



## WP2A9: Synthesis of OA publication

### Citizen engagement as a crisis response at higher education institutions in the Baltic states and Ukraine

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Baltics4UA: Supporting Ukraine through citizen engagement at Baltic Universities

# Deliverable Factsheet

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## Consortium

The consortium governing the project is adequately representing a wide range of expertise, as 5 Higher Education Institutions (Tallinn University, Lviv Polytechnic National University, Kaunas University of Technology, University of Tartu, University

of Latvia) join hands with a web education specialist (Web2Learn). This mix of knowledge, skills, experiences and networks guarantees a layered approach toward a diverse range of stakeholders.

	Name	Short Name	Country
1	Tallinn University	TLU	Estonia
2	Lviv Polytechnic National University	LPNU	Ukraine
3	Web2Learn	W2L	Greece
4	Kaunas University of Technology	KTU	Lithuania
5	University of Tartu	UT	Estonia
6	University of Latvia	UL	Latvia



## Revision History

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V1.0	14/07/2024	Rasa Dovidonyte (KTU)	Internal review
V1.0	14/07/2024	Yurii Kondratyk (University of Tartu) Kateryna Boichenko (Web 2Learn)	Final touches on a layout; last content review

### Statement of originality:

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.

### Disclaimer:



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## Synthesis

Since Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, many Ukrainians had to leave the war-torn regions and seek refuge in other countries for safety. The Baltic countries Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have accepted refugees from Ukraine, provided needed support, and implemented various activities to ensure successful integration into the hosting society. This humanitarian crisis has presented new challenges for both the Ukrainian refugees in the Baltic states and the communities hosting them. In order to address these challenges Baltic higher education institutions are working on a project “Supporting Ukraine through citizen engagement at Baltic Universities” (Baltics4UA) under the Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 2: Partnerships for Cooperation.

The main goal of the project Baltics4UA is to enhance Baltic universities’ social responsibility through civic engagement actions to address the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis in the Baltic states. The Baltics4UA project unifies 5 universities (University of Tallinn, University of Tartu (Estonia), University of Latvia (Latvia), Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania), and the Lviv National Polytechnic University (Ukraine)). In Baltics4UA project also takes part Web2Learn (W2L), an organisation established in Thessaloniki, Greece. It is a business partner that operates at the crossroads of open innovation and business-academia cooperation. Web2Learn brings together academic (and in general, educational) partners in fruitful research, development, and service design collaborations with business partners.

In order to solve real-world problems all Baltics4UA project partners organised social actions in their institutions. These social actions were organised by applying the quadruple helix model. The quadruple helix model is an innovation framework that integrates four major sectors: academia, industry, government, and civil society to foster collaborative innovation and socio-economic development. According to this model, academia prepares and develops educational resources and carries out research, the industry suggests practical application, the government ensures policy support and regulation and society suggests community engagement activities. Synergy and engagement among these four sectors tackle complex societal challenges through a holistic and inclusive approach.

Prior to planning and organising social actions a methodological approach of Butkevičienė et. al (2021) was adopted for two reasons: a) its focus on citizen engagement in socio-environmental issues based on case studies analysis, b) its emphasis on social innovation and participation, – two elements associated closely to the scope of the Baltics4UA project.

Citizen engagement practices and actions build stronger and sustainable collaborations between academia, business, and society. As a result, the citizen engagement typology outlined by the World Bank Working Group on Citizen Engagement (2015) was adopted. This typology distinguishes four levels of citizen engagement, namely:

1. **Information:** Citizens are recipients of information by external stakeholders.



2. **Consultation:** Institutions receive citizens' feedback with citizens' role being limited to this one-way interaction.
3. **Collaboration:** Citizens are called to contribute to the process in a two-way interaction scheme.
4. **Empowerment:** Citizens are initiators and strategic organisers of the actions.

The following engagement levels vary from passive receipt of information to the most advanced empowerment level when community members are empowered to take leadership and organise initiatives and activities in crisis response by themselves.

In order to have a common understanding about a variety of social actions among Baltics4UA partners a typology of social actions was outlined. The first introduction of this typology is available in the open-access publication by Zourou & Oikonomou (2023) "Baltic universities fostering citizen engagement through social actions for Ukrainian refugees". The typology includes 18 social actions:

1. Citizen Science
2. Hackathon
3. Crowdfunding
4. Crowdsourcing
5. Do-it-yourself
6. Art events (theatrical plays, music concerts, exhibitions etc.)
7. Scholarship
8. Tuition-free studies
9. Free accommodation
10. Psychological counselling
11. Podcast
12. Campaign
13. Public lectures
14. Legal counselling
15. Networking event
16. Summer camp
17. Educational equipment
18. Working/Research group

Social actions were organised taking into account the specific needs of the following primary target groups: university students, university staff, Ukrainian refugees and/or internally displaced persons, and Baltic and Ukrainian citizens.

Furthermore, seeking to ensure the systematic process of social actions planning, executing, and evaluating citizen engagement actions. The Baltics4UA methodology and its



instruments were prepared and disseminated among project partners. Following the checklist described in Baltics4UA methodology project partners organised 23 social actions following 9 step methodology that entailed:

- 1) defining their target groups,
- 2) developing an engagement strategy,
- 3) considering inclusion and diversity issues,
- 4) defining the level of citizen engagement,
- 5) identifying the type of social action,
- 6) creating an implementation plan,
- 7) training their staff,
- 8) assessing the impact of their action, and
- 9) disseminating and sharing best practices.

This structured approach ensured that the engagement initiatives were aligned with the project's objectives and the specific needs of the target groups into 23 social actions on the four levels of citizen engagement (information - 9 actions, consultation - 4 actions, collaboration - 7 actions, empowerment - 3 actions):

Level of citizen engagement	Type of social action	Title of social action
information	Art event	1. Film screening "Who are we? Psychoanalysis of Ukrainians" and post-film discussion (UT, Estonia)
	Public lecture	2. Public lecture "Information war: Industry 4.0 enabled technologies to ensure freedom, security and justice" (KTU, Lithuania)
	Public lecture	3. Volunteer event organised in cooperation with Caritas organisation "Discover yourself as a volunteer" (KTU, Lithuania)
	Public lecture	4. Public lecture "Leadership in times of crises" (LU, Latvia)
	Networking event	5. Ukraine Treasure Hunt (UT, Estonia)



	Art event	6. Beata Kurkul's exhibition "Fighting Ukraine" (KTU, Lithuania)
	Public lecture	7. "Ukraine Indomitable: How Ukrainians Keep Standing During the War?" (UT, Estonia)
	Public lecture	8. Meeting with the Ukrainian Ambassador, His Excellency Maksym Kononenko (UT, Estonia)
	Networking event	9. Film screening of "A Letter to Ukraine" and post-film discussion with the director (KTU, Lithuania)
Consultation	<i>Networking event</i>	10. Youth debate tournament at the War Museum (Latvia, LU)
	<i>Public lecture</i>	11. Public lecture and discussion about local government challenges in Ukraine during the war (Latvia, LU)
	<i>Campaign</i>	12. Debate about the documentary film "Ukrainian Storybox – Voices of War" on voices from Ukraine during the war (Latvia, LU)
	<i>Working/research group</i>	13. Survey of Ukrainian students (Estonia, TLU)
Collaboration	Networking event	14. Students' seminar about engaging Ukrainian pupils in educational institutions (Estonia, TLU)





	<i>Working/Research group</i>	15. Roundtable on “The vector of values as the main direction of influence in involving citizens in humanitarian aid in crisis situations” (Ukraine, LPNU)
	<i>Working/Research group</i>	16. Brainstorming session on "The role of the academic community in engaging citizens in humanitarian aid" (Ukraine, LPNU)
	<i>Working/Research group</i>	17. Case study championship “Social Communications as an Effective Tool for Involving Business in Humanitarian Aid” (Ukraine, LPNU)
	<i>Working/Research group</i>	18. Webinar "Psychological support for citizens in humanitarian aid in crisis situations" (Ukraine, LPNU)
	<i>Hackathon</i>	19. The Cosmic Hackathon “Baltic Universities’ students for Ukrainian cultural heritage protection through space data and Earth observations” (Greece, Web2Learn)
	<i>Hackathon</i>	20. Hackathon on “Young professionals using space data to safeguard Ukrainian cultural heritage” (Greece, Web2Learn)
Empowerment	Art event	21. Folk dance workshop (Estonia, TLU)
	Do-it-yourself	22. “Spend a day with me” language tandem (Estonia, TLU)



	Do-it-yours elf	23. LIFE course on citizen engagement actions to provide humanitarian aid or educational support to Ukrainians in Estonia and Ukraine (Estonia, TLU)
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In 23 social actions, 448 participants took part. To get the feedback and measure the impact of these events participants were asked to fill in post-event evaluation feedback consisting of six agreed-upon questions. The post-action survey was implemented for 16 activities out of 23. Eighty-five percent of the participants indicated that activities met their expectations. Furthermore, participants were asked how likely they would participate in similar action in the future and the average score was 4,7 (according to a Licert scale from 1 to 5, 5 being most likely). In the survey was an open-ended question about whether the activity met expectations. Seventy percent of participants answered that they have a general interest in engaging in social actions, while the rest of the respondents indicated that their participation depends on the purpose and context of the event. Survey respondents were asked how much the action helped to increase their motivation or interest in engaging in university-driven initiatives for Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees the following options were suggested: 63 % of the respondents agreed that action increased their motivation (very much), 21 % - slightly, 14% - not sure and 2% indicated that activity did not motivate them at all. Finally, general satisfaction with the social actions was 9,1 according to a Likert scale of 1 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (very satisfied).

Project partners identified the following challenges while organising and implementing social actions: difficulties in engaging stakeholders and identifying their needs, lack of communication and cooperation between stakeholders, language barrier, safety concerns encountered by project partners from Ukraine: need to find a safe place to organise events, loss of electricity supply due to humanitarian crises, lack of responses to post-event surveys. Some of these challenges project partners were able to foresee in advance and took actions to eliminate or reduce while the other were not expected.

Organisers of social actions learned lessons that could be useful for anyone interested in organising similar social actions. Documentary screenings on Ukraine's humanitarian crisis have sparked strong emotions and discussions in the audience. Viewers felt empathy and a willingness to provide support, to get involved in initiatives that provide support. University of Tartu organised a Meeting with the Ukrainian Ambassador and the delivery style of this event was formal presentation rather than engaging discussion, still questions and answers



session brought liveliness to the event. The University of Latvia faced a similar situation during a public lecture “Leadership in times of crises” when keeping participants engaged was challenging as the event was organised early Saturday morning. Whereas Lviv Polytechnic National University organised a Case study championship which could be indicated as a success story as participants agreed to collaborate continuously. A couple of social actions were targeted to younger participants, schoolchildren and gymnasium students: Folk Dance workshop for children aged 9-14 and KTU (LT) public lecture on volunteering for KTU gymnasium students. These events were successful as they encouraged the social integration of Ukrainians and encouraged young people to become volunteers in organisations that provide humanitarian aid to Ukrainians affected by the war. The case study championship indicated that university students have many innovative ideas in social communications and humanitarian aid. Tallinn University emphasised that in order to have better communication and engagement with participants it is worth considering an idea to organise social actions in participants’ native language. Hackathons organised by Web2Learn highlighted the significance of using efficient online collaboration and communication tools to enhance engagement among participants from various geographical areas. Collaboration with other institutions while organising social actions became a foundation that enabled several institutions to unite their competencies and resources providing support for Ukraine and its citizens impacted by the war crisis. Finally, taking into account experience of planning and organising social actions project partners would recommend prior to organising events to take into account who is your target group and how you are going to engage the audience to actively participate. Furthermore, university students, high school students and youth groups are the audience with significant potential. Try to avoid language barriers when organising events, and organise events in native language. In order to have a more productive online collaboration use efficient online collaboration and communication tools. Inter-institutional collaboration had a positive impact on event success.



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