Global Communities in Ukraine

Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) Program
Global Communities leads an international consortium of American, Ukrainian and Polish organizations to implement the program Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) across Ukraine, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

DOBRE strengthens local governance to deepen democracy, improve conditions for development of communities and promote stability. The program builds the capacity of local governments to more effectively manage resources and deliver services that respond to community priorities. At the same time, DOBRE improves citizen engagement and oversight of local governance.

Context
Decentralization, a stated priority of Ukraine’s post-Euromaidan government, results in more decisions and policies set at the local level, with more resources flowing from the central government down to local communities, and more potential for communities to raise their own revenues. As a first step, the government introduced a process through which Ukraine’s more than 11,000 towns, villages and settlements could consolidate into larger and more self-sustaining Consolidated Communities (CCs). Since 2015, almost one-half of these towns, villages and settlements consolidated (or amalgamated) and held new local elections to form over 900 (out of a projected 1500) new local governments. Now these communities face the challenge of governing in ways they did not in the past. Previously, Ukraine’s system of centralized governance meant that local governments, especially villages and rural settlements, had little or no experience exercising the new responsibilities now given them under decentralization.

Program Scope
DOBRE helps those new local governments effectively manage these new responsibilities, and support the development of stronger community cohesion through citizen engagement in these CCs. DOBRE focuses specifically on enabling 75 newly formed CCs to better manage resources, increase the quality of public services, stimulate the local economy, facilitate better communication, and improve citizen engagement. DOBRE helps CCs thrive and prosper through stronger local governance and better conditions for development. These pilot CCs serve as models and motivation to other communities seeking to consolidate.
DOBRE works in seven target Oblasts: Dnipropetrovsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kirovograd, Mykolayiv, and Ternopil. DOBRE provides direct assistance to 75 consolidated communities in these Oblasts. Showcasing the achievements of participating CCs and the benefit to community members allows DOBRE to encourage adoption of best practices in other CCs and promote decentralization on a national scale.

DOBRE starts by supporting CCs in participatory strategic planning, emphasizing mechanisms for including citizen voices. Resulting strategic plans reflect what citizens want and need. DOBRE then helps each CC implement these plans to address those needs. Projects to support local economic development or develop public-private partnerships, or plans to improve the management and delivery of public services or develop improved infrastructure are supported with technical advice and co-funding.

DOBRE helps CCs develop better budgeting and financial management to build trust with citizens. DOBRE also supports improved operations and performance, from individual staff capacity, strengthening council members, increased transparency, sustainable asset management, effective communications with citizens, technological solutions to local issues, and inclusive processes to integrate the needs of vulnerable community members (e.g. people with disabilities, displaced, women, youth or elderly).

DOBRE emphasizes mechanisms for citizens to participate in local government and decision making throughout the program. DOBRE supports civil society and helps the community better advocate for their interests and form a partnership with their CC, while also supporting anti-corruption, transparency and monitoring mechanisms to strengthen trust between CCs and their citizens. DOBRE encourages innovative methods for improving broad participation, particularly through ICT solutions.

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DOBRE Implementing Partners

Global Communities, an international NGO with significant experience around the world improving local governance and communities will lead the DOBRE Consortium.

Poland’s Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD) provides technical expertise from the Polish experience in strategic planning, service provision and participatory budgeting. The Malopolska School of Public Administration at the Krakow University of Economics (MSAP/UEK) helps strengthen educational and professional development opportunities in public administration.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) elevates gender equity and promoting women’s empowerment in DOBRE activities. SocialBoost promotes innovative and demand-driven ICT solutions for inclusive and participatory local governance.

The Ukrainian Crisis Media Center (UCMC) leads a robust communications strategy that strengthens public awareness of the benefits of decentralization, trains stakeholders in effective communications, and maximizes dissemination of results achieved by CCs and the DOBRE program.

Global Communities is an international non-profit organization that works closely with communities worldwide to bring about sustainable changes that improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable. Development is not something we do for people; it is something we do with them. We believe that the people who understand their needs best are the people of the community itself.

Please visit our website at www.globalcommunities.org for more information.