



NGO «STEP»
Strategies and Technologies of
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Strengthening Democratic Governance
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Profile of the NGO

Non-Governmental Organization “Strategies and Technologies of Effective Partnership” or NGO “STEP” for short was registered in 2009. Until April 2019, known as Zaporizhzhia Youth NGO “STEP”. Since its founding, the organization has been actively participating in the civic processes at the local and regional level.

We cooperate with the local community, local self-governance, and NGOs to achieve **our Mission**: to foster the establishment and development of partnerships between different stakeholders at the local, regional and national levels to build a cultured, democratic, capable, and human-oriented society.

Previous experience

- Provided joint projects with the EIDOS Centre for Political Studies and Analysis (monitoring and advocacy campaigns), 2011-2015. In particular, was a member of the Ukrainian NGOs’ coalition for civic monitoring of the activity of tender committees and public procurement (in 2012, with a focus on Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions).
- Has the experience of international projects. For example, cooperation with *NGO Fundacja Miejsc i Ludzi Aktywnych* (2016), *Fundacja Mapa Pasji* (2017).
- Assistance to establishing the first youth councils in the small cities and rural areas of Zaporizhzhia region, training programs for young leaders (2016-2017).
- Administrating grant projects of different scale and budgets – from 100 to 30,000 USD.
- Has the experience of working with sub-grantees, administrating sub-grants, 2018.
- One of the founders and providers of the largest social event for kids and families in Zaporizhzhia – the Family Festival (held annually since 2012, in public park Dubovyi Hai).

Our focus

2009 – 2015: *youth initiatives, advocacy campaigns, public monitoring at the local and regional levels, anti-corruption activities.*

This is the period of active participation of the NGO’s founders in youth policy at the city level, including membership in the Zaporizhzhia Youth City Council (in 2014-2015, the NGO’s chairman, Viktoriia Agientaieva, held the position of the youth mayor of the city).

2015 – recently: *strengthening civil society at the local level, local development and engagement, promoting youth work in communities, participation projects.*

Since 2015, our priorities are as follows: strengthening civil society in local communities, local democracy, and social dialogue, participation in local development projects, and cooperation with amalgamated territorial communities. However, youth participation is still one of our activity areas.

Partnerships

Since 2010, “STEP” is a regional partner of *the Centre of Political Studies and Analytics EIDOS* (eng.eidos.org.ua) in Zaporizhzhia. Has the successful experience of joint projects.

Since 2017, NGO collaborates with *the PAUCI Foundation* (www.pauci.org) experts within the projects with a focus on promotion of participatory budgeting.

In Zaporizhzhia, we cooperate with local and regional NGOs – *Zaporizhzhia branch of the All-Ukrainian Initiative Active Community (Insitute Respublica)*, *Spilno HUB*, *Insitute for Civil Development “Ortega y Gasset”*, *YES, Zaporizhzhia – City of Opportunities*.

Regional network

Since 2018, STEP has been developing the regional network of NGOs working for local development. We help active people to create, register and develop NGOs or other platforms of civil society in rural communities and small cities in Zaporizhzhia region. Our partners in amalgamated communities: NGOs Integration and Development (Huliapole), *Platform of Development* (Chernihivka), *Workshop of Welfare* (Ostrykivka), Youth Public Councils in Preobrazhenka, Chernihivka, and Shyroke communities, as well as more than 10 bodies of local self-governance.



Main projects and results over the past three years

Since November 2018 *Strengthening Democratic Governance II* funded by NED, **USD 28 000**

The project will contribute to the capacity and engagement of local civic platforms in Zaporizhzhia region. At this stage, 10 territorial communities participate in the project. Their representatives have built the project teams from both activists and local government officials, for joint training and further fostering civil society at the local level. To achieve this, they will establish and promote local civic platforms, like NGOs, public councils, community centers, bodies of self-organization of population and others. With expert support, they will also develop and provide information and advocacy campaigns to address local challenges.

- The basic analysis of the current level of citizen engagement was conducted in the target communities.
- In March 2019, 60 participants from 10 communities began their training.

2017–2018 *Strengthening Democratic Governance* funded by NED, **USD 36 045**

The project was launched to promote civic engagement and democratic governance in Zaporizhzhia region, as well as support the local initiatives that reinforce civic engagement in the decentralization process and address local concerns.

- About 60 persons from 10 communities gained the basic knowledge of project management, fundraising, effective public oversight, developed their skills of leadership, cooperation, and communication with stakeholders.
- Participants from 6 communities could build effective partnerships. As a result, 9 local initiatives were developed and supported by "STEP" and NED with sub-grants.
- In total, more than 50 local events were held in 20 villages, settlements and towns of Zaporizhzhia region. They engage more than 650 people.
- Three new NGOs were registered in communities (Huliaipole, Chernihivka, Ostrykivka). After the SDG-project, they started their own initiatives, and now are working actively with local stakeholders.
- In Shyroke community, the Honourable Council was established as the public body at the village council. In Komyshe-Zoria community, active youth united as the youth council.

2017–2018 *Community Center for Urban Development "Zmistovno"* funded by Initiatives of the Infrastructure Program for Ukraine (GIZ GmbH), **EUR 10 855**.

The project was designed to promote participatory budgeting in Zaporizhzhia as well as cooperation between the city residents, local government and other stakeholders for urban development.

- The program for the Public Lectures on Urban Development was prepared. Four lectures were held in city parks, particularly of the remote districts of Zaporizhzhia, to engage more isolated city residents in their communities. "STEP" involved eight lecturers, including cultural activists of Zaporizhzhia, experts on participation from Kyiv and Poltava (EIDOS Centre, PAUCI Foundation), and the expert on urban development, GIZ consultant Lukas Born from Germany.
- Nearly 300 citizens participated in other educational events, such as the school for moderators of participatory budgeting, seminars on proposals writing, and the final forum. They obtained the information of the main stages and procedures of participatory budgeting, learned the successful practices of other cities, and developed their skills of projects writing and communication.

2017 *Youth Councils in the amalgamated territorial communities*, provided in collaboration with Fundacja Mapa Pasji (Poland), funded by the Polish-American Foundation for Freedom within the framework of the RITA program "Changes in the Region", **UAH 95 800**. Training for young activists in rural communities, assisting the establishment of local youth councils in Kushuhum, Chernihivka and Shyroke of Zaporizhzhia region.

2016 *The Government is Our Common Goal. Civil Dialogue in South-Eastern Ukraine* provided in collaboration with NGO Fundacja Miejsc i Ludzi Aktywnych (Poland) and Ukrainian partners, **UAH 203 620**. Coordination of training for local officials and activists, coordination of small sub-grant projects in 10 communities of Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions. Conducting the conference "Public Dialogue in Ukraine – on the path between struggle and indifference".

Earlier projects, including monitoring campaigns

2015–2016 *Advocacy Campaign for the Implementation of the New Anti-corruption Legislation by Local Authorities* supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Ukraine.

Within the project, the representatives of NGOs from 5 regions of Ukraine created the Coalition for Transparent Council. The coalition developed the methodology to evaluate the regulations of 40 local governments in the context of anti-corruption reform. In particular, "STEP" provided the analysis of regulations of 8 local governments in Zaporizhzhia region.

2015 *Public monitoring of the right to education for internally displaced persons* funded by the International Renaissance Foundation.

Conducting a comprehensive sociological study "Supporting the needs and implementation of the rights of IDPs", proposals on necessary procedures for addressing the problem issues.

2014 *Public anti-corruption control for increasing financial transparency and budgetary accountability of local health departments in Zaporizhzhia region*, provided in collaboration with EIDOS Centre, with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

2013–2014 *Know to Act!* All-Ukrainian project of EIDOS Centre was funded by the Media Development Fund of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine. As a regional partner, "STEP" provided a monitoring campaign on local budgeting, activities of tender committees, implementation of the Law of Ukraine "On Access to Public information".

2013–2014 *Functional Survey of Local Authorities to Increase the Effectiveness of the State Gender Policy* funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Ukraine.

2011 *Implementation of the public monitoring method – the basis for the transparency of public procurement* funded by the International Renaissance Foundation.

Selected publications

Developing Civil Society in Amalgamated Territorial Communities: the Practical Guide (2018)

<http://www.stepngo.in.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Developing-Civil-Society-In-Amalgamated-Communities.pdf> (in Ukrainian)

Basic research of the level of civil society development in amalgamated communities of Zaporizhzhia, conducted for the Strengthening Local Democratic Governance project (2019)

<http://www.stepngo.in.ua/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Communities-basic-research.pdf>

To wait or to act: are citizens ready to participate in community management?

<http://www.stepngo.in.ua/chekaty-chy-vplyvaty-chy-hotovi-meshkantsi-do-uchasti-v-upravlinni-hromadoiu/>

Brief presentation on the results of the Strengthening Democratic Governance project (2018)

<https://issuu.com/sdg-project/docs/about-sdg-project> (in Ukrainian)

Developing civil society in amalgamated communities: risks, barriers and opportunities (2018)

<https://www.prostir.ua/?news=rozvytok-hromadyanskoho-suspilstva-v-oth-ryzyky-pereshkody-ta-mozhlyvosti> (in Ukrainian)

Not subventions alone: how the active citizens change their communities

<https://www.prostir.ua/?news=ne-subventsiyamy-jedynymy-yak-meshkantsi-novyh-hromad-zavdyaky-aktyvnosti-ta-spivpratsi-zminyuyut-svoji-mista-i-sela> (in Ukrainian)

Summer of the activity and cooperation in Zaporizhzhia region

<https://www.prostir.ua/?news=lito-hromadskoji-aktyvnosti-ta-spivpratsi-na-zaporizhzhii>

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