cities, airports, car parks, factories „pollute” the sky, distant stars and planets fade, and photographing them becomes impossible.

One of the few places in the whole of Europe, where not only astro-amateurs, but also professionals find good conditions for this are the Eastern Carpathians. The first professional observations of the Carpathian sky were conducted already during the First World War and they developed together with technological progress. In 1938, in the observatory built on the Pop Ivan mountain, one of the largest and most modern telescopes in Europe at that time was installed with an objective diameter of 33 cm. In the Slovakian town of Humenné a professional observatory has been operating for 70 years, and on the Polish side – in Roztoki Górne until recently – the Bieszczady Station of the Astronomical Observatory of the Jagiellonian University was operating and rallies of e.g. the Polish Society of Astro-Lovers are still held.

You can see the whole sky from there... All those galaxies in Andromeda, in the Triangle or globular clusters in Hercules, planets up to Uranus... The Milky Way makes a huge impression in the Bieszczady Mountains – it is simply incredible how precisely you can see it – enthuses Matthew.

From some mountain ranges of the Eastern Carpathians, including the Bieszczady mountains, despite the long distance you can see even... the aurora borealis.

All this was the basis for the project „Carpathian starry sky”, in the framework of which the project team conducted research on the quality of the night sky on the Polish and Ukrainian side.

We took photographs of the night sky in many places and at different times. In addition, fellow naturalists offered us supplementary products for astronomy – something for the day and something for bad weather, explains Robert Bury, coordinator of the Polish part of the project.

Thanks to the joint work of astronomers and naturalists, an educational route with boards informing about the starry sky and the influence of light pollution on people and nature was created in the Zakarpattia Dark-Sky Park in Ukraine. With the use of professional equipment it will be possible to play the role of an astrophotographer – not only to observe the stars, but also to take photos and assess the quality of the sky.

The project partners want both starry sky parks – Zakarpattia and the previously established Bieszczady - to be registered in an international database of such areas and promoted all over the world.

And Matthew, one of the many sky enthusiasts for whom the project was carried out, sums up:

The Cosmos won't care if I stop looking at it and even cease to exist at all, but it is so beautiful and so magnificent that I would do a lot to have a glance at it surreptitiously at least for a moment. Even though it is quite unimportant for the Cosmos...

More about the *CarpathianSky* project can be found [here](#).

ALICJA WOSIK-MAJEWSKA



The Soul of Lemko Land

Discover culture of the Cross-border region PL-UA

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 59 650.00 EUR PBU co-financing 53 685.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Perechyn City Council (PL)

Project partners Communal Culture Center of the Leżajsk Comune (PL);
Municipal Institution Local Ethnographic Museum of Perechyn (UA)

The village of Zarichovo is immersed in greenery and flowers. As we drive past newer country houses an old house on a hill becomes visible. Painted in blue, with a thatched roof, it looks like a picture in a school textbook. And yet how naturally it looks against the mountainous landscape!

We did not come here just for an excursion - in a few minutes a reproduction of traditional Lemko wedding ceremony within ETHNOTOUR project will take place here. A group of ladies wearing traditional costumes - blue skirts and embroidered shirts are getting everything ready. The folk ensemble „Lemkivchanka” – the singing soul of this village – will sing at the wedding and set the tone for the whole process.

The performance begins with traditional wreath weaving, accompanied by the ritual song „Come out, wreath”, which resembles an ancient prayer. When the work is completed, a merry tune is played and everyone dance in a circle. Throughout the ceremony, lyrical songs alternate with merry ones, solemn words with humorous dialogues, there are dances, treats, gifts - like during a real wedding.

It seems that not all the texts are written in the script, some come out spontaneously. There is no artificiality in the performance, the songs and rituals are not something archaic for the performers. Nowadays, local weddings are only slightly complemented by modern elements. Even if they take place in a fashionable restaurant, the young couple and guests wear modern outfits, folk songs are sure to be heard. However, few people know as many songs as „Lemkivchanka” ladies, there are dozens of them in their repertoire. Apart from the songs, they have an amazing story to share.

The story began in the 80's of the past century and it is connected with this old blue house. A local teacher, Zhanna Sukholit, decided to set up „Lemkivska Sadyba” museum here and invited local women to help her. During the work, the women sang folk songs and, impressed by their singing, Zhanna suggested creating a folk music ensemble. This was the beginning of a great cause! The singers themselves selected their repertoire and had regular rehearsals. They also made their own costumes based on old patterns. They were eager to perform at various mass events, welcomed tourist groups to the museum, and even were shot in the movie, in the wedding scenes in „Zhmeniaky”(1986) film. The ensemble has performed in many places in Ukraine and abroad, in particular, in Germany and Slovakia. Traditionally, every year on January 7, they sing old Christmas carols. The ladies also make traditional periwinkle wedding wreaths.

Nowadays, it's not very common for people to get together with the only purpose to practice singing. Moreover, these singers have no professional interest in it, they sing just for their pleasure. Or, perhaps, because singing is part of their nature, something that helps to overcome life's troubles, something that helped the Lemko ethnic group to go through the centuries of their turbulent history of wars, forced resettlement and mass labour migration.

Showing the history of this ethnic group through the prism of people's stories is one of the objectives set by the ETHNOTOUR project implemented within Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme. The old photographs collected for the exhibition 'About the People, for the People' can unveil such stories to us. You can see the photos of Lemko people – peasants, artisans, priests, military men and read about them. If you look closely at the photographs, you can even see some similarities with the faces of visitors to the exhibition - the residents of Perechyn and surrounding villages. This part of Transcarpathia, on the slopes of the Beskyds/Bieszczady (Zarichovo and Novoselytsia villages in Perechyn raion and Domashyn, Zagorb, Lubnya, Strychava, Stuzhytsia, Knyagynya, Zavosyno, Verkhovyna Bystra villages in Berezne raion) are traditional Lemko areas, which are characterized by distinct elements of Lemko culture, i.e. architecture, crafts (ornamentation), cuisine and, of course, unique songs. And although traditional Lemko songs are now sung all over Ukraine, it is important to realize that the origins of this culture are here, in the Lemko land. Local folk musicians and singers have strong connection with their land, have a sense of unity with their heritage, which allows genuine reproduction of traditional art, which is probably the secret of their special charm.

The original cast of the „Lemkivchanka” ensemble is depicted by the old photo from 1987. Festively dressed, smiling, they pose against the background of the „Lemko estate”. They have all left this world but were replaced by new talented singers, who continue their work. We believe that thanks to such incredible people beautiful Lemko music and songs will last for long and will be sang and heard by future generations.

More about the ETHNOTOUR project can be found [here](#).

OLENA ZUBRYTSKA



Music connects cultures and generations

Music of Borderland

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 66 702.00 EUR PBU co-financing 60 000.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Association of Folk Culture Animators (PL)

Project partners Creative Union «Nivroku» (UA)

In the early 90's, as soon as the borders opened, we set off to Ukraine. We travelled on the Dniester River, then we went to the Carpathian Mountains to see the legendary Czarnohora. Then we also met the Hutsuls - those first contacts with local residents were amazing. I remember how we crossed the Czarnohora mountains and descended to Zakarpattya to some hamlet, we saw the first houses and pitched the tent on the edge of the forest, without any contact with other people. In the morning we were woken up by a knocking on the tent. Terrified, we opened the tent and heard- „Get up, because breakfast for you is ready!“. This first contact convinced us completely about people from Ukraine.

This is how Bogdan Bracha from the Association of Folk Culture Animators, founded in Lublin over 20 years ago, recalls his first contacts with Ukraine and its inhabitants. The Association is made up of musicians, cultural animators, academics, teachers and students, mainly affiliated with Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. Their goal is to promote multicultural music and other activities inspired by folklore.

Association of Folk Culture Animators, people who founded it and still create, always looked with interest to the East. They know the culture of the borderland, the Carpathians, Roztocze, and are strongly connected with it. These areas are close to us culturally and musically – emphasises Agnieszka Matecka from the Association's board.

They started with concerts in student clubs. Now they travel to folk festivals all over Europe, exploring new trends, learning new instruments and musical phrases. However, the fascination with the music of their native borderland is still their main source of inspiration, hence the idea to create a joint Polish-Ukrainian album recording the most interesting songs and to organise a series of concerts promoting the common musical heritage. But where to find the funds for this? Maybe in the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine? As they thought, so they did. The Lublin Association chose as a partner the friendly Creative Union „Nivroku“ from the Ternopil region. They wrote a project together and... it worked out!

We've been thinking about such a Polish-Ukrainian project for a long time, especially since we've tried to do it before. But this is the first time we've done a project on such a big scale!

To begin with, the Associations started collecting music material and announced a competition among folk bands.

Eventually, two experienced folk formations were selected to record a joint Polish-Ukrainian album: St. Nicholas Orchestra from Poland and Joryj Kloc from Ukraine.

The bands know each other's work, each other's style of music making. They are a bit different and that's good. If these were two identical-sounding bands, we wouldn't have anything to offer each other.

During joint music workshops in Gorajec in Roztocze, the musicians worked on selecting material:

It is also an interesting combination of two generations of musicians and a history of getting to know each other's countries. I found this rehearsal surprisingly constructive, so it bodes very well – recalls Bogdan Bracha.

Due to the pandemic, further work on the musical material takes place on-line. The musicians devote most attention to a joint composition, which will have a text inspired by the folklore of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. This composition, together with 12 traditional Polish and Ukrainian songs (6 in Polish and 6 in Ukrainian), will be recorded on a CD. The culmination of the project is the organisation of 6 joint concerts in Poland and Ukraine combined with a wide promotion of the common musical heritage of the borderland.

I am always interested in what unites, not what divides – adds Bogdan. - I am most enthusiastic if I manage to find one song in two different language versions e.g. Polish and Ukrainian, or from yet another region. I believe that we are all the same, that we have common archetypes. Discovering this is the most fascinating adventure for me...

More about the MUZA project can be found [here](#).

ALICJA WOSIK-MAJEWSKA



As if in a mirror

Let's get to know each other — Ukrainians in Suwałki, Poles in Ternopil

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 54 245.00 EUR PBU co-financing 48 820.50 EUR

Lead beneficiary Maria Konopnicka Public Library in Suwałki (PL)

Project partners Ternopil City Council (UA)

More than 600 km apart. Two cities, in two countries, on two sides of the border. And fates reflected as if in a mirror...

Olga Ignatowicz comes from Ukraine, but for the past five years, she's been living in Suwałki (PL), her husband's hometown. They met in Ukraine, where, as a student of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Warmia and Mazury, he served an internship. After a few years, they moved to Poland, to which they both decided to dedicate their future. Olga works in a kindergarten and, at the same time, is active in the Association „Union of Ukrainians in Suwałki”, which gathers her compatriots, who came to Poland mostly in search of work. She tries to integrate the Ukrainian community around common events, to which they also invite other inhabitants of the city. She stresses, however, that the biggest barrier for Ukrainians in Poland is the lack of the language knowledge, especially because of their intensive work they don't have much time for external contacts:

And without knowing the language, as in any foreign country, it is difficult to live. You don't know whom to address, sometimes you're ashamed to speak, you're afraid that you won't be understood.

„On the other side of the mirror”, in Ternopil (UA), Jerzy Zawadzki lives with his family of Polish roots. He and his relatives have been associated with the Ternopil area for generations:

His mother's family (Łopuszyńscy, Wołosieccy) comes from Ternopil and the surrounding area, while his father's family joins families from the Ternopil area and from near Jarosław. My family is diverse - in everyday life in Ternopil we use Ukrainian, each of us is fluent in Polish, and I also use Polish in my work as a poet and translator. My grandmother gave me recipes, fairy tales, poems, proverbs in Polish, and I grew up in an exclusively Ukrainian environment at school. (...) I feel equally at home here and in Kraków, Przemyśl or Tarnów.

A characteristic feature of the borderlands is the interpenetration of cultures, languages, but also human fates, often difficult and changeable. And although a lot of ink has been spilled on the subject, it turns out that we still know very little about each other. Stereotypes, prejudices and sometimes simply ignorance are the main barriers. The participants of the project „Let's get to know each other - Ukrainians in Suwałki, Poles in Ternopil” decided to change that.

According to estimates, there are about 3,000 Ukrainians living and working in Suwałki, but residents don't know much about them. The aim of the „Let's get to know each other - Ukrainians in Suwałki, Poles in Ternopil” project was to show to the Suwałki's residents the Ukrainian culture and traditions and on the other side, to create a place in Suwałki, where Ukrainians could get information about the city and meet each other - say the project's authors.

And as in a mirror - a similar number of Poles live in the Ternopil oblast of Ukraine, so similar activities are also planned there.

The project is also the fruit of several years of cooperation between the two cities - in August 2017, the authorities of Suwałki and Ternopil signed a letter of intent on cooperation. But how to translate intentions into practical action? To begin with, the partners met on-line as part of the project's opening conference. Then it was time for “The book that changed my life” action. It was the beginning of an Ukrainian-language book collection in the Suwałki Public Library and a Polish-language book collection in the library in Ternopil.

And this is how the implementation of the project began. What do the residents of the friendly cities would expect from the common project?

It's worth integrating, organising joint meetings - they would help us, Ukrainians become more integrated into Polish society - says Olga.

This cultural exchange is very important for us - this is one of the ways of bringing back from the past the spirit of Galicia, which was our common home - complements Jerzy

More about the EACH project can be found [here](#).

ALICJA WOSIK-MAJEWSKA



A House amidst the Mountains

Better Access to Medical Services in the Cross-border Region

SECURITY / Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services

Project budget 1 104 148.80 EUR PBU co-financing 993 733.92 EUR

Lead beneficiary Healthcare Institution "Brest Regional Pediatric Hospital" (BY)

Project partners Independent Public Health Care Centre in Łosice (PL)

Snow is falling in the Carpathian Mountains. Father Mateusz looks at the fluffy fir trees outside the window, at the mountains that are so close. Musical instruments are laid out in the room, in a few moment children will come here for a rehearsal.

Could he ever have imagined that he would find himself in this old parish in the middle of the mountains, in another country? A native of Katowice (Śląskie voivodeship), Mateusz first visited Ukraine 15 years ago when he volunteered in children's camps in Bibrka (Lviv oblast). This time was remembered with such special emotions that he and his brother Łukasz decided that they would like to serve in Ukraine one day. A few years after graduating from the seminary, this plan came true. Łukasz found himself in ancient Kremenets, and Mateusz in the mountainous Skole.

For 8 years Mateusz has been serving the local Roman Catholic community of the parish of Our Lady's Seven Sorrows. He made his path on his own, without a mentor and it was not easy in the beginning. But as the time passed, he mastered the Ukrainian language well, found real friends and won the trust and respect of the locals. And he literally fell in love with these mountains, got really into active in tourism and his passion is contagious to others. He considers working with young people to be an important part of his servitude.

There are few opportunities and entertainment for children compared to large cities, and in our parish they can learn foreign languages, music, singing, participate in sporting events. Mateusz admits that his own experience in the scout organization (Polish harcerstwo) helped him a lot with this. He knows how to communicate with children, how to ignite their minds, arouse their interest and organize their leisure.

From the very beginning, Father Mateusz understood that this parish was special. The number of parishioners is small, but the location in the heart of Skolivski Beskydy makes it an ideal place for meetings, training and active recreation; young people from different parts of Ukraine and Poland can come here. This was also the vision of his predecessor, who built the first guest house here. Groups of children from different regions of Ukraine have been staying here for many years. However, this was not enough and he wanted to have more guests and to create better conditions for them. There was also a need for a conference room, a space for training and meetings.

MichaelandYouth project initiated by Mother House of Congregation of St. Michael the Archangel in Miejsce Piastowe (Poland) and implemented together with Roman Catholic Parish in Skole (Ukraine), gave a chance to implement such plans. The aim of this joint project is to set up two centres of working with youth in Miejsce Piastowe and Skole based on the legacy of Father Bronisław Markiewicz, who took care of orphans and children from poor families.

Project implementation was not easy. Father Mateusz immersed himself in the construction process, personally supervised each stage, discussed with the builders possible technical solutions, proposed changes that would make this place even more comfortable. The result of this work is an elegant building in a contemporary style, which stands out a bit from the surrounding houses, but fits well into the mountain landscape. There are living rooms, dining room and a modern conference room. Every detail has been thought through; everything has been done with guests' safety and convenience in mind.

However, Father Mateusz has not only been building the centre. He managed to build an active community, where everyone can find something important for themselves, but also can join their efforts in good deeds. All these steps also contribute to the development of the area. Mateusz has good relations with the local Ukrainian Greek Catholic priests, the headmaster of the local school, the director of National Natural Park "Skolivski Beskydy" and other active people of Skole. He has a strong interest in other projects in the area related to tourism and cultural heritage.

It is often the case that one initiative inspires the creation of other initiatives. There have been many interesting events taking place in Skole in recent years, for example, "Skolivski Beskydy" marathon, which was first organised this summer and is going to become a regular event... We also have a common idea to launch some activities related to board games, possibly holding chess tournaments. Our centre can become a place bustling with activity, playing an important role in community life.

More about the *MichaelandYouth* project can be found [here](#).

OLENA ZUBRYTSKA



Inconspicuous but unmissable

We get to know the natural wealth of the Carpathians with the Hucul horse

HERITAGE / Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of natural heritage

Project budget 63 666.00 EUR PBU co-financing 57 299.40 EUR

Lead beneficiary Hutsul Horse Breeders and Lovers Association (PL)

Project partners Verkhovyna National Nature Park (UA)

Compared to others, it is not tall and not very handsome. It can be stubborn. When it wants to go its way, it will. And trust it, because it knows where it is going. Always persistent. Can survive in the open air, even in winter. Clever. It will open a gate for itself, walk across a wobbly bridge, overcome obstacles to seek the freedom it loves above all with its wild nature. At the same time it has unusual patience with people and calmly endures even an unbearable child, who jumps on his back constantly wriggling.

Out of curiosity... curious. It will come up by itself to get to know you better. And as it approaches, it will gently poke at your pockets in search of a treat.

Hutsul horse.

One of the two most important mountain horse breeds in Europe. Without it, the Carpathian landscape would not be the same.

It was shaped by the harsh environment, where often a lack of forage. Not once it was forced to dig out the remains of grass with its hoof from under the snow. It is not a noble horse, which was shaped by the steppe or the desert, where the defence against predators is a fast escape. The Hutsul horse could not afford it, because in a panic escape it would simply perish. So it had to learn to move efficiently in the mountains...Władysław Brejta, project manager, from the Hutsul Horse Breeders and Lovers Association placed near Rymanów (PL) could talk for hours about his subjects.

The extraordinary features of these equine were first noticed by the Hutsuls, who used them mainly as pack horses. Nowadays, Hutsul horses – due to their gentle and patient character – are used mainly for the first contact between a human and a horse, for learning horse riding, for hippo therapy and for peaceful excursions and rallies in the mountains. Unfortunately, it is a breed whose existence is still in question...

It is estimated that in the entirety of Europe today there are approximately 2500-2600 Hutsul mares, out of which

about 1600 in Poland. According to the FAO guidelines, the breed is considered endangered if there are less than 5000 females in its population. So Hutsul horse is still an endangered breed. In Poland, we receive EU funds to save this breed, but unfortunately, there are no such subsidies in Ukraine – says Brejta.

That is why enthusiasts from both sides of the border decided to carry out new projects not only to save, but also to promote this rare and unique horse breed. Using funds from the PBU 2007-2013 Programme, they implemented the project thanks to which stables, riding halls and administrative buildings were modernised. An inventory of these horses was carried out in the Zakarpattia region in Ukraine to search of animals which could enrich the modest genetic pool. The so-called „Hutsul paths” were created – for training horses and conducting their performance tests. A joint strategy for the restitution of this breed in the Carpathians and an event entitled „The Hutsul Horse in the Culture of the Eastern Carpathians” were also prepared.

What connects us with our Ukrainian partner is, above all, a passion for the Hutsul horse which is a common heritage of the Eastern Carpathians, especially the highlanders living in the Hutsul region and the people living in the Low Beskids. The Hutsul horse's homeland is the Hutsul region, while Polish breeders and scientists did most to save this population after World War II – says the project manager.

Partners from Poland and Ukraine do not cease in their joint efforts for this horse breed. They already started the implementation of next joint Polish-Ukrainian project „We get to know the natural wealth of the Carpathians with the Hutsul horse”, financed from the PBU Programme resources for the years 2014-2020. They plan to create two Carpathian lands of the Hutsul horse: Beskid's Land and Marmor's one. In the Low Beskids, the existing horse trail will be marked with QR codes, which will be tested by a group of 20 riders during a sightseeing and nature walk. The Ukrainian partner intends to design a similar trail in the Hutsul region and then to prepare technical documentation of a stable building for horses with facilities and storage room. Together, the partners also want to promote a Hutsul horse breed via joint website or TV reportage.

However, the war stood in the way of these plans...

People come first, we need to save people – stresses Władysław Brejta. – but the animals will hurt as well. There are not many Hutsul horses in Ukraine and I am afraid of how many will remain after the war.

One source of income for horses in the Hutsul region was the sale of young ones, but nobody buys them when there is a war. The other source was recreation for tourists and patients - now the resorts and sanatoriums are filled with refugees from the East and no one thinks about horse riding. For the time being, there is no possibility to temporarily transport horses to Poland. That is why the Polish leader of the project – Hutsul Horse Breeders and Lovers Association - organized a fund raising campaign to keep the horses in Zakarpattia. They reached into their own pockets and appeal in social media to all people of good will.

It is said that the true measure of humanity is one's attitude towards animals. The project partners pass this exam with flying colours. We all hope that their joint efforts will result in increasing the number and popularity of the Hucul horse breed both in Poland and in Ukraine and it will no longer be an endangered breed.

More about the *Horses&Nature* project can be found [here](#).

ALICJA WOSIK-MAJEWSKA



The war refugees found a shelter in old Reformati monastery

The twin monasteries: Węgrów and Rava-Ruska – using the potential of the heritage of Reformati Order for development of tourism and socio-cultural life in Poland and Ukraine

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 2 638 872.58 EUR PBU co-financing 2 374 985.32 EUR

Lead beneficiary Roman Catholic Parish Church of St. Peter of Alcantara and St. Anthony of Padua in Węgrów (PL)

Project partners Religious Organization “Curia of Lviv Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church” in Ukraine (UA)

Rava-Ruska in the Lviv region is the first settlement you find yourself in after crossing the Polish-Ukrainian border. This is an ancient town with a rich history and a special cross-border atmosphere.

In the first days of the war, Rava-Ruska witnessed a spectacle never seen before – the endless queue of people waiting for the crossing of Ukrainian-Polish border. At one point the queue reached as much as 45 kilometers long. People were trying to escape from the war, first of all, to save their children, the sick, and elderly relatives. The number of people crossing the border these days was on the level of several hundred thousand. One of the local landmarks here – Reformati order monastery – reacted immediately.

In those days, there was an urgent need to help these people. So in the monastery, they set up a place where you could warm up and eat. - recalls Markiyan Stefanyshyn, the project coordinator - The nuns cooked hot food for people. We would drive along this huge queue and hand out snacks to people.

Another immediate necessity was housing for displaced persons, as the Lviv region received over 200 000 refugees from other regions of Ukraine in a very short period of time. All suitable housing in Lviv and the oblast was adapted for the temporary residence of people fleeing from the war-stricken cities.

As of the beginning of the war, renovation works on our monastery facility had been completed; we were furnishing the rooms. We decided that these rooms will be used by refugees... We had to make some preparations, though. In total, the premises can accommodate 44 people, there are kitchens and bathrooms. They are designed to accommodate large families - describes Markiyan.

The first two families from Mariupol (13 children) and Sumy oblast (8 children) who fled the horrors of war, found a temporary home here. They stayed here for some time and went further to Europe. Now, a big family from Zhytomyr is staying here (8 people). Not only foster families are accommodated in these premises - there are several women with children, mostly from Kyiv oblast and other areas. About 30 people are staying here at the time at a regular basis. Also, a group of 30 children stayed here for some time before going to Spain. Polish doctors who came to Ukraine to provide

medical care also were accommodated in the monastery building. Local people and organizations from abroad constantly help with food products and other items, but guests do their own cooking. Those who have been staying longer help the new-comers, and organize necessary logistics. The old monastery, which has been silent for many years, is now a bustling place. The door is open for anyone who needs refuge.

Our premises are mostly used as a temporary shelter. Some people stop here for a while before moving on to Europe, some have been staying for a couple of weeks but with a thought to come back to their homes when the war is over. But we do not mind if families with foster children who come from another region of Ukraine will settle here forever. It's a great place to live – says Markiyan.

The Monastery project partners from Węgrów in Poland have been helping with food and basic necessities from the very first days.

The monastery complex of the Reformati order lately has undergone restoration under the TwinMonasteries project implemented within PBU Programme. The monastery premises in Rava-Ruska was to serve a noble purpose by housing “family-type orphanages” (the term used for big foster families which are expected to replace traditional orphanages in Ukraine). The works within the TwinMonasteries project were also carried out on the other side of the border - in Węgrów, Poland, in the building, which is a “twin brother” of Rava-Ruska monastery. These baroque buildings of the XVIII century were to house the Centers for the Dialogue of Cultures and become points of the new tourist route.

Now both partners have changed completely the approach to their joint project and decided, most of all, to come to help to necessitous Ukrainian people hurting and escaping from war. The Programme strongly supports its beneficiaries in these activities. It's true that hard times bring out the best in people, what can be worth more?

More about the *TwinMonasteries* project can be found [here](#).

OLENA ZUBRYTSKA



Helping hands across the border

The Borderland of Equal Chances

SECURITY / Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services

Project budget 2 219 412.00 EUR PBU co-financing 1 979 412.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Step by Step Association for Help to Disabled Children (PL)

Project partners Public Organization Association of Disabled Children, Their Parents and Friends "Dawn of Hope" (UA)

The news about the war threw everyone in the town of Kremenets in the west of Ukraine into a panic. The team of "The Borderland of Equal Chances" (BEC) project which is located there was concerned not only about their own families but about their patients and wards - children with disabilities, which are the most vulnerable group of people in such situations. How to save them from cruel raider? Where to escape?

Fortunately, their partners from Poland - "Step by Step Association for Help to Disabled Children" - were there to help. The staff of association has been collecting children with their families from the Ukrainian-Polish border and helping them to find a long-term place to stay in Poland.

We were lucky to have such friends. Thanks to them we managed to transport 10 children from our area - Ternopil oblast - on the first days of war. But somehow people from other places learned about us and I started receiving calls from other places in Ukraine. I guess we have obtained over 100 such requests to help in getting across the border. - says Alla Andrushchuk, the Head of "Dawn of Hope" organization, beneficiary of the project.

As the war very quickly spread into other areas of Ukraine, the flow of internal refugees to the Western part of Ukraine was increasing. Kremenets became a temporary home for 13 thousand people from the regions covered by war. The "Dawn of Hope" Rehabilitation and Education Centre hosted people from Bucha, Irpin, Odessa, and Kharkiv oblasts. For children with disabilities, seeking a refuge in Europe was the safer option and BEC project partners were helping them to find a place to stay there. From the beginning of the war, they have managed to arrange the travel for over 100 families with children - the figure sounds almost beyond comprehension.

The true stories of these people are moving but sometimes terrifying. As, for instance, the story of Eugene, a courageous boy from Chernihiv, who has covered over 10 kilometers alone on a wheelchair to escape the war. Or a story of a family from Kherson, a city under Russian occupation. They lived in constant terror and wanted to escape at any price. The mother of two children, including a 16 years old girl with a severe mobility disability, contacted the organization and prayed for help. They had to wait for 50 days to get

out of their city as it was extremely dangerous to go there. Finally, thanks to some brave people, they managed to escape. They are now in Lublin, where they got a very warm welcome.

For a person with disabilities a long journey abroad is connected with extreme effort of both physical and logistical nature. Sometimes a wheelchair doesn't fit into the car or an extra help is needed to lift lying person. A male guardian under 60 years old is not allowed to cross the border with his ward unless special permit is issued. And even after crossing the border safely, it's not easy to manage abroad. Language barrier, psychological trauma, need of qualified medical help, weak knowledge about country-specific regulations are the factors that can make a refugee feel isolated and even depressed. Under such circumstances, the help of other people, especially those who understand the needs of children with disabilities, is needed very much.

I'm really impressed by what the Polish people have been doing for Ukrainians. Maria Król, the director of "Step by Step" partner organization from Zamość has been working for 24 hours a day helping our refugees. Her commitment is incredible. - shares Alla.

Alla and her colleagues have no time to rest. They take families in need to the border on their bus or car, then return back to Kremenets with humanitarian aid such as food, hygienic items and other essentials. Next they have to cater to the people who are staying in their town. Previously, Alla's most important goal was to finish the construction of the Centre and provide trainings to the team of care specialists. Now, because of the war, everything changed. Although the construction is in the process, the future is vague and it's not easy to make any plans. Will it be completed? Sustained properly? Will there be people willing and able to work here?

The hope for better future is something that keeps her going. The thought that there are the people ready to help on both sides of the border makes her hope even stronger.

More about the BEC project can be found [here](#).

OLENA ZUBRYTSKA



”Dear Programme, you have changed my city for the better. Thank You so much!”

New life of the old city: revitalization of monuments of historical and cultural heritage of Lutsk and Lublin

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 1 676 398.00 EUR PBU co-financing 1 508 758.20 EUR

Lead beneficiary Executive Committee of Lutsk City Council (UA)

Project partners City of Lublin (PL)

On scaffolding piled several metres up, amid cement and dust, with trowels in their hands, in the sweat of their brows, are toiling... the women themselves. The strongest of them, in a large bowl instead of bread, is making concrete. Why? Because the male builders have left for the West in search of work. Despite this, a gem is slowly emerging from beneath the women’s hands - the renovated façade of the Jesuit college in Lutsk, adjacent to the 16th century Czartoryski Tower. This - also undergoing restoration - is returning the favor with surprises that give history enthusiasts a heartbe- at:

„Scio me nihil scire[1]”, said a wise man. This famous phrase best expresses the feelings I am feeling right now. The Czartoryski Tower has revealed yet another secret - the unexplored underground cellars. Scientists still have a lot of work ahead of them before the discovered rooms are made available to visitors, and no one knows how many more treasures the Tower will allow us to discover, but the greatest treasure I have for myself is the experience of being part of the „TwoTowers” project, part of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020, which overcomes borders and makes you feel special! - Oleh Parfeniuk, head of the Ukrainian part of the project, commented warmly at the time.

The TwoTowers project, carried out in cooperation between the Executive Committee of the Lutsk City Council and the City of Lublin, concerned the revitalisation of the Czartoryski Tower with the defensive wall and the Jesuit Monastery in Lutsk and the Gothic Tower in Lublin. A modern museum was created in the underground cells of the Jesuit mona- stery.

History buffs in the partner city of Lublin were equally exci- ted, as part of the same project work began on the renova- tion of the Gothic Tower, part of the Old Town fortifications.

It is one of the best-preserved fragments of Lublin’s defen- sive walls and medieval defensive architecture in the entire region. (...) During the conservation work, we wondered

whether it was possible to make the tower accessible and how the construction of wooden walkways would affect the exposition of this object, but we decided that it would be unjustified, as today we can see this object in the form it was given in the 16th century,’ says Dr Hubert Mącik, the Municipal Conservator of Monuments at Lublin City Hall, passionately.

Thanks to the project, a model of the Old Town in Lublin in its shape from five hundred years ago was also created. In addition, a number of events were organised to promote this unusual place attracting tourists. But it was not easy...

These events were carried out at a special time, because a pan- demic broke out in 2020 and we had to slow down some of the activities. Fortunately, during the summer we returned to this enthusiasm, being together in the space of the city – recalls Barbara Wybacz, coordinator of the Lublin Legends Festival. Organised among the historic tenements, backstreets and squares of Lublin’s Old Town, the festival was the most spectacular part of the project.

With its stories and tales, it complemented these spaces with additional values. This is a festival that is based on street theatre, on events that happen in space, involving visitors, residents, and spectators in all kinds of stories. In addition to the theatrical layer, installations-sculptures in public space were a very important element. (...) There was also a lot of music, but above all time spent together. The Festival of Legends was conceived as an event for children, for families - one that evokes that Eastern hospitality that we ascribe to ourselves as our special characteristic.

Difficulties harden characters and are a test for human bonds. The project partners emerged from it victorious and strengthened. They not only coped with the challenges of the pandemic, realised investments and events, but also faced together dramatic events that could not have been foreseen:

Today we are also united with our partners in their daily struggles, with Ukraine, which is immersed in war. Lublin is such a transit city where many refugees from Ukraine arrive and we try to provide them with first aid. (...) On a personal level, both our authorities and the office staff work on a voluntary basis at information points, at transit points such as the railway and bus stations. In the office we have many employees who are of Ukrainian origin, so they also get involved, keenly emotionally involved. We are happy that at least in this way we can help our partners. I think that also the projects we have been doing have contributed to the fact that we feel as one community and this help comes naturally – concludes Barbara.

Today, when Russian missiles have also reached partner city Lutsk, such experiences of the already 20-year coopera- tion between the two cities and the strong human ties are a source of confidence for both sides that the good days of building together will return. Especially since it is possible and worth building on such a solid foundation.

Oleh Parfeniuk:

The space under the Jesuit monastery in Lutsk is no longer an underground cell, it is a real underground city! Two parts of the historic galleries have been combined to form the largest undergro- und complex in Ukraine. I would never have thought to address the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme as a living being, but now the time has come: „Dear Programme, you have changed my city for the better. Thank You very much!”

More about the TwoTowers project can be found [here](#).

ALICJA WOSIK-MAJEWSKA



A Silent Plea for Help

Rzeszów and Vynohradiv – animal-friendly cities

SECURITY / Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services

Project budget 667 841.20 EUR PBU co-financing 601 057.08 EUR

Lead beneficiary Center of Investment and Development Vynohradiv City Council of the Transcarpatian Region (UA)

Project partners Animal Protection Organization in Rzeszów (PL);
Vynohradiv City Council (UA)

In this article we would like to share several stories instead of one.

The first story is about Umka, a white retriever who, together with his owners, was hiding from shelling in a basement in Kharkiv and whose owners had to send him to a safe place in Zakarpattia region. The dog ended up in the shelter and was so frightened that he did not leave the quarantine for a month and a half, refused to go for a walk, until he made friends with another dog. He stayed there for 98 days, which was the longest period of stay in the shelter.

The second story is about the old lady, who had to flee from Kyiv with her Yorkshire terrier, called Yorik. The woman was housed in a home for the elderly, where no pets were allowed, so the dog had to be placed in a shelter. Every day she came to see her friend and to take care of him – she walked him, brushed his teeth, talked to him.

There is also a story about Richie, an old German shepherd, and Shera, the malamute, whose owners couldn't find a place to live during the first days of war. Nobody wanted to rent their property to someone with such huge dogs. The family had to sleep in their car until Richie and Shera were placed in the shelter, where they spent almost two months.

There is a story about three women who lost their home due to the war but, finding themselves in a new place, a town in Western Ukraine, found the strength to master new skills and are now serving a noble cause, helping abandoned animals in the animal control center.

This is a story about Spanish volunteers who collected 46 dogs in Ukraine, some of them in a difficult health condition. On their way home they received a warm welcome from their Ukrainian colleagues in a small cross-border town – Vynohradiv. They stayed there for three days, had some rest, the dogs got necessary medical assistance and their documents for border crossing were arranged.

This is also the story of a German lady who has been rescuing homeless dogs from Hungary and Serbia for many years, and during the war she also started helping the dogs from Ukraine. She brought almost 3 tons of dry dog food to the animal control center in Vynohradiv and took out 25 dogs for adoption in the countries of Northern and Western Europe.

In fact, there are much more such stories, and all of them make a part of one big story - the story of the joint Polish-Ukrainian project CBC4animals, which was created and implemented by the people for whom caring for animals is not just a job, but a life mission. In Rzeszów, Poland the project involved the extension of an already existing animal shelter with 25 years of experience behind, while in Vynohradiv everything started almost from the scratch. A small shelter transformed into a modern animal control center. It was a totally new concept for this town, and even the fact that the money would be spent on the welfare of dogs, not people, caused some public disapproval. But very soon, thanks to the devoted work of the project team, the animal center appeared in Vynohradiv, which has no equals in terms of technological advancement not only in Ukraine, but also in many Eastern European countries. The center's employees have been performing vaccinations, sterilizations, examinations, providing medical assistance, shelter, organizing adoption and holding educational activities.

We can say that we managed to change the situation with homeless animals in our town. As part of the project, we performed 100 free sterilizations, and after the opening of the Center we do 200 sterilizations each year, which led to the reduction in the number of stray dogs. But the most important thing is that the people themselves have changed, their way of thinking, their treatment of animals. Now, if you happen to see a few stray dogs on our streets - they are cheerful, non-aggressive, well-fed animals... Yes, our town has the most well-fed stray dogs! But most dogs find a new home. For example, in 2021 221 dogs out of 353 were adopted and another 53 were returned to their guardians. That makes the adoption rate at the level of 77%. In 2022 the results would be even better, but everything has changed with the war... - says Arthur Sherehi, project coordinator.

On a regular basis the Vynohradiv Center serves 350 animals per year but only in the last 6 months more than 300 animals have been treated. These were the dogs of internal refugees who stay there temporarily until their owners find a long-term housing as temporary accommodation for refugees usually doesn't allow pets. Sometimes local people went abroad and couldn't take their dogs with them. Instead of the planned 50 dogs, about 120-230 animals live in the Center at one time. There is much work to be done and the demand for food and medicines has also increased.

When the war started, we decided that we will contribute the best if we do what we can do the best. We carried out vaccinations, did chipping and everything necessary for the transportation of animals abroad, treated them, gave them a temporary shelter, helped with the transportation of animals. We even invited parents and children to play with the puppies so they could take their mind off the war. Our working hours have extended, we had to hire new employees - says Arthur.

Fortunately, in this difficult situation the Vynohradiv Center was not alone. The cooperation between both project partners did not end with the completion of the initiative. Animal Protection Organization from Rzeszów, helped with dog food and medicines. They also provided 250 chips for free, which were necessary for Ukrainian dogs to travel abroad. Moreover, 10 dogs have been taken to their Kundelek shelter in Rzeszów for further adoption.

Gradually, the aid began to arrive from organizations and philanthropists from various countries around the world. To a large extent, this happened thanks to refugees from other cities in Ukraine who received help here.

... The war became a tragedy for millions of Ukrainians, ruined their lives and their pets were a part of it. For a dog, the owner is the whole world. But what if the owners died during the shelling? Or squeezed into the evacuation train at the last minute rescuing their children? Left their dog in a carrier at the train station because they didn't know if it would be allowed in their new home in Europe? The dog is looking at this mad world with the eyes full of terror, runs away from the sounds of gunshots, waits for months for its owners near an abandoned house. But in dark times you can clearly see bright people. People who, in spite of everything, care about the weak, about those who cannot ask for help with words. And it is incredible to see that a good deed causes more good deeds and the chain of good deeds never ends.

More information on the *CBC4animals* project can be found [here](#).

OLENA ZUBRYTSKA



About history in a different way

To touch history and culture – a historical-cultural mosaic of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 66 659.29 EUR PBU co-financing 59 993.36 EUR

Lead beneficiary Zagórz Commune (PL)

Project partners Lion Society (UA)

By day, Piotr is a clerk-turned-city gardener and Artur is a computer games developer. From time to time, they quit their professional occupations, put on 18th-century military uniforms, load up their black-powder weapons, curl their sumptuous moustaches (whoever has one) in order to... immerse themselves in history, which is their life's passion.

I am from the von Lattorff Garrison Regiment from Koźle. I have been interested in history since I was a child, and the period of the 18th-century was the most interesting for me, I started digging into the history of the town, its fortress, and that is where we started our activity, recalls Piotr Paisdzior, President of the Koźle Historical Reconstruction Association since 2010.

To begin with it was the 13th-century, I liked the chainmail and started looking for information about the knightly culture. Then I wanted to do something related to Częstochowa and at some point I found a description of a soldier who was stationed at Jasna Góra. It turned out that they had very interesting uniforms, and the era was also interesting, but forgotten, not known by everyone, treated in Poland „with neglect”. And this is how the stage of interest in the 18th century began for me, comments Artur Kramer, President of the Częstochowa Fortress Garrison Association since 2013.

The two enthusiasts travelled several hundred kilometres from the centre of Poland to Zagórz, located on the Polish-Ukrainian border, to take part in a historical reconstruction as part of the project „To touch history and culture – a historical-cultural mosaic of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland” (acronym Touch_History). In the scenery of the ruins of the Carmelite monastery, project partners together with re-enactors recreated an event from 250 years ago – the last battle of the Bar Confederation. Reconstruction groups from Poland and abroad presented themselves, and tourists and residents could observe camp life, genre scenes, demonstrations of weapon wielding, infantry and cavalry skirmishes, participate in thematic workshops, costume and equipment presentations. There was also a concert of music referring to Sarmatism and the times of the Bar Confederation, as well as a tasting of regional dishes.

According to the re-enactors, such a journey in time can attract hundreds or even thousands of history enthusiasts:

Such events are hugely successful everywhere. Lots of people come to watch them. Especially when there is a lot of banging, a lot of smoke, colourful uniforms and costumes for example for ladies, because the 18th-century was an interesting era for ladies' costumes, stresses Artur. Historical re-enactments are powerful undertakings. They bring together various formal and informal groups, non-associated people. They are often attended by up to thousands of the re-enactors themselves and, finally, the public.

Such a great interest in history and its recreation through reconstructions pleases the mayor of Zagórz – the project leader. The main objective of this undertaking was not only to promote the historical and cultural heritage of the borderland, but also to attract tourists.

The unconventional way of presenting historical and cultural heritage encourages residents and visitors to learn about the history and traditions of our region. With this in mind, the Zagórz Commune is planning to organise further performances touching on various eras and historical events connected to the region. In addition to these activities, next year in the area of the ruins of the 18th-century Zagórz monastery we are planning to organise a historical and cultural festival based on the theme of fire. The task, like this year's staging, has received funding under the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020”, emphasises Mayor Ernest Nowak.

More information on the *Touch_history* project can be found [here](#).

ALICJA WOSIK-MAJEWSKA



Culinary secrets of the Bug valley

Culinary traditions of Bug river region

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 62 203.38 EUR PBU co-financing 55 982.50 EUR

Lead beneficiary Association "Local Action Group – Bug Valley Melting Pot" (PL)

Project partners NGO "Local Agency of Economic Development of Kamyanka-Buzka District" (UA)

River is a symbol of life and abundance. Cities and towns often emerge on riverbanks, apparently brought to life by the river's flow. The Bug is one of the most important rivers in the Polish-Ukrainian cross-border area. Throughout the ages, it has been the source of life for the people, who settled on its banks. People living there, both on Ukrainian and Polish sides, have much in common in terms of their traditions, folklore and food culture. This was the idea behind the project BugCuisine. The project partners, Association „Local Action Group – Bug Valley Melting Pot” and “Local Agency of Economic Development of Kamyanka-Buzka District” had this idea during a festival in Poland, where Ukrainians were guests.

We thought it would be interesting to revive the recipes of old dishes prepared in the Bug valley area and share them with people. By doing this, we wanted to integrate local communities, help them learn more about each other and promote our area through a new product. The project turned to be a truly unique and moving experience, with a great social element – even if the activities had to be modified due to the war in Ukraine — says Maria Zhukovska, project coordinator on the Ukrainian side.

The project also got her to know amazing people, for whom food means more than everyday routine. They were for example Halyna and Oleksiy, a mother and son duet, who conducted a series of culinary workshops within the project.

Cooking is very important to me, it's something I've been doing for all my life. I can speak about it for hours. – tells Halyna.

Previously she worked as a teacher in a vocational school in Dobrotvir, where she held cooking classes. This work was also a source of inspiration for her as students would often bring their own old recipes from home. Then, she would convert old measurements into modern ones, try them and sometimes adapt them a bit. This is how many old dishes were preserved and revived. She has been looking for old recipes everywhere and has collected a great deal of them.

She has a theory of her own:

Every time I see some new fashionable dish I can think of its Ukrainian analogue, which existed a long time ago. Ukrainian cuisine has everything in it – its own pizza, quiche, pudding. Our grandmothers knew how to prepare these dishes.

At some point Halyna decided to start her own restaurant in her town. It's called «the Bug» and it positioned itself as «a restaurant of revived recipes». Her son followed in her footsteps. He has both education and practical experience in this field, as well as several culinary contests behind. He loves experimenting, mixing the old and new. Participating in the project was new and unusual experience for both of them.

Ten workshops went in one breath – we would finish one workshop and start getting ready for the next one. The process was so inspiring, the atmosphere was incredible. – Halyna states.

The workshops focused on the dishes typical for this area or local variations of well-known dishes.

Naturally, fish is the specialty of the Bug cuisine. So, we prepared a «fisherman's bag» with different kinds of fish inside. Also, vegetables have always been quite popular, but, of course, not salads. Beans, cabbages and beetroots were prepared, usually stewed or baked, often together with some grains – we had such dishes on the table, too. Meat dishes are very interesting and diverse. For example, one of the workshops was devoted to vereshchaka – a very old way to prepare meat in marinated beetroot. Also, we cooked ribs in beer with cherries and three kinds of sausages – krovianka, kartoplianka and hurka. And, of course, there was borshch.

...The war put the project on a pause. It was hard to think about anything but war. Each Ukrainian family was affected by it. Kamyanka-Buzka became a temporary home for internally displaced persons from northern and southern parts of Ukraine.

In spite of this, one day the project team decided to renew the workshops. As there were many refugees in the town, Maria decided to invite them to participate in the workshops, too.

For many of them, this experience was priceless. After the atrocities and devastations they left behind, they felt welcome and enjoyed a warm and friendly atmosphere, while cooking together, discovering new tastes and learning about the culture of their hosts. They appreciated it so much. Some dishes or rather a way of cooking was new to them – such as borshch with smoked pears or our local sausages. Our cuisine is so diverse, we can learn a lot from each other. – Halyna says.

More information on the BugCuisine project can be found [here](#).

OLENA ZUBRYTSKA



Carpathian taste of wine

Carpathian wine heritage academy

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 66 658.60 EUR PBU co-financing 59 992.74 EUR

Lead beneficiary Vynohradiv District Council (UA)

Project partners Association of self-governments "Euroregion Carpathians - Ukraine" (UA);
Association for Development and Promotion of Podkarpacie "Pro Carpathia" (PL)

It is a peer of man. Planted in one place and tended by his hand, it can live and bear fruit for up to 100 years. The oldest finds relating to its cultivation and use are ... 8,000 years old. It likes the sun, for which it repays with sweetness and a drink that has been praised by poets, historians, artists and lovers of fine cuisine for centuries. Its fields, which cover the sunny slopes of mountains and hills in characteristic rows, provide a livelihood for families for several generations and have already become firmly established in the European landscape. Grapevine.

The establishment of vineyards, the cultivation of grapes and the production of wine is part not only of the culinary heritage, but also of the traditions and history of the Carpathians. This can be seen, among other things, in the names of places: Vynohradiv (UA), Winna Góra, Winnica, Winne (PL).

New values have emerged in my hitherto 'hectic' life, such as the beauty of communing with nature and humility towards it. Being a winegrower obliges you to constantly take care of the plant, its needs at the various stages of growth, and especially the grapes so that they concentrate what is most valuable to be enclosed in a bottle of wine, writes Mr Maciej Sowiński, a participant in the WineAcademy project.

There is evidence that in the Zakarpattya Oblast (UA), grape growing and wine making began as early as the 2nd century AD, i.e. almost 2,000 years ago. In the Polish part of the Carpathian Mountains, the history of viticulture dates back to the Middle Ages, and the first vineyards were established by monasteries, producing wine for liturgical purposes. Winegrowing in this part of Europe today is favoured by a warming climate. Today, vineyards in the Zakarpattya Oblast cover an area of more than 4,500 hectares and are mainly concentrated in five districts: Berehovo, Irshava, Vynohradiv, Mukachevo and Uzhhorod. More than 160 vineyards have been established in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, mainly in the area of Jasto, Krosno, Przeworsk and Jarosław, and even the voivodeship's capital, Rzeszów.

It all started with the first trip to Moravia in 2010 together with the Association of Winemakers of the Podkarpackie Region. The visits to the vineyards, the tastings, the wonderful and varied wines and the excellent atmosphere accompanying these new experiences had a great impact on my later decisions. My wife and I decided to leave the

city life behind. We found a place near Rzeszów that could fulfil our dreams: building a house made of larch logs with a wine cellar underneath and creating a small vineyard next to it. We succeeded in this venture and are successfully living from it, recalls Mr Maciej.

In the world, however, French or Italian wines are known above all. Wines from the Carpathian Mountains still need to be promoted and appreciated.

The Carpathian Wine Route is a unique and modern tourist product. The aim of this trail is to promote and develop enotourism[1] in the Carpathian Mountains, in particular in the Polish-Slovakian-Ukrainian border region. (...) Guests and tourists visiting the region or individual localities are given the opportunity to discover not only its richness through wooden architecture, monuments, nature or the culinary potential of the restaurants, but also through wine, through the aroma, taste, smell, which reflects the „Carpathian” character of the region, emphasises Ms. Ewelina Nycz from the Association for Development and Promotion of Podkarpacie „Pro Carpathia”, the Polish partner of the project.

Project participants, including Mr. Maciej, shared their experiences of vineyard establishment and viticulture. The resulting videos instructing and promoting this part of the intangible heritage of the Carpathians attract more visitors, lovers of good cuisine and traditional cultivation, who may one day also decide „to abandon urban life” for a new passion....

More information on the *WineAcademy* project can be found [here](#).

ALICJA WOSIK-MAJEWSKA



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