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**SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION
IN THE CONDITIONS OF RECOVERY OF COMMUNITIES:
THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AS A TOOL FOR VETERANS` REINTEGRATION**

Modern challenges related to the recovery of communities after conflicts and crises require the development and implementation of new approaches to the socio-economic development of regions. One of the most important tasks in this context is the reintegration of veterans who, returning to peaceful life, need not only material support, but also opportunities for self-realization and active participation in public life. Social entrepreneurship becomes an effective tool for solving these issues, as it combines economic and social goals.

Social entrepreneurship is a powerful lever for the development of regions, ensuring the creation of jobs, stimulating the local economy and promoting social cohesion. The importance of the development of social entrepreneurship increases in the context of community recovery, where the successful reintegration of veterans becomes one of the key components of stability and sustainable development.

Social entrepreneurship, as an effective tool for the reintegration of veterans and stimulation of socio-economic development of regions, is reflected in various platforms of cooperation and dialogue. One of the examples of such platforms could be the Forum for Local Development of Territorial Communities «Chernihiv region from recovery to development», which was held on October 31 – November 1, 2023 in Chernihiv, organized

with the support of UNDP in Ukraine with the financial support of the European Union, provided within the framework of the project «EU4Recovery – Empowerment of communities in Ukraine». The Forum brings together representatives of government, the public, business and non-governmental organizations to share experiences and spread best practices in sustainable development. This forum becomes an important place for discussing strategic areas of cooperation, in particular in the field of security, restoration of affected communities and territories, as well as for strengthening social cohesion through interaction with various institutions. The purpose of the forum is not only to increase the effectiveness of cooperation, but also to create conditions for the integration of innovative approaches, such as social entrepreneurship, in the processes of community recovery and development. The Forum brought together 176 participants (men and women), among them are the representatives of local self-government bodies, authorities, law enforcement structures, small and medium-sized businesses, the veteran community, representatives of mass media, active youth, women, socially responsible business and international organizations, representatives of the Chernihiv Regional State Administration, partners, guests, invitees.

The main priorities in the recovery of Chernihiv, in particular for 2024, are defined in the reports of the speakers of the forum, presented in Table 1.

The speakers of the forum identified the following as tools for economic recovery in the affected regions:

- continued cooperation with international organizations, state programs of foreign countries, private corporations, charitable foundations on the restoration of infrastructure,
- assistance to the affected population and businesses;
- financial support of small and medium-sized enterprises within the framework of both state and international programs (provision of long-term and low-cost loans, grants for starting and developing one’s own business);
- the introduction of a war-related risk insurance system for business;
- further liberalization of the markets of friendly countries and support for the Ukrainian market manufacturer.

Figure 1 demonstrates the main international projects that supported the businesses of the Chernihiv region in the period January-September 2023.

Table 1

The main priorities in the recovery of Chernihiv, 2024

The direction in the recovery of Chernihiv	Measures within the directions in the recovery of Chernihiv
Restoration of destroyed infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - restoration of educational institutions; - critical infrastructure restoration (Chernihiv thermal power plant, water supply);
Business recovery and development of a new regional economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creation of conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises; - support of self-employment; - development of new sales markets; - development of industries with high added value; - development of innovations; - support for agriculture and food industry; - support for woodworking industry; - support for high-tech mechanical engineering; - creation of conditions for development of IT industry
Preservation and development of human potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - restoration of physical and mental health; - ensuring employment of the population; - access to quality education, medical care at all levels; - ensuring the rights of veterans and their integration into society; - support for internally displaced persons; - development of the youth movement; - ensuring gender equality and inclusiveness; - provision of high-quality administrative services; - care and comprehensive development of children; - support of the sphere of culture and art; - provision of high-quality administrative services

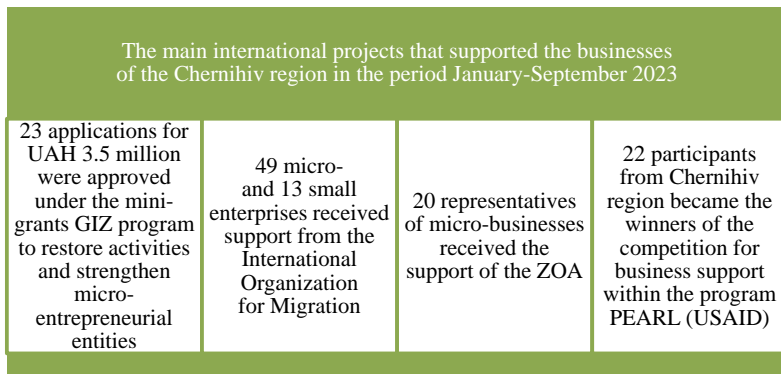


Figure 1. The main international projects that supported the businesses of the Chernihiv region in the period January-September 2023

According to the analytical report Analytical report based on the results of the local development forum – Chernihiv region, UN development program in Ukraine, direction «Public safety and social cohesion», in the section devoted to social entrepreneurship, «social entrepreneurship» is defined as an instrument of interaction of local government, community and business aimed at overcoming unemployment, first of all socially vulnerable population groups, their social protection, protection of human rights, development of education, culture and science, improvement initiatives and solving a number of other problems. An example of the implementation of this approach is the initiative «Social Entrepreneurship Studio», which was implemented in seven affected communities of Chernihiv Region by the Agency for Regional Development of Chernihiv Region with the support of UNDP in Ukraine and the European Union. The information company reached more than 6.5 thousand people regarding the implementation of the initiative. 66 people (including internally displaced persons, youth, women, veterans and their family members) were involved in the project. There were 10 trainings with visits to communities for participants from seven target communities (Chernihivska, Ivanivska, Mykhailo-Kotsiubynska, Ripkynska, Horodnianska, Prylutska, Nizhynska) and 4 lectures in online format. As part of the initiative, an educational excursion to the social bakery «Good bread from Good People» (Kyiv) took place, during which the excursionists had a unique opportunity to communicate with the founders of the largest social bakery in Ukraine and be inspired by their experience [1].

It is important to raise awareness of social entrepreneurship, popularize its ideas and essence, and inform entrepreneurs, public activists, veterans and their family members that social entrepreneurship is a promising field. For this purpose, it is worth scaling up such projects as the considered case study of «Social entrepreneurship studies in communities of Chernihiv region affected by the military aggression of the RF» in order to popularize it. A good practice could be the creation of online platforms at the community level, where useful information about social entrepreneurship, local opportunities and potential partners would be presented [2].

At this difficult stage of Ukraine's development, in connection with the full-scale invasion of Russian troops on our territory, the social stability of society, which is achieved as a result of effective and systematic interaction between the government, business and community, is extremely important. One of the modern tools of such interaction, proven by world practice, is social entrepreneurship, that is, the implementation of social-innovative entrepreneurial activity, a significant part of the income from which is

directed to solving social problems. This kind of entrepreneurial activity as a way of further professional self-realization of servicemen and veterans is seen as an effective tool for their social reintegration in the future [3].

Social enterprises able to stimulate a common community culture, thereby uniting communities. They can support vulnerable groups of people using an entrepreneurial approach and create opportunities that contribute to the social cohesion of the community. Social enterprises contribute to the economic stability of the community by increasing the number of jobs, they can attract significant investment to local areas. Through the creation of added social value, there is a long-term impact on the community. For example, by supporting economic skills development among young people, social enterprises help this age group gain practical experience that can influence their future, as well as the life of the community in general.

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