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Маріупольська
міська рада



"Bridges of trust" Communication platform for civic activists and Mariupol government



Background

Mariupol is the largest city in Ukrainian controlled Donbas, but it has also been the most infrastructurally isolated and one of the most politically volatile. Local elections in Mariupol in 2015 while contentious, resulted in an old guard, yet reform minded city administration, which has introduced new blood and fresh approaches to municipal management.

Along with this a growth of activists' potential in common problems solving and watchdogging during the last three years has made them sustainable participants of community development process. However, there is a lack of understanding and cooperation between Mariupol activists and the city administration, which would potentially bring more efficiency into civic activities and increase positive perception of governmental decisions. A dialogue in different contexts at different levels is associated with a high appreciation of values such as freedom of expression, justice, partnership, tolerance. Local administration does not articulate clearly their decisions to the community and local activists in their turn start blaming city administration without clear understanding of the situation. This situation results in tensions, often fueled by the journalists. According to the results of the latest survey made by GFK, less people in Mariupol see an improvement in inclusive decision-making (43% in December 2017, compare to 51% in April 2017). Creation of



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conditions for constructive dialogue between the public and local authorities through the establishment of a communication platform to discuss the city's development prospects, as well as through the development of key principles and methodologies for efficient communication will contribute to mutual understanding, trust and productive engagement between the activists and city government. Active residents will be involved into the dialogue with the authorities through direct participation in the training programs and events on topics relevant to the community, the possibility of information dissemination through modern telecommunication technologies (online streaming through blogging, etc.).

Local Democracy Agency and Mariupol city council, NGO "Skhidna Brama" will teach authorities and activists how to articulate their plans and activities, check facts in social media, hold 3 open discussions with the authorities on topics actual for the local community. These topics will be proposed by community via online voting.

As a result of the activity

Activity Objective(s) 1

To equip local authorities and citizens in Mariupol with the tools for constructive dialogue on issues of local importance through trainings on effective communications and facilitated public meetings for local authorities and citizens.

Activity Objective 2

To improve the necessary relationships and skills participants need to have more honest, productive engagements with one another.

Activity Objective 3

Improve perception of citizen oversight/participation in local government decision making

Training courses

- Effective communication – mid April – mid May (one 2-days training for each group)



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- Blogging -

in April

- June the grantee will hold 2 training sessions for 40 participants (representatives of local authorities- 10, activists – 30) on following topics:

- 1) Practical tools for successful managing of social networks
- 2) Effective messaging through social networks
- 3) Fact checking

After the training on effective communication, 10 the most active attendees will discuss with their initiative groups the criteria of effective communication with the local authorities. The trainer will give a guidance on how to hold these discussions. Key messages collected during the meeting will be sent to the trainer Diana Protsenko for further discussion.

40 trainees (2 groups/20 people) will be gathered to discuss the rules of effective communication based on previously collected information). As a result, the participants will develop a code of rules for constructive dialogue between the local authorities and community. The codes of rules developed by 2 separate groups will be discussed among all 40 participants to develop the final version. It is planned to sign a memorandum of cooperation between the activists and local government based on these rules.

Activity 3. Public discussions

During May-August, 2018 the grantee will hold 3 public discussions in "Halabuda space" of actual topics, initiated by the activists under participation of the local authorities responsible for the relevant issues.

40 participants of the training course will select 3 topics for each public discussion based on opinions collected in their initiative groups (communities).

Outputs:

To equip local authorities and citizens in Mariupol with the tools for constructive dialogue on issues of local importance through trainings on effective communications and facilitated public meetings for local authorities and citizens.



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- 3

training

courses for 40 representatives of local activists and authorities

- 15 people taught how to conduct trainings of effective communication and blogging in their communities

- 3 public discussions of actual topics, initiated by the activists under participation of the local authorities responsible for the relevant issues

- signed Memorandum of cooperation between the activists and local government based on code of rules for constructive dialogue between the local authorities and community.