

# Combating Youth Exclusion in Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts, Ukraine





# The Project

**This project is working to build the capacity of local youth NGOs to develop innovative and effective partnerships to address youth social exclusion in Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts in Ukraine. While economically dynamic, these regions have also been severely affected by industrial restructuring, with consequent with high levels of local social and environmental problems. The project has focused on exchanging experience and expertise between Groundwork's "Youth Works" programme in the United Kingdom and the Donetsk Youth Debate Centre, working closely with local social NGOs in Donetsk and Lugansk. The project is helping to replicate UK experience of bringing together partners from different sectors (NGOs, state agencies, local community and private sector) to deliver focused area-based youth support initiatives targeting severely disaffected and disadvantaged young people (aged 5-25).**

**The project is operating at a number of closely integrated levels. Internationally this includes exchange of experience through study visits to the United Kingdom by Ukraine colleagues, and a number of UK training and support visits to Ukraine and the translation and adaptation of training and other resources, including a Youth Works "Toolkit". Within Ukraine Donetsk Youth Debate Centre has also developed a project web-site, newsletters and training packages. Crucially the project has developed six local pilot actions to put the project concepts into practice with delivery led by local NGOs in Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts, each working with young people facing significant needs and challenges. The project has also worked to evaluate progress and lessons to promote continuous learning and improvement in delivery.**



## Objectives of the project

To help develop understanding and capacity within Ukraine to build sustainable “multi-stakeholder” approaches to combating youth exclusion through local targeted activities that help to regenerate local communities socially and environmentally.

To develop resource materials, including an adapted Youth Works “Toolkit” and complementary training and other resources, including a project website

To implement six small scale pilot 'Youth Works' projects working with local social NGO's, three in Donetsk and three in Lugansk oblasts

To evaluate and feedback local project experiences to help build better project practice and opportunities for long term project sustainability and replication

To share and disseminate project experiences, learning, outputs and outcomes with others working in similar fields in Ukraine and other parts of the former Soviet Union.

The six local projects have provided local people and their communities with the confidence, skills and opportunities which are achieving sustainable outcomes.



# Achievements

- **In 6 pilot communities conditions for improving the situation of the project target group have been created. This has been achieved through establishing youth clubs where the work is involving young people back into community life, raising their confidence and self-esteem, increasing awareness of the young people about issues including the negative impact of alcohol, drugs, smoking and developing their motivation to look for employment. Due to the youth clubs activities the time young people spend on the streets and the risk of their involvement in criminal activities has reduced.**
- **The 6 projects are empowering local residents and encouraging them to play an active roles in steering groups which are combating a range of issues including social exclusion.**
- **The 6 pilot projects are encouraging communities to co-operate with NGOs, community and public authorities. To help solve the problems associated with excluded youth by applying a range of innovative interventions.**





- **The level of awareness about problems and needs of excluded youth has been raised among public and public authorities.**
- **Capacities of NGOs from pilot communities to implement innovative approaches and methods in their youth work have been strengthened and they are reliable partners of public authorities in the process of community and youth problem solving.**
- **Methods and approaches introduced during the project are being partly implementing by public authorities for development of local programmes aimed at young people and excluded youth in particular.**
- **Experience and project good practices are being continuously disseminated.**



# Local projects

## Rainbow

Staff work on this pilot project in Stahanov have been engaging the local community, improving multi agency partnerships whilst re-engaging socially excluded young people in their communities. During the first year of the projects implementation, we have made considerable achievements: levels of anti-social behaviour have fallen significantly and, as a small example of specific action most of the target group have stopped smoking.

234 young people (159 male and 75 female) have benefited from the project's activity programme. The pilot coordinator and volunteers have conducted 34 formal training sessions and 24 thematic studies on legal, medical, social, ethical and moral issues. A number of informal topics were included including Life Skills among Teenagers and Young People.

In 2006 much was achieved in regard to the quality and quantity of diverse educative activities and events carried out within the pilot. We would like to recap on the most memorable actions and events below:

Bright and enchanting performance "Dedication to the Rainbow Land" in fancy dress was filled by various competitions. Costumes of Pirates, Cossacks, and fairy tale characters were prepared by the young people themselves.

During the Holiday of the Ukrainian Varenik the project organised a master-class in cooking traditional Ukrainian dishes. This involved the young people who attendants of the youth club. The participants developed a number of new and exciting skills these being: reading recipes, preparing ingredients, exploring hygiene issues, health and safety, table manners as well as cooking up a treat.



During the summer season the ecological project “Tour Grad” took place. This ordinary outing to the nature outside of the city has been turned into a fascinating event. The local pond has been cleaned during the project. After the hard work was carried out on the pond we organized a sports competition, in which the young people performed songs and danced. In addition to the pleasurable time the young people were taught how to make a fire in order to bake potatoes which were wrapped in foil.

There was a competition for the best costume, “the Fantastic Costumes of the summer”. These costumes had to be made from natural materials; this event was enjoyed by all the participants and of those who judged the competition.

With great enthusiasm “Rainbow Young People” have participated in the process of land regeneration bordering the pilot project's premises they have cleared away all the waste from the local waste ground then planted trees and flowers.







# Local projects

## Rainbow

Residents of “Juzhnaya” provided young people with flower seeds and young plants including chestnuts, maple trees and oak trees amongst others.

“Break Dancing” tournaments involving local young people and other youths from two boarding institutions took place several times last year. Participating teenagers from Stahonov city shelter for minors and local young people competed in front of judges included students that attend the dance section of Stahonov Palace of Culture.

During the year the pilot project has implemented thematic studies, lectures and conversations with experts from the local Police (Militia), Narcological Centre, medical institutions, housing and communal services. These meetings have educated young people to understand their rights and responsibilities, learning about relevant Ukrainian legislations and their for gaining a sound understand of the consequences of anti-social behaviour.







## Family Spring

It has taken a lot of time to find an approach to teach the youth leaders, who are the leaders of the mini-project.

The project partnership within the community of the Proletarsky district, Donetsk has helped the local schools with the established of youth clubs. As they have made contact with socially excluded teenagers and young people by establishing quality leisure time has been spent within hobby groups such as “National Motives” and “Needle Woman”.

In the course of the year 50 young people (20 male and 30 female) have visited the “Family Spring” youth club on a regular basis. Almost 300 young people have participated in awareness activities, which include disability awareness sessions and sexual health sessions. Approximately 24 “life skills” sessions have been carried out so far during the project.

One of the most important elements of the pilot project is the community involvement of the district's residents and family members of the project participants' that have themselves been suffering from social exclusion along with their children.

Here is an example of some of the projects. Last year everyone was pleased with the involvement of the Mardi Gras holiday and the project's attendance, which involved the young people from local schools and the residents of the nearby streets. All guests have learned about traditions of this holiday and its concomitant ceremonies. Performance in fancy dresses made great impression on everyone; the revelry was followed by tea-drinking with delicious pancakes cooked by volunteers.

September 2006 was marked by the “Week of Kindness”, aimed at volunteer's involvement into social actions and events. Pilot project volunteers have visited 12 disabled people at home, gave them presents provided by sponsors of the action.



## Local projects

### Family Spring

The innovative programme helped to cultivate respect between older generation and young people. “Heart of Danko” aimed to recognise local heroes and their contribution towards their community. Young people identified 8 nominees with whom they have conducted preliminary interviews. After these interviews the winners were chosen and had prizes presented to them.

In June 2006 the pilot held a drawing competition named “I Can See the World” young people drew pictures on the asphalt. In their drawings young people have expressed their perception of the world and concerns that bother them.

With the view of cultural development in the course of the whole calendar year, young people have visited plays and performances and have shared their impressions afterwards at the joint tea-drinking.

“Leader School” has been established for several months in the mini-project's framework. Young people got to know about human rights and responsibilities, tools of advocacy, have learned to stand upon their rights in practice.

Young people were the direct initiators and organizers of mini-football and backgammon tournaments.

Starting from June 2006 the pilot project has been placed at School Number 138. The administration of school has kindly provided project with the premises. During the summer months the repair of the premises has been carried out with joint efforts (plastering and painting of ceiling, replacement of electric wiring, wall painting). Due to help from sponsors' the pilot project acquired furniture, piano, DVD-karaoke system, and TV-set and office equipment.



Pilot coordinator Svetlana Stepanez in close cooperation with one of the most active community members Mrs. Tamara Izyumova find “keys” to each teenager, develop direct individual plans on career guidance for target young people.

An important topic of the pilot project implementation is learning about healthy living. In addition to the training course on Life Skills, coordinators and volunteers conduct training, lectures and discussions with young people on the topics that are of great interest to them.

We are pleased to mention that in the creation and editing of special issues of community informational bulletin “Harold of Settlement” that is being published and disseminated in the community of Proletarsky district take part in pilot project volunteers and partly its young people.

To sum up we would like to celebrate that project's aims such as social adaptation of socially excluded youth and community involvement into this process are achieved at this phase.







# Local projects

## Family Spring

Year 2006 was successful for our community, the youth club “Family Spring”, community activists and for the staff of the project “Combating Youth Exclusion in Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts”. We have achieved such results only due to the insistent work and devotion to social sphere and also under support of “Donetsk Youth Debate Centre”. Working as a solid team we have achieved a lot in the course of the last year and we all are proud of these achievements.

A big amount of work is ahead and we intend to be guided by the basis of our achievements and results of the year 2006. In the 2007 we will continue to work together in order to improve life of people in our community, district and city.







## I Can

This pilot project in Khartsyzsk has identified the priority directions in social work with children and young people and they in turn have been united in order to solve one of the main community problems the building of children's playground in the centre of the city.

In the course of the 2006 26 young people (10 male and 16 female) are visiting youth club at the regular basis. During last year there were 19 training and thematic studies on the base of mini-project "I Can". Total number of participants of the actions and events provided by the project is 175 young people of Khartsyzsk community.

Forming of aesthetic upbringing of teenagers and young people is being provided by participation of young people in cultural activities. Visits of theatre plays have caused a real delight among young people as a lot of them have never been to the theatre before entering the youth club "I Can".

Study sessions and leisure time help young people to get to know each other better and to make friends.

In November/December 2006 the pilot project has implemented training on Life Skills involving volunteers. Young people actively participate in discussions of topical and urgent questions. One of the last social topics that were of great interest to them is the gender issue in Ukraine. Due to the project implementation each young person attending the youth club is aware of his/her rights that will help them to be more aware of the consequences.

The project participants have learned about Europe and the European Union and have learned about the capital cities of each country and the historic culture of each country.



# Local projects

## I Can

Ten young people participated in a drawing competition, which consisted of drawings of memorable places of the city that the young people have visited.

Two tours investigating graffiti have been successfully put into practice and have allowed an increased awareness for the young people who have integrated socially excluded young people with the art of graffiti, giving them possibilities to fulfil their creative abilities. Such events have united young people and professionals in this kind of art with attendance of the mini-project.

The action “Treasure Quest” has been conducted in August 2006. Teenagers and young people of the pilot project have invented this activity exclusively for small children from the kindergartens. 20 small children and 13 young people have participated in the event aimed at showing of creative abilities of the target audience, to encourage them to care about others.





Young people from the project have participated in the process of territory regeneration in the city park of culture and rest. Young people were working with enthusiasm though it was quite hard to clear and tidy the territory that has been neglected for many years. After much hard work the teenagers were very surprised by the provision of tickets to the circus tent given by the head of department of culture of Khartsyzsk City Council, who was pleasantly surprised by the volunteer initiative from the young people.

The young people on the pilot project have widened their knowledge and skills by working and learning about the worldwide Internet. 10 young people have attended computer and Internet courses.

The important direction of mini-project's work is the initiative on creation of children's playground. A questionnaire has been designed by the community and confirmed the necessity of such a building in the city with a population over 60,000. Creation of initiative group and the development of a fundraising programme for the initiative will be started in 2007.

In December 2006 young people were glad to celebrate Christmas Day investigating in different ceremonies, popular beliefs and traditions of this holiday. The most active participants in all youth club's activities have got nice souvenirs.

The pilot project "I Can" has a lot of ideas that will unite young people as before and that should be implemented in the 2007.





## Local projects

### **Gorlovsky Youth Informational Centre**

Young people want to be noticed, to be heard and of course to be supported. Youth has a strong desire to be treated as full members of society and citizens of their country. Young people want to build, to plan and to actively participate in life. But for these purposes they need support and perhaps create conditions for development of skills and abilities, to express and to make their ideas become a reality.

The overall aim of the mini-project in Gorlovka (Donetsk region) called “Gorlovsky Informational Centre” relies on the activity coordinator and volunteer staff to combat these issues.

In the course 2006, 88 young people have visited the mini-project on a regular basis (41 female and 47 male); more than 150 young people have participated in project activities and events. Socially excluded teenagers and young people took part in 14 Life Skills sessions and healthy living sessions. The “mini project” regularly conducts computer studies. The pilot project coordinator Leonid Komarov said “Young people who don't have computer skills have far less opportunities to express one self”. That's why young people are waiting for classes. It's indisputable that youth involvement into community life with the help of computers and the internet all allow young people to open up new possibilities and prospects in for the future.

In the spring and summer period young attendants of the youth club have decided to improve the gardens of their favourite club. They have organized meetings and residents of the local community have planned the regeneration of the land next to the club's premises.





In 2006 the group implemented visits to concerts, city parks and other cultural interest sports. As well as participating in participating on a healthy way of life and other interesting discussions and fascinating events such as “Children are Our Future”, “Believe in Yourself”, “Winter Fairy Tale”. All of these events plus a lot of more were conducted in the “Gorlovsky Informational Centre” during the course of the project implementation in 2006.

In November 2006 mini-project “Gorlovsky Informational Centre” in cooperation with partner organizations from the European Union implemented “Youth with Youth through Mass Media” being held in Estonia with financial support from the EC “Youth” program. This project has helped 6 volunteers of the mini-project to meet with their contemporaries from Estonia, Greece, Lithuania and Azerbaijan. In the course of the week young people have examined the role of Mass Media in establishment of multicultural dialogue and have made journalistic investigations.





## Local projects

### Edelweiss

The young people of mini-project “Edelweiss” which has been established in Lugansk would like to wish their partners and friends good health, happiness, study progress, happy families and everyone to find one direction in life to everyone who is engaged in the project's activities.

The wishes of the young people relate directly to the main aims of the project. In the course of the last year the young people that have participated in the project have learned and achieved a lot from working with experienced social workers, teachers and mentors.

This project has worked in partnership with the Regional Charitable Foundation “Teenager”. During the last year young people attending the pilot project have met interesting people, have participated in 20 training sessions on healthy living and on human rights. 46 young people (38 male and 8 female) have visited the youth club on a regular basis and more than 120 teenagers have participated in other activities.

The most interesting and memorable for young people from “Edelweiss” pilot project were outing trips from the city and community regenerations. Young people attending the project's activities have laid out flower-beds in the yard of the club's premises, planted flowers and young trees. This is not the full list of actions and events that were held in 2006 in the framework of the project.

Young people from “Edelweiss” have perfectly managed with the renovations. They have painted the walls, put up wallpaper and decorated the premises with bright posters, pictures and drawings. Unfortunately we had to face the realities of the “adults' life” we had to leave the premises.





Starting from October 2006 the mini-project has been working with Lugansk secondary school # 14. Now young people freely participate in the new premises of the youth club.

Effective multi-sectoral partnership, social work with socially excluded young people and with those having anti-social behavior are the constituents of our work that has already produced significant results. The quantity of young people from the risk group of being socially excluded has been significantly decreased in 2006 on the local community territory. School progress has been increased among pilot project's attendants; the project staff gives them certain direction for self-actualization. The local community of the Shevchenko quarter in Lugansk has become more solid and ready to unite any moment in order to solve common problems. In the local community multi-sectoral approaches are being used effectively with a view of local problem solving. Namely these facts are very demonstrative and indicative and say about effectiveness of mini-project work.





## Local projects

### Meteor

All the staff of the mini-project “Meteor” are situated in Alchevsk within the Lugansk region are devoted with commitment and dedication to the target young people who are attending the youth club. The project is based at the City Club for Youth.

The project staff consists of 12 volunteers, which range from ages 16 to 65.

In the course of 2006 the activities of the pilot project have engaged with 132 young people (57 female and 75 male). During this time approximately 24 non-formal educational trainings sessions thematic lectures and lectures have been carried out.

The leisure time has been organized in a varied way with a variety of activities that will impress the most experienced of social workers. Teenagers and young people have had opportunities to be participate in break dance activities, varnish painting, football, singing, modern dances, knitting and sewing. The participation in these activities and events is part of 'Day of the Yard'. Holidays and performances that were held at the backyards of the club's premise have involved residents of the local community.

While entering the club's premise you would be astonished by the dŭcor as all the walls are decorated with bright hand made articles that the young people have made themselves. In autumn 2006 with joint the efforts of the young people and their older mentors a repair of the club's premise has been put into practice.





A girl became one of the most active participants of the project. She is being bringing up in not full family that is not sufficiently provided for (altogether there were 8 children, now 4 under-aged are left in the family). She is studying in the sixth grade and she is not successful in her studies. She is in kleptomania and each year has epiclesis. Last time local coordinator had to take her to the sanitary station by her own.

The girl was not respected in her class, her classmates stood aside her.

As the result of club attendance she became more active, began to study well. She has believed in herself as she has a possibility to communicate with her contemporaries, elder volunteers, to show her up from the best side.

Now it's obvious that her classmates are more willing to speak to her. Her accidents with stealing have stopped.





# Implementing Agencies

## **Donetsk Youth Debate Centre**

The mission of the organisation is to promote the development of civil society by means of designing and implementing educational and social projects and programmes.

The organisation works in four priority areas:

### *Development of Personal Community Initiative*

The basis for civil society development is an active life position of every citizen. One of the main tasks of Donetsk Youth Debate Centre is overall encouragement, informational and consultative support of initiatives with young people aimed at bringing positive changes into modern Ukrainian society. Elements of personal civic initiative development are included into all projects and programmes of the Centre.

### *Human Rights protection*

Promoting and respecting Human Rights and action in the face of their violation is a fundamental part of a democratic society. Donetsk Youth Debate Centre contributes to the improvement of legal situation in Ukraine through education, information, lobbying and rights protection of young generation, providing opportunities to take part in the decision making process on different levels.



### *International Integration*

**Our activity in this direction allows Ukrainian citizens to realize themselves as an integrated part of the World Community. Donetsk Youth Debate Centre implements programmes, which provide children and youth with an opportunity to gain knowledge in diverse fields, to learn experience of different countries in problem solving, to learn culture and traditions during international youth exchanges, seminars, conferences, internships. The Organisation also works on raising awareness about integration processes taking place in Europe and their impact on the situation in Ukraine.**

### *Personal Development*

**Donetsk Youth Debate Centre provides an opportunity for personal development of children and young people. This is achieved by implementation of educational and psychological programmes aimed at building key knowledge and skills by the participants. Use of non-formal education approach allows teaching children and young people to use their knowledge and skills in different spheres of civil life. DYDC pays real attention to the conception of equal opportunities for all children and young people regardless of their sex, race, nationality, physical abilities and social background.**





# Implementing Agencies

## Groundwork UK

Groundwork is a leading UK NGO that works to regenerate areas affected by serious environmental, social and economic problems. Groundwork was set up as an initiative of UK government in 1981 to develop innovative multi sector approaches to deliver holistic area-based regeneration, operating through nearly 50 local “Groundwork Trusts”, and employing nearly 2500 staff in total with disciplines ranging from landscape architecture and regeneration, community work, education, youthwork and Environmental Management Systems for businesses.

Groundwork's vision is of a society made up of sustainable communities, which are vibrant, healthy and safe, which respect the local and global environment and where individuals and enterprise prosper. We work closely with government, communities and the private sector to help achieve this vision.

Every year Groundwork Trusts deliver thousands of neighbourhood projects, which aim to deliver benefits in three ways:

- For people - creating opportunities for people to learn new skills and take local action;
- For places - creating better, safer and healthier neighbourhoods; and
- For prosperity - helping businesses and individuals fulfil their potential.



**Groundwork recognises that people, places and prosperity are inextricably linked and designs and delivers projects that bring benefits for all three. An important new priority theme is to help communities reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change.**

**We work extensively with international partners, especially in the European Union and the former Soviet Union. There are associate Groundwork partners adopting the UK model in the USA and Japan. We have been working with partners in Ukraine since 2000 helping to deliver both national and regionally based environmental and social projects.**



# Implementing Agencies

## Youth Works

Youth Works is a national UK NGO delivered as a successful partnership established originally by “Crime Concern”, the major private sector company “Marks & Spencer” and Groundwork.

Youth Works provides young people growing up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with the skills and opportunities to develop their personal skills to reduce crime and improve their social, physical and economic environments.

The Youth Works vision is:

To address issues of crime and criminality among young people.

To provide structured vibrant and optimistic programmes and activities aimed at providing young people with the skills, capacity and motivation to become directly involved in their personal development and the regeneration of their local community.

To involve the wider community to ensure that the Youth Works programme is sustained, adding value to existing and new partnership initiatives.





**Specific programme objectives include:**

**Reducing “youth nuisance” by providing a range of community based activities and access to a range of recreational activities and facilities.**

**Giving at risk young people better opportunities to fulfil their potential and reduce the risk of offending behaviour.**

**Helping young people to find jobs through access to training and educational activities.**

**Building local community confidence and cohesion from reductions in crime rates, youth nuisance and the fear of crime.**

**Creating opportunities for young people and older residents to take part in decision taking in their lives and become active stakeholders in their communities.**

**Improving the local environment that promote local vitality, confidence and economy, and helping to both attract and retain local business and employment opportunities.**



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This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Donetsk Youth Debate Centre and Groundwork UK and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union