The main focus of GfE is on youth work and cultural activities, social projects, and support to leadership figures among Ukraine’s ethnic German community. In addition to this, a country-wide network of NGOs representing ethnic Germans and 60 meeting centres was created.

Success Story

The well-known artist of Ukraine, Harry Ruff, was supported by the programme. He contributed as a speaker and active participant to several events that took place as part of the programme. Harry Ruff’s works were included in the international painting exhibition ‘Who can bring us peace?’ that was shown in the European Parliament in March 2015. His participation was made possible by a grant awarded as part of the BMI-funded ‘Avantgarde’ project.

Objective

The German minority represents its interests independently in its country of origin. It is developing its ethno-cultural identity and actively fulfils its role as a bridge between Germany and the country of origin.

Challenges

Today, the German minority in Ukraine numbers around 33,000. Prior to the Second World War there were still 400,000 of them. Many of the ethnic Germans living in Ukraine today emigrated there from Russia and the countries of Central Asia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The German Government is working hard to improve the living conditions of the German minority in Ukraine and to provide them with a brighter future.

Activities

The welfare fund ‘Society for Development’ (GfE) is based in Odessa and is administered by the ‘Council of Germans in Ukraine’ (RDU), the umbrella association for the German minority. GIZ supports GfE by overseeing project finances and monitoring project content. The main focus of GfE is on youth work and cultural activities, social projects, and support to leadership figures among Ukraine’s ethnic German community. In addition to this, a country-wide network of NGOs representing ethnic Germans and 60 meeting centres was created.

Results

A close-knit network of youth clubs has developed. The clubs give younger members of the ethnic German community a chance to preserve and further develop their identity by visiting language and education classes and by participating in leisure activities. The number of volunteers taking part in social activities has almost doubled within the last five years and now stands at around 850. Today, at least 55 public persons actively promote the interests of the ethnic German minority inside and outside the community. They play a vital role in the programme’s implementation and give visibility to the concerns of the German community. Individual support programmes help them in their scientific, cultural and social activities.