

# The Scientific Voyage

On the 14th and the 15th of November of 2015, we held the annual Science Days in Ukraine. Thanks to the Outreach Grant from the Biochemical Society, this time we were able to fulfill our dream of



making Science Days mobile and bring them to the refugee children living in hard-to-reach locations on the outskirts of Kyiv. Although the target group was very specific, the number of people who wished to attend the event was much larger than anticipated. We had to change our plans and expand the event further than intended. As a result, we had two large buses on each day gathering our future scientists and their parents around the Kyiv region and bringing them to the main locations of Days of Science.



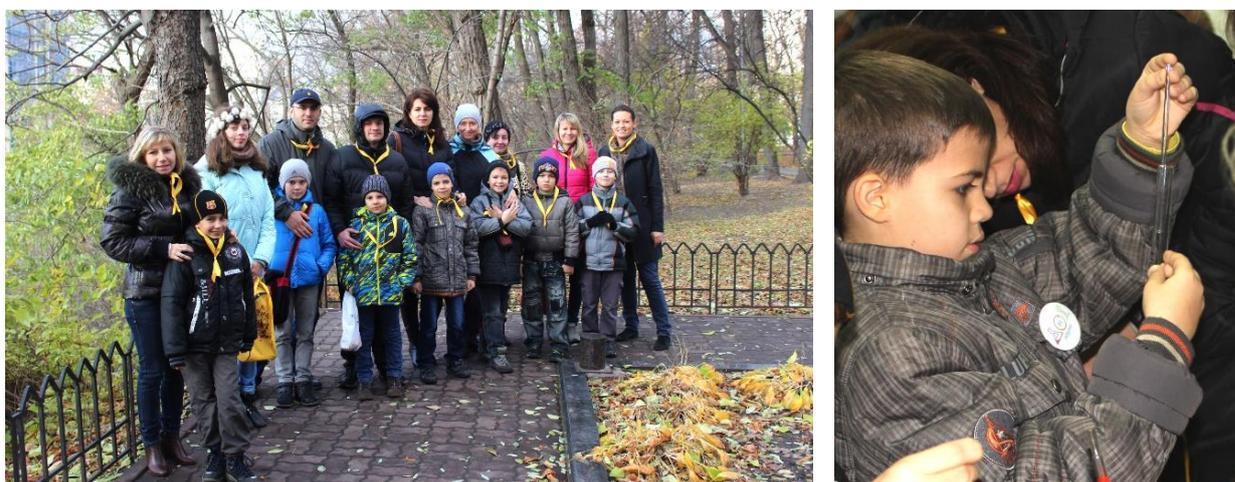
**Day One. Part One.** Early morning, the organizers were on board of the buses carrying Science Days logo, and the logo of the Biochemical Society, our sponsor. We had different printed colorful materials about science and molecular biology, several popular articles from my.science.ua, and a very excited spirit. We were moving from different directions and gathering people who have registered for participation. On long way around Kyiv region, we had the time to talk to children, explaining a lot about science, scientists, molecular biology, and our projects. When the buses arrived to the destination point – the Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics – the scientific demonstrations, workshops, and mini-lectures swallowed our guests. They extracted DNA, participated in an exciting chemical show, used different dyes, observed bacteria and glowing GFP mice, participated in a workshop, and did many of other interesting activities. On the way back home that day we had many questions to answer, and shared the printed materials, which the students could keep for the future contact with us.



**Day One. Part Two.** The first part of the first Science Day was finished but our team had one more important thing to do. One of the buses going to Irpin (Kyiv region) had to take our microscope with the camera, collection of specimen, the DNA extraction and protein analysis tool kits, to the Center for Psychological and Social Adaptation of Refugees at Irpin where more than 30 children awaited us. We had more than 2 hours of experiments explaining everything we did in a process. Everyone could prepare the microscopic slide with a specimen and take the photo of it using the microscope with the build-in camera. Then we discussed the cell structure how the information for it is hiding in the genetic code, and everyone could extract the DNA from a specimen. It was very rewarding to see a keen interest in the eyes of even the youngest pupils!



**Day Two.** On the following day, two buses were again on the move from two additional starting points (refugee centers), carrying new groups of students to Bogomoletz Institute of Physiology in Kiev Center. There, volunteers from the National Academy of Sciences prepared a set of new experiments and interesting lectures. Moreover, this Day was the day when the parents were also invited to join in the activities. They engaged as actively as the children did! Parents asked the questions about genetics and epigenetics, about influence of nutrition, about most widespread diseases and how to avoid them, about science in Ukraine and in the world. So, this Day was very interactive. Furthermore, we put out a collection of scientific photographs made by the scientists and presented them in front of the Institute to that increase the interest of people walking by!





**We have gathered the feedback** in form of several immediate mini-interviews and e-questionnaires later on. Most of participants ranked the activity with the highest mark. Most of them said that they would not be able to find out and participate in Science Days without The Scientific Voyage.

All adult participants were surprised and inspired about the fact that this activity was organized especially for them and supported by the Biochemical Society from the U.K. They said that it increased their motivation to support science in Ukraine and develop the interest in science in their children. Children wrote me that they saw the things like this just in movies and could not believe that it was possible to see these experiments performed in their home country. Many said that they want to become scientists in the future!

This event was very important not only for children and their parents but also for us, for our team. A special thanks to Svitlana Kurinna who has inspired us and provided a great support while preparing the event! Dariia Tsymbal and more than ten young scientists contributed a lot in scientific part of The Scientific Voyage. Everyone enjoyed this event, enjoyed sharing his or her knowledge and passion for science. Outreach events have a great impact on everyone who participates!

Currently, we have accomplished most of the planned objectives and two of them to be finalized soon. We are preparing the delivery of additional materials (scientific notebook marked with a logo of Biochemical Society, a special letter, and some popular articles) to participants to remind them about the deadline for competition (end of February 2016) for the best drawing, essay, or a short video about The Scientific Voyage. During the Voyage students were asked to share materials and knowledge with a friend, and now we are waiting for them to prepare the common mini-projects for the competition. We will prepare additional report on the results of this competition and a small movie about this activity to inspire other scientists to perform some special events to share their knowledge with other people and increase the popularity of life sciences among youth.

On behalf of all the participants, I would like to express the deepest gratitude to the Biochemical Society for awarding us the Outreach Grant. The support provided by the Biochemical Society powered this event not only financially but also with inspiration and extraordinary motivation for further learning and activity. We hope for the future collaborations!

With kind regards,

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