

## Annex 3. ENGAGE Approach to Strengthening Civic Education



**ENGAGE**  
Enhance Non-Governmental Actors and  
Grassroots Engagement



### MEMORANDUM

**Re:** USAID/ENGAGE Approach to Strengthening Civic Education in Ukraine  
**From:** USAID/ENGAGE  
**To:** Interested parties  
**Date:** December 14, 2021

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#### I. Executive Summary

The purpose of this memo is: 1) to inform interested stakeholders on the USAID/ENGAGE approach to strengthening civic education in Ukraine; 2) offer key findings of a fresh civic education network analysis; and 3) outline ENGAGE plans for further activities to improve the quality of civic education in Ukraine and strengthen coordination among civic education actors.

#### II. Background

USAID/ENGAGE is based on the idea that individuals' understanding and realization of their roles in society as free and responsible citizens is a key to sustainable democracy in Ukraine. To achieve this mission, ENGAGE has supported the strengthening of civic education in Ukraine by working with civil society and with the formal education system.

Since 2018, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) and civil society organizations (CSOs), USAID/ENGAGE has aided the formal education system by helping design and introduce a new civic education curriculum in Ukrainian schools to 10<sup>th</sup> graders. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, this course was adapted to an online format.<sup>1</sup> USAID/ENGAGE continues to support the MOES in piloting and introducing mandatory civic education courses for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders to instill greater tolerance, democratic values, and critical thinking among the students. In addition, USAID/ENGAGE promotes the value and quality of civic education courses amongst teachers, students, and their parents through communication campaigns and by introducing a special nomination in Osvitioria's Global Teacher Prize Ukraine<sup>2</sup> to recognize the most prominent teachers of civic education at the national level.

In 2017-2019 USAID/ENGAGE supported 45 informal CSO-driven civic education initiatives to build a stronger foundation for a lasting democracy in Ukraine. The multitude of extra-curricular activities supported by USAID/ENGAGE, including TV-shows, open public events, hackathons, fairs, simulation games, film screening, and organization of events in innovative spaces positively influenced citizens' civic knowledge among the participants of those programs.

<sup>1</sup> Online course "3D of Democracy: Think, Care, Act" available on [www.citizen.in.ua](http://www.citizen.in.ua)

<sup>2</sup> Announcement of the winner of the special nomination for best teacher of civic at Global Teacher Prize Ukraine 2021 <https://osvitoria.media/news/v-ukrayini-ogolosyly-najkrashhogo-vchytelya-gromadyanskoyi-osvity-2021/>

### III. The Challenge

Our own data, however, suggests that even though the number of active Ukrainians has increased, the majority remain disengaged from civic initiatives and lack understanding of their roles and responsibilities in a democratic society.

To address this challenge, USAID/ENGAGE continues to build on its previous work to emphasize the importance of a systemic and partnership-based approach to improve the quality of civic education and strengthen coordination and cooperation between the formal education system and civil society – the two key actors of the Ukrainian civic education ecosystem.

#### Ukraine Civic Education Network Analysis as a First Step to Better Understand the Challenge

In July-August 2021, USAID/ENGAGE conducted a network analysis of civic education actors in Ukraine to get a deeper understanding of the relationships among actors, and to better understand opportunities and challenges for improving the quality of civic education and more effective cooperation between the “formal” and “informal” civic education actors.

For this network analysis,<sup>3</sup> USAID/ENGAGE used the snowball sampling method.<sup>4</sup> Starting with a core group of main partners of USAID/ENGAGE, major donors, implementers, and ministries, data on all their connections has been collected. The initial inquiry asked them to provide contacts of three CSOs working in their civic education sector to contact them for the next wave of the survey. Our team reached out to CSOs mentioned by partners, and subsequently collected new data through a total of three waves. This method allowed us to contact more than 230 civic education actors, 76 of whom provided answers to the following three questions designed to allow capturing connections of information exchange, cooperation, and desired cooperation among network members:

1. *Name organizations working in the field of civic education whose activities you follow up on and/or whose events you attend?*
2. *With which organizations working in the field of civic education have you had joint projects during the last 3 years?*
3. *Which organizations of your sector do you want to cooperate with in the future?*

The limitation of this method is that it can take more time and thus be somewhat disruptive while not necessarily increasing the response rate. In addition, a low response rate in network research could have a negative effect on estimating structural network properties. However, for informal and large sectoral networks of organizations, a high response rate (60% and higher) is hardly reachable. Indeed, despite the relatively low response rate (33%) the survey data is still significant enough to draw conclusions about the ecosystem as a whole, its structural parts, the estimated number of network members, and the intensity of connections among them.

Commented [WW1]: Snowball method?

### IV. What Has ENGAGE Learned to Understand the Challenge Better

The results of the survey suggest that there is an ecosystem of Ukrainian formal education institutions and civil society organizations with a great potential (much larger than the sample studied) who interact with each other in the same “playing field” and under the same operational environment. But what does that interaction – based on respondents’ answers - tell us?

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.pactworld.org/sites/default/files/ONA\\_Handbook\\_ext.pdf](https://www.pactworld.org/sites/default/files/ONA_Handbook_ext.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://ftp.columbia.edu/itc/hs/pubhealth/p8462/misc/biemacki\\_lect4.pdf](http://ftp.columbia.edu/itc/hs/pubhealth/p8462/misc/biemacki_lect4.pdf)

- The current ecosystem's architecture requires actors to take excessive effort to engage with each other. Based on respondents' answers, the *diameter* of the ecosystem is 9; this means that those groups doing similar work in civic education who are most distant from each other will need to perform 9 different steps (phone calls, emails, meetings, etc.) to even know about the activities of another group. Those who are not so distant from each other will still need to perform at least 3.5 steps on average to get a hold of someone else in the ecosystem.
- While the required effort to engage with each other is great, do actors do enough to maximize the existing potential? Answers provided by the respondents suggest that this may not be the case. The network analysis demonstrates that the ecosystem is using 0.4%-0.6% of its potential to share information and cooperate. The *density* parameter of the network analysis suggests that the number of connections of any type per any actor is 1.5 – in other words, very low.
- Given the difficulty of engagement and the low use of the overall capacity to engage, what is the quality of engagement that does take place? The analysis suggests that information exchange between ecosystem members is stronger than the ties of cooperation. Respondents more frequently observe activities of one another, but also more seldomly enter into a meaningful partnership with observed counterparts.

## V. How Will ENGAGE Address the Challenge with this New Knowledge?

USAID/ENGAGE will further advance its earlier work to raise awareness among citizens of their civic rights and responsibilities, and to provide them with tools and opportunities to become more active citizens. Over the next two years, USAID/ENGAGE will concentrate its efforts on enhancing the quality of civic education and strengthening coordination and cooperation among formal and informal actors of the civic education ecosystem. To address these priorities, USAID/ENGAGE will pursue two interconnected tracks of activities.

First, USAID/ENGAGE will facilitate a series of events that allow relevant stakeholders to collectively map and better understand the nature of the civic education ecosystem and to identify specific ways of improving it. Second, USAID/ENGAGE will offer financial and technical assistance opportunities to formal and informal civic education actors that will help improve the quality of civic education and strengthen the network.

### 1. Mapping and Deeper Understanding of Civic Education Ecosystem

#### • Civic education ecosystem mapping

For a sustainable framework of civic education, USAID/ENGAGE will support the Ukrainian civic education ecosystem using a systems-mapping approach<sup>5</sup>, originally designed by Acumen. The ecosystem mapping will be carried out in late 2021 - early 2022 and will involve five inclusive workshops to identify the key forces in the civic education ecosystem, explore the relationship among them, and create a holistic and cohesive vision of the Ukrainian civic education system. As a result of the workshops, a civic education system, which includes both formal and informal civic education, will be created, and suggestions towards a sustainable framework of civic education system will be developed.

#### • Network strengthening events

Following the ecosystem mapping, USAID/ENGAGE will host network strengthening events among a wider group of partners. These common learning activities will allow partners to better understand, debate, and enrich the results of the mapping, and broaden the network of CSOs engaged in the conversation on strengthening the civic education

**Commented [WW2]:** 9.... ?

What units?

E.g., 9 meters?

Perhaps you will be supplying a graph or chart alongside this document which will supplement this sentence, but "the diameter is 9" is a baffling sentence either way.

**Commented [WW3]:** I understand now.

9 degrees of separation, or 9 steps of mediation.

I think just linking these sentences with the colon as I have done above will resolve this confusion.

You could also say in the sentence above:

"...the *diameter* of the ecosystem - measured in degrees of mediation - is 9." And then leave this second sentence the same just to clarify.

<sup>5</sup> <https://acumenacademy.org/blog/systems-practice-tackle-difficult-problems-complex-for-social-innovators>

ecosystem.

## **2. Financial and Technical Assistance to Partners to Improve Education Quality and Strengthen the Ecosystem**

In the course of 2022 and 2023 USAID/ENGAGE will lend support to formal and informal civic education actors to improve the quality of civic education and improve coordination and cooperation within the ecosystem through several assistance mechanisms.

- **Support to the formal system of civic education**

USAID/ENGAGE will work closely with the MOES and its partners to provide tailored financial and technical assistance to help expand the formal civic education curriculum and improve the quality of teaching in public institutions.

- **Institutional support to key civic education CSOs**

USAID/ENGAGE will provide institutional support to key national CSOs leading in formal and extra-curricular civic education. Institutional civic education partners will serve as main network connectors for a variety of civic education actors and for citizens to better understand and live by democratic norms and behaviors. By providing institutional support to sectoral leader CSOs with large constituency bases, USAID/ENGAGE will contribute to the civic education sector development as a whole.

- **Issue-based support to a variety of national, regional, and local groups**

USAID/ENGAGE will offer opportunities for project support to national, regional, and local organizations as well as coalitions and informal civic initiatives, through full and open competition to implement extra-curricular CSO-led direct civic education and engagement, and local constituency-building activities.<sup>6</sup> This support to CSOs and informal initiatives will build multi-level networks and develop platforms for long-lasting and goal-oriented networking among formal and informal civic education CSO partners.

## **VI. How can we Address the Challenge Together?**

The intended impact of the above activities could be achieved better if we, as a development community, would:

- Bolster civic education activities that define audiences and reach more citizens strategically.
- Apply a more discerned, focused, and nuanced approach to prioritizing sectors that can benefit most from civic education interventions.
- Rethink how we engage with, listen to, and support the efforts of sectoral donors who do not have a clear civil society mandate.
- Help our traditional partners expand their outreach and expand our own partnerships beyond those key partners.
- Seek ways to integrate our civil society partners into the state institutional mechanisms thereby applying the same quality standards as those of formal civic education.

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<sup>6</sup> RFA Linking, Advocating, Collaborating: Support to CSO Reform Initiatives <https://engage.org.ua/eng/request-for-applications-no-p4767-2021-05/>