

@ctivation.pl

Toolkit for Young Leaders:
Ethnic and National Minorities' Rights
in Theory and Practice

HUMANITY IN
ACTION
POLSKA



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The publication is an integral part of @ctivation.pl project implemented by the Foundation Humanity in Action Poland <http://aktywacja.blogspot.com/>

Authors/Editors:

Monika Mazur-Rafał and Magdalena Szarota

@ctivation.pl was financially supported by the PZU Foundation



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Foundation Humanity in Action Poland
address: Konwiktorska 7 lok. 43_7; 00 - 216 Warsaw
phone: +48 (22) 635 01 50
mail: poland@humanityinaction.org
website: www.humanityinaction.org



Graphic design

Jan Witkowski, www.janwi.com

Printed by WEMA Wydawnictwo-Poligrafia Sp. z o.o.,
www.wp-wema.pl

Printed in 2011

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In a Nutshell: Humanity in Action Poland

Humanity in Action (HIA) is an international educational organization. HIA educates, inspires and connects a global network of students, young professionals and established leaders committed to promoting human and minority rights, diversity and active citizenship — in their own communities and around the world.

HIA is a non-profit and non-partisan organization. It is composed of independent entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Poland and USA.

educates
inspires
connects

Within this mission the Foundation Humanity in Action Poland (HIA PL) tries to inspire young people to become socially engaged leaders and take actions on behalf of marginalized people/groups. On the basis of Poland's unique experiences with resisting unjust regimes, regaining freedom as well as building democracy and civic society, HIA PL sees the need to share this knowledge with societies still on the way towards democracy. It points out the importance of solidarity with people in need and the special role that leaders can play as opinion makers within a given society. Therefore, HIA PL targets its educational efforts at specific minority group members and potential leaders.

future
leaders

Why Does it Matter?: @ctivation.pl's Countdown

One, two, **three**.....? In fact, there are quite a few of them even though they are scattered around Eastern Europe. We are talking young and active leaders who have the same dream: to bring some positive change in their local communities. Not an easy task at all. Especially, taking into consideration the complex and quite recent history concerning national and ethnic minorities as well as the current geopolitical reality of the post-Soviet bloc countries. For a civic society to flourish, a democracy needs to be strong with human rights in full swing.

That's for theory. Practice is mostly a different story. The process of transitioning from one system to a new one seems to be still an ongoing one. Well, especially in people's heads. There is still a lot of confusion regarding the "rules of the new game"; finding one's place in the new reality as well as (re)defining one's identity. The world as we knew it is no longer in place. In order to "catch up" there needs to be a collective effort leading to establishing a greater sense of social responsibility on individual and group levels. Young leaders could be truly crucial in triggering this process.



What is needed? They should be well equipped with both knowledge and skills which would make them effective and aware leaders devoted to human and minority rights. They should get a chance to learn from more experienced leaders and experts. By meeting up with their peers – they should get to know that they are not alone in their efforts. They should have a chance to get inspired and inspire others. They should @ctivate their own potential in order to take wise actions.

Three, two, one...

the @ctivation.pl countdown has begun...



What's Here for You? @ctivation.pl's Toolkit

If you are:

- interested in human rights and really keen on the rights of ethnic, religious, racial and national minorities in Eastern Europe;
- eager to become a more effective and dedicated leader and activist;
- looking for inspiration and ideas for taking action and bringing some positive change about in your local communities;
- seeking good practices on how to design and implement workshops/seminars regarding the above-mentioned topics;
- searching for first-hand experiences of like-minded young activists;
- ready to learn “by example” from experienced experts and leaders.

Then, this publication is for you!

Welcome!

Be a True Agent of Change! Humanity in Action Poland's Top Ten Tips:

passion is
the best fuel
for action

1. Passion is the best fuel for action. Carry out a project which tackles a problem/issue which you deeply care about or that touches upon a cause which you believe is the right one. Being passionate means that you will have enough motivation to go all the way and inspire other people to join you.

2. Action is reaction: make sure that what you want to do is what needs to be done. Even if you are passionate about something and you believe something should be done, double check it: make research about the subject, talk to people, see what has been done already, make sure that you are really targeting what needs to be targeted. Be your own devil's advocate. Once you make sure that you are right – continue with your actions.

be your
own devil's
advocate

3. Making a BIG change is a long and complex process. Bringing change about does not happen overnight. It takes time for "things to grow." This process requires commitment and perseverance not only of its leader, but also of people engaged in it. So, think big, but start with something tangible and within your reach.

start with something
within your reach



4. Making ANY change is a process made out of small steps. Once you have your passion and vision, you are ready to get down to work! If you want to reach your goal, there is no other way than doing it step by step

**plan and
be ready
to change**

and day by day. Plan exactly how you want to reach your goal and be ready to change your strategy along the way.

5. Innovate and experiment: be well prepared, but also trust your instincts! You should know the issue you want to tackle inside out but...if you have “a gut feeling” about doing something other than planned, against the odds, taking a road not yet taken – do not be afraid to do so! You may be as about to discover a more effective way of reaching your goal.

**innovate and
experiment/trust
your instincts!**

6. If you want to lead – others should be ready to follow. If you have your vision, exact plan, you are ready to experiment...you still need a network of people to help you out. In order for others to be ready to follow you, a clear and genuine message is needed

**have a clear
and genuine
message**

to start things off: Why is the issue important? Why should they join? Where are you heading? How are you going to do it? How long is it going to take you?

7. Listen carefully: anybody can have a good idea. Being a leader means that you have your vision of action



listen carefully and communicate

and ideas how to reach your goal. It means that you are a good communicator – you know

how to convey your message to others. Remember, however, that anybody can have a good and fresh idea; that anybody can have a great suggestion. A leader should be not also a great spokesperson, but also a fantastic listener. Observe what people want to tell you...and do not ignore them. If they know you listen to them, they will have a greater sense of commitment as well.

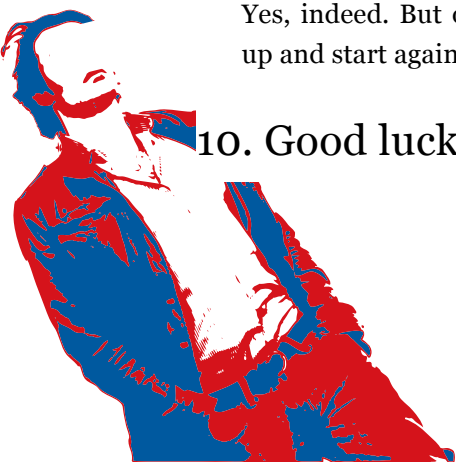
look for allies

8. Money is important, but having friends even more so. Someone said once that fundraising is friends-raising, which means resources are unlimited, if you do not narrow your thinking just to “money” alone. Talk about your idea with as many people as possible. Share your passion with them...look for allies. Also, remember that if you really want to carry something out, it can be done on a string shoe budget.

carry on!

9. Failure – the greatest lesson? Yes, indeed. But only if you get up and start again.

10. Good luck!



Diversity. Challenges. Leadership: @ctivation.pl in the Spotlight

Monika Mazur-Rafał, President
and Director of Humanity in
Action Poland



“Men make history
and not the other way around.
In periods where there is
no leadership, society stands still.
Progress occurs when courageous,
skillful leaders seize the opportunity
to change things for the better.”

The words of Harry S. Truman are very true for Poland, a country which over centuries was lucky and rich in great leaders who in hard times – wars and all sorts of upheavals – managed to come up with their own vision for a change, to convince people to join together and work for the common cause.

If contemporary societies want to become truly civic societies, where the rights of all the members are equally obeyed, they also need leaders, who would model certain behaviors, even if sometimes it means that they are against the majority. Such people seldom come out of the blue – they are made by hard effort: education and

training. In Humanity in Action we assist young people who want to become leaders in their personal growth by providing them with a platform for activism in human and minority rights as we are convinced that such people can empower others and can bring important change about. They can navigate a society through reefs of diversity.

@ctivation.pl's Assets in Short:

- linking theory (knowledge) with practice (skills and training);
- connecting the past (history education) with present and future (human rights education);
- tailor made skills enhancement on an individual basis;
- peer education, networking, mentoring and training in activism;
- serving as a bridge between people from "the West" and "the East."

@ctivation.pl's participants write about the need for such projects:

Bartłomiej Śliwa:

"The Polish city of Cracow is inhabited by some national minorities. Among them Jews constitute a small community which is visible in the public sphere and is



considered as very creative. Jews are distinguished by their distinct religion, specificity of their culture and deep historical roots. For centuries, there were moments of mutual cooperation between Poles and Jews, but there were also many tensions and anti-Jewish riots. For example, the Jews were accused of causing a fire in 1494 and after that fact forced to settle outside the walls of the city in Kazimierz. During the 1919-1939 period the Jewish minority was still growing and was estimated at 60,000. Although Jews were officially recognized as a minority, the Polish government implemented some restrictions on them: they were not allowed to study in certain faculties (law, medicine) and the number of them was limited in some of the offices because of politics aiming to give the major posts to the Poles. After the World War II all previous worlds were annihilated. In 1968 another 20,000 to 25,000 Jews left Poland as a result of anti-Semitism purge conducted by the party.”

Kateryna Seriogina:

“Berehove region of the Zakarpattia Oblast is home to the Hungarian minority in Ukraine. They can be considered as an indigenous nation to this region as they have been living there for ages. Despite this, Hungarians keep their identity and are one of the least integrated minorities in Ukraine for various reasons.



First of all, the language is a factor which in practice hampers integration. Hungarians speak their native language at home. When their children go to school, they are expected to be fluent in Ukrainian, whereas they are fluent in Hungarian. Ukrainian is a foreign language for them. As it is a source of problems at school, many parents decide that their children should continue education in Hungary. Some people claim that the integration of the Hungarian minority in Ukrainian society would be easier, if their languages were more similar. As the Hungarian language is not like any of the Slavic, it is hard to learn Ukrainian and vice versa.

Second of all, Hungarians live their life within families and the family is responsible for the transmission of ethnic and cultural traditions to future generations. Family is the key value. As a result marriages are relatively stronger and divorces are less frequent. Cultural life is reduced to the Hungarian theater in Beregovo and frequent visits of cultural figures from Hungary as well as Hungarian newspapers “Herald Beregovo” and “Bereg info”.

Third of all, religion has always played an important role in the life of Hungarians. Currently, the vast majority of Hungarian population of Zakarpattia consider themselves reformers.”



Liana Ayrapetyan:



“Contemporary Crimean Tatars, a national minority, which constitutes 12% of the Autonomous Republic Crimea’s population used to be a nation historically formed on the territory of today’s Crimea. The contemporary minority had previously its own the state system – a national state called Crimean Khanate, that existed from the 15th until the 18th centuries which used to be very influential in Eastern Europe and in the Black Sea region. During World War II, the entire Crimean Tatar’s population in Crimea fell victim to Soviet policies. On 18 May 1944 all Crimean Tatars were deported en masse as a form of collective punishment to distant parts of the Soviet Union.



In the end of the 20th century Crimean Tatars received the right to return to the historical motherland. They have been massively arriving in Crimea, but have not found any support from the authorities as the communist establishment was against any form of Crimean Tatars’ self establishment.

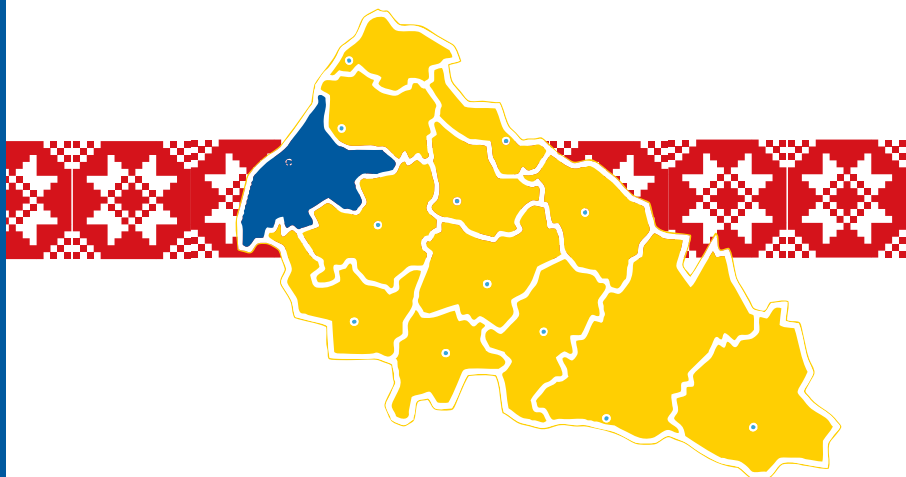
The situation changed after the independent state of Ukraine had appeared, because it respected from the very beginning the obligation to help the arrival of all the deported Crimean Tatars. Although the Ukrainian state has been helpful in all the actions aimed at developing the identity of Crimean Tatars through schools, media and language training, lots of their problems remain unsolved yet, such as unreturned properties confiscated by the communists, lack of basic infrastructure necessary for leading a normal life such as water, gas



and roads or the rights to use the real historical names of villages, cities and districts of Crimea. There are still shortages of Crimean schools and representatives in bodies of power, therefore some Crimean Tatars still consider themselves as victims of discrimination.”

Anastasiya Moskvychova:

“I was born in Uzhhorod in the Zakarpattia region. I cannot imagine any other place with such a great number of different cultures in the whole Ukraine. Although there are many ethnic groups such as Hungarians, Slovaks, Chechens, Germans, and Jews, I find Rusyny (as they call themselves) the most interesting minority. They do not have their own history, but they developed their identity mainly through culture – literature, music and language (...) In practice nowadays the dilemma: “to be Rusyn or not to be” is luckily a matter of choice”.



From A to Z: @ctivation.pl Step by Step

@ctivation.pl was Humanity in Action Poland's first educational project exclusively focused on national and ethnic minorities. It was initially conceived to gather participants from Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania. It was in line with the HIA model of comprehensive education, encompassing not only deepening and broadening knowledge on national and ethnic minorities' rights and providing project participants with some insight information on practical aspects of defending their rights shared by the key activists in this field, but also (re)developing skills necessary to take own actions. The key idea was to inspire young people by engaging them in an innovative and attractive educational project to take actions in form of projects of their own design and to become active citizens in the long-term future.

The project team responsible for creating and conducting the program was composed of: Monika Mazur-Rafał, President of the Foundation HIA PL and Program Director; Magdalena Szarota, HIA PL Managing Board Member and HIA Program Coordinator and Yulia Gogol, @ctivation.pl Coordinator.

Poland
Ukraine
Belarus
Lithuania



What for? The Goals

@ctivation.pl's Strategic Goals:

- to promote and facilitate an ongoing, international dialogue about the impact of challenges that new degrees and forms of diversity pass on to our societies;
- to prepare young people to be active for the benefit of civic societies and its minorities and to encourage them to become leaders in these fields as well as to foster a growing international community bound together by these commitments;
- to reinforce the commitment of young people to democratic values and human rights especially to inspire them to take concrete actions in their local communities and to become empowered active citizens in general;
- to create opportunities to get to know Poland better by national and ethnic minority activists and to share Polish experiences in implementing international standards in this field;
- to disseminate knowledge about human rights and to promote human rights culture among young people and raise human rights awareness within their local communities.

international
dialogue



HUMAN
RIGHTS
FOR ALL

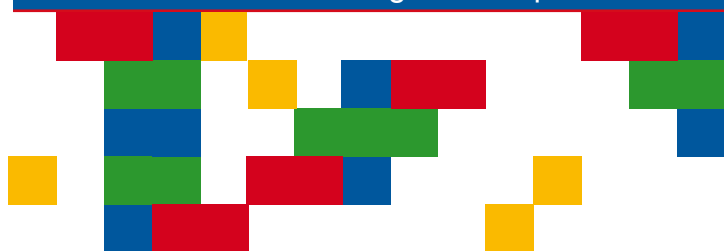




@ctivation.pl's Direct Goals:

- 1) to provide project participants with a comprehensive educational offer consisting of:
 - a 3 months long on-line course on national and ethnic minorities' rights and on project management in the NGOs environment;
 - a 10 day-long seminar on how the Polish state and society have been implementing national and ethnic minorities rights;
 - opportunity for developing a set of skills necessary for activists and future leaders such as: blogging (Internet journalism), training of trainers (conducting workshops) and learning by doing (implementing projects of own ideas).
- 2) to offer project participants a testing ground for their own activism by:
 - meetings with practitioners who share their best practices;
 - providing assistance in developing ideas for projects and supporting their implementation financially and organizationally;
 - networking and mentoring;
 - helping to instigate changes in their local communities/schools and raising human rights awareness.

What and How? The Design and Implementation



1. On-line Education: Almost Like a Game?

overcoming geographical barriers

The idea behind the project was to use the Internet based tools as much as possible in order to overcome geographical barriers.

First of all, an on-line forum was created, where project participants introduced themselves and started discussing project related issues. Second of all, the on-line course principles and contents were shared. The course itself took place from September to November 2010, and was divided thematically into six levels which were implemented according to the unified scheme. First, the project coordinator made available all the materials for a given topic together with the task description. Then, the participants were asked to send in their responses, which were subsequently evaluated. It functioned like a computer game: only these participants were allowed to reach a higher level who completed correctly the actual level.

Thematically, the course's aim was to explore the impact of ethnicity, religion and language as they pertain to the infringement of national and ethnic minority rights. Furthermore, the course focused on international

mechanisms guaranteeing the rights of people belonging to national and ethnic minorities, and international and national actors responsible for defense and protection of human rights. Finally, as individuals can also bring about change, the course provided participants with the tools they need to implement their individual projects to the highest possible standards.



Course program:

LEVEL 1 What is a Minority?

Ethnic and National Minorities in Europe

LEVEL 2 Religion and Minority Rights

LEVEL 3 Minority Languages in Contemporary Societies

LEVEL 4 Minority Rights as an International Concern:
Actors and Strategies of Minority Rights
Protection

LEVEL 5 Strategies of Struggle for Minority Rights –
The Power of ONE

LEVEL 6 Project Management

2. Study visit „Patchwork: Deconstructing Homogeneity of the Polish Society”, Warsaw 05-12.12.2010

Theory / Knowledge and Encounter



Whereas the on-line course enabled project participants to get to know nuances of national and ethnic minorities' rights and to get a solid grasp of theoretical knowledge, the study visit in Warsaw gave them the opportunity to deepen the knowledge on certain aspects as well as to learn from experts and practitioners in this field. In other words Poland served as a case study.

Throughout the visit in Warsaw, @ctivation.pl's participants had the chance to learn from and network with representatives of the following organizations: Amnesty International, Association of Ukrainians in Poland, Common Council of Catholics and Muslims, Education for Democracy Foundation, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Human Rights Defender's Office, European Parliament Information Office in Poland, Humanity in Action Poland Senior Fellows' Network, Open Republic Association Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia, Organization for Security and Co-operation/Office for Democratic Institutions and

Human Rights, Polish Council of Christians and Jews, Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation PAUCI, and the Representation of the European Commission in Poland.

Poland
as a case
study

@ctivation.pl's Traces of Multicultural Warsaw

We kicked off the study visit by exploring the multicultural traces of Warsaw. Here are some of the interesting sights recommended by our guide Ewa Bratosiewicz.

1

“Krakowskie Przedmieście street served as a salon of the old Warsaw. The street was and

is located along the representative Royal Route and is full of beautiful palaces and old churches. Very close to this street, just behind the Saski Garden there was a district inhabited

by Chasidic and Orthodox Jews – **Plac Żelaznej Bramy**, **Rynkowa** and **Skórzana** streets, and perhaps the most well-known in the world Jewish street: **Krochmalna**.”

full of beautiful
palaces and old
churches.

2

“Old Praga is a multicultural district, where in the 17th century a dynamic Jewish community was set up and where in the times of partitions lots of Russians settled. At the center a “triangle of three religions” was established consisting of a Synagogue in Szeroka street (today’s **Kłopotowskiego** street), Orthodox Cathedral of St. Mary Magdalene and the later Praga’s Cathedral of St. Florian – a Roman-Catholic church.”

triangle
of three
religions







@ctivation.pl's Traces of Multicultural Warsaw

3

Dworzec Wileński

4

Ząbkowska

2

Kłopotowskiego

5

Kłopotowskiego

Jagiellońska

Floriańska

1

Plac Żelaznej Bramy

Skórzana

Krochmalna

Rynkowa

3

“In the times of partitions Warsaw was an important city in the Russian Empire. As the railway transport has been developing and the trade was booming, a lot of Russians settled in Warsaw which was perceived to be a more Western city than others. At that time some Orthodox churches were built which were the vivid symbols of occupiers such as Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral or Orthodox Cathedral of St. Mary Magdalene, which used to be the first building which newcomers from Russia saw when they were leaving trains at the Petersburg Railway Station (today Wileński Station).”

4

“Before the World War II the **Ząbkowska** street in Praga was called „Praga’s Nalewki street” as ca. 90% of inhabitants were of Jewish origin. There were a lot of Chasidic prayer houses, small workshops and shops. Also Christians were living here – up to these days one can notice small shrines on the buildings’ facades or in the courtyards, and mezuzah traces in the door-frames of preserved apartment-houses.”

5

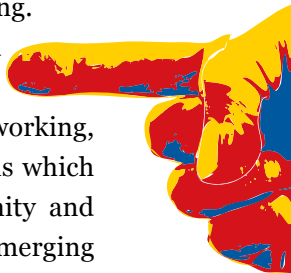
“Old Praga it is also a corner of Warsaw folklore from before the war time and the Warsaw dialect used up until now, which despite all the war human losses is a proof for a distinct cultural identity of Warsaw. A Praga Band Monument at the crossing of streets **Floriańska**, **Jagiellońska** and **Kłopotowskiego** symbolizes this tradition.”

Practice / Skills and Training



Apart from examining the situation of the national and ethnic minorities in Poland and discussing the best practices, project participants had the opportunity of developing their training skills. As education at the school level is one of the most important means of raising awareness, they were asked to conduct workshops on selected aspects of human rights protection and were given feedback on their performance. This training of trainers helped them to enhance their skills and became inspired by other participants and experts. Moreover, as future leaders need to know how to implement projects, they were also offered a tailor-made training on project management with the special focus on fundraising.

In addition, the face-to-face contact helped the project participants get to know each other, to create bonding as well as to facilitate networking, intercultural exchange and exchange of opinions which are a necessary step in building any community and are of key importance for the community of emerging leaders who are expected to take joint actions.



3. Action: @ctivation

a c t i o n



The third and the last program phase was about ACTION. Inspired by the program and filled with ideas, the project participants were asked to come up with ideas for their own projects on national and ethnic minorities in their respective communities. To transform ideas into reality, HIA Poland organized a competition for the most innovative project ideas. The winners received financial support.

These are the winners!

- **“Know Your Rights! Debate Tournament”:** *Kostyantyn Yakovlev*, Youth NGO “Noetikos”, Donetsk; *Yaroslav Minkin*, Luhansk Human Rights Center “Postup” and *Anastasiya Zababurina*, Union of Young Lawyers, Autonomous Republic of Crimea;
- **“The Neighbors”:** *Anastasiya Moskvychova* and *Kateryna Kundelska*.



Who? The People Involved:

- 1) Direct participants: university students and young professionals from Poland, Belarus and Ukraine who either are minority members or are interested in national and ethnic minorities rights and want to be active in this field;
- 2) Indirect participants involved:
 - youth from secondary schools together with school communities (parents and teachers) from the areas selected by direct @ctivation.pl participants;
 - HIA community consisting of alumni and mentors;
 - Internet users interested in national and ethnic minorities rights;
 - the media.



Magdalena Szarota, HIA PL
Managing Board Member and
HIA Program Coordinator:



Thanks to a careful selection process we gathered active and passionate young people with a large variety of experiences who created a very motivated group, curious and interested in Poland's experiences in implementing national, religious and ethnic minority rights standards. They were and are aware of limits in using one country experiences in a different social, political and economic environment, but at the same time became inspired by the Polish case and in a way empowered to action in their local communities.

@ctivation.pl's team consisted of emerging experts in a variety of fields, such as law, education and the media.

Meet a few of them:

Andrii Gozhyi, a lawyer with experiences in corporate structures and public administration (assistant-advisor of the deputy of Zhytomyr City Council in 2004-2006 and 2009-2010). He has an extensive experience as a volunteer:

- 1) in Zhytomyr part of Municipal Governance and Sustainable Development Programme (MGSDP) of UNDP/Ukraine UNO in 2004-2007;
- 2) since 2003 as the first vice-chairman and as an advocate of human rights of Zhytomyr Region Social Young Organization "The Association of Young Lawyers";
- 3) at the Polish Scientific Society in Zhytomyr City.

Thanks to these experiences he became specialized in legal education (project leader of projects "The legal education for youth" and "Poland Law Project").



Kateryna Seryohina, educated initially as an economist-accountant, but she has never really liked this profession. Thus, she qualified as a psychologist who discovered the passion to work with people and help them solve their problems. Since 2005 she lives in Zakarpattia, a Hungarian village in Ukraine, where she works in an orphanage and volunteers for a charitable foundation “Bene” as a chief accountant and public relations specialist.

Victoria Vesolovska, a journalist with extensive voluntary work experience. Since 2003 she has been the coordinator of the Nikolaev oblast public organization “Nikolaev press club”, in charge of approximately 400 events for journalists. Since 2005 she has been involved in the education of future journalists



holding leading positions including International Relations Department Director, College of Press and TV. Moreover, since 2006 she is a producer of the Television Academic Channel of College of Press and TV – the first in the territory of the former USSR educational TV channel on air which belongs to an institution of higher education. In addition, she is an active journalist and author of many various political, economic, international TV materials.



Hurray! The Achieved Impact

@ctivation.pl's Results:

From the perspective of the participants:

They...

- had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge on ethnic and national minorities rights, international standards and strategies of defending the rights as well as to get the insight into the best practices shared by experts/mentors;
- had the chance to broaden their theoretical knowledge and (re)develop skills regarding project management including communicating skills with the Internet based tools;
- were provided with the 'playground' to test themselves as grass-root activists by designing and implementing their own Action Projects.

From HIA Poland's perspective:

Thanks to @ctivation.pl:

- a unique and innovative on-line course on national and ethnic minorities rights was developed and tested in practice;
- a tailor-made educational 10 day-long program on national, religious and ethnic minorities rights in Poland was conceived and implemented in Warsaw;
- a blog (<http://aktywacja.blogspot.com/>) devoted to the national and ethnic minorities rights was set up and up-dated by project coordinators and participants;



- a broad range of Action Projects ideas was developed, many of them were subsequently implemented for the benefit of local communities and their national and ethnic minorities;
- approximately 200 high school pupils were indirect project participants as they were involved in projects conceived by direct project participants and were exposed to the topic of diversity, tolerance and coexistence of national and ethnic minorities and took actively part in project of various types.



Overall Effects:

- Inspiration, empowerment, exchange of experiences and good practices among young emerging leaders from Poland, Ukraine and Belarus;
- Thanks to their increased qualifications, mastering selected skills, broader range of social network, our emerging leaders were able to professionalize themselves and subsequently also the organizations where they work;
- More professional organizations would attract more people to work for the common cause and thanks to this local communities would be more active, more aware of rights of other people and more open for diversity;
- Young people would implement their own successful Action Project, become empowered and engage in many more social initiatives. They can become active citizens/local opinion leaders. Thanks to the “snow ball” effect they could attract many others who do not know where and how to start being active for the society.



Bartłomiej Śliwa about the project:

“The project @ctivation.pl enabled me to familiarize myself with the complex knowledge about the issue of human rights defense, particularly national and ethnic minorities’ rights in the Polish context. It was a great opportunity to exchange ideas with well experienced Polish social activists and scientists and to prepare my own action plan. But, the most important thing about the program was, to me, to experience the energy and engagement of both: the young people from Polish NGOs and the participants from behind the Polish Eastern border (Ukraine and Belarus).

to
experience
the energy
and
engagement

We were comparing our experiences, seeing what needs to be done in human rights in our countries and working together for the benefit of the ethnic diversity.”



Yes, You Can! Action Projects in the Spotlight:

“Know Your Rights! Debate Tournament”

*Kostyantyn Yakovlev, Yaroslav Minkin
and Anastasiya Zababurina*



What Was the Project All About?

The idea was to organize a debate tournament for young students of Eastern Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea aimed at increasing their awareness of national and ethnic minorities' rights by providing participants with the skills and knowledge to develop their own activities addressing these topics to further spread the acquired information.

The necessity of the project was pointed out by the lack of human rights activists in Eastern Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea as well as the population's lack of awareness of the minorities' rights, ways to stop abusing them and institutions that may help.





Why the Project?

According to *Kostyantyn Yakovlev*, project initiator and chief organizer:

"I had already been interested in human rights issues for half a year before the event and wanted to create an educational course for human rights defenders in my region since I noticed that many youngsters were manipulated in order to increase numbers of rally members for various protests. In my opinion, every person has to know her/his rights and understand everything on his/her own not to be a blind mouse in the claws of sneaky cat politicians. The @ctivation.pl seminar actually activated my idea and prompted to conduct a similar online learning course. As I was acknowledged with debate technique

**every person
has to know
her/his rights**

since my early university years I decided to use the debate tournament as a main tool of collaboration during the final meeting of participants in Horlivka."



Project Goals:

Thus, the main objectives of “Know Your Rights! Debate Tournament” were as follows:

- to teach active students about the minorities’ rights issues in Ukraine;
- to acquaint them with the best practices of advocates for rights and freedoms;
- to encourage students to develop their own projects on the topic addressed;
- to strengthen the participants’ leadership and communication skills as well as team work.

The distinct difference of this project idea lied in the online learning course prior to the tournament. During the e-learning phase participants acquired some knowledge on minorities’ human rights issues especially thanks to the usage of interactive and innovative ways such as social networks and special online communication platforms. Also, the topicality of the debate tournament involved not only debating, but also a training by recognized experts in the field of the human rights and distribution of project-related materials in the form of printed leaflets, online collections of remarkable materials and videos shown before and during the event. This focus on on-line attractive tools met positive reactions of the audience.



The Project Design:

March – April 2011: Preparation

June 2011: On-line course

Module 1

- What are national and ethnic minorities?

(http://www.argumentator.org/blog/znay_prava/326.html)

Module 2

- Linguistic rights of national and ethnic minorities

(http://www.argumentator.org/blog/znay_prava/339.html).

Module 3

- Minorities identification

(http://www.argumentator.org/blog/znay_prava/352.html)

July 1-3, 2011: Debate Tournament



http://www.argumentator.org/blog/znay_prava/

Project Results in Numbers



- 26 young students were engaged into the on-line phase directly;
- half of the participants continues work in human rights sector;
- ca. 200 high school pupils and young students in Eastern Ukraine were indirectly involved.

10 Tips for a Successful Action Project:

1. Collaboration is about finding the right team.
2. Preparation is about being on the safe side.
3. Believing is about realizing.
4. Trying again is about getting what you want.
5. Online is not always the best way.
6. Being fun is about finding friends.
7. Engaging is about interaction.
8. Feedback is about correcting the way.
9. Sharing responsibilities is about time management.
10. Realizing the project is living it.





Kostyantyn Yakovlev, chief organizer; Human Rights Officer in Donetsk region Youth NGO “Noetikos”; since his student years he run a Youth Discussion Club (D-Club) in his native city of Horlivka (Donetsk region, Ukraine) with the aim to strengthen democratic values

through encouraging participation in debates, volunteering and creative teaching. As a grantee of the US Department of State he was in 2009-2010 teaching English of challenged boarding school children in the region through games and interactive exercises. Passionate grass-root

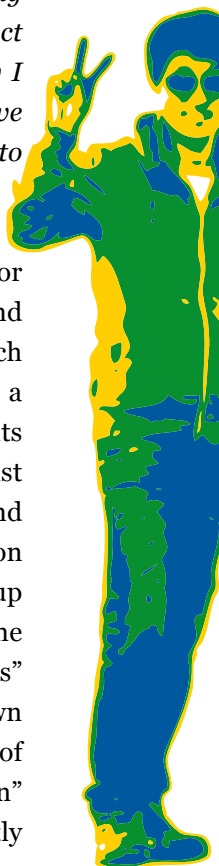
activist in his ‘small homeland’ Horlivka, won the title of the European City to it in the contest by Council of Europe. Besides he broadens his knowledge and skills through numerous workshops and international exchange programs in the field of non-formal education, international collaboration and human rights and works as an interpreter. He is fascinated by digital photography and runs a blog on it.

“When last autumn I was selected to take part in @ctivation.pl project, I devoted huge attention to it since the idea was different in many ways from traditional seminars and conferences. During the online course the participants already learnt basics of human and minority rights defense and we were all friends even before we met in the train heading to Warsaw. In the Poland’s capital the educational training started not with usual “getting to know each other” games but with an excursion to the Old City that pointed out its

importance as a way of prevailing of humanism over its enemies. The whole seminar ahead was conducted under this statement and persuaded me to take actions in my homeland.

In Warsaw I met new friends and colleagues that supported my idea and helped to receive a grant with the help of which we were able to provide financial assistance for travel and lodging of people that applied to “Know Your Rights!”. Realization of this project also taught me how to collaborate with other people and authorities, allowed me to get acquainted with many interesting people. During the realization of the project I was proposed a new position in an NGO and now I am in charge of human rights with “Noetikos”. I have established connections with many participants to further continue the “Know Your Rights!” idea.”

Yaroslav Minkin, co-organizer; press coordinator of the Luhansk Human Rights Center “Postup” and the chairman of the youth organization “STAN”, which advocates human rights through arts. He edited a number of literary anthologies concerning human rights infringements. He is devoted human rights activist focused on human rights media coverage, censorship and monitoring militia. In cooperation with the Ukrainian Helsinki Group he also realizes projects within the “Understanding Human Rights” program. On the basis of his own experience of the organizer of “Human Rights Activists in Action” social network and May 32nd Nightly





Festival of Social Youth Films, he finds cinema and other arts together with the Internet based media the most powerful means of expressing freedoms and engaging youth.

Anastasiya Zababurina, from Sevastopol active in Union of Young Lawyers (AR Crimea, Ukraine), student of Law at the V. I. Vernadsky Taurida National University



aims to become an expert in the field of jurisprudence to protect rights of people. She is interested in tolerance, takes part in protest actions concerning infringement of human rights and promotes concerts devoted to various indigenous people of the Crimea.

Project Participants

Yuliya Karyuk, Kurakhove, Donetsk region. As a member of “Understanding Human Rights” project management course by Ukrainian Helsinki Group she has drafted a project for combating gender discrimination in the region. Yuliya continuously defends consumers’ rights in her native city, acts as a professional elections observer and plans to monitor actions of Ministry of Internal Affairs officers in Eastern Ukraine that have recently paid attention of international watchdogs due to an increased number of deaths in preliminary detention centers.



Oleksandr Kiselyov, Donetsk, an experienced debater and human rights activist. He is a member of the Direct Action independent student union and coordinator of the Dead Poets movie club in Donetsk National University where the festival of anti-fascist movies took place along with other showings on the topic of tolerance and combating xenophobia.



Participants' Testimonials:

Darya Varyvod, Severodonetsk, Luhansk region. In 2009-2010 she was an EVS volunteer in the international youth center in Auschwitz where she provided excursions for Ukrainian visitors at the Holocaust memorial.

"I was not much interested in human rights before my volunteering in Poland neither I was a debater. But as I have just finished a pedagogical institute I noticed that many people are not tolerant to each other, and radical groups of youngsters regularly invade streets of Horlivka. Swastikas still appear on Auschwitz walls, they are still seen on streets of Donetsk and can be recognized in symbols of ultra right organizations. An education process similar to the one that took place during "Know Your Rights!" project is necessary for youth to understand principal values of rights and freedoms. As a future teacher I wanted to gain more



information on this topic as I want to educate children that respect others and can clearly form their own views based on principles of humanism.”

Oleksandra Arinenkova is a PR specialist from Makiyvka, Donetsk region, Ukraine. She took part in regional media school last summer and now continues her debating career as a member of “Noetikos” NGO.

“It’s no use explaining how important the ability to prove your points in an argument is. Unfortunately we can’t avoid conflicts in our personal or business life, but when they appear



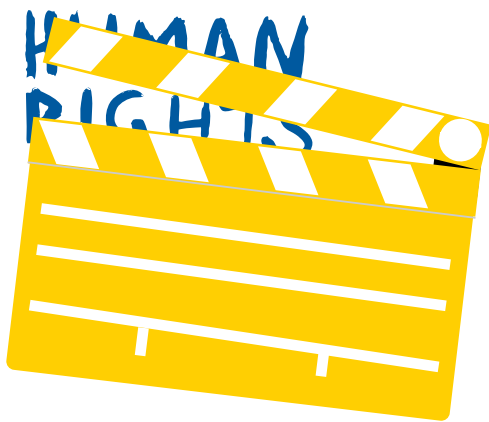
clear argumentation can help us not only come off clear, but also to persuade the opponent and, this is the practical purpose of debates. I played my first debate round during “Know Your Rights!”, and Horlivka was the city where I learnt the rules of this rhetoric and intellectual game. Many of my friends were fond of public speaking, but I was not sure that I would be able to present counterarguments and was afraid that I would let down my teammate. But it appeared that my own intuition and knowledge helped a lot with producing not bad results with experience further gained in such a way. In addition to it, judges patiently clarified debate nuances, examined speech mistakes and made valuable suggestions. Besides this I learnt new information about human rights and maybe for the first time in my life I started thinking about justice or unfairness of some laws.”

Antonina Fedik is a member of control and audit committee of the Donetsk “Noetikos” NGO. Antonina was responsible for registration of participants and filming the activities.



“A friendly atmosphere created by a debating community was seen in positive impressions exchanged during coffee breaks and in eyes burning with the desire to spend the three days in an active way. Human rights experts stayed with the participants for all the three days that is not common for such activities. Besides, the guests had already played in 3 online rounds that enabled them to be better prepared. It was also interesting that the theme for the final was closely connected with the movie shown before pointing out interconnections of all the event components.”

This tournament also highlighted close cooperation of the organizing committee with the participants as a result of which the schedule was reworked and useful feedback was received. Interactive games made us all friends and will stay with us for a long time. When the tournament was over I could not believe in it, but the other debaters would support me that everybody was leaving with positive and bright feelings.”



Yes, You Can! Action Projects in the Spotlight:

“The Neighbors”

Kateryna Kundelska and Anastasiia Moskvychova



Why the Project?

intolerance in small towns

The project deals with a problem of latent intolerance of national and ethnic minorities in small towns which are inhabited by closely integrated communities of people who have mainly conservative worldviews. To exemplify the tensions which diversity poses to such communities project leaders *Kateryna Kundelska* and *Anastasiia Moskvychova* focused on the example of Baranivka in the Zhytomyr region which is a small town in Northern Ukraine. It is inhabited by ca. 12 200 thousands of people (as of 2009), including representatives of many national minorities such as: Poles, Jews, Russians and Armenians. In Baranivka there are not only the Orthodox and the Catholic churches, but also there are representatives of other religious communities (Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses). Religious and ethnic diversity still remains a challenge for this

community. Inter-ethnic and inter-religious integration is hampered because local people do not know much about other minority members and think of them in mainly stereotypical categories. There are many popular myths regarding others concerning their customs and everyday life.

Kateryna Kundelska, student of journalism at the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv; with practical experience of working for “Newspaper in Ukrainian” and site Gazeta.ua. As the editor and writer of the columns “Society” and “Interesting” and as she comes from Baranivka she naturally became interested in the theme of national minorities. Kateryna decided to do this project because she does believe that everyone is equal and therefore people must respect each other.



What Was the Project All About?

Kateryna Kundelska and Anastasiia Moskvychova:

“To change the situation we decided to attract pupils and students (16-20 years old) who would be interested in journalism. Through drawing attention to the problem of latent intolerance we wanted to instigate change by creating a public response concerning this issue in form of a newspaper. The idea behind was first to educate young people about national minorities living in the city by organizing a club of young journalists. Second,

project participants were assisted in writing journalistic pieces about national minorities living in the local area. The third step was to form an editorial board which then worked on a newspaper and included their own articles about national minorities (essays, interviews etc.). Apart from this there was an event organized at social network “vkontakte”. The newspaper will be distributed at two schools of Baranivka and hopefully will be used as a didactic tool during the lessons.”



Anastasiia Moskvychova, student of journalism at the Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University in Kiev with practical experience of working at newspapers, online-media and radio station; freelancer at Radio Liberty.

“Implementing “The Neighbors” inspired and triggered by the HIA Poland program @ ctivation.pl was a great experience of teamwork for me. I met people who believe in what they are doing and I think that in any social activity this belief is the necessary requirement. I am happy that I could help people who are genuinely interested in improving the situation in their local community.”



Kateryna Kundelska and **Anastasiia Moskvychova** about the project ‘from behind the curtain’:

“We’ve started working on project in June 2011. First, the participants analyzed problem of religious diversity and tolerance. To find out what is the situation in Baranivka they interviewed Azat Saroyan, representative of Armenian minority Baranivka, and monk of the Catholic Order of St. Francis, father Victoryn. Second, young journalists also analyzed stereotypes and myths about minorities in their small society. One of them researched the news about the minorities. Third issue tackled was tolerance reflected in the culture (...). Apart from these topics we asked the project participants to draft short essays containing reflections on their personal understanding of tolerance and these personal remarks were also included to the newspaper.”



Participant's Testimonial:

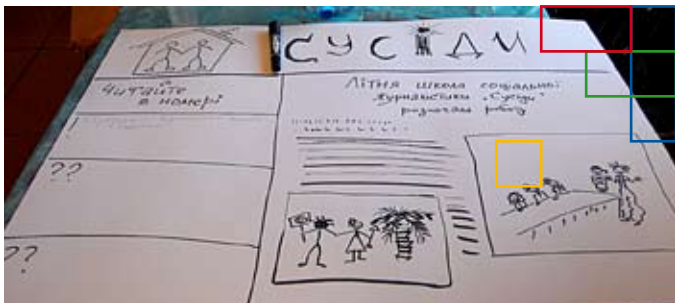
“My name is Jana. I am a musician studying at music college Zhytomyr, where I play violine. I come from Baranivka where I was born 18 years ago. I became very much interested in the media school dealing with the problems of national and religious minorities in my hometown because I am a representative of Catholic community in Baranivka. The majority of population is Orthodox. I interviewed our priest father Victoryn.

learning
about
stereotypes
and
forgiveness

We talked about stereotypes, about forgiveness and...about financial matters in churches. I discovered that being Catholic is much cheaper than being Orthodox! But of course this is first of all the issue of faith and not money:~)”

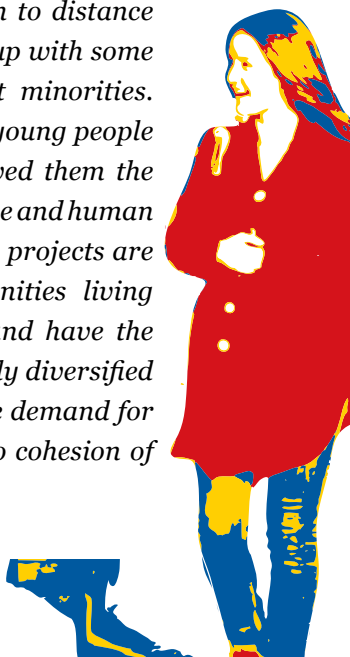


Project Results in the Eyes of Project Leaders:



"It was a fascinating experience to implement "The Neighbors", the first project of our own design in Baranivka. We believe that thanks to the project we assisted project participants in gaining broader knowledge about culture, language, customs, traditions and legal protection of national minorities in Baranivka. In our opinion, it helped them to distance themselves from stereotypes and to come up with some doses of objectivity in discussions about minorities. Moreover, we are happy that we assisted young people in developing journalistic skills and showed them the power of the media in promotion of tolerance and human rights culture. We are convinced that such projects are needed in small towns because communities living there in general are very conservative and have the tendency to exclude all 'others'. In ethnically diversified areas such as in Baranivka there is a huge demand for reflection on diversity and its relevance to cohesion of given communities."

**a huge
demand for
reflection
on diversity**



Appendix: “Patchwork: Deconstructing Homogeneity of the Polish Society”



Program in Warsaw:

December 5, 2010 - December 12, 2010

Theory/Knowledge and Encounter

Traces of Multicultural Warsaw

“Let’s Get to Know the Surroundings: (In)Visible History and Vibrant Present in the Warsaw’s Streets”, Ewa Bratosiewicz, guide

Ethnicity

“What Rights Ethnic and National Minorities Enjoy in Poland?”, Dorota Pudzianowska, lawyer and member of the Board of Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

“Through the Eyes of Minority/Majority: Mapping Diversities in a Homogenous Country”, Konstanty Gebert, writer and columnist

“Nothing about Us without Us?: Ukrainian Community in Poland”, Piotr Tyma, President of the Association of Ukrainians in Poland

Religion(s) & Minorities

“On the Search of the Common Ground: Developments of the Inter-religious Dialogue”, Agata Skowron-Nalborczyk, PhD, Common Council of Catholics and Muslims, University of Warsaw and Reverend Wiesław Dawidowski, PhD, President of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews

“Gluing the Community: The Role of the Orthodox Church”, Reverend Rościsław Gwizdak, Metropolitan Orthodox Cathedral of st. Mary Magdalene

Identity & Language

“Assisting Minorities in Poland: The Role of the Human Rights Defender’s Office“, Mirosław Wróblewski, Director, Human Rights Defender’s Office

“Rights to Rights: Introduction to Human Rights Education”, Łukasz Mielnik, Amnesty International

“Beyond Words: Anti-Semitism in Poland vs. Free/Hate Speech”, Elżbieta Petrajtis O’Neill, Open Republic Association Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia, Board Member

Minority Rights: an International Concern and Its Actors

“On the Margin? Struggling for Inclusion of Roma in Poland”, Andrzej Mirga, PhD, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Organisation for Security and Co-operation

“The Rule of Law: Protection of National and Ethnic Minorities by the EU”, Jacek Safuta, Director, European Parliament Information Office in Poland and Kinga Schlesinger, Political Department, Representation of the European Commission in Poland



Practice/Skills and Training

Education on Minority Rights

“Action! Bazaar: on the Search of Potential Cooperation Partners”, a networking meeting with representatives of: Martyna Michalik, Education for Democracy Foundation and Igor Lyubashenko, Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation, PAUCI

“Sharing the Experiences: Educating about National and Ethnic Minority Rights in the HIA PL Context”, HIA PL Team and Kinga Brudzińska, HIA PL Senior Fellow

“Toolkit: Tolerance & Non-Discrimination”, Łukasz Mielnik, Amnesty International

How to Instigate Change? Fundraising and Project Management

“HIA PL: Action Projects. What Is Expected? How to Prepare a Successful Action Project?”, Monika Mazur-Rafał, President of the Foundation HIA PL and Program Director

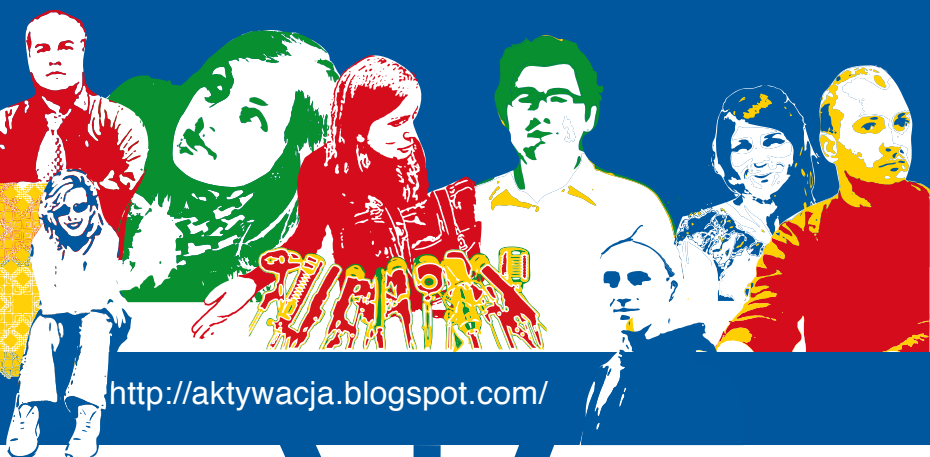
Series of workshops on “Project Development”, “Fundraising”, “Project Implementation”, Monika Mazur-Rafał, President of the Foundation HIA PL and Program Director

Project Evaluation

“Exchange of Action Project Ideas”, Magdalena Szarota, HIA PL Managing Board Member and Program Coordinator

„Project Evaluation”, Monika Mazur-Rafał, President of the Foundation HIA PL and Program Director, Magdalena Szarota, HIA PL Managing Board Member and Program Coordinator and Yulia Gogol, Project Coordinator





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