



AS IT IS

Turning Old Soviet Plant into Green City Space in Ukraine

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Entrepreneurs in western Ukraine are turning a large manufacturing building from Soviet times into a center for education, business, and art. An entrepreneur is a person who starts a business and is willing to risk loss in order to make money.

They hope this will drive development in a country that has problems with corruption, political insecurity, and a recession.

The disused factory in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk once produced gas meters and other products. Now, it is a growing city space with a green micro farm, a space to show art, offices, and a children's education group.

The creators of the 'Promprylad.Renovation' project named it after the factory. They bought the 36,000 square meter site in 2019. They have raised more than \$8.5 million from local investors for the remodel.

The project's co-founder is Chief Executive Officer Yuriy Fylyuk. He is 38 years old.

"We are creating an **innovation** center which will include four main fields – education, art, new economy and **urbanism**. Why these fields? Because they drive development of any area, any **society**," he said.

Forbes magazine named Ivano-Frankivsk the best city for doing business in Ukraine. It placed ahead of the capital of Kyiv and the city of Lviv. Ivano-Frankivsk is in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains.

Corruption is part of life in Ukraine. Also, its economy has been hit hard by the pandemic, falling by four percent last year.

Transparency International is a nonprofit organization that works to spread information about corruption and suggest policies to fight it. In its 2020 Corruption Perception Index, Transparency International gave Ukraine 33 out of 100 points where zero means “corruption effectively replaces the government.”

The project only takes up a sixth of the 36,000 square meter area. It also houses the local government’s department for investment policy.

“The atmosphere is different here. A place shapes a person's thoughts. And this particular place has had an **impact** on our thoughts and our ideas," said department head Igor Popadyuk.

Fylyuk said almost 900 private investors put money into the project. The only requirement for accepting their money is that it must come from legal sources.

Its founders expect the project to be complete by the end of 2023. They plan to add an event space for 4,000 people, a bookstore and a peaceful place to think quietly. They will also add a library, which is a place that loans people books for free.

I’m Gregory Stachel.

Sergiy Karazy and Margaryta Chornokondratenko reported this story for Reuters. Gregory Stachel adapted it for VOA Learning English. Susan Shand was the editor.

Words in This Story

innovation – *n.* a new idea, device, or method

urbanism – *n.* the way of life of people who live in a large city

society – *n.* people in general thought of as living together in organized communities with shared laws, traditions, and values

impact – *n.* a powerful or major influence or effect

