



# Conflict resolution through decentralization

Lessons from the Eastern Ukraine State Building  
and Accountability (EUSTAB) project

**PAX**

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and Accountability (EUSTAB) project

Implemented by VNG International and PAX  
from January 2016 till December 2017

**Colophon**

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**About PAX**

PAX works with committed citizens and partners to protect civilians against acts of war, to end armed violence, and to build just peace. PAX operates independently of political interests.

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# Summary

Since the start of the armed conflict in 2014, Ukraine has witnessed considerable violence on its territory. The bloodshed in the eastern regions of the country continues without a clear prospect on peace. The international community has an important role to play in developing the resilience of Ukrainian society to withstand further polarization and new conflicts. Effective external support can strengthen the ability of Ukrainian citizens to deal with divisions and tensions in society in a non-violent manner.

This publication summarizes the experience of a Dutch peacebuilding organization, PAX, which together with its partner, the international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities VNGi, implemented a project that promoted the principles of good governance in 6 municipalities in eastern Ukraine. Our aim was to make a contribution to an active and effective civil society and a responsive, transparent and accountable local government. Decentralization in Ukraine opened a window of opportunity for international actors to promote inclusive policy-making based on dialogue and participatory mechanisms of governance. In the context of an ongoing armed conflict, practical application of these mechanisms is as important as ever before. We share our experience so that others can make the best use of this opportunity.

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“Being an important part of the Minsk peace accords, decentralization should be seen not only as crucial for the socio-economic development of Ukraine, but also for its territorial integrity and the peaceful co-existence of its citizens”.

- Lessons learned by PAX

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After two years of project implementation we concluded that local actors in Ukraine are eager to take advantage of the decentralization reform. However, the activities of international actors must respond to the identified needs by offering tailored solutions, which take into account the peculiarities of the local environment across the country. The success of dialogue on the local level in Ukraine among others depends on the availability of sufficient time for learning through practice. In case of our pilot municipalities, we understood that it could also mean learning from mistakes. Our project was a proof that trust and patience between donors, civil society and authorities are important prerequisites for effective peacebuilding and successful democratization. The establishment of long-term partner relationships between donors and local actors allows the latter to become more effective in providing quality services to the community. Emphasis on the value of the learning process often helps to develop the capacity of local administrations to take full ownership of the policy-making processes together with the members of their local communities. Therefore, we hope that the lessons we learned together with our partners will make a contribution to effective international support for Ukraine, which can bring peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflicts and strengthen the resilience of the citizens to withstand violence and polarization in the future.

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“The first time I heard about potential cooperation between youth and the city council, I thought it was another empty promise. At the end of the project, I admit that I was completely wrong. And I am actually really happy about it”.

- Young participant from Sloviansk

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# Context

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“Decentralization can foster stability and facilitate democratization in Eastern Ukraine through a bottom-up, legitimate and responsive governance and inclusive participation at the local level.”

- Lessons learned by PAX

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Throughout its history, Ukraine was part of undemocratic, oppressive regimes for extended periods of time. Top-down governance, lack of inclusive processes and limited engagement of people in their local communities hindered the success of early democratization after Ukraine gained independence in 1991.

Soviet legacy in particular casted a long shadow over the country's future by cementing homo sovieticus (a Soviet man) mentality among the generations of its citizens, who grew dependent on state-provided services and became accustomed to authorities controlling every aspect of their lives. Lack of desire to engage in public life resulted in a wide gap between the society and the political elites. What is more, the latter actively discouraged citizens' attempts at self-governance. As a result, the involvement in political life on any level of governance is still seen by many Ukrainians as tainted, corrupt and reserved for a chosen group of individuals who are perceived as untrustworthy. After realizing the ineffectiveness of the Soviet system, a lot of citizens of independent Ukraine felt the desire to change their local surroundings, but they lacked the knowledge and tools to succeed in their democratic aspirations. Taking into account Ukraine's troubled past, decentralization is expected to be a breakthrough moment that can ensure socio-economic development of the country and stability of its democratic institutions.

The volatility and unpredictability of the political scene, resulting in regular shifts of political elites and lack of experience in participatory governance among average citizens, prevented the decentralization reform from unfolding in a sustainable and effective manner prior to 2014. The situation started to change only after Ukrainian citizens gained some experience and started to



mature in their democratic aspirations. Growing support of the international community in the form of financial assistance, expertise and capacity building facilitated the process. The first mass mobilization of citizens in 2004 (Orange Revolution) was a sign that society wanted to hold the authorities accountable for their actions and policies. However, in the aftermath, electoral control and protests remained the most popular democratic mechanisms of exercising the right of the society to oversee the actions of the authorities. These mechanisms allowed citizens to occasionally participate in public life, providing them with an opportunity to vent their dissatisfaction regarding Ukraine's standard of living and giving them a false hope that sustainable changes will occur after a new electoral cycle comes to an end. Elections and protests did not have a long-term positive effect on the day-to-day functioning of the local communities in different regions of the country mainly because citizens were not involved in addressing their own needs on a regular basis.

Due to unprecedented rise in civic activity all across the country from 2013 onwards, the Revolution of Dignity (also known as the Euromaidan) was seen by some experts as a possible way out of the vicious circle of irregular civic participation. Euromaidan established a fairly strong political foundation for decentralization reform to proceed. On a mass scale this protest movement led to consolidation of different groups in the society against an external enemy (Russian Federation), which posed a threat to the territorial integrity of the country. In addition to the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russian Federation, certain areas of two regions in Eastern Ukraine (Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts) are for the time being not under control of Ukrainian government. The armed conflict in the Donbas (Donets Basin) gave an additional sense of urgency to the decentralization reform. Socio-economic development of Ukraine, but also its territorial integrity and peaceful co-existence of its citizens depend on the success of the process. Decentralization is an integral part of the Minsk agreements (2015). Despite the imperfections of the accords, a clear lack of progress in their fulfilment and no agreement regarding any possible alternatives, the peace process initiated in Minsk is the only diplomatic instrument that has been accepted by all sides of the conflict. Hence, for a peacebuilding organization such as PAX, decentralization in Ukraine offers a chance to end violence in the Donbas and prevent future conflicts in the country through establishing inclusive governance, promoting active participation of citizens in policy-making and using non-violent dialogue to solve conflicts between individuals who share opposing views.

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"I see a group of powerful leaders here. I am amazed by your energy, confidence, creativity."

- Representative of an international NGO. Feedback session during final conference in the project.

# Decentralization reform

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“Speaking about the impact of internal displacement on our city ... well, I can tell you today that we started to form one community.”

- Representative of Sviatohirsk during the final conference of EUSTAB

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The reform process was launched in 2014 and included five major steps: (1) setting up a three-tiered system of administrative and territorial structure in Ukraine (27 regions, 120-150 districts, 1500-1800 communities); (2) basic services to the citizens should be provided by the local as opposed to central government; (3) delegate the competences of the local state administrations to the local self-governance bodies; (4) renew the budget system, providing additional resources on the local level; and (5) introduce the accountability of local governments to increase trust in them. For the first time in country's history, this resulted in a number of far-reaching decentralization steps (see Annex for an overview)<sup>1</sup>:

Decentralization reform arguably became the most successful political and societal process in the post-Euromaidan era. However, a number of challenges persist. The action plan developed for the reform in 2014 required constitutional changes. Such a step would solidify decentralization as a core constitutional principle in Ukraine. Moreover, it would limit the possibility for any political party (or coalition) to hijack the process in the future for short-term political gains, because constitutional changes require strong parliamentary support. In light of the armed conflict and the Minsk agreements, a consolidation of political will among the required majority of Ukrainian deputies to adopt the changes has not been possible to date. This can be explained by the high political costs of such decision for individual politicians and the polarizing effect the issue of regulating the status of non-governmental controlled territories of the Donbas has on the Ukrainian society.

<sup>1</sup> <http://decentralization.gov.ua/en/about>

Moreover, representatives of local authorities face new set of responsibilities as a result of decentralization. The administrative boundaries of some municipalities shifted. The budget assigned to local communities grew considerably. The demographic composition of many cities changed due to a massive internal displacement of population (various sources have estimated that approximately 2 million people were displaced since 2014). As a result, many local communities embarked on a huge learning exercise when it comes to assessing their needs and finding the best ways to deal with them. Mistakes in self-governance will not be avoided due to lack of experience of successful democratization process in Ukraine. Yet, with due support from the international community and through an active involvement of local actors, the process can be less painful and costly for them. These challenges can also be turned into a learning process that might lead to new best practices.

In the context of both democratization and peace processes in Ukraine, PAX aimed to ensure that cooperation between different actors on the local level during the decentralization reform led to inclusive policy-making, which, in turn, would allow the local community to satisfy its needs and face new challenges in a non-violent manner, based on dialogue, participation and compromise. These principles were used to implement the Eastern Ukraine State Building and Accountability (EUSTAB) project together with VNG International.

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“Thank you for helping us to see things differently. Thank you for helping us to change our mentality”.

- Representative of Association of Ukrainian Cities, one of the partners in the EUSTAB project.

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# Rationale behind the project

The foundations of the Ukrainian state and society have been shaken by the armed conflict in the Donbas. The stability of democratic transformation of the country and the human security of its citizens continue to be at risk.

Legitimate and responsive governance and inclusive political and public participation processes at the local level have the potential to become a valuable instrument that will help steer Ukraine out of the current challenges and into the successful and peaceful democratic transition. Decentralization provides an overarching framework for these processes to succeed. EUSTAB has been implemented in response to the following observations:

- ◆ A successful and sustainable transition to a peaceful and democratic society requires a participatory, locally driven response to the changing needs of the local communities.
- ◆ The high influx of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) creates a need for basic services such as education, health care, housing, jobs. Subsequently, municipal structures face challenges in providing these services to IDPs - groups of citizens that are vulnerable and traumatized.
- ◆ The trust in the government and its structures remains to be weak in Ukraine. In many regions the public resources and services are scarce and poorly administered.
- ◆ People who are beneficiaries of the decentralization reform require support in finding their place in the new reality. External guidance and expertise can help to avoid mistakes in the process and/or turn mistakes into a learning experience.
- ◆ A participatory, locally driven response under the broader decentralization reform is crucial for peace process in Ukraine. On a higher political level, it remains to be a core element of the Minsk peace process. On a local level, inclusive and participatory governance constitutes a solid foundation for dialogue and possible reconciliation among the members of Ukrainian society, currently living on different sides of the frontline.

# The project at a glance

- ◆ Implemented from January 2016 to December 2017, together with VNG International, in close collaboration with local partner organizations (local CSOs, local governments and government associations such as the Association of Ukrainian Cities).
- ◆ Participating municipalities: Iziurm, Pavlohrad, Pokrovsk, Pershotravensk, Sviatohirsk, and Sloviansk. Regional focus of the activities on the eastern regions of Ukraine, municipalities that are situated very close to the conflict line in Donetsk, Luhansk (government-controlled areas), Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia regions.
- ◆ Target groups included different members of local communities: activists, youth, elderly, IDPs, war veterans, people with disabilities. These groups participated in variety of activities that were dedicated among others to culture, integration of local community, non-violent communication, dealing with stress, ethnography, sports, project management and fundraising, protection of environment etc.
- ◆ The project contributed to the process of establishing an active and involved population in Ukraine, an active and effective civil society and a responsive, transparent and accountable local government.
- ◆ An emphasis on small scale, locally driven initiatives/projects based on the common efforts of authorities, civil society and citizens. Municipalities drafted their own plans and organized an inclusive process of consultation and implementation of the initiatives. Thereby local stakeholders were actively involved. Locally driven initiatives improved equal access to basic services, helped to restore trust in local authorities, and contributed to social cohesion among different ideological groups of inhabitants in the municipalities. These activities constitute an integral part of the peacebuilding process in Ukraine.

# Design of project activities

## **Component 1 (Response-driven)**

GOAL: support to local authorities to formulate systematically accurate, accountable responses to demands put forward by (civil) society/local community.

ACTIVITIES: trainings on accountability and communication, networking, exchange of practices.

## **Component 2 (Demands-driven)**

GOAL: ensure inclusive processes for the local civil society, including IDP groups, to elaborate realistic demands towards local government actors.

ACTIVITIES: workshops and trainings on citizens participation and dialogue, implementation of small projects.

## **Component 3 (Dissemination)**

GOAL: dissemination of the results of the project to other local governments within Ukraine, wider civil society and central government.

ACTIVITIES: establishment of partner networks, seminars, press releases, manuals and educational activities.

# Lessons learned

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“Decentralization process that encourages locally driven initiatives is one of the key instruments for finding inclusive and non-violent solutions to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.”

- Lessons learned by PAX

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## 1. Invest in partnership instead of control

Pilot cities were free to choose a problematic area they would like to address in their activities. In the short-term perspective such an approach proved difficult. Project teams (sometimes even individual members) had varying visions of priorities in their municipalities. For majority of pilot cities EUSTAB was their first experience of participatory project, through which they were able to learn how to diagnose the local needs and reach compromise on the solutions to address them. However, the freedom of choice enhanced the feeling of ownership and responsibility about the process and its results. Such an approach required patience, time and a degree of trust in local partners on behalf of PAX and VNGi. Although at first challenging, it delivered excellent results in the long-term perspective, because pilot municipalities understood quite early that successful implementation of the project lies above all within their own long-term interest. PAX believes that trust and partnership promoted during the project led to genuine honesty and openness of the partners, highlighted among others during the presentation of results at the end of the project. The pilot cities were able to look at themselves from a critical standpoint and see both successes and challenges in the learning process, thus not being focused on achieving only material results at any cost.

PAX together with VNG International adhered to several principles to achieve the effect described above:

- ◆ Flexibility and availability of PAX/VNGi teams and experts/consultants;
- ◆ Providing support through on-site monitoring (several study visits by small teams composed of experienced experts from Ukraine and abroad), but also via regular correspondence;

- ◆ Applying a tailored approach, trying to understand the needs of each city and each project team. “A one size fits all” approach would prove to be detrimental to the quality of the learning process. Whichever similarities exist with other regions of Ukraine or other conflict environments throughout the world, a tailored approach in activities in Eastern Ukraine proved to be the right choice.
- ◆ Trusting partners and not rushing them into developing project proposals. PAX believes that good governance is a concept that requires patience, especially in the context of democracies in transition. Partners should go through several learning stages to gain experience and mature in their approach to solving problems. Mistakes (including procrastination with starting the activities) are often indispensable elements of that process. Guidance from PAX and VNG International and timely interventions when necessary allowed to turn missteps and/or mistakes into valuable lessons.

## 2. Explore the “window of opportunity” to civic activity

Much of Ukrainian society is very good at grasping their opportunities pertaining to participatory governance and learn fast about democratic engagement. Moreover, PAX noticed a genuine desire for change among the participants. The window of opportunity for civic activity, democratization and activities increasing the resilience of citizens against hate and polarization is still open, despite the heavy toll that the armed conflict is taking on society. Experts who participated in the project felt that most donors are currently focused predominantly on mitigating the negative effects of the armed conflict in the Donbas. Hence, humanitarian assistance and infrastructural projects prevail in terms of international support. Moreover, many initiatives targeted at local communities focus on IDPs (or specific groups such as war veterans). An inclusive approach to the engagement of community as a whole in the ongoing democratization requires much more attention. While focusing on salient details (the need to help vulnerable groups), we should never take our eyes off the bigger picture - establishing a stable democratic model of governance in Ukraine, that promotes inclusive and non-violent solutions to local challenges. The international community has a unique chance to invest some of its resources into the strengthening of the ability of local actors to sustain inclusive governance, taking into account the needs of community as a whole and its various groups.

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“You have to involve people for everything to work.  
You must engage members of the civil society.”

- Representative of Pavlohrad

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### 3. Attach value to the learning process

Ukraine is a country in transition that requires a well-elaborated approach to democratization. Protests arguably constituted the most visible instrument of public participation before Euromaidan. Lack of regular civic activity was an obstacle to stable democracy. Citizens focused predominantly on the end result of the process. Without any tangible outcomes of common activities (e.g., building a playground, renovating a street etc.), the community members saw the exercise of coming together for a common goal as being relatively ineffective. The feeling of the need to deliver in terms of practical results was also present among the pilot cities in EUSTAB project. PAX and VNGi therefore had to improve understanding among project teams about the role and importance of the learning process when it comes to the inclusive governance. Awareness about the value of having stable participation mechanisms is crucial for changes to happen at a local level. PAX and VNGi, with the help of experts/consultants had to invest considerable resources (through trainings, ongoing consultations, study trips) to draw attention of the project teams to the value of learning process associated with democratic participation. The availability of mechanisms of public participation in the community (requests for information, citizen appeals, e-petitions, local initiatives, public expertise, community meetings, public hearings, participatory budgeting) and their effective usage in policy-making is an important step to ensure inclusive and effective governance. At the end of the project many participants commented on the positive effect of the participation process itself, because they felt that in spite of the outcome of the activities (satisfactory or not), their voice was heard, in some cases for the first time in their lives.

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“We hope that in the future we all can continue to cooperate together successfully. The first steps have been already taken.”

- Representative of Pershotravensk

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### 4. Facilitate exchange of best practices on the regional level

Inspiration and motivation drive the ability to change. The current Ukrainian reality confirms, that members of local communities often adhere to the saying “to see it is to believe it”. At the beginning of the project, the pilot cities followed a relatively popular pattern of searching for inspiration and best practices in other regions of the country (Kyiv and Western Ukraine being popular destinations). Confirming this tendency, one of the project teams went on a study trip to Western Ukraine. The tendency of looking for best practices in remote regions of Ukraine has

started to change as soon as the project commenced and networking between municipalities unfolded. Participants started to realize that the solutions can be found in close proximity, both geographically and in terms of common mentality. PAX and VNGi promoted the links between the municipalities participating in the project through providing a platform for networking, offering ongoing advice and expert consultation. The final conference created an additional occasion for pilot municipalities, but also other regional representatives, to see that they can draw inspiration and look for advice in their own regions. We have observed a strong desire to learn more about what inclusive governance means in practice among public officials as well. Members of project teams from different cities bonded, which creates a chance for them to join efforts (and resources) in dealing with regional issues in the future. The feeling of shared responsibility developed among majority of pilot cities constitutes one of the most important achievements of the project.

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“Equal participation gives added value to the project. Youth, adults... I like that everyone was involved, that everyone had an equal say in the process”.

- International expert, who assisted in the implementation of the project

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## **5. Promote better understanding about the division of roles in the local community**

The relative inexperience of actors on the local level in the Eastern Ukraine pertaining to the building of a democratic and inclusive governance often is exemplified by lack of understanding (or misinterpretation) of their roles in the society. At the beginning of the project, it was not uncommon for local authorities to perceive civil society not as a partner, but mainly as a watchdog. Authorities feared that CSOs want to undermine the legitimacy of government officials in the eyes of the constituency. Civil society organizations, on the other hand, felt that members of the local authorities act as gate-keepers when it comes to providing the [administrative] resources to their community. Moreover, authorities were often accused of using a top-down (“all knowing”) approach to the provision of public services to the local population. In the course of the project the vicious circle of misconception was transformed into a virtuous circle of cooperation because:

- ◆ Project teams in EUSTAB consisted of members of both civil society and local authorities. Other representatives of the local community were invited to participate in an inclusive approach to policy-making. Members of different societal groups were no longer insulated from one another. They could openly talk and share their views about the solutions to the local needs. Through effective facilitation, the in-group/out-group dynamics started to fade and teams understood that essentially they all want to achieve the same results. A synergy effect can be achieved if they all combine their efforts and expertise.
- ◆ The distrust and miscommunication between civil society and local authorities resulted mainly from different perceptions actors shared about one another prior to the project due to lack of experience of common initiatives in a long-term perspective. Trainings and networking opportunities provided by PAX and VNGi during the first stage of activities, followed by an emphasis on team work in the project improved the trust and communication between civil society and local authorities.
- ◆ Communication is the key to effective implementation of activities. For external actors it is important to clarify the expectations and challenges before the actual activities start. The success of joint activities depends on the common understanding of the principles developed in the project (e.g. what partners understand behind inclusive governance). Investment in effective communication helps to save human (e.g. expert's time devoted to consultation) and financial resources during the implementation of the project.

# Looking ahead

- ◆ **Ensure follow-up activities.** The municipalities of Eastern Ukraine still require close guidance and monitoring. Pilot cities strengthened the democratic record of civic participation of their communities. However, there is a threat that without any type of assistance after project's completion, a spillback (stalemate) in inclusive policies might occur in the communities. Political and economic uncertainty, decentralization, proximity of the armed conflict, changing demographics of the local population due to migration and displacement will remain serious challenges for years to come.
- ◆ **Take account of the political situation.** As shown on the examples of certain pilot cities, the political will of the central authorities in particular remains to be a key factor influencing the success of good governance efforts of donors. The external pressure from the local, national and international actors is seen as a major factor that could change the unfavourable political context. Experience in linking different levels of governance (which PAX brings) to achieve policy goals and conduct advocacy campaigns is seen as a desired asset for local partners in Ukraine.
- ◆ **Invest in sustainable development.** Taking into account the growing presence of various donors in Eastern Ukraine, their attention has to be focused on making sure the communities have a plan for sustainable development (e.g., involving (local) businesses) and not on short-term influx of finances. Some local actors in Ukraine have a tendency to focus on immediate financial support, neglecting the value of community building exercises.
- ◆ **Focus on community as a whole.** The challenges in Ukraine have to be approached from a inclusive perspective and based on involving a community as a whole, not only its individual members. It is important to involve 'frontline- municipalities' more and set-up a structural approach of engagement between them and other municipalities in the region/wider Ukraine and with their local CSOs.
- ◆ **Peaceful future of Ukraine depends on its youth.** The next generations of Ukrainians will have to face the variety of challenges brought by the armed conflict. Right now it is important to enable and involve youth more structurally in conflict resolution and prevention (e.g. PAX's project Youth Peace Tour). Possible measures include: non-violent communication, dialogue, critical thinking, civic education at schools, participatory mechanism of involvement in the life of the community (e.g. participatory budgeting).

# Best practices

In less than two years, the 6 municipalities that participated in EUSTAB have gone through changes in their mentality and behaviour. Uncertainty, distrust, misconception and passiveness turned into cooperation, hope, awareness and engagement. The inexperienced project teams often had to learn from mistakes, however, by the end of the project they gained a deep insight into advantages and challenges of participatory governance and non-violent communication. Pilot cities had to go through all of the stages of the implementation process – starting with identification of the local problems to finding their own unique approach to solving them. The learning process, its challenges and achievements constitute a unique type of expertise that cannot be taken away from them. PAX encourages others to tap into that source of knowledge. In order to facilitate the exchange of best practices in Eastern Ukraine and beyond the region, we are highlighting the expertise of each municipality obtained in the course of the EUSTAB project. On the map of Ukraine we present on the next page, you can find the geographical location of our pilot municipalities, the name of their projects, the specific areas in which you can ask for their expert advice, and the name of project partners that were involved in implementation of the activities. The best piece of advice is given by those who know the context and have gone through similar challenges. Hence, we especially encourage other municipalities to make use of that knowledge, because as the saying goes “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”.

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“For the first time in the history of our city we conducted an in-depth and inclusive assessment of needs and expectations of the local population”

- Representative of Izium

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**Overview of the  
projects implemented  
in the framework of  
EUSTAB**

**Project:**  
**Centre for civic activity**  
In Sviathorisk (population 4 504)

**Project:**  
**ART-territory "Everyone is welcome"**  
In Pavlohrad (population 106 298)

**Project:**  
**Partnership for Development**  
In Pershotravensk (population 28 696)

**Map of Ukraine**

**Capital:** Kyiv

**Population:** 47 732 079

**Conflict since:** 2014 (state January 2019)

**Casualties:** 12.800-13.000 (including 3.300 civilians)

**Injured civilians:** 7.000-9.000

**Internally displaced:** 1,5-2 million

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aggregated numbers based on data provided by  
international organizations

**Project:**  
**Open the region of ĭzium**  
In ĭzium (population 49 370)

**Project:**  
**Pro 4T**  
In Sloviansk (population 117 475)

**Project:**  
**Ĭ am the history of my country**  
In Pokrovsk (population 63 437)



"contact line" of  
the armed conflict  
in Ukraine

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## Details of projects implemented in the framework of EUSTAB

**Project:**  
**ART-territory "Everyone is welcome"**  
In Pavlohrad (population 106 298)

**Ask project team for advice on:**

- ♦ Facilitating an effective adaptation to the new living conditions of families of internally displaced persons
- ♦ Conducting socio-cultural activities centred around libraries
- ♦ Raising awareness about the history and culture of the city among the population
- ♦ Providing assistance to IDPs through art, consultation services, psychological assistance, cinematography and sports
- ♦ Conducting an art or a sports flash-mob
- ♦ Organizing integration workshop dedicated to cuisine and food
- ♦ Conducting integration and entertainment workshops for families
- ♦ Organizing educational, business and entrepreneurial workshops exploring opportunities for members of local community (including IDPs)

**Whom to contact:**

- ♦ Pavlohrad City Council
- ♦ NGO "Agency for Economic Development of Pavlohrad"

**Project:**  
**Centre for civic activity**  
In Sviathorisk (population 4 504)

**Ask project team for advice on:**

- ♦ Creating a resource centre to support the civic activity of your local community
- ♦ Raising the knowledge about fundraising and project management among local activists and CSOs
- ♦ Involving volunteers, activists and members of local community in the process of local governance
- ♦ Creating a network of cooperation among local CSOs

**Whom to contact:**

- ♦ Sviatohirsk City Council
- ♦ Charity organizaion "Soniachne misto"

**Project:**  
**Partnership for Development**  
In Pershotravensk (population 28 696)

**Ask project team for advice on:**

- ♦ Adopting a multi-annual programme promoting strategic partnership between local authorities and CSOs
- ♦ Involving the community in addressing socio-economic issues and cultural development of the city
- ♦ Conducting a comprehensive in-depth survey of public opinion
- ♦ Addressing the ecological situation in their city
- ♦ Organize a competition among the talented youth in your city
- ♦ Popularize physical activity among the younger generation of citizens
- ♦ Promote social inclusiveness of children with disabilities

**Whom to contact:**

- ♦ NGO "Zviazok Pokolin"
- ♦ NGO The Community of Parents of Children with Disabilities „Dovira"
- ♦ NGO "Centre for the Development of the City"
- ♦ Border-Guard Association of Pershotravensk
- ♦ Pershotravensk City Council



**Project:**

**Open the region of Izium**

In Izium (population 49 370)

**Ask project team for advice on:**

- ♦ Understanding how to assess better the needs of your local community
- ♦ How to obtain the best practices from other municipalities
- ♦ Conducting a comprehensive in-depth survey of public opinion
- ♦ Preparing a study visit to a neighbouring region or other part of the country
- ♦ Conducting a discussion about the needs and future plans for the development of your local community

**Whom to contact:**

- ♦ NGO Iziumskii Shliakh
- ♦ Municipal Civil Centre of Izium "Rozvytok"

**Project:**

**Pro 4T**

In Sloviansk (population 117 475)

**Ask project team for advice on:**

- ♦ Establishing active cooperation between youth, adults and local authorities
- ♦ Conducting a workshop dedicated to non-violent communication among youth
- ♦ Using theatre as a method for building dialogue in your community
- ♦ Holding a competition for the best slogan of your project
- ♦ Making use of art and social creativity to boost the activity of your community
- ♦ Making the landscape of your city greener

**Whom to contact:**

- ♦ Sloviansk City Council
- ♦ NGO Promyr

**Project:**

**I am the history of my country**

In Pokrovsk (population 63 437)

**Ask project team for advice on:**

- ♦ Raising awareness among young people about the history of the place they live in
- ♦ Building cooperation among various actors in your community by promoting cultural legacy and traditions of your region
- ♦ Conducting archaeological and ethnographic activities involving members of local community and experts
- ♦ Organizing a youth camp dedicated to raising awareness about the history and tradition of your region
- ♦ Creating a board game about your municipality and/or your region
- ♦ Organizing an ethno-festival and a workshop popularizing the culture and tradition of your region

**Whom to contact:**

- ♦ Pokrovsk City Council
- ♦ NGO "Toloka"

# Annex

## Overview of decentralization processes in Ukraine<sup>2</sup>

Creation of a decentralization action plan "Concept of Reforming Local Self-Government and Territorial Structure of Power" in April 2014.

Laws on amendments to the Budget and Tax Codes of Ukraine. Due to those amendments, local budgets increased by UAH 123,4 billion: from UAH 68.6 billion in 2014 up to UAH 192 billion in 2017. The share of local budgets in the consolidated budget of Ukraine is continuously increasing and, as of the end of 2017, it is close to 50 % (in 2015, it totalled 45.6 %). Direct revenues in the local budget grew from 10% to around 36%.

The Law "On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities", which was an important step in formation of a capable basic level of local self-government. As of the beginning of 2018, 699 amalgamated territorial communities (the "ATCs") were established.

The Law "On Cooperation of Territorial Communities", which established the mechanism of dealing with common problems faced by communities such as waste management and recycling, development of joint infrastructure, etc.. As of the beginning of 2018, 118 cooperation agreements are being implemented. 535 communities took advantage of that mechanism.

The Law "On Fundamental Principles of the State Regional Policy", which increased the government support for regional development and the development of infrastructure in communities by 32 times over the period of reform: from UAH 0.5 billion in 2014 up to UAH 16.1 billion in 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Based on information available on <https://decentralization.gov.ua>

The Law "On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine regarding the Decentralisation of Powers in the Area of Architectural and Construction Supervision and Improvement of the Town Planning Legislation". About 90 cities and ATCs were vested with new town planning powers.

A package of laws pertaining to the enhancement of powers of local self-government bodies and the optimization of administrative services provision. It allowed delegating powers to provide administrative services to local self-government bodies of respective level: individuals registration at the place of residence, issuance of national identity documents, state registration of legal entities and individuals, entrepreneurs, associations of citizens, civil registration, registration of proprietary rights, dealing with land issues, etc.



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