CONTENTS

ACRONYMS...................................................................................................................................................... ii
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION ................................................................................................................................... 1
    UCBI II Program Areas.................................................................................................................................. 1
UKRAINE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COUNTRY CONTEXT ................................................................. 4
GRANTS SUMMARY....................................................................................................................................... 7
ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS ............................................................................................................................... 8
    Objective 1: Increase support for pluralistic national unity................................................................. 8
    Objective 2: Increase public confidence in positive, democratic change............................................. 13
PROGRAM EVALUATION......................................................................................................................... 17
### ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>Administrative Service Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoR</td>
<td>European Committee of the Regions</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSC</td>
<td>City Services Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDGS</td>
<td>Direct Distribution of Goods and Services</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EBU</td>
<td>European Broadcasting Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAA</td>
<td>Fixed Amount Award</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMR</td>
<td>Final Monitoring Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCA</td>
<td>Government Controlled Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>NGCA</td>
<td>Non-Government Controlled Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSDC</td>
<td>National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSBB</td>
<td>Apartment Building Co-Owners Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTI</td>
<td>Office of Transition Initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDA</td>
<td>Program Development Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDO</td>
<td>Program Development Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Rolling Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>R2P</td>
<td>Right to Protection</td>
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<td>SCORE</td>
<td>Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeeD</td>
<td>Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprise</td>
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<td>SMM</td>
<td>Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine</td>
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<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>Sub-Objective</td>
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<td>STTA</td>
<td>Short-Term Technical Assistance</td>
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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In April 2017, USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) launched the second phase of the Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative (UCBI II) project focusing on Ukraine’s historic democratic transition. While the government has implemented some national level reforms since 2014, threats, such as political and social division, an unstable economy and malign Russian influence, continue to affect national unity and successful implementation of further reforms. Ukrainians across the country have low levels of optimism, rooted in a variety of political and economic issues.

The UCBI II project was established to complement USAID’s ongoing efforts to support a successful democratic transition and promote national cohesion in the wake of the conflict in the East. The goal of UCBI II has been to contribute to efforts that ensure eastern Ukraine has greater confidence in Ukraine’s democratic reform process and European integration. As discussed in more detail below, the project recently shifted its focus to national-level media content development and programming in western, southern, and central oblasts.

In the past six months, UCBI II supported visible and tangible public service delivery improvements in eastern Ukraine, galvanized reform, and made local government decision making more transparent and inclusive. UCBI II provided citizens with opportunities to play a more productive role in their communities by supporting civil society efforts to hold the government accountable, and by using media as a platform to better disseminate balanced information and amplify public awareness about the impacts of reforms. This approach has required significant and ongoing dialogue with host authorities and communities, both in Kyiv and in the eastern regions.

UCBI II assistance comes in the form of small, in-kind grants (goods, services, and technical support procured directly by UCBI II and provided to grantees) and fixed amount cash awards (FAAs) to a range of partners, including national and local civilian government entities, civil society organizations, and community leaders. UCBI II provides targeted assistance to expand acceptance of a pluralistic Ukrainian civic identity based on common values.

UCBI II PROGRAM AREAS

To achieve the program goal of expanded acceptance of a pluralistic Ukrainian civic identity based on common values, the team identified two objectives and associated sub-objectives that target critical areas where OTI has a comparative advantage among international donors because of the project’s ability to implement fast and flexible programming. UCBI II's programming is guided by analysis of local dynamics and geographic regions; activities addressing each sub-objective vary based on the assessed needs and identified opportunities.

The strategic framework prioritizes the following program areas:
From October 2018 to March 2019, UCBI II supported activities in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and occasionally in neighboring Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts.

In September and October 2018, USAID/Ukraine launched two new programs focused on Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. As a result, UCBI II planned to cease operating in those regions by April 2019 and began coordinating with the two new programs.

USAID’s Democratic Governance East (DG-East) is a five-year (2018-2023) activity to improve trust and confidence between citizens and government in eastern Ukraine, contributing to USAID’s broader development objective of mitigating the impacts of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. Key objectives include increased participation in community problem-solving; more efficient, modern service delivery; integration of separated, marginalized, and isolated communities; greater citizen confidence in and understanding of key reforms; and diversified citizen engagement with inclusive and democratic civic values.

The USAID Economic Resilience Activity (ERA) (2018-2023) will support entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized businesses in competitive sectors to mitigate the impacts of the conflict and reduce the region’s reliance on oligarch-backed big businesses and trade with Russia. ERA’s long-term goal is to build confidence in the future of the eastern Ukrainian economy to stimulate entrepreneurship and investment in the region.

On March 21, 2019 UCBI II held a close-out event in Kramatorsk to celebrate its activities in the East, to thank partners and grantees for cooperation, and to introduce them to the representatives of the new USAID programs. UCBI II had frequent meetings with the
management of the new programs to facilitate their smooth startup in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and to inform future activities. This included sharing information, such as lessons learned, programming recommendations, information about partner performance, and partner contacts.

Despite the cessation of operations in the East, UCBI II will continue to work in Ukraine on national media programming and in Kharkiv, Odesa, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Zakarpattya, which were identified as priority regions for UCBI II based on USAID and U.S. Embassy priorities and ongoing analysis of data from the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) index.
UKRAINE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COUNTRY CONTEXT

Five years after the Revolution of Dignity, Ukraine has seen a significant amount of reform, and the economy is showing signs of recovery. However, the visible impact of these changes at the local level has been slow and, coupled with the ongoing war in the east, continue to erode public confidence. Ukrainians across the country have low levels of optimism, rooted in a variety of political and economic issues. Broadly speaking, reformers are disillusioned with the pace of change, many Ukrainians in the west are growing impatient with the ongoing conflict, and Ukrainians in the east are skeptical of the reform process and the government in Kyiv.

Ukrainians in Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Odesa regions continue to be the most skeptical about the national government and reform process, most pessimistic about the economy, and most influenced by malign external influence. Populist politics are resonating across the country and will continue to sow mistrust and skepticism in the reform process.

This trend also points to a Ukraine that is becoming increasingly divided, as the uniting effects of the Revolution of Dignity and ensuing war have started to dissipate. The shared values that were championed in the period following the Revolution of Dignity—civic engagement, innovation, entrepreneurship, pluralism, tolerance, and respect—are increasingly being challenged by regional divides. As evidenced by the SCORE index, Ukrainians in the west are increasingly hostile toward the east and are less accepting of a pluralistic Ukrainian national identity. As a result, nationalism and disruptive civic behavior may threaten democratic processes. These perceptions are fueled by a media landscape that prioritizes patriotic messaging over inclusivity and cross-regional experiences largely characterized by participation in the war in the east.

The SCORE index also indicates that although the community of reform-oriented Ukrainians in the east and south has grown, nearly half the population remains disillusioned and disconnected. While they may have turned away from political ties with Russia, they continue to be vulnerable to external manipulation. This disconnectedness is fueled by a misunderstanding or low awareness of reforms and positive changes in the country, few opportunities for citizen participation, and weak voices for change and reform in the regions. UCBI II recognizes that these dynamics do not exclusively characterize these regions. There are large numbers of disengaged Ukrainians in the west while radical groups are also prominent in the southern and eastern cities of Kharkiv and Odessa. These trends also manifest in other regions, most notably in the capital Kyiv, where they may pose the most significant threats to stability and national unity.

NATIONAL

Several key issues impacted the country context during the reporting period.
Presidential elections in Ukraine and monitoring of electoral moods. Ukrainians voted for their next president on March 31, 2019, selecting their new leader from a crowded field of 39 candidates. The election of Volodymyr Zelenskiy, a comic with no political experience, directly reflects the frustrated aspirations of many Ukrainians and their mistrust towards politicians in power. According to research carried out by the Sociological Group “Rating” in January 2019, almost 70 percent of the respondents believe that the country needs radical changes, 12 percent believe there is no need for change, and 14 percent would prefer a return to past administrations. This desire for change is relatively high in most regions; however, a relatively lower desire for change was recorded in the east.

Elections and the threat of radicalism rise. In the run up to the 2019 national elections, the number of public events resulting in violence due to radical actors increased throughout Ukraine. UCBI II initiated a grant with the Centre of Military-Political Studies to understand the scale of radical activities, mutual relations between various groups, and radicalism manifestations. The grantee completed a detailed profile of the top 12 radical groups in Ukraine and identified 237 radical incidents in 2018 throughout Ukraine. The Central Election Commission registered a record number of 139 Ukrainian NGOs monitoring the election process. Among them is the Natsionalni Druzhyny (“National Militia”), a far-right organization who warned that in case of fraud during the election process, they would physically intervene without hesitation. On March 10, 2019, 22 police officers were injured as a result of clashes between the police and militants at Petro Poroshenko’s election rally in Cherkasy.

Escalation of the conflict in the Black Sea and martial law. In late November 2018, 24 sailors were captured when Russian coast guard vessels fired on and subsequently boarded three small Ukrainian ships in the Black Sea close to the Kerch Strait between Russia and Crimea, setting off a major international crisis. The incident in November was a serious escalation of the four-year conflict between Russia and Ukraine that began when Russia invaded Crimea in 2014. It sparked fears that the detentions could lead to the return of full-scale war and prompted Ukraine's government to temporarily impose martial law in 10 regions along the Black Sea and the borders with Russia, Belarus, and Moldova. Martial law ended after 30 days, amid continued tensions with Russia in the Kerch Strait.

Tomos for Ukraine Church signed by all members of Constantinople Synod. On January 5, 2019, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I signed the tomos proclaiming the autocephaly of the newly formed Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The document sets out the basic principles for the functioning of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has stressed the importance of the independence of the newly created Orthodox Church of Ukraine, saying there should not be any interference in its affairs.

Facebook audience in Ukraine grows by 3 million people in 2018. Over the past five years, the number of Facebook users in Ukraine has increased significantly. As of December 2018, 30.95 percent of Ukrainians used social networks, while the share of Facebook users continued to grow. Ukraine’s western regions are in the lead in terms of Facebook penetration. The lowest rates are observed in the south and east of Ukraine. Most active users are in the cities of Kyiv, Lviv and Uzhgorod.
DONETSK AND LUHANSK OBLASTS

While UCBI II implementation has shifted from the east to the west, activities were ongoing in and around the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts during this reporting period. Therefore, relevant events in the region are highlighted below.

In March 2019, OSCE monitors record highest number of ceasefire violations since November 2018.

Between March 11 and 24, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) recorded over 17,700 ceasefire violations. Almost 10,000 of them were recorded in the second week of the reporting period; the highest number occurred since early November 2018.

As reported by OSCE, several areas were of particular concern, such as Chermalyk, which has been the scene of repeated spikes in violence since October 2018 when Ukrainian forces moved closer to those backed by Russia. Likewise, in Zolote, OSCE continued to observe armed personnel, hardware, mines, ceasefire violations, and damage to civilian property. OSCE observed damage caused by small-arms fire to a functioning school building in Zolote, which has sustained damage six times since late December 2018.

Poroshenko approves borders of occupied areas in Donbas.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has approved the borders and the list of temporarily occupied settlements and districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This data is provided in the text of Decree No. 32/2019 of February 7, 2019. The bulk of the document consists of border coordinates of the temporarily occupied territories, which are determined by the actual line of demarcation in the zone of hostilities in the east, as well as the list of settlements. The decree was approved by head of the Presidential Administration, Ihor Rainin.

Children from occupied Donbas register for External Independent Evaluation in Ukraine.

According to the Head of Donetsk Oblast State Administration, more than 800 graduates living in the temporarily occupied territory, registered for External Independent Evaluation in the Donetsk region in order to receive degrees. All graduates for several years studied under the program of distance or external education in schools located in the government-controlled area.
GRANTS SUMMARY

Between October 1, 2018 and March 30, 2019, UCBI II initiated a total of 37 activities, including sub-grants, short-term technical assistance (STTA), and direct distribution of goods and services (DDGS) for a committed total of $2,720,435.04.

Figure 1 Number of activities cleared: October 2018 – March 2019

Figure 2 Dollar amount of activities cleared per month, October 2018 – March 2019
ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

UCBI II worked primarily in eastern Ukraine, focusing on population centers in the regions close to the conflict which have been targeted by external aggression. The primary focus of the program during this time was the government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, while also seeking to access people across the line of contact through activities. During the reporting period, the project issued grants to non-government organizations (NGOs), civic initiatives, state and local authorities, and other organizations on the international, national, and local levels. In addition, UCBI II initiated activities in Kharkiv, Odessa, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Zakarpattya.

UCBI II activities work towards the following two objectives, which are described below. Further, some examples of activities under each objective also are provided.

OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASE SUPPORT FOR PLURALISTIC NATIONAL UNITY

The shared values that were championed during the period following the Revolution of Dignity - civic engagement, innovation, entrepreneurism, pluralism, tolerance and respect - are increasingly being challenged by regional divides. Ukrainian politicians seeking to secure voter support have promoted a Ukrainian identity based on language and ethnicity, isolating the country’s minority language groups. The SCORE index illustrated that Ukrainians in the west are increasingly hostile toward the east and are less accepting of a pluralistic Ukrainian national identity. As a result, nationalism and disruptive civic behavior may threaten democratic processes. These perceptions are fueled by a media landscape that prioritizes patriotic messaging over inclusivity and cross regional interaction that is largely characterized by participation in the war in the east. UCBI II assumes that by including a more diverse range of stakeholders, it can expand this pluralistic community and “win” a significant proportion of both the polarized and disengaged segments of the population.

Unifying the west around tolerance and change: UCBI II initiated a grant that will conduct a mapping for CSOs in the west (Ivano-Frankivsk, Uzhgorod, Lviv, and Ternopil) to 1) identify groups that truly embrace progressive civic engagement and pluralism and 2) give UCBI II concrete suggestions on building connections between those groups to assess the civic and cultural scene in relation to community development and cohesion. The grantee will identify active civic, cultural, and youth organizations and will engage them about the prospects and threats they see for their communities, the role of youth in the communities, and youth vulnerability to extremism of all kinds. This activity will support UCBI II's engagement in the west, improving its efficiency and as a key result, expanding communities of groups actively working to promote pluralism in western Ukraine.
Cartoons uniting the country: UCBI II partnered with a communication agency to build and engage a young audience of Ukrainians around diversity and democratic values. UCBI II provided 20% of the funding to create five educational cartoons about unifying Ukraine as a nation. The primary goal of this activity was to reach a younger generation and get them interested in Ukrainian culture. However, when the videos were released, it became evident from viewer data and feedback that the activity engaged an audience beyond the adolescent viewers, including many older Ukrainians. This was achieved due to the high quality of content and creative storytelling. Outreach and viewings of the cartoons on YouTube exceeded expectations: the goal was to get 100,000 views per cartoon, when actual views averaged 147,000 per cartoon with total of 737,000 views overall, demonstrating that many people want to see Ukraine as an accomplished, interesting, diverse, and unified country.

TV series for peace: To alter the negative narrative about the conflict, UCBI II worked with 1+1, one of the largest private television stations in Ukraine, to produce, promote, and broadcast a TV series called “Routes of Destiny” about a driver who travels from the occupied to government-controlled areas on a daily basis. All the scenarios in the series were inspired by real stories of internally displaced persons and those who stayed in the occupied territories. The main aim of this activity was to change the perception of the ongoing conflict, bring the conflict a human face, and show how it affects millions of those who continue to struggle from it. “Routes of Destiny” also demonstrated that socially relevant content could be profitable. The series was watched by more than 27 million people on television, due in part to a robust promotional campaign, supported by UCBI II. It was either the first or second most watched show on television in Ukraine in its time slot, and is also popular on the Internet and the first episode gathered more than 400,000 views. Based on the success of the first season, 1+1 is considering shooting the second season of the show. To promote sustainability and local ownership, UCBI II is contemplating the provision of less funding that what was provided for the first season.

Urban redevelopment based on an inclusive and diverse vision: During the reporting period, UCBI II worked with Teple Misto, a well-established NGO in Ivano-Frankivsk to organize the City Scanning Session Festival which will be held during late spring/early summer 2019. The Festival will focus on supporting an inclusive future of post-industrial revitalization and bring together residents of the city and oblast, local/international urbanists, artists, universities, businesses, and
the city municipality to map areas for development, including the Promprylad factory, which is a large abandoned gas meter facility near the city center. They will discuss the potential for that tract, as well as others, to demonstrate that citizens can discover and experience diverse ideas and visions around urban development and to expand communities of groups actively working to promote pluralism.

*Enhancing universities with Career Development Centers:* UCBI II supported an activity aimed at empowering universities to play a more proactive role in providing opportunities for students' employment and establishing links between universities and business. The decline of Donbas's economy, hastened by the ongoing war, is further alienating these regions from the rest of Ukraine and has the potential to disrupt future reintegration efforts. Fortunately, there is a growing community of small business entrepreneurs and champions in local government, educational institutions, and civil society which can support a much-needed economic transformation. Universities need to do more to engage both students and local/regional businesses, forming a nexus of collaboration that can become an economic driver of the Donbas economy. As a result of this activity, three Career Development Centers at leading universities of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are open and operational, and a total of 576 people attended 28 events, including trainings, workshops, study visits, and career forums. Because of these events, students at participating universities have more confidence in their career prospects and their competitiveness in the labor market has increased.

*New economy in the East:* UCBI II supported the opening and operation of TOP PLACE, a modern and innovative co-working space in Sloviansk. This activity contributed to efforts to improve optimism about economic transformation among key stakeholders. Almost 50 educational, cultural, and business-oriented events were organized which attracted 8,500 participants. So far, 293 people aged 22-35 years old have benefited from 20 activities aimed at the development of various skills, ranging from psychological trainings to mastering specific business knowledge. Random site visits conducted by the PDO and M&E specialist showed that most participants attended the events regularly as “it is the only platform that provides career/business development courses and workshops in Sloviansk,” as one beneficiary told them.

*Business Booster for Mariupol community:* Through an in-kind grant from UCBI II, the Mariupol Association of Entrepreneurs, in cooperation with Mariupol City Economic Department, established and equipped a small and medium enterprise (SME) support center that now provides regular training and guidance from experts on accounting, finance, legal issues, etc. to local SMEs. It equipped more than 25 Mariupol businesses owners with knowledge on SME development, and trained 15 of them to become business mentors to visitors to the SME support center. The SME support center specifically provided information and assistance to prospective applicants to the Donetsk Kurkul SME grant program. The activity resulted in a
significant increase in the number of Mariupol entrepreneurs which applied for grant support for business development. After the training program, which included informational meetings with experts, mentorship, and a “crash-test” business ideas presentation, 30 people applied for the grant support with their business plans. Out of those, 18 received financing. In addition, the membership of the Mariupol Association of Entrepreneurs increased from 40 to 271. Cooperation between local entrepreneurs and the City Economic Department was also strengthened. Through active participation in informational meetings during the activity, the City Economic Department won the trust of participants and laid the foundation for further cooperation between the city administration and SMEs.

The first IT-hub for Mariupol: The launch of the first information technology (IT) hub in Mariupol was an important achievement that contributed to new economic opportunities for citizens and the general improvement of Mariupol’s image as an innovative city. UCBI II supported the renovation of the premises of the city chess club to also serve as the IT-hub and procured furniture and IT equipment. The IT-hub offers not only the space to work, but also valuable support in the form of networking opportunities and IT development workshops led by the Mariupol branch of Beetroot Academy. In total, 24 people enrolled in training courses and 43 Mariupol residents were engaged as coworking visitors during the first month of IT-hub operation. Residents and visitors of IT-hub noted that the premises makes a very positive impression and is a unique example for Ukraine because of the combination of IT and a chess club, both of which are popular in the country. According to visitors, networking and communication with other specialists and beginners in the IT sphere reduced their desire to move to another city or country. Some participants have already teamed up and started working together on joint projects. Coworkers also highlighted increased productivity and inspiration from working in a modern and ergonomic space.

Building network of active citizens in the East: Youth activism has been one of the driving forces in the recovery and transition of the conflict-affected Donetsk region. However, the capacity of local youth groups in smaller locations is not enough to successfully manage independent activities and sustain those activities on a long-term basis. NGO Nova Druzhkivka, a mature Donetsk-born partner organization, mentored four youth hubs in Lyman, Toretsk, Pokrovsk, and Novohrodivka. UCBI II provided equipment and training to the core teams of the four youth hubs, as well as to Nova Druzhkivka, and supported the hubs in organizing different events, including the annual Urban Fest in Druzhkivka. As a result of this activity, 87 trainings, workshops, and educational indoor events for 659 beneficiaries were organized by the four newly created/relaunched and equipped youth hubs in northern Donetsk. The annual Druzhkivka Urban Festival gathered 5,000 attendees from the city and neighboring communities and 19 outdoor sporting and cultural events reached around 1,200 people.
People change a city, and a community changes Ukraine: UCBI II carried out an activity aimed at empowering and enabling national and local activists to strengthen their networks and engage new audiences through cultural expressions of a modern Ukrainian identity. The sixth iteration of the popular From a Country to Ukraine (FC2U) music and culture festival was conducted in nine cities in eastern Ukraine (six supported by UCBI II and three by ENGAGE), attracting over 18,200 people and engaging more than 265 volunteers and local organizers. From September 22 to October 7, 2018, the grantee organized six one-day festivals in the following towns: Rubizhne, Shchastia, Avdiivka, Vugledar, Volnovaha and Popasna. The festival program was roughly divided into day and night agendas. During the day, there were platforms where representatives of Ukrainian NGOs could present their ideas, tents supporting a variety of workshops, and a photo exhibition featuring famous places of Donbas, including those currently located in the non-government-controlled areas. The grantee successfully combined traditional folk activities, such as weaving dolls, with modern workshops on robotics and 3D construction. The night program included performances by contemporary folk bands. Furthermore, during the reporting period, UCBI II expanded FC2U to the south and west, including nine communities in the Transcarpathia (Mukachevo, Berehove, Tyachiv), Odesa (Bilgorod-Dnistrovskyi, Chornomorsk, Ismail), Kherson (Kahovka), and Zaporizhzhia (Berdiansk, Melitopol) regions. Local organizing groups will be responsible for the design and implementation of 30 percent of the festival content in each city, with the remaining content included across all festivals.

Fostering unity through music: Kharkiv has political and cultural divisions and as Ukraine’s second largest city, it is torn between east and west. These tensions were exploited in 2014 when the city was nearly destabilized and occupied by the same forces that occupy much of the Donbas. A key reason for the divisions and disparities in Kharkiv is the lack of opportunities for ordinary residents and active citizens to participate in efforts to improve the city and participate in modern Ukrainian and European culture that has become popular in other large cities. Since 2014, arts, culture, local history, and urbanism have proven to be platforms that both successfully engage civil society and unite residents in Kharkiv. During the reporting period, UCBI II initiated work on the Music Days festival which seek to fill that gap when it is held in 2019. It is based on a successful festival, held in the past in collaboration with Cultural Agency A, a local NGO, which UCBI II will work with once again. This festival has given local artists an opportunity to show their vision of contemporary Ukrainian culture, as well as given Kharkivites the opportunity to hear new music performed by artists from around the country.
Plan B: The third iteration of the Plan B Festival, an important opportunity for civic engagement in Kharkiv, was successfully implemented this year with UCBI II support, attracting approximately 3,500 participants, despite being postponed by two and a half months due to the declaration of martial law in Ukraine shortly before the initial Festival was scheduled to take place. This year, the addition of Idea Boot Camp and sale of tickets to the night programs were important steps forward in growing the Plan B brand, allowing participants to derive more value from the Festival and setting Plan B up on the road to greater independence and sustainability. The festival in February started with the Idea Boot Camp. This invitation-only two-day event gathered 53 activist groups at different stages of development from all over Ukraine to network amongst themselves as well as meet with local and international mentors to refine their concepts. The event culminated in a pitching session during which five teams selected by mentors presented their ideas and addressed questions from the audience. The festival itself followed the format of the previous two years, with TED-style talks on various social innovation and activism topics, panel discussions, and workshops conducted by approximately 42 local and 20 international speakers. The grantee received applications from 168 teams for Idea Bootcamp, with each team comprising two to five members. The third year of implementing the festival helped solidify its brand and reputation as a festival of social innovation and new music. The messages focusing on concepts of civic engagement and innovation resonated with festival participants. Participants indicated that they feel inspired to be more civically engaged and active.

OBJECTIVE 2. INCREASE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN POSITIVE, DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

According to the 2018 SCORE research, and other polls from the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute, a large share of Ukrainians have become disillusioned with the country’s political trajectory and politics. They believe the current economic and political system is corrupt and is beyond reform. While many challenges do exist, there are real reasons to be optimistic. The government has implemented some important technical reforms, including efforts to streamline health care and decentralization that, while imperfect, offer real improvements in people’s lives. But these glimmers of hope are buried in the media by bad news and political manipulation driven by Russian and Ukrainian sources. It will continue to be essential to connect local improvements in governance to national reforms.
Local city sites about reforms: UCBI II initiated an activity to build an audience for new city websites that contain reliable information about changes affecting the region and nation, including positive changes in the security situation, economic opportunities, policy reforms, citizen engagement, and others. Historically, the changes that are implemented by the government and local authorities are not well-communicated nor are they understood by Ukrainians. Ukrainians report that they want more positive stories, educational content, and more local news. Five editorial teams from Volnovakha, Popasna, Svatove, Toretsk, and Troitske and one editorial team from the occupied territories launched local city sites to provide their communities with relevant information about changes in their cities. The UCBI II partners launched nine local online media websites from scratch with further training and mentors' support for staff. Now, most of these websites have between 27,000 to 58,000-page views per month and their audience is steadily growing.

Enhancing the quality of the local content on the public TV channel: The TV channel "UA: Donbas" was created as a result of the all-Ukrainian public television reform in December 2017, by merging the TV channel "LOT" (Severodonetsk, Luhansk region) and the TV channel "To TeBe" (Kramatorsk, Donetsk region). Both television stations were previously stationed in regional centers, but with the onset of an active armed conflict, their equipment and premises were captured by armed groups. This channel is one of the very limited media resources that can broadcast to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. UCBI II supported the channel with the procurement of new equipment, enhancements to the studio, and capacity building activities so the station can more effectively organize the live broadcast of local events and develop new studio programs. On March 22, the renovated TV studio for the local channel in Donetsk and Luhansk regions was opened. With the full set of equipment, hosts have the possibility to travel and make entire episodes from different cities and to go live in case of emergencies and newsworthy events to be shown not only on UA:Donbas, but also on the national UA:PBC channel (the national public broadcaster). Growing the capacity of UA:Donbas is an opportunity to not only to cover outstanding events in the region but also to build a strong partnership with civic society organizations and show the positive changes that are happening in Ukraine.

Demonstrating positive change to Hungarian speakers: Transcarpathia’s large Hungarian ethnic community is significantly influenced by Hungarian language media that often reflects a negative narrative about Ukraine and uses issues such as Ukrainian policies about language education to undermine confidence in the Ukrainian state. This influence is one of the key reasons that Transcarpathia trends similar to east and south Ukraine with regards to low trust in national authorities. Transcarpathia is a unique region - it borders Romania, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia, and it supports two of the largest populations of national minorities including Hungarian people (156,000 people) and Roma people (76,000 people). The media environment of Transcarpathia is crowded, polarized, and non-independent. During the reporting period,
UCBI II initiated a grant to Hungarian and Roma languages departments of Transcarpathian UA:PBC that will be technically equipped and staffed with a translator from Ukrainian to Hungarian to produce specific content for both national minorities and translate daily news.

**Improvement of the social services in Izyum:** More and more cities in eastern Ukraine are embarking on efforts to improve service delivery, in particular using Administrative Service Centers (ASCs) and Departments of Social Protection, as both agencies provide a significant amount of direct government-citizen interaction. However, local administrations are often financially constrained to effectively update old Soviet-style premises and customer service practices to new, more transparent and customer-friendly service delivery. UCBI II supported the Izyum ASC to optimize 87 business processes, improve front office staff capacity to provide customer-oriented service delivery, and organize the ASC premises in a transparent manner. With a grant from GIZ and using their own funds, new ASC premises were renovated. The ASC was officially opened on January 31, 2019. Though small at 195.6 square meters, the center is bright, open, and transparent, providing comfortable conditions for both employees and visitors. Through a Limited Scope In-Kind grant to the Izyum city council, UCBI II helped to complete the transformation of administrative service delivery by procuring IT, office equipment, and furniture for five front office administrators and two receptionists, as well as procuring an electronic queuing system, equipping a passport service point with one workspace, and furnishing the staff break room. As a result of this activity, UCBI II helped Izyum city in to demonstrate quantitative and qualitative improvements to local government service delivery in key reform areas.

**Demonstrating change through recycling in Odesa:** According to the recent SCORE index, 57.4 percent of the local population in the east of Ukraine (including the Odesa region) belongs to a category of passive pro-human rights (i.e., people who can be potentially engaged into community activism, support to diverse and unified Ukraine). UCBI II experienced positive results by working with residential apartment associations (called OSBBs by their Ukrainian acronym) through a recycling activity in Mariupol which united neighbors and representatives of different social groups with diverse experience and backgrounds. During the reporting period, UCBI II initiated a similar grant in Odesa, assuming that recycling can become an effective key to both active groups and people who are not connected with the activists’ circle.

**Healthcare Reform in the East:** UCBI II initiated activities to improve patient experiences and demonstrate the benefits of health reform in a highly visible and practical way. The primary healthcare system in Severodonetsk has been legally restructured and its infrastructure is being optimized to deliver services out of three main buildings in the city. Through a Limited Scope In-Kind grant to the Severodonetsk city council, UCBI II created more comfortable and efficient
primary health care (PHC) offices through light renovation and the automation of processes and increased the understanding of and support for health care reform among doctors and health care administrators through training. Under this activity, three public reception areas and 16 doctor's offices were renovated, refurbished, and equipped in three Severodonetsk PHCs and 122 medical personnel trained (including 60 PHC receptionists, doctors, and nurses). As a result of this activity, the Severodonetsk primary healthcare system demonstrated tangible patient-focused improvements to the delivery of healthcare and 115,000 citizens have already received improved services.
PROGRAM EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is an integral part of project performance management systems, critical for learning, accountability, and outreach. UCBI II’s project evaluation is a systematic process of analysis, with clear feedback generated during monthly activity site visits performed by staff, regular M&E meetings, findings from an independent monitoring firm contracted by UCBI II, and media monitoring. Information gathered by UCBI II staff and by external evaluators is examined by project management, who use it to make strategic decisions.

During the reporting period, UCBI II program staff conducted an average of three to four activity site visits per month. Information collected through site visits and the third-party M&E firm helped to finalize final monitoring reports (FMRs) for completed activities.

During this period, UCBI II also completed a nationwide data collection for Phase II of the SCORE Index. The findings from the SCORE index are integral as UCBI II transitions its focus from Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts, where new USAID programs have been recently initiated, to other areas of the country. Most notably, the survey revealed that while attitudes towards the EU are mixed in the East and South of the country, they are lowest and deteriorating in Odesa and Donetsk oblasts. Also troubling is the finding that attitudes in western Ukraine towards people from the East and other minority groups are poor and getting worse.

In September 2018, UCBI II requested a cluster evaluation of the media programming. A two-person team consisting of a member of the OTI Bullpen (and former CR for the Ukraine program) and an independent media expert from Ukraine conducted the evaluation. The team conducted a combination of desk research as well as Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The team conducted in-country interviews from September 24 - October 5, 2018 and recommendations to the UCBI II team following KIIs.

UCBI II also commissioned a cluster evaluation focused on the effectiveness of service delivery improvement activities and the affect those activities have had on perceptions of the reform process. UCBI II has supported the planning, equipping and renovation of various administration services centers (ASCs or TSNAPs) and a small number of Departments for Social Protection. The evaluation report contained the review of the following reports from Kharkiv, Luhansk and Donetsk region:

- reports on the assessment of the satisfaction of consumers of services for registration of the residence of citizens;
- reports on focus group discussions and interviews with the ASC customers and staff;
- reports on focus group discussions with the Department of Social Protection staff;
- grantee reports; and
- monitoring reports.

Some reports were prepared by GfK and others were prepared by other contractors. In January 2019, two additional surveys with ASC customers and ASC staffs were conducted by GfK in Mariupol and Lysychansk. In addition, the information from the phone survey in 11
settlements of Donbas was added, as well as open information from ASC webpages, and information from UCBI II staff.

UCBI II also has taken important steps to monitor online media and respond to different issues for more than a year. In late 2018 OTI recommended a digital expert to the program, who spent a week with the UCBI II team to develop a possible system to monitor complicated topics as reforms, elections, radicalism, veterans, healthcare, and others. In addition to television, Ukrainians are also actively using the internet and social media to get information on current events. After several meetings, OTI approved a concept called “Listening Platform,” which will track social media influencers and develop content to counter or reinforce their arguments.

During the reporting period, UCBI II also initiated a media consumption survey in its new focus regions with a local firm called InfoSapiens. Results, expected in May 2019, will help to inform program strategy and tactics in the future.