



Marketing Recommendations for Expanding Tourism in the Chernobyl-Affected Regions: The Cases of Manevychi & Borodyanka

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Introduction

The districts of Manevychi and Borodyanka, located in Ukraine, are two of several areas throughout the country attempting to increase tourism and, in turn, economic activity, through expanded marketing efforts. As both districts are in the Chernobyl-affected regions of Ukraine, in 2011 they signed on as first-time participants in the United Nations Development Programme sponsored Volunteers for Chernobyl initiative – a program now in its fifth year that matches pairs comprised of both an international graduate student and Ukrainian student to assist communities impacted by the 1986 nuclear disaster. Specific activities include helping to implement development efforts, conducting relevant research, and suggesting potential recommendations for future action.

This report, on the topic of regional marketing strategies, reflects the findings and recommendations of the pair of students – Kelly Hays of Arcadia University in Glenside, PA, in the United States, and Lena Mirnaya of Pohlta University of Economic and Trade in Pohlta, Ukraine – placed in Manevychi and Borodyanka for approximately five days each as part of the most recent Volunteers for Chernobyl program (that took place from August 21 through September 10, 2011). The following report gives a general overview of each district and the current state of tourism and marketing and outreach efforts. We then detail our specific accomplishments and other related activities during our weeklong field visit to each district (to the urban villages comprised of the same names as their respective districts), and conclude with a series of recommendations, based on our research while in each community, as to how both Manevychi and Borodyanka might consider moving forward with their tourism-related marketing strategies in the future. The report first considers Manevychi and then Borodyanka.

MANEVYCHI

Overview

Located in the Western Polissia region of Ukraine in Volyn Oblast, Manevychi District is approximately seven hours west of the capital city of Kyiv by vehicle. Close to both the Belarusian and Polish borders, it is positioned on the main thoroughfare between Warsaw, Poland, and Kyiv. The district is comprised of 69 rural villages and two urban villages – Manevychi (where we were based) and Kolki. Manevychi was founded over 125 years ago as an outgrowth from the Manevychi Railway Station, and today the district maintains a population of over 55,000 people, with close to 15,000 within the village of Manevychi. The district is one of the only areas in Ukraine experiencing population growth where the birth rate exceeds the death rate, and in turn has an uncharacteristically young population for the country.

In Manevychi, we worked with the Manevychi Rayon State Administration under the guidance of Mr. Volodymyr Lyskovets.

Current State of Tourism and Marketing Efforts

Manevychi District currently receives an estimated 3,000 visitors per year, as determined by the numbers of guests who stay in Manevychi's primary hotel, Hotel Oscar. The majority of tourists come from throughout Ukraine and from Poland, but Manevychi would like to expand the number of international tourists, specifically those from Western Europe and the United States, as well as the number of Ukrainian and Polish visitors. Most tourism related activities, such as tours, are handled through the Manevychi Regional Museum.

Consisting of 24 lakes and wide areas of undeveloped forest, most of Manevychi's current draw is related to its natural attractions, as well as its reputation as being a hub of

authentic Polissian culture. Manevychi representatives view these two areas as key to expanding tourism in the region, and they have many natural assets that create the potential for both increased eco-tourism and adventure tourism. They currently promote hiking, fishing, kayaking, bird watching, sap collecting, mushroom and berry gathering, and horseback riding in their brochures and on their website, and offer several tours (though it is unclear how many tours they operate per year). Specific sites of potential interest include Okonsky Natural Springs, Cheremskiy Nature Reserve, and Karasytn Forest.

Additionally, Manevychi has several sites of potential historic and religious interest including 19 Orthodox churches (primarily made of wood and unique to the region), a Polish Roman Catholic Church that was utilized as a salt storage center under the Soviet Union and recently reopened, the previously mentioned Regional Museum, and several monuments and memorials, and currently offers a guided tour of several religious sites of interest. They also host several small scale festivals throughout the year that are featured on their website, and an extensive weekly market that they have not promoted as a tourist attraction to date but may hold potential as a tourist draw.

In regards to tourist infrastructure, within Manevychi there is one traditional hotel – Hotel Oscar – and two smaller scale options. Manevychi also promotes home stays in local villages as well as camping throughout the nature reserves (both organized through the Regional Museum). There are three grocery stores, several pharmacies and gas stations, five banks with international ATMS (including one with a Western Union), and a few cafes, though more formal dining options are limited. There are also at least two nightclubs in Manevychi, and one internet café. In terms of accessibility, a train runs once daily from Kyiv, and there is one daily bus from Kyiv leaving at 10:30am and an overnight bus returning to Kyiv (taking seven hours each way and

costing 120 UAH). Public transportation options within the village of Manevychi are limited, but much of the village is walkable. A vehicle may be necessary for excursions outside of the village proper.

As far as current promotion, the State Administration recently invested in promotional and informational signage through the village of Manevychi highlighting different tourist options as well as the local history. Manevychi also has a website (administered by the State Administration) and a Facebook fan page. They recently produced five variations of well-designed, full-color, tri-lingual brochures (Ukrainian, Polish, and English), although their budget has limited the printing to 500 each. Each brochure highlights a different area of potential tourist appeal including churches and religious sites, natural parks, Polissian culture, historical sites, and the Regional Museum. There is also a dedicated team of community leaders in the district – such as our point of contact Mr. Volodymyr Lyskovets – dedicated to both increasing tourism and attracting investment, and it appears that the State Administration in the district is supportive and understanding of expanding the opportunities for tourism.

Despite these assets, there are several challenges. Funding is an issue, and it is recognized that efforts to expand tourism is caught in a Catch-22 scenario to a degree. For example, as Europe and Poland are co-hosting Euro2012, Manevychi makes a potentially attractive midway stop point between Warsaw and Kyiv for potential tourists using the Kyiv-Warsaw Road. In our discussions, we learned that the village would like to expand the tourist infrastructure to offer more cafes and hotels to better accommodate these tourists. However, a lack of funds makes this seemingly unlikely, as funds generated by the very tourist activity looking to be drawn to the town is one of the only potential sources of funding for these types of ventures. As far as attracting foreign or regional investment to promote tourist development,

factors such as corruption, instability of the UAH, frequently changing laws, the political climate, and the tax structure were all cited as reasons that make this a challenge. The effects of Chornobyl were not cited as an impetus to investment or tourism in the region; this may be in part due to the fact that while Manevychi received relatively high levels of radiation exposure as a result of wind patterns, the area is perceived to be far away from the disaster site and therefore unaffected.

One the most basic level, perhaps the greatest challenge is how to encourage tourists – both from within Ukraine and internationally – who are faced with many options to choose Manevychi, especially when the destination is not well known. In this sense, its location can be both a plus and a minus, as its position on the Kyiv-Warsaw Road, close proximity to Poland (potentially to be marketed as being closer to Western Europe than the rest of Ukraine and therefore more accessible) that can attract Polish as well as other European visitors, and potential to offer a country respite from Lviv, Kyiv, and other large cities is a potential positive. However, its seemingly remote location – despite its relatively well-developed infrastructure -- may make promoting Manevychi to others sections of Ukraine, or to international visitors based in Kyiv or Crimea, a challenge. Furthermore, Manevychi currently has a weak presence on the internet in general outside of their website, and in particular on travel websites and in guidebooks; a quick search of Lonely Planet Ukraine Guide, Lonely Planet Eastern Europe Guide (the chapter on Ukraine), Trip Advisor, and Virtual Tourist did not turn up any results. It is reasonable to assume that most potential visitors have never heard of Manevychi and what it has to offer, and that many within Ukraine who have heard of it have never been there, eliminating the possibility for positive word-of-mouth as it currently stands. We view this lack of awareness as one of the most pressing obstacles to attracting further tourism.

Accomplishments & Activities

During our week in Manevychi, we worked with Mr. Lyskovets at the Manevychi Rayon State Administration to accomplish a series of projects aimed at expanding their marketing efforts and ultimately increasing tourism. These included:

- Updating the content and changing the layout of the Manevychi Rayon's website focused on tourism to make it more visitor friendly. The content was also translated into English at and can be found at: <http://www.manadm.gov.ua/eng/eng.php>.
- Updating the English Wikipedia page for Manevychi to match the content of the Ukrainian Wikipedia page; it can be found here: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manevychi>. The English page had previously been a one-sentence stub.
- Providing updated high-resolution photography of major tourist points throughout Manevychi for use in promotional materials and on the web.
- GPS mapping all of the tourist points of interest in Manevychi, to be added to Google Earth and ultimately used to create a tourist map.
- Researching and identifying potential grant funding sources for tourism expansion and/or rural development in Manevychi, as well as identifying those funders not supporting those projects at this time.

In order to learn more about the region and its tourist attractions, and to get community input, we participated in a series of meetings and also visited several local sites. We met with the owner of the local internet café and the director of the Regional Museum to get information and input regarding the website update, and presented our updated content and photos to the head of the Manevychi Rayon State Administration. We also met with English teachers at School No. 2, and took a guided tour. Additionally, we met with the head of the local Polka mushroom

processing plant and toured that facility as well. Finally, we visited the Regional Museum, the Roman Catholic Church, the Sunday market, and Okonsky Natural Springs.

Recommendations

Based on our research and observations, we have several practical recommendations for how to create conditions for increased tourism and to expand marketing and outreach efforts. These recommendations build off of and are meant to augment the many good ideas and strategies expressed or already being put into place by the members of the community we met who are currently working in this area.

- Manevychi should continue to expand its web presence, especially because they seek to reach a greater number of international visitors. Since the State Administration is operating on a very limited budget in regards to marketing its tourist attractions, many web-based methods of promotion can be of little to no-cost. While the current website update and translation is a great step in the right direction, additional possibilities to consider include:
 - Further expansion of the current website content to provide as much relevant information as possible in an inviting way to potential tourists. As creating additional sub-pages can be done at no cost with the assistance of the State Administration web designer, they may wish to include additional translations (including Polish, German, and Russian). If any of the local businesses have their own web pages, the Manevychi page should link to them. In our research it did not appear that many if any at all of the local businesses, such as Hotel Oscar, have their own sites, and in response the Manevychi site may wish to house simple sub-pages dedicated to these local businesses to establish a greater web

presence for the Manevychi community in general. For example, while the Manevychi website currently lists Hotel Oscar as a local hotel with its address and phone number, a sub-page could be created with more detailed information, such as photos and pricing, to entice visitors to stay there.

- Creating and monitoring an email address for tourism inquiries. Currently, there is no method for potential visitors to email for further information, and this may limit international tourist's likelihood of reaching out to ask questions or book tours. As the Regional Museum is the current center through which most tours are organized and they have internet access, it may make sense to have the email address monitored through there, or through the State Administration. This email address (along with the website URL) should be featured on all applicable promotional materials (and listed on the website itself).
- Purchasing a very low-cost, easy to promote and remember domain name in English such as VisitManevychi.com to be used on all collateral material, signage, etc. This can direct back to the current website.
- Linking each of the five brochures, in PDF format, to the website. As a small budget has limited brochure production to 500 each, this allows the brochures to continue to be viewed virtually and will further enhance the web content.
- Establishing a photo gallery on the website. Currently, a few photos are embedded within the Manevychi tourism page but a gallery would give an updated look to the website and also allow visitors to get a better sense of what Manevychi is like; this is crucial as much of the district's appeal is in its natural beauty. If creating a browsable photo gallery is not feasible on the website due to

monetary or time constraints, a terrific option is to create a Flickr gallery (on Flickr.com – free up to 300 megabytes and \$25 USD a year after that) with different collections of photos of Manevychi’s tourist attractions, festivals, etc. Each photo can be tagged with “Manevychi,” “Ukraine Travel,” and other relevant tags so that when a user searches for Manevychi or Ukraine, these tourist-friendly images will come up. The website can then directly link to the Flickr gallery as well. Our recommendation is to establish the Flickr gallery even if a photo gallery is established within the website. To this point, while Manevychi currently has a number of very attractive promotional photos, we suggest they expand their current collection of images to feature more “active” photos to appeal to the tourists they would like to attract. For example, they have a limited number of photos depicting people participating in camping, kayaking, hiking, berry picking, etc. and building their library of shots will allow them to further expand how and to whom they market the district, and create images where potential tourists can see themselves participating. If possible, we suggest they also expand their wildlife photos, particularly birds, as they want to continue to promote Manevychi as a place for excellent bird watching.

- Further promoting the Manevychi Facebook page and attracting more fans (there are currently only 19 fans). While Facebook is still catching on in Ukraine, many international tourists use Facebook and promoting and utilizing the page, including personally interacting with visitors, promoting tours and specials, and posting photos, can allow Manevychi to stay in Facebook users’ consciousness even if they do not visit the website. It is also a way to direct more traffic to the

website. A Facebook button should be added to the website.

- Utilizing Google Analytics to track and understand who is currently visiting Manevychi's website. This will allow them to see which pages are most popular, what users are searching for, where visitors are coming from, how long they stay on the site, what they are searching for to get to the site, and many other key factors that can help to understand if marketing efforts are successful and where potential visitors are located.
- Tourism-related businesses in Manevychi should submit their information to the Lonely Planet guide (http://www.lonelyplanet.com/contact/business_listing/new) for consideration in Lonely Planet authors' future trips to Ukraine. While there is no guarantee of inclusion, increasing visibility in guide books and travel websites that market to adventurous travelers and backpackers who enjoy traveling off the beaten path is key to the strategy to promote tourism in the region. Additionally, all known tourists who are believed to have had positive experiences should be encouraged to rate these experiences on TripAdvisor.com, VirtualTourist.com, Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree Travel Forum (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree>), and any relevant European-based travel sites as well, if possible. Manevychi should also contact any relevant Ukrainian based tourism sites to ensure they are included on their websites. For example, a search for "Manevychi" on <http://www.traveltoukraine.org> did not turn up any results.
- The Manevychi leadership may want to consider utilizing local young people who are seriously studying English or majoring in it in school to assist in further English translation, thereby engaging the local community in some of the marketing efforts. They could also be asked to participate in brainstorming sessions around expanding

tourism. Manevychi may also want to consider registering translation or proofreading opportunities with the UN Volunteers online volunteering component. Opportunities can be posted here: <http://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en/org/index.html>. Additionally, as there are such a large number of young people in Manevychi, the development of further tourist infrastructure should keep an eye towards things that may also benefit the local youth and serve a dual purpose. For example, in the center of Manevychi village there is an abandoned movie theatre where many young people congregate outside. Attracting investment to reopen the theatre would provide additional activities not only for tourists but for young people as well. The same goes for the creation of more cafés, restaurants, arcades, etc.

- Manevychi may want to consider exploring the feasibility of small group tours created around certain interest areas that can then be promoted to those target populations that have an interest in those types of activities. For example, they could explore offering a Cultural Culinary Tour, that includes a small number of nights in a both Manevychi and in a home stay, where tour members learn how to make local authentic dishes, go berry and mushroom gathering (assuming this is not a radiation concern in the proposed area), visit the local sites, and have an all-around authentic “country” experience. Additionally, Manevychi may want to look into current tour operators in Ukraine – in Lviv, for example – to see if Manevychi could be added as a part of an existing tour. As many of the current tourists come from Poland, it is worthwhile to explore how Manevychi can cooperate with other towns and/or tour operators in Poland to promote sites of interest in Manevychi, specifically the Polish Roman Catholic Church in conjunction with other sites and activities. It may be worth looking into if there are specific congregations in

Poland that might enjoy taking a day trip or longer to the church, and exploring ways to market to these groups. In regards to home stays, it may also be helpful to make it very clear on the website and in other materials what exactly a home stay entails, including sample photos, so that international visitors will feel comfortable and know what to expect.

- As noted, Euro2012 is approaching and as Manevychi is located on the Kyiv-Warsaw road they may want to explore ways to promote themselves as a stopover. For example, information about Poland and Ukraine is featured on the Euro2012 website (<http://www.uefa.com/uefaeuro2012/index.html>) but if there are plans to feature information about traveling between matches, Manevychi could inquire about being included as a stopover.
- Finally, in terms of developing a more in-depth marketing strategy, it would be worthwhile to conduct a series of focus groups with both potential Ukrainian tourists and international tourists to determine what their current thoughts are about Manevychi (if any – it may turn out they are completely unfamiliar, especially in the case of international tourists), what would encourage them to travel there, what would be a deterrent, and other relevant issues. Former Volunteers for Chernobyl (the authors included) could be utilized as potential facilitators in their home cities, or sessions could be conducted electronically, over the phone, or through internet surveys. This research would give a broader base of information on which to base marketing decisions and also enable Manevychi to have direct feedback from potential visitors, their potential wants and needs, and realistic likelihood of attracting certain demographics of travelers. Additionally, the Administration in Manevychi may want to explore acquiring an intern –

either from a Ukrainian undergraduate or graduate school or from a school abroad -- to continue and expand the work initiated by the Volunteers for Chornobyl on a longer term basis and help to expand capacity. Many programs require internships – the author's school Arcadia University in Pennsylvania is an example – and it is common for students to take unpaid internships. A six-week to four-month internship could be offered each semester to interested students fluent both in Ukrainian or Russian, and could be pioneered through contacts already established at schools that have previously sent Volunteers for Chornobyl participants.

BORODYANKA

Overview

Located approximately 30 kilometers from the capital city of Kyiv, Borodyanka District – formed in 1923 – is situated in the western part of Kyiv Oblast in the 3rd Chornobyl zone. With roughly 10,000 inhabitants, the urban village of Borodyanka is the largest of five towns in the district; there are 43 additional villages throughout Borodyanska. There are roughly 57,000 people in the entire district. Originally, Borodyanka was just small village but grew first with the introduction of a railway stop and then even more so with the opening of the Borex excavator plant in the 1980s that provided heavy equipment throughout the Soviet Union. In the village of Borodyanka, we worked with the Economic Development Promotion Center, a non-profit founded in 2005 with the support of the United Development Program to help local business ventures and encourage economic development (including tourism) in the district, under the guidance of Mr. Andriy Galaka, the Center Director.

Current State of Tourism and Marketing Efforts

While the number of annual visitors to Borodyanka is not currently tracked, it is known

that the majority of visitors are Ukrainian and come as part of day trips from Kyiv.

Internationally, they receive the greatest number of visitors from Poland and Germany. Like Manevychi, Borodyanka wishes to increase the number of tourists both from within Ukraine and from other countries. They also want to expand their efforts towards marketing the area as a hub of green tourism in the future.

Many tourists do not stay in the village of Borodyanka itself during their time in the district and instead head out into the nearby surrounding areas. There is not a hotel in the village at this point in time, and this is something that the Center staff expressed needs to be added if they wish to attract overnight visitors to stay within the village itself. One of the current key attractions in the area is The Old Pond restaurant, a large indoor and outdoor fine dining and recreation center set on a lake that offers kayaking, a small beach, a children's playground, volleyball, and interaction with the resident animals (goats, rabbits, pigs, swans, and ducks). The most common visitors to The Old Pond are Ukrainians on day trips from Kyiv who wish to escape from the city to experience the country. Within Borodyanka, a spa - Ukrainian Spa Village - opened recently offering traditional spa services as well as a swimming pool; the village hopes to capitalize on this to attract more tourists.

Additionally, another unique tourist attraction is the opportunity for skydiving through PARA-SKUF at the local airbase in Borodyanka that attracts many day visitors from Kyiv. Visitors can jump solo or tandem, and the cost is approximately \$125 USD per person. There are also several interesting historical and cultural sites in the district including the Traditional Garment & Eastern Egg Museum, the historical burial mounds located throughout Borodyanka, traditional egg painting master classes offered by a local artist, and the Voronstov mansion ruins; they also host an annual Varenyky Festival (that in 2011 featured the world's largest varenyky).

A complete listing of attractions in the area can be found on Borodyanka's website (managed through the Center) at <http://borodyanka.in.ua/>.

In terms of infrastructure, while as previously noted there is no hotel within Borodyanka, camping and home stays are a possibility outside of the village itself. Borodyanka does however offer a fairly wide variety of restaurants and cafés within the village and surrounding areas (including The Old Pond), as well as one large grocery store and several small corner stores selling food items, a small daily market, and several pharmacies and banks with international ATMs. They also offer the previously mentioned spa. There are also a few nightlife options, including a disco and bars. The library, located within the House on Culture on the main street – Lenin Street – offers internet services, as there is not currently an internet café. Borodyanka's close proximity to Kyiv means getting there and back is quick and easy, with buses running from Kyiv throughout the day (for 12 UAH one way); the train is another option. Getting around to the sites throughout the district may require a vehicle.

In regards to current marketing and promotional efforts, Borodyanka District has a fairly extensive, frequently updated, and well laid-out website – managed by the Center – that has different pages dedicated to different potential areas of interest for tourists that they would like to be translated into more languages. The site has a tourism tab that links to sub-pages about Dining & Entertainment, Historical Sites, and Museums. They also have tabs about Tours and Green Tourism that do not yet have content added. Businesses in Borodyanka seem to have a slightly more extensive web presence than Manevychi and the site links to several other sites, including The Old Pond and the Ukrainian Spa Villages websites. While the local skydiving business does have a website, it is not linked to from the Borodyanka page.

There does not appear to be a brochure specific to Borodyanka village itself, but there are

several well-designed brochures for activities within the region. However, brochures such as those for The Old Pond and the Ukrainian Spa Village are only in Ukrainian at this time. As in Manevychi, there seems to be a core group of individuals enthusiastic about the possibility of increasing tourism, although we did not meet with State Administration representatives to gauge their level of interest.

As in Manevychi, funding is an issue, and promising ideas expressed by the Center like a hotel close to the Ukrainian Village Spa to encourage tourism need funds to become a reality, as they are well aware. Borodyanka has been especially hard hit by the economic crisis of 2008 that greatly impacted all of Ukraine, and while they have begun to rebound many local industries has decreased capacity or shut down, including the Borex plant which significantly reduced production following the turndown. Unemployment is an issue, and many residents of Borodyanka commute to Kyiv by train or bus for work. This means that locally there is little money for investment and few people are starting new businesses – factors that impact potential tourism.

Borodyanka's close proximity to Kyiv, however, can be seen as both a positive and a potential negative. In one sense, its close proximity means it is better positioned to attract economic development initiatives and benefit from investment in the region as a whole. As noted, its location means that further promotion of days trips from Kyiv may be key to increasing tourism initially as it can be billed as a quick excursion into the "country," and Borodyanka can capitalize on both locals and international visitors in the capital. Additionally, its location near Kyiv likely means that most potential visitors, whether from Ukraine or elsewhere, would not associate the area with being a Chernobyl-affected region when making their travel plans. (In fact, the stigma of being labeled a Chernobyl-affected region was not mentioned as an obstacle

to tourism or investment in Borodyanka).

However, the closeness to Kyiv may mean Borodyanka is overlooked in favor of other locations perceived to be more unique or for Kyiv itself. Borodyanka also suffers from poor awareness and the challenge of how to get on tourists' radar as a potential travel consideration – especially in relation to international travelers. As with Manevychi, a search of Lonely Planet Ukraine Guide, Lonely Planet Eastern Europe Guide (the chapter on Ukraine), Trip Advisor, and Virtual Tourist did not produce any relevant findings.

Accomplishments & Activities

During our week in Borodyanka, we worked with Mr. Galaka at the Center to accomplish a series of goals, the bulk of which related to English translation of websites for further tourist promotion. They included:

- Translating the Borodyanka website (consisting of multiple pages of content) managed by the Economic Development Promotion Center located at <http://borodyanka.in.ua/>.
- Translating The Old Pond Restaurant's website, located at <http://oldprud.com.ua/>.
- Translating the Ukrainian Spa Village website, located at <http://our-services.at.ua/>.
- Providing updated high-resolution photography of tourist points in Borodyanka for use in promotional materials and on the web, including extensive photos of The Old Pond Restaurant.

Additionally, we also met with several community representatives and visited many local attractions. We met with the staff of the Borodyanka Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Center and toured the facility, and spoke to a classroom of nine-year-olds at School No. 2 about the United States and worked with them to encourage their use of English. We also took a guided tour of the Traditional Garment & Easter Egg Museum, participated in a master class on egg painting

conducted by a local artist, toured the Ukrainian Village Spa, and visited and ate at The Old Pond Restaurant. Finally, we visited the Voronstov Mansion ruins and the ancient burial mounds with local historian and author Valenytn Moiseienko.

Recommendations

We have several recommendations for expanding tourism-related marketing efforts based on our experience and research in Borodyanka. As in Manevychi, they are drawn from the feedback and insights offered by the individuals already involved in these initiatives in the district. Many of the recommendations are similar to those offered for Manevychi, but reflect the specifics of the situation in Borodyanka.

- First, while it is noted that Borodyanka has a fairly extensive website already, ways to further expand their current site include:
 - Translating the site into more languages. The Center expressed a desire to translate the site into German and Russian, and we would recommend Polish as well. UN Volunteers Online provides a good option for further translation services at no cost, and is a way to continue the connection with UN Volunteers beyond Volunteers for Chornobyl. Additionally, while in Borodyanka we met two fluent English speakers who assisted with translation work who could be engaged to further translate future sections of the website, and also to translate existing promotional brochures that are currently only in Ukrainian. There are most likely other local resources for translation, such as college students majoring in English who would like to practice their language skills.
 - Establishing and promoting a Facebook page for Borodyanka, as well as for the Economic Development Promotion Center, The Old Pond, Ukrainian Village Spa,

and any other relevant businesses. The PARA-SKUF skydiving center already has an active Facebook page. The Facebook button should be prominently displayed on all of their websites.

- Creating a photo gallery on the site, as well as a Flickr.com gallery (in addition to the many high-quality photos already embedded within each page). As with Manevychi, the Flickr gallery can be used as the sole photo gallery if creating one within the website itself is not feasible. Additionally, more dynamic skydiving photos – like those posted to the PARA-SKUF Facebook page – may be a positive addition to the website.
- Adding tourist testimonials to the site under the Tourism tab to highlight previous tourists' positive experiences. Once tourists provide other positive reviews on travel review sites, this section of the website can link to them as well. Additionally, Google Analytics should also be implemented to track visitors and help tailor marketing plans.
- Setting up an account with a low cost email marketing service such as ConstantContact.com (or the Ukrainian equivalent) and adding an email sign up button on the website to capture interested users' email addresses in order to promote events, news, festivals, and other relevant items.
- Because Borodyanka has a very unique tourist attraction with the PARA-SKUF skydiving center, a key element of marketing the district should include an emphasis on how to get the word out to potential skydivers, especially first-time ones who do not already know about the possibility of skydiving so close to Kyiv. First, the skydiving center is currently listed on DropZone.com – a skydiving database – and has one positive

review. Skydivers should be encouraged to review their experiences after jumping, and post photos and videos of their experience to relevant sites. There are currently six YouTube videos on of jumps in Borodyanka, and the Center may want to post and tag more, as well as to set up their own Flickr account. Next, as many tourists – particularly backpackers – in Kyiv may not be aware that skydiving is so close and inexpensive, it would be helpful to partner with hostels throughout Kyiv to advertise through flyers (potentially including a discount coupon) and allow scheduling and transportation to be arranged conveniently through the hostels. Flyers should also be placed throughout local colleges and universities to attract students if schools are amenable. Finally, PARA-SKUF should submit its business information to Lonely Planet to be considered for an author visit and potential inclusion in future books as Lonely Planet readers are likely to be the very tourists who may be interested in adding a day of skydiving to their trip to Ukraine. PARA-SKUF may also want to investigate the cost of advertising on Lonely Planet's website (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/advertising/>) or on Google Ads if they have any space in their budget.

- As stated with Manevychi, all tourists should be encouraged to post reviews on relevant travel sites such as Tripadvisor.com. For example, The Old Pond could include a small flyer along with the check asking diners to review their positive experience.
- While skydiving is one of the attractions in Borodyanka to be promoted at Kyiv hostels (and hotels as well), there are other possibilities that can be tested. We recommend coordinating with hostels and hotels to promote other one-day excursions, such as for the annual Varenyky Festival. Day trips could also be targeted specifically to local Ukrainian groups (some as women's societies, senior citizen clubs, and many others) promoting

one-day excursions that include a master egg painting class, trip to the spa, a visit to the museum, and dinner at The Old Pond, by way of example. These can include shuttle transportation in the cost. There is currently a fair amount of cross promotion occurring – for example, The Old Pond displays brochures for the Spa – and this should continue to be encouraged between all businesses that are not competitors. Borodyanka will also want to make sure it is listed on all local Kyiv-based or national Ukrainian websites promoting tourism within the country.

- The Center may wish to explore pitching stories to the media in their target markets. For example, if German tourists attend the Varenyky Festival, staff may wish – with the tourists’ permission – to pitch a story about their attendance and the festival itself to the tourists’ home newspaper, if it is a small enough market that it may foster a response. This would generate additional interest in the festival and in Borodyanka as a whole.
- Opening a small student run gift shop at the Traditional Garment and Easter Egg Museum could serve multiple purposes. Since opening four years ago, they have had several thousand visitors – many of whom are international - yet do not have a gift shop where these visitors can make a purchase. Enabling visitors to make purchases would generate extra income for the museum, give the students a way to get further involved (as the museum is located at the local agriculture school and much of the museum’s content consists of replicas or examples of traditional dress made by the students themselves), and allow tourists to take something back with them to their home city that would serve as a little piece of promotion for the museum and the district.
- While financial considerations may be a limitation, Borodyanka may want to explore the feasibility of offering and promoting bi-plane or helicopter tours out of the local airfield.

These could be promoted in ways similar to skydiving.

- As Borodyanka is home to approximately 40 historical burial mounds – most of which have not been unearthed and many of which are not protected or are farmed over – Borodyanka representatives may wish to pursue a potential partnership or at least initiate a conversation with the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology or another similar institution to gauge if there is any interest in excavating the mounds, or to get advice on how to proceed with the mounds or generate tourist interest about these archeological sites.
- Borodyanka may wish to pursue the feasibility of offering affordable language immersion in Russian and/or Ukrainian combined with a home stay as a way to attract international visitors.
- Finally, as was recommended for Manevychi, it would be very useful to conduct focus groups of both Ukrainian and international potential visitors regarding how to effectively market the region, and also for the Economic Development Promotion Center to pursue acquiring interns from within Ukraine or abroad to assist in furthering their marketing efforts and conducting more in-depth research on the topic.

Conclusion

While both Manevychi and Borodyanka are in the Chornobyl-affected regions, our analysis suggests their Chornobyl status may not be the primary stumbling block in attracting tourists, at least on the regional and broader international level, but that lack of awareness and low visibility may be the more significant factor, as well as other funding challenges related to rural development in Ukraine in general. We believe there are certain subsets of tourists – backpackers, adventure-seekers, etc – who enjoy traveling off of the beaten path and may be

very interested in what both Manevychi and Borodyanka have to offer. Additionally, both locations may offer appeal to Ukrainian city residents who want to escape to the countryside, either for the day or longer. The key is getting the word out to these types of travelers, and further research can help to determine the most effective strategies for attracting their attention and encouraging them to include the areas as part of their future itineraries.

Despite that it appears that the Chornobyl-affected label may not be the most significant impetus to growing tourism, both locations may still also benefit by looking into what other regions or cities have done to actively rebrand themselves. A potential starting point is Colombia, which capitalized on its previously violent reputation by creating and promoting the current slogan “The Only Danger is Wanting to Stay.” Likewise, the city of Medellin, previously known for being considered one of the most violent in Latin America, is now a paragliding mecca. One possibility is to work with local schools to implement a research project on how other areas have rebranded or developed thriving tourism markets.

We believe there is great potential for tourism in both Manevychi and Borodyanka, and are very grateful to both communities (especially our host families and agencies) for welcoming us with open arms and providing us with a wonderful experience; we also extend our sincere appreciation to the UNDP team that supported us during our participation in the program. It is our hope that this report provides useful and practical contributions as Manevychi and Borodyanka continue to expand their marketing efforts and increase tourism.