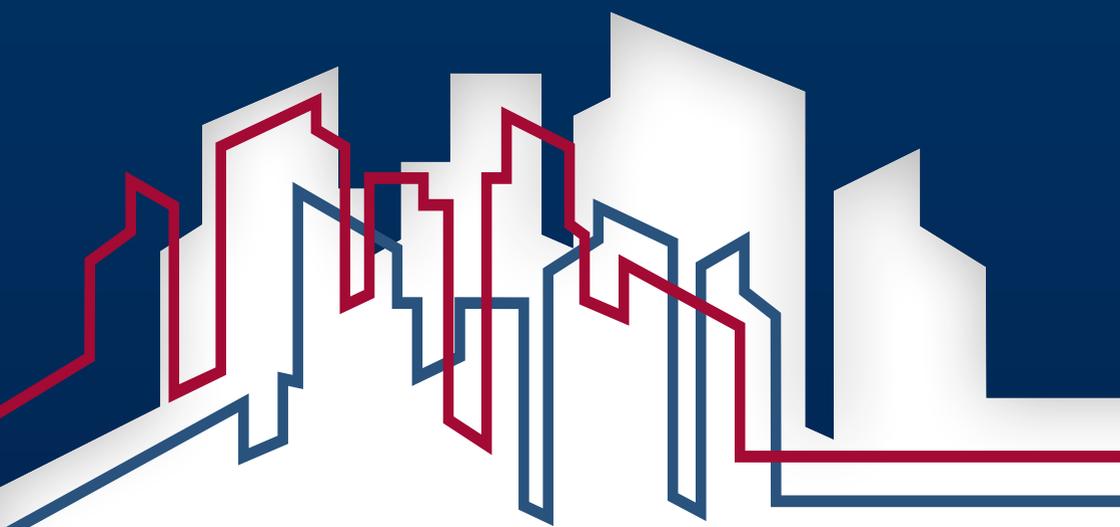


# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION:

ADVOCACY PROJECTS DEVELOPED BY  
IRI CITIZENS ACADEMY ALUMNI 2017



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE





## INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE

Established in 1983, the International Republican Institute (IRI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide. IRI helps political parties to become more issue-based and responsive, assists citizens to participate in government planning, and works to increase the role of marginalized groups in the political process. Having conducted democracy development programs in more than 100 countries, IRI works alongside political and government actors, citizens and civil society to bring government closer to citizens, transforming government into a responsive, transparent and effective institution.

Since 1994, IRI has partnered with Ukraine to promote good governance, strengthen government and civic institutions and foster unity efforts within this transitional democracy. With a focus at the regional and local levels of government, IRI works with local political party branches, local civil society organizations and local government officials across Ukraine.

## U-RAP

In January 2017, IRI launched its work with the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Ukraine Responsive and Accountable Politics Program (U-RAP) project. Throughout 2017, IRI partnered with the cities of Dnipro, Khmelnytskyi, Mariupol and Mykolaiv to advance collaboration and cooperation between supply-side (local government officials and local political party branches) and demand-side actors (citizens and youth) in addressing particular areas and issues of concern to each respective city.

The U-RAP project will continue through March 2020 with two rounds of programming for newly chosen partner cities in the 2018 and 2019 calendar years. For more information about IRI and its programming in Ukraine, please visit IRI's e-Learning Platform at [www.iri.org.ua](http://www.iri.org.ua)

## CITIZENS ACADEMY

As part of USAID's U-RAP project, IRI implements the Citizens Academy program with the goal of equipping citizens with knowledge about government institutions, methods for engaging with and monitoring government, and skills for public advocacy and coalition building.

In 2017, participation in the Citizens Academy was open to all citizens in the four partner cities (Dnipro, Khmelnytskyi, Mariupol and Mykolaiv) through a competitive application process. Eighty-seven active citizens were chosen to participate out of 270 applicants. Fifty-six percent of Citizens Academy participants were women under 40 years of age.

During the Citizens Academy workshop series, participants learned about how their local government works; the role of government and its decision-making procedures; practical tools for citizen oversight of local government and citizen engagement in decision-making; ways to help prevent corruption; how to build a coalition of supporters to advocate for needs to the local government; and how to promote issues in the media.

The Citizens Academy has become a platform for like-minded active residents (most of whom did not know each other before participating in the Academy) to develop community advocacy projects and coalitions to resolve issues of concern to their respective communities.

As a result of the Citizens Academy, participants developed 12 advocacy campaigns on a wide range of issues pertinent to their communities. Proposal teams presented these projects in each city to an open audience of citizens and local government officials who then had the opportunity to vote on which projects were most relevant to their community and to discuss possible avenues for implementation.

The Citizens Academy encourages the skills and strength of citizen activists, enables them to understand the phased steps of successful advocacy campaigns, and provides the opportunity for citizens to interact with and voice their positions to local government authorities. For some participants, this is their first experience engaging in public life and their first attempt to design, develop and implement a public project for the benefit of the community.

This booklet contains basic information about the 12 projects developed by Citizens Academy participants in 2017. IRI encourages other stakeholders to read about these advocacy projects developed by grassroots leaders, to determine which citizen-led projects may offer potential areas for cooperation with your organization, and to recognize the areas of concern requiring future attention and intervention. Contact information is provided for each project team.



## Project Topics:

IMPROVEMENTS TO TRANSPORTATION  
INFRASTRUCTURE

COMFORTABLE PUBLIC SPACES

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

SERVICES FOR CITIZENS



## RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PUBLIC STADIUM

This project is intended to promote sports and ensure its availability to all members of the 12th Quarter community through the renovation and preservation of the neglected stadium located at 8B Krasnopolska Street in Dnipro. Project activities include:

- Conduct background research by collecting resolutions, petitions and letters from the city council and the executive bodies connected with demolition of the existing stadium and construction of new buildings on its territory.
- Collect signatures of district residents in support of a collective appeal to local government to stop possible demolition of the stadium and make its renovation instead.
- Analyze of the current situation to determine the number of free and equipped stadiums suitable for sports; the number of football, volleyball and basketball fields and playgrounds; and the number of commercial sports centers that require payment for use.
- Determine the estimated cost of the stadium repairs; write and submit a draft decision on the stadium renovation to the city council.

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## IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC RESTROOMS

This project aims to establish comfortable European-style public restrooms in the most popular places in Dnipro. Such restrooms will be designed to fit into the architectural environment and be resistant to vandalism, to disinfect automatically and to be accessible to all citizens. The project presupposes cooperation between active citizens and city government, and will make Dnipro more attractive to both residents and tourists. Project activities include:

- Investigating the current situation: analyzing the status of public restrooms in the city center; surveying the opinion of city residents; studying the experience of other cities in Ukraine and the European Union.
- Identifying solutions to the problem, including what types of facilities are needed and installation sites.
- Providing information about the project to local authorities, advocating for the adoption of a city council resolution aimed at the installation of

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## PHOTOFACT

This project offers a service that converts photos into reporting documents with reference to the location, author and the time the picture was taken; its users receive accurate information from the scene and can quickly react to it. PHOTOFACT, an innovative online tool for reporting city concerns, can be used to monitor the quality of public works or services supported by photographic evidence. The service enables users to complete the following activities:

- Download a database of problematic and insufficient infrastructure or service delivery and determine which organization is responsible for that particular area. The database can be created manually or downloaded from a specific file.
- With a mobile application, the organizations responsible for addressing the concerns with infrastructure or service delivery send the photo report to those who reported the issue.
- Photo reports are automatically available for review by anyone with the appropriate access rights in the system. The reliability of the report is ensured by linking images to the location, time the picture was taken, and the author of the photo report.



## EDUPAY

EDUPAY is a specialized payment service that allows parents to officially make voluntary contributions to schools and kindergartens and to help oversee expenditures of these educational establishments. The service includes the following elements:

- Users can sign a contract for servicing and opening a separate account by the educational institution (initiated by the director of the institution or by the local council decision).
- The administration of educational institutions and parent committees should conduct an awareness-raising campaign among parents to inform them about the availability of the service, its simplicity and ease of use.
- Parents can make payments through EDUPAY either online or in-person at the bank. Information about all the expenditures of educational institutions will be available on the website.

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# MYKOLAIV



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGULATIONS FOR BILLBOARDS AND ADVERTISEMENT INSTALLATION

As a result of the absence of guidelines regulating the erection of advertisement structures in Mykolaiv, the city is visually overloaded with billboards. This project assesses the current situation, develops recommended regulations, creates an open register and provides free access to information about each billboard placed in the city. Project activities include:

- The collection and analysis of information on the current situation, including: existing rules and regulations; the experience of cities that have implemented similar projects; and consultations with specialists, the development of the project and a step-by-step plan for its implementation.
- Public presentation and discussion of the project, including: meetings with residents and owners of advertising structures; activities such as press conferences and round tables; information campaigns through social media, television and radio; an advocacy campaign to develop regulations for billboards and advertisement installation; and the collection of signatures from residents of Mykolaiv to support the project.
- Lobbying and approval, including: joint work and discussion of project implementation with councilmembers and specialized committees of the city council and submission of a draft decision to the Mykolaiv city council.

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## IMPROVING ROADS IN SHYROKA BALKA

The Shyroka Balka district in Mykolaiv suffers from poor road conditions, even though the city has a large amount of left-over asphalt. This project suggests utilizing this base material by sealing it on prepared dirt roads. This technique creates roads capable of sustaining the weight of traffic while providing drainage and a smooth surface for carriages and bicycles, and has the added advantage of being completed within two weeks. Project activities include:

- Communicate to officials the complexity of living in the district with roads that have a poor drainage system; explaining the technological ease and cost effectiveness of this quick solution. This issue was partly communicated throughout the past year with numerous publications on social networks, online media, YouTube, and regional television programs.
- Enable communication between local authorities and residents on short-term options to create roads from leftover asphalt remains and long-term plans to pave them with asphalt; inform residents about the feasibility of improving local roads.
- Submit a project for participation in the 2017 Mykolaiv Participatory Budget competition and promote the initiative among community residents and other private residential areas. If this project is implemented in 2018, it can be later replicated in other residential areas.
- Prepare a draft decision for the executive committee that will require local district administrations to allocate funds to fulfill the requests of residents for used asphalt coatings on the agreed upon locations.

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## ECO-FRIENDLY - PROMOTION OF ECO-BAGS AND THE PARTIAL PROHIBITION OF PLASTIC PACKAGING

The surplus of plastic bags is a major source of environmental pollution. This project raises awareness of this problem and works to introduce a partial ban on plastic bags that will help to maintain a clean environment, encouraging residents to use eco-bags instead of plastic packaging. Project activities include:

- Assessing practices internationally and in other Ukrainian cities; conducting a public opinion survey to understand resident attitudes toward the issue.
- Public awareness campaigns, including: "Eco-friendly: Color Your Eco-bag" project implementation (summer 2017); an informational/art campaign among the citizens (500+ persons were informed, 250 eco-bags were drawn); collecting signatures of citizens in support of a partial ban on plastic bags; conducting an advocacy campaign in 2018 to convince councilmembers to submit official project proposals to the city council.
- Advocate for including the partial prohibition of plastic packaging on the agenda of the Mykolaiv city council and its adoption. Attract representatives of Ukrainian and international organizations (350.org, WWF, UMKA, EcoClub) to the advocacy campaign and monitor the implementation of the city council resolution.

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# MARIUPOL



## FREE LEGAL AID FOR THE POPULATION OF MARIUPOL

This program aims to raise the level of legal education and awareness among Mariupol residents, and to ensure the right to free legal aid by providing citizens with up-to-date legal information; consultations and legal advice; and assistance with preparation of applications, complaints and other legal documents (except procedural documents). The program shall be financed in the Mariupol city budget. Project activities include:

- Creating the conditions to provide residents with access to free legal aid, including: employing legal experts on a contractual basis to provide legal support at the Mariupol Administrative Services Center; leasing non-residential property to the Mariupol Local Center for the Provision of Free Secondary Legal Aid as location where free legal services can be provided; and conducting a public awareness campaign to educate residents on the services available.
- Implementation of continuous professional training and professional development of specialists through round tables, trainings and seminars; dissemination of methodological recommendations and excerpts from regulatory acts through a network of media partners and the Mariupol city council website to familiarize citizens with relevant judicial information.
- Practical assistance to residents of Mariupol to help them understand their rights and responsibilities; recruitment of law students to work with the provision of free legal aid.

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## IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ROAD REPAIRS IN MARIUPOL

Compliance with State Standards of Ukraine 3587-97 is a key prerequisite for improving the quality of roads in Mariupol. The current quick-fix approach is expensive and does not adequately address the problems with road quality. This project addresses this problem through the following activities:

- Analysis of the quality of road repairs in Mariupol by collecting comprehensive information about hazardous roads that cause danger to drivers and have damaged public and private transportation.
- Negotiations with the representatives of the communal commercial enterprise Mariupolavtodor regarding compliance with the State Standards of Ukraine 3587-97 and recommendations on improvements to the repair and maintenance of roads.
- Introducing an interactive roadmap identifying problematic areas and recommended prioritization for repairs; creating a team to oversee the city's budget allocation for transportation infrastructure and the quality of the performed work; introducing innovative approaches to road repairs by engaging highly experienced vendors with modern equipment through the e-procurement system Prozorro.

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## CREATION OF A SEPARATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTE IN MARIUPOL

Challenges connecting two remote districts of Mariupol – the Eastern microdistrict and the Azovie area – are exacerbated by the low profitability of this route for private carriers and a lack of public transportation to connect these areas. Residents of these remote city districts suffer from high fares, increased travel time and insufficient availability of transportation. This project addresses this problem through the following activities:

- Assess the transport situation; request necessary information from government public records; conduct negotiations with the public transportation organizations.
- Organize a press conference to highlight the importance of the issue; collect signatures in support of civic initiatives to address the problem; submit official proposals to municipal authorities.
- Ensure that the issue is included in the agenda of the Mariupol city council session; advocate for the adoption of a relevant decision; organize a press conference to announce the results of the campaign; oversee and monitor the decision of the Mariupol city council and its implementation.

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# KHMELNYTSKYI



## PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FILTER BUH (SOUTHERN BUH RIVER)

This project aims to create a working group that will draft plans for the Pivdennyi Buh (Southern Buh) River recovery, with a goal of renovating and upgrading factory equipment that is polluting the reservoir of the Southern Buh River. Project activities include:

- Joint consultations with local ecologists on the plan for the Pivdennyi Buh River recovery.
- Laboratory studies of the water quality of the Southern Buh River in cooperation with the local or oblast department of ecology to identify enterprises that can potentially pollute the river.
- A regional forum entitled "Filter Buh", which aims to bring together representatives of factories and plants that may potentially pollute the river and encourage dialogue and partnership among them to solve the environmental problem.

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## THE CREATION OF A YOUTH CENTER IN KHMELNYTSKYI

Youth Forum is a civic platform that unites a number of interested civil society organizations and independent activists with representatives of relevant departments of the Khmelnytskyi city council and oblast state administration to affect meaningful change in the city, including creating a Youth Center in Khmelnytskyi. With a goal of developing youth civil society, Youth Forum has worked to:

- Hold a roundtable on October 24, 2017, in which project participants discussed and developed a strategy for tackling the issue. Participants then signed a memorandum of understanding to ensure future implementation of the goals as defined by the roundtable.
- Decide upon a venue for the future Youth Center based on the following criteria: its location, size, and the availability of technical equipment and opportunities for multi-purpose usage. The venue must correspond with the Youth Center's goals as defined by the roundtable participants and described in the memorandum.
- Hold the grand opening for the Youth Center, as well as conduct a public awareness campaign to attract as many youth representatives as possible to the Khmelnytskyi Youth Center. The recruitment of staff members for the Youth Center team is critical at this stage, since they will be instrumental to the project's success.

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