



GAME-BASED PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

as an innovative tool of advocacy and strengthening the capacity of youth non-formal groups to implement local eco-projects

In Ukraine, in small communities, youth projects and the daily work of local authorities for young people are often separated from each other. Young people need to learn the tools to influence local policy. Local authorities usually use too complicated and bureaucratic procedures which aim to involve young people in their engagement in community life. Through a board game simulation, the project aimed to help build an effective dialog between 24 youth initiative groups in 23 communities and local decision-makers, including local authorities.

The project had two rounds of public consultations based on a World of Communities simulation board game*:

- **The first round** of game-based public consultations took place in October-December 2021.
- **The second round** of consultations was aimed at deepening knowledge of the circular economy and SDG and their importance for communities and took place in January-February 2022.

As a result of the game-based public consultations, the youth representatives could present their projects' ideas to the decision-makers, identify the risks, and find support from local authorities.

The World of Communities LLC implemented the project in partnership with the International Organization for Migration. Direct beneficiaries of the project were 24 youth initiative groups of the "Join, interact, create" of the International Organization for Migration (approximately 240-250 people).

Main topics addressed by the project:

- **how to organize** an open-minded, constructive dialogue between youth and representatives of local authorities;
- **how to present/pitch** the ideas of your project to decision-makers and get their support: finances, recommendations;
- **how to identify** potential risks in youth projects and prevent them in advance;
- how to engage representatives of local authorities to sit at one table with informal youth initiatives and speak one language in the format of a board game;
- **how to promote** the Sustainable Development Goals and the Principles of the Circular Economy among young people as effectively as possible.

Objectives of the project:

- **to improve** dialog between youth and local authorities;
- **to build** a team for further implementation of their initiatives and sustainability of results;
- **to demonstrate** to young people the real tools to influence the life of their community;
- **to get** feedback and support from stakeholders in the implementation of youth eco-projects;
- **to test** the format of game-based consultations as an innovative way of constructive dialog between youth in the community and key decision-makers;

Project results and impact:

- **During 4 months, 48 game-based public consultations were organized**, and 24 initiative youth groups of 294 participants participated.
- **95% of participants in consultations** believe that the simulation game session helped them better interact with the team and build a more substantial ground for further project implementation;
- **93% of participants in the game sessions** agreed that the public consultations in the format of the World of Communities Simulation Board Game helped them to start a dialogue between local government servants and youth;
- **participants of 24 youth initiatives** received particular recommendations on how to improve their environmental projects so that they make changes in their communities;
- **participants learned about the principles of the circular economy**, the Sustainable Development Goals, and how to make their youth projects more sustainable,

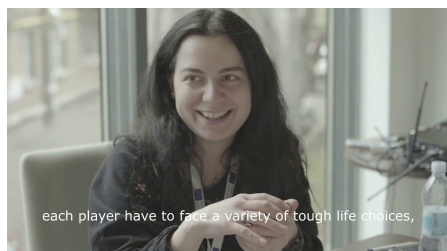
Why do we consider this project successful?

In a concise time, we developed and successfully put into practice a model of using the World of Communities Simulation Game for public consultations and strengthening of young people.

The tool and model have shown their effectiveness and helped to change the perception of young people and local government officials about the public consultation process. It turns out it can be joyful. Interactive and meaningful for both parties. This was evidenced by feedback questionnaires and the next steps planned by the participants (implementation of new initiatives, additional consultations, etc.).

One of the success factors of the program was the presence of a national network of masters of the World of Communities Simulation Game, which allowed to quickly engage game facilitators in all regions to conduct such game sessions. The network includes over 300 masters from Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia.

The success of the project is evidenced by the desire of the participants of the game sessions to master the skill of facilitating the World of Communities Simulation Game — a flexible tool for the implementation of various professional tasks.



"World of the Communities is the first Ukrainian multiplayer co-op strategy board game, which closely models real-life and real decision-making, conflict resolution, and community development. The game was designed and created by a group of professionals with an extensive background in facilitation, civil society, community, development aid, and the private sector in November 2016.

It's the easiest way to start an open, meaningful, and joyful conversation with the general public about what a community is, how to develop it, and how to make it more sustainable.

WOC LLC <https://worldofcommunities.org/>

Word of Communities Board Game <https://worldofcommunities.org/game>