

Annex 5. Pact USAID/ENGAGE Memo: Findings from the Sectoral Organizational Network Analysis (ONA)



ENGAGE
Enhance Non-Governmental Actors
and Grassroots Engagement



MEMORANDUM

Re: Findings from the Sectoral Organizational Network Analysis (ONA)
From: USAID/ENGAGE, Pact Inc.
To: USAID
Date: April 30, 2021

Executive summary

In 2020, ENGAGE assessed performance of its main partners using a tailored Organizational Journey to Self-Reliance (OJ2SR) Assessment tool, which was developed by ENGAGE in 2019. This assessment aims at providing three-fold results areas: assessing the performance of USAID/ENGAGE key partners toward financial and programming outcomes, evaluating the adaptive and influencing capacities of USAID/ENGAGE partners, and providing assistance for ENGAGE by defining partner CSOs that will become part of USAID/ENGAGE sustainability activities in FY20 and FY21.

Taking into account that USAID/ENGAGE encourages its partners to interact with regional and local counterparts and engage them actively, as well as to coordinate activities among themselves, network-mapping through Sectoral Organizational Network Analysis (Sectoral ONA) was a part of this assessment. **The role of the Sectoral ONA tool** with respect to OJ2SR is seen as contributing to the assessment of the influencing capacity of ENGAGE main partners, as well as their leadership potential within sectors, in which they operate.

Eleven USAID/ENGAGE main partners were chosen for OJ2SR Assessment based on their achievements in the ENGAGE priority areas and the level of investment made by Pact. They also participated in the Sectoral ONA survey. This list is as follows: Transparency International Ukraine (TIU), Centre of Policy and Legal Reform (CPLR), Centre UA, VoxUkraine, Anti-corruption Action Center (AntAC), New Europe Center (NEC), The Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF), Ukrainian Leadership Academy (ULA), Ukrainian Toronto Television (Toronto TV), Automaidan, Global Office.

The purpose of this memo is to map a network of main ENGAGE partners and identify how they are positioned in the given network regarding ties of cooperation, desired cooperation, information exchange, and offline networking.

Sectoral ONA began in FY4 with the data collection and completed in FY5 with the data visualization and subsequent analysis. The findings drawn from the Sectoral ONA are to serve as the baseline foundation for monitoring the progress of ENGAGE's key partners toward enhancing their influencing and leadership capacities through networking in FY21. In order to extract comparative lessons, in March-May 2021 USAID/ENGAGE will conduct the repeated network survey within the re-OJ2SR assessment.

The **key findings** of the memo can be summarized as follows:

- The network demonstrates that the best cohesion is in the case of informational exchange, while the lowest is in the case of cooperation and the implementation of joint projects.
- Regional and local CSOs are located mainly on the periphery of the network and only nearly one-fifth is well-embedded into the network having good ties with national-level CSOs.

- The best cooperation with governmental institutions and local authorities is demonstrated by organizations which work in the fields of local democratic development, civic education, and environmental protection. Only a few organizations reported their connections with business entities.
- Not many of the CSOs have the ability to aggregate the main messages and news of their respective sectors and serve as information nodes. It appeared that among the actors holding information exchange and communication in the sector are not only sectoral leaders, but also resource centers (*Gurt, Prostir.ua*), donor organizations, funds, and initiatives.
- Regional CSOs, unlike national-level CSOs, more frequently mentioned donors as organizations that they have regularly gone to for information to keep up to date with developments in the given sector. It may indicate that regional CSOs experience a lack of connections with their national counterparts and rely on information from donor organizations regarding updates, priorities, and innovations in the civil society sectors.
- In total, the eleven ENGAGE main partners have connections with 351 organizations including 53 regional CSOs and 37 international organizations. This is to say that investments in main partners as sectoral leaders have the potential to reach around 31% higher with regard to the number of organizations connected through network linkages.
- Several ENGAGE partners have pronounced coordination positions (TIU, CPLR, ULA, and Toronto TV), embedding groups of marginal CSOs, which connected to the network with a single link.
- All eleven ENGAGE partners gravitate to the network's center, which means they are well-connected to each other. Moreover, half of them are so-called network brokers¹, that serve as bridges between organizations at different levels and disseminate the main ideas, trends and values within civil society sector.

This memo comprises three sections: description of the methodology, overview of key findings from the Sectoral ONA and main takeaways regarding ENGAGE key partners.

I. Description of the Method

In this memo, the term “network” refers to the ENGAGE network of partners and other CSOs which are interrelated, connected to each other by different types of relations (informational exchange, resource sharing and cooperation etc) and working in common sectors of civil society.

For the Sectoral ONA, we used the *snowball sampling method*². Starting with a core group of ENGAGE main partners, data on all their connections were collected. Then the ENGAGE team reached out to CSOs mentioned by partners, and subsequently collected new data. The team completed four waves of data collection, when the survey's period ran out of time. This method helped to access a wider sample of network members than the ENGAGE team could have identified on its own. The limitation of this method is that it can take more time and thus be somewhat disruptive while do not necessarily increase higher response rate.

This sectoral ONA used an *un-bounded type*³ of survey/questionnaire so that respondents were able to list any partner they have connections with as opposed to *bounded type* where we provide a closed list of organizations.

¹ Network “broker” is a network member which occupies a structural position of bridge between two or more otherwise disconnected actors. It provides an efficient way of connection to other actors and cannot be by-passed by any given actor. (S.W.Kwon, E.Rondi, D.Levin. *Network brokerage: an integrative review and future research agenda*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339677692_Network_Brokerage_An_Integrative_Review_and_Future_Research_Agenda)

² This is a non-probability (non-random) method of data collection in qualitative research which is applied when samples with the target characteristics are not easily accessible. Snowball sampling starts with survey of initial sample group, and other respondents are recruited via chain referral i.e. each following participant recruits other participants for a survey. (P Biernacki, D Waldorf. *Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling*. http://ftp.columbia.edu/itc/hs/pubhealth/p8462/misc/biernacki_lect4.pdf)

³ There are two types of ONA questionnaire: bounded (with closed list of network members) and un-bounded (respondents are open to list any partner they have connections with). (D. Mykhaylenko, K. Palaio. *Applying Network*

The ONA survey consisted of 4 research questions:

1. *Which organizations have you regularly gone to for information/materials to keep up to date with developments in the sector? (ONA Q1, captures connections of information exchange)*
2. *Which organizations did you have collaboration/joint projects with in 2019? (ONA Q2, captures connections of cooperation)*
3. *Public events of which organizations of your sector did you visit during 2019? (ONA Q3, captures connections in terms of offline networking)*
4. *Which organizations of your sector do you want to cooperate with in the future? (ONA Q4, captures connections in terms of desired cooperation)*

With the aim to identify key sectors of the map, additional question was asked: *List the sectors in which your organization operates*. In addition, CSOs were asked to provide contacts of three CSOs working in their same respective sector of civil society to contact them for the next wave of the survey.

II. Overview of main findings

During January-March 2020, in the framework of OJ2SR assessment USAID/ENGAGE conducted a Sectoral ONA. With the use of snowball sampling, an online questionnaire was rolled out, starting with a core group of eleven of ENGAGE's main partners participating in OJ2SR. The survey was available for four weeks starting from February 18, 2020 and collected responses from four waves of respondents. After this, a Sectoral Network Map was generated.

As a result, the ENGAGE team reached out to more than 140 CSOs, and 50 of them answered the ONA survey, including 23 ENGAGE partners⁴ and 27 non-partners.

In total, the network map includes:

- 408 organizations of international, national, regional and local level⁵;
- 1224 connections regarding four different types of linkages (ties of cooperation, desired cooperation, informational exchange and offline networking)⁶;
- connections of 51 ENGAGE partners and 357 non-partners (Figure 1).

Analysis to Improve Program Impact and Sustainability. https://www.dmeforpeace.org/media_gallery/me-thursday-talks-applying-network-analysis-to-improve-program-impact-and-sustainability/

⁴A CSO is considered as an ENGAGE partner in case it had or currently has financial support within USAID/ENGAGE activity. CSOs-members of local reform coalitions supported by Pact were considered as Pact partners in this survey.

⁵ This amount doesn't include such displayed at ONA picture nodes as "with all", "none", "hard to say" etc.

⁶ ENGAGE partners are highlighted in green on the Map and non-partners - in red. The size of nodes (CSOs) is scaled by their In-Degree rate which means the number of CSOs that are approaching an organization, for instance for cooperation or information.

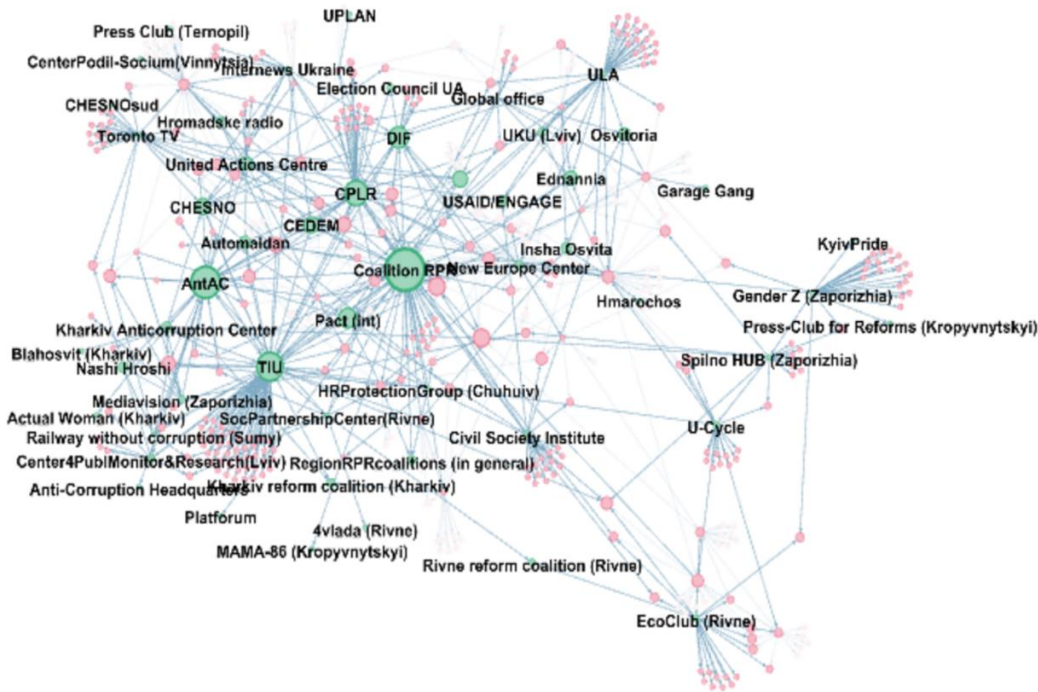


Figure 1. Positioning of all USAID/ENGAGE partners in the network regarding all types of connections

Overall, the network demonstrates the best cohesion in the case of information exchange (Diameter⁷ – 6, Density⁸ – 0,009) and the lowest – in the case of cooperation and implementation of joint projects (Diameter – 10, Density – 0,006) (Figure 2).

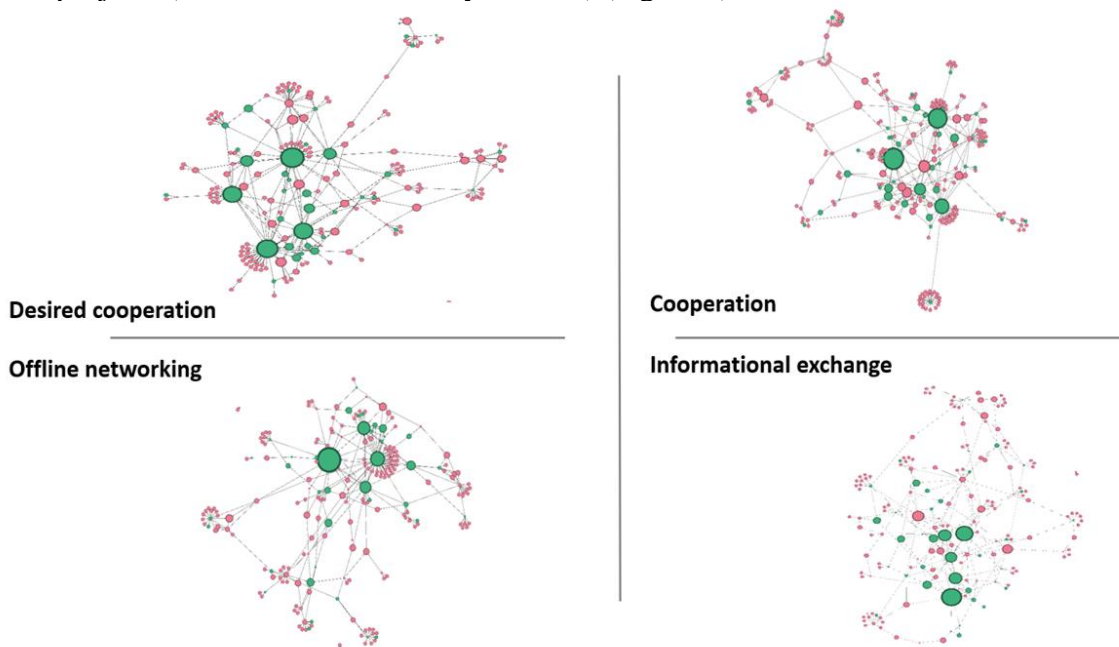


Figure 2. The network regarding each type of connections

⁷The **diameter of a network** is the largest geodesic distance in the (connected) network. **Geodesic distance** is the number of relations in the shortest possible walk from one actor to another (Robert A. Hanneman, Mark Riddle. *Introduction to social network methods*. Riverside, CA: University of California, Riverside, <http://faculty.ucr.edu/~hanneman/nettext/>)

⁸**Network density** is the percentage of potential linkages that exist in reality. This is calculated by dividing the total number of linkages in the network by the total number of linkages that would exist if every network member were linked to every other member. *Pact Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) Handbook* (Dec 2011) https://www.pactworld.org/sites/default/files/ONA%20Handbook_ext.pdf

On the sectoral map, *TIU* has the strongest leadership positions with regard to all types of ties, including ties of cooperation, desired cooperation, information exchange, and offline networking. It has linkages with 82 organizations internationally, nationally, and locally. The *Reanimation Package of Reforms Coalition (RPR Coalition)*, which is a national coalition of CSOs striving for reform promotion, has connections with 49 CSOs and occupies one of the most central positions in the given network. It also has the highest In-Degree rate⁹ since the largest number of organizations in the network are approaching the RPR Coalition for cooperation, information, or offline networking. *CPLR* occupies the third place regarding the number of CSOs it has connections with, being linked to 38 organizations.

The network contains 105 regional and local CSOs (Figure 3). They are located mostly on the periphery of the network. Only nearly one fifth is embedded into the network at a sufficient level, having relatively good ties with national-level CSOs. Based on the In-Degree rate, the most notable regional CSOs are the following: *GromControl (Dnipro)*, *Environment.People.Law (Lviv)*, *Kharkiv Anticorruption Center (Kharkiv)*, *Institute of Analysis and Advocacy (Poltava)*, *Center for Public Monitoring and Research (Lviv)*, *Teple Misto (Ivano-Frankivsk)*, *Kharkiv Reform Coalition (Kharkiv)*, *Edison Space (Zaporizhia)*, *Ecoltava (Poltava)*, *UKU (Lviv)*, *Dzyga (Zaporizhia)*, *Charity and Health Found (Kherson)*, *Anticorruption Platform (Ivano-Frankivsk)*, *Young Cherkashchyna (Cherkasy)*, *Anticorruption Platform (Ivano-Frankivsk)*, *Mediavision (Zaporizhia)*, *EcoClub (Rivne)*, *ExpertyZaReform (Kharkiv)*, *Institute for Regional Development (Lviv)*, *Promolod (Cherkasy)*, *VeloKherson (Kherson)*.

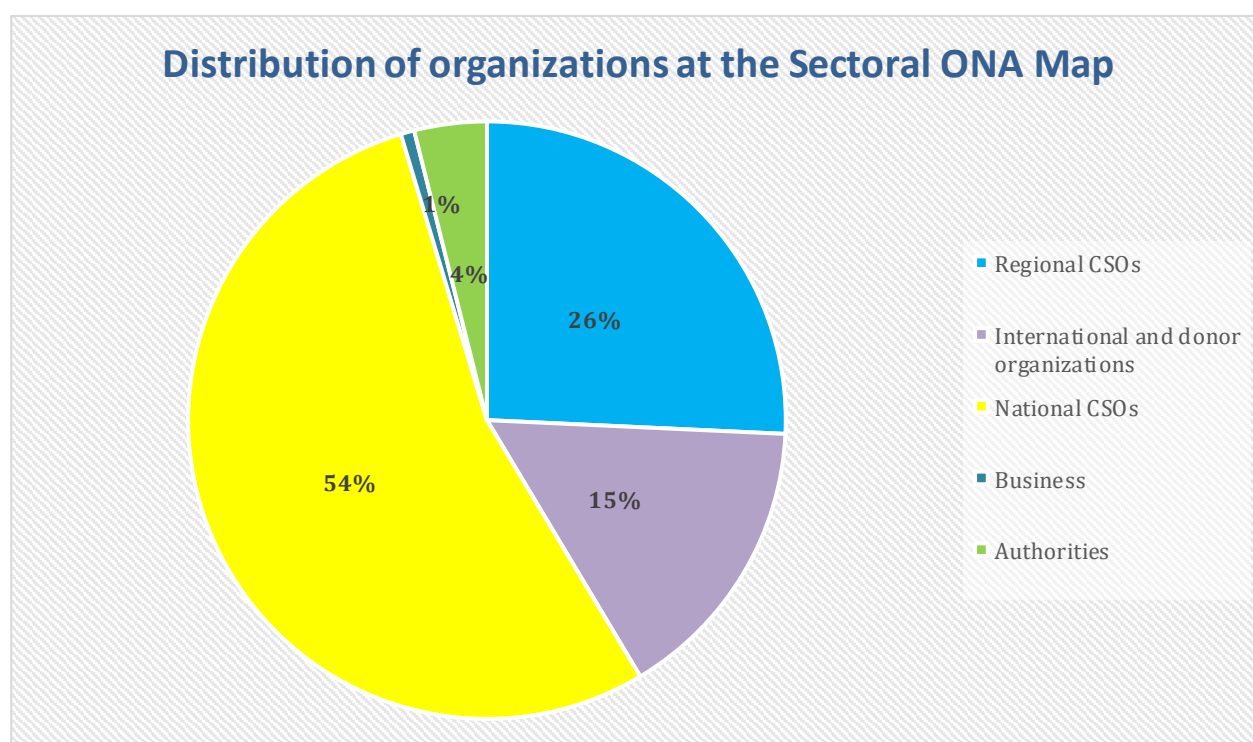


Figure 3. Distribution of organizations in the network

While CSOs were asked to provide a list of organizations that they have connections with, national and local authorities, business entities, and technical assistance providers were also mentioned. The organizations that work in the fields of local democratic development (*Civil Society Institute*), civic education (*ULA*, *EdCamp*), and environmental protection (*EcoClub [Rivne]*, *EcoAction*, *Ukrainian Climate Network*) demonstrates the best level of cooperation with governmental institutions and local authorities. In the ONA survey, only a few CSOs mentioned that they have connections with business organizations: *TIU*, *Civil Society Institute*, *DEJURE* and *ULA*.

⁹ According to the *Pact Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) Handbook (Dec 2011)*, the higher the degrees-in score, the larger the number of nodes that are approaching an organization for resources or information. https://www.pactworld.org/sites/default/files/ONA%20Handbook_ext.pdf

Only few network actors serve as information nodes and could aggregate the main messages and news of their given sector. It appeared that among CSOs amplifying the information exchange and communication in the sector (*ONA Q1*) are sectoral leaders such as *AntAC*, *Coalition RPR*, *TIU* and *DIF*, resource centers (*Gurt*, *Prostir.ua*), donor organizations, funds and initiatives (*Pact*, *USAID/ENGAGE*, *UNDP*, *GIZ*, *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*, *SIDA*, *Council of Europe*, *DOBRE*, *EU Delegation to Ukraine*, *IRF*, etc).

The fact that surveyed CSOs mentioned donors may indicate that they see donor entities as partners who not only provide funding but also contribute with their own expertise and activities in the sector. Regional CSOs experience a lack of connections with their national counterparts since in the *ONA* survey they more frequently mentioned donors as organizations that they have regularly gone to for information. It may indicate that regional CSOs rely largely on information from donor organizations in order to keep up to date with developments in their given sectors.

A number of CSOs are located at the intersection between organizational connections having a good level of *betweenness indicator*¹⁰ (Figure 4). The high value of this indicator enables an actor to either facilitate interactions in the network or hinder them in order to keep its competitive advantage in the sector. Therefore, such well-positioned actors are the important connectors between those not directly linked with each other.

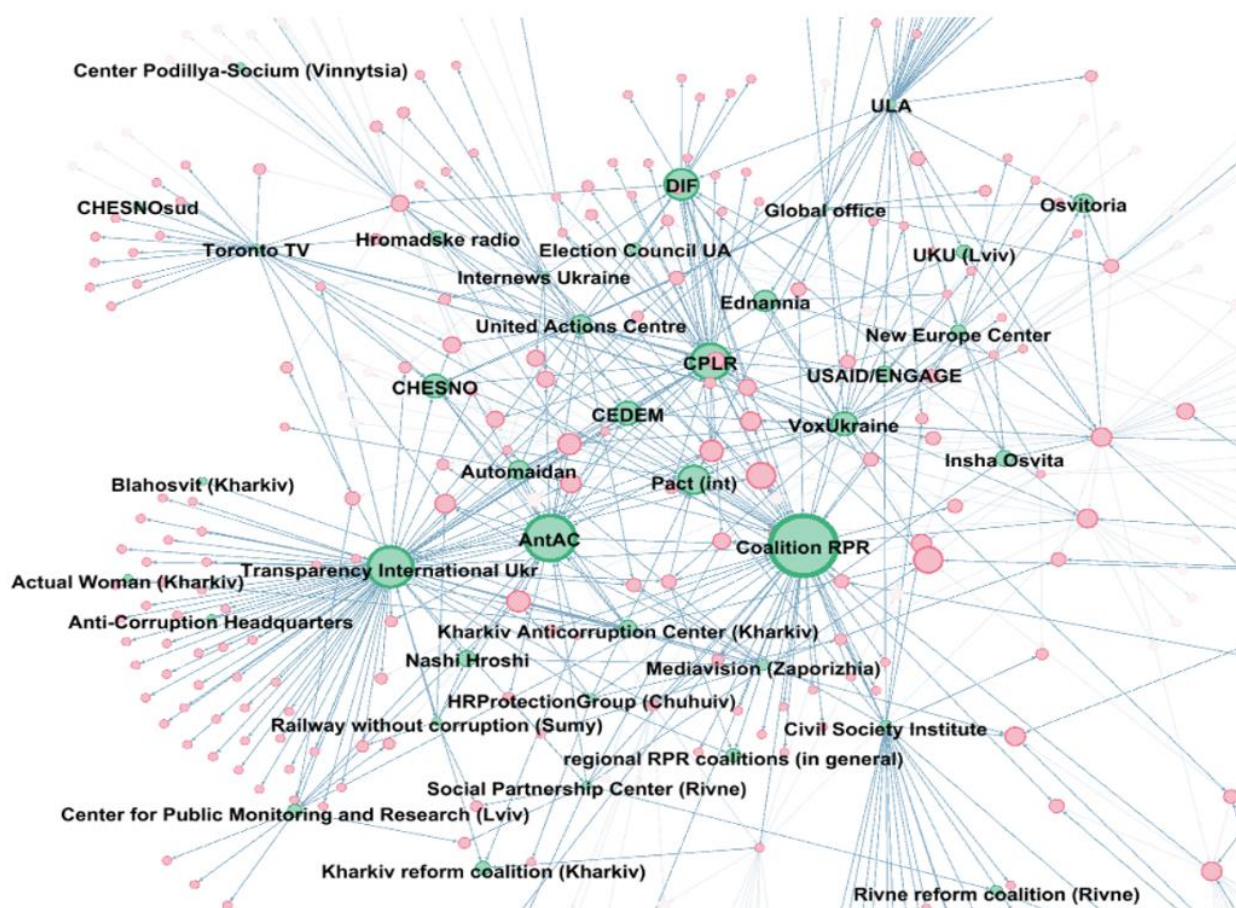


Figure 4. The CSOs which have the core positions in the network regarding all types of connections

The most notable info brokers¹¹ among national-level CSOs are: *TIU*, *CPLR*, *Coalition RPR*, *AntAC*, *Internews*, *DIF*, *DEJURE* foundation, *CHESNO*, *VoxUkraine*, *Centre of Economic Strategy*, *ZMINA*, and *Toronto TV* (Figure 5). In turn, the highest rate of *Betweenness* among regional and local level CSOs have *GromControl* (Dnipro), *Institute of Analysis and Advocacy* (Poltava), *Kharkiv*

¹⁰ According to the *Pact Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) Handbook (Dec 2011)*, *betweenness* is an index score that describes the extent to which an individual member acts as a bridge between different nodes, thus maintaining the viability of the overall network. https://www.pactworld.org/sites/default/files/ONA%20Handbook_ext.pdf

¹¹ Info broker is an actor who connects two otherwise unconnected actors in a position to manage the information flow (K. Ehrlich, I. Carboni. *Inside Social Network Analysis*. Boston College)

Anticorruption Center (Kharkiv), Independent Centre of Law Research (Zaporizhzhia), Network of Anticorruption Centers (Kharkiv, Donetsk), Mediavision (Zaporizhzhia), Zaporizhzhia Investigation Center (Zaporizhzhia), Hunam Rights Protection Group (Chuhuiv), Social Partnership Center (Rivne), Railway without Corruption (Sumy), Center for Public Monitoring and Research (Lviv), and Smart Media (Kharkiv). This advantageous network position enables the aforementioned CSOs to strengthen the cooperation patterns, control the flow of information, and foster interactions in the network.

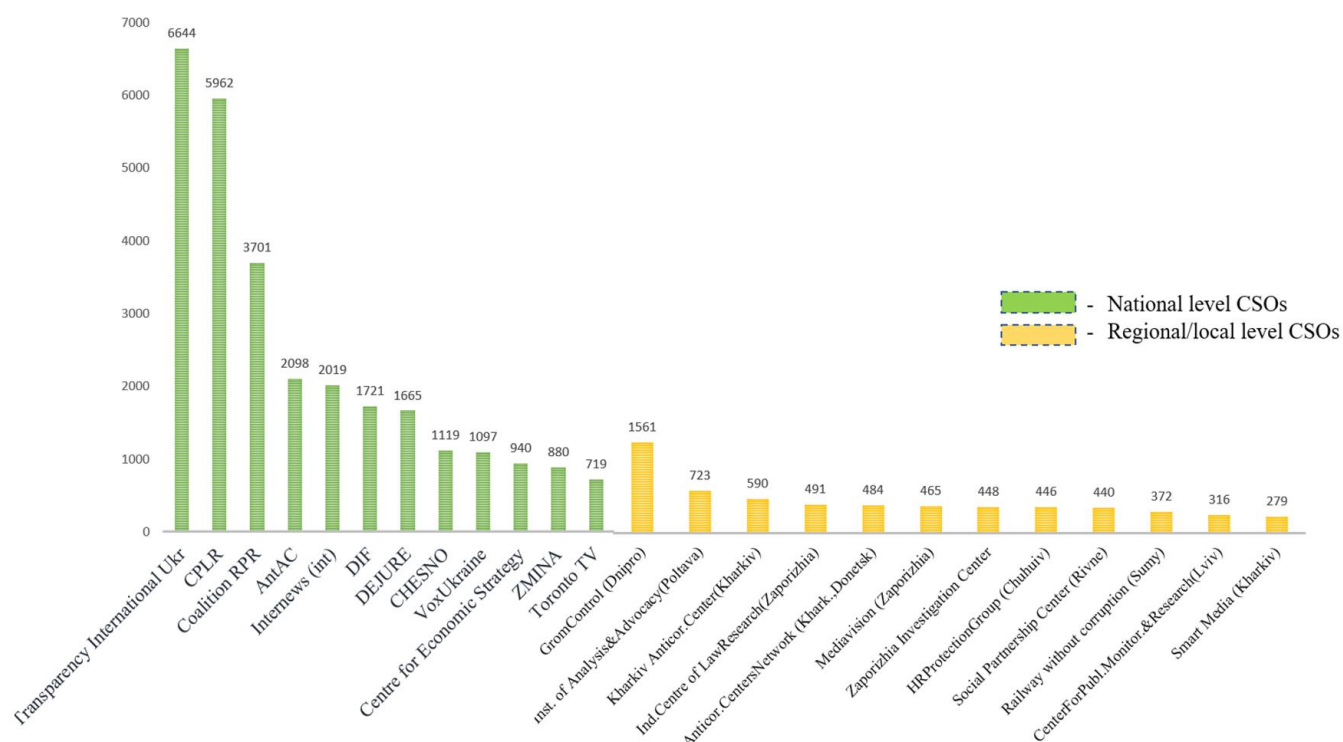


Figure 5. TOP-24 national and regional level “info brokers” in the network based on the overall rate of betweenness indicator

III. Key-findings regarding ENGAGE’s key partners

In total, ENGAGE’s main partners have connections with 351 organizations including 53 regional CSOs and 37 international organizations. TIU (29 connections), ULA (8), AntAC (7) and CPLR (5) are in the closest contact with organizations across Ukraine, having the highest number of connections with regional and local CSOs. Several of ENGAGE’s main partners have pronounced coordination positions (TIU, CPLR, ULA and Toronto TV), embedding groups of marginal CSOs which are connected to the network with a single link.

All eleven of ENGAGE’s main partners are well-connected to each other and gravitate toward the network’s center (Figure 6). Half of them serves as network brokers being a network bridge among organizations at different levels and effectively disseminating the information, ideas, trends, and values within the civil society sector. Moreover, several ENGAGE partners (such as TIU, ULA, Toronto TV etc.) appeared to have gatekeeping positions¹² in the given network having capability to control the flow of information.

¹² Gatekeeper is a type of network broker who guards a gate or another actor who controls access to different groups of actors. Actors with these roles are important in any type of network because they have capability to control the knowledge flow and so, to some extent, the ability the shape the network. (N. Gürsakal, A. Bozkurt. *Identifying gatekeepers in online learning networks*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317342445> Identifying gatekeepers in online learning networks)

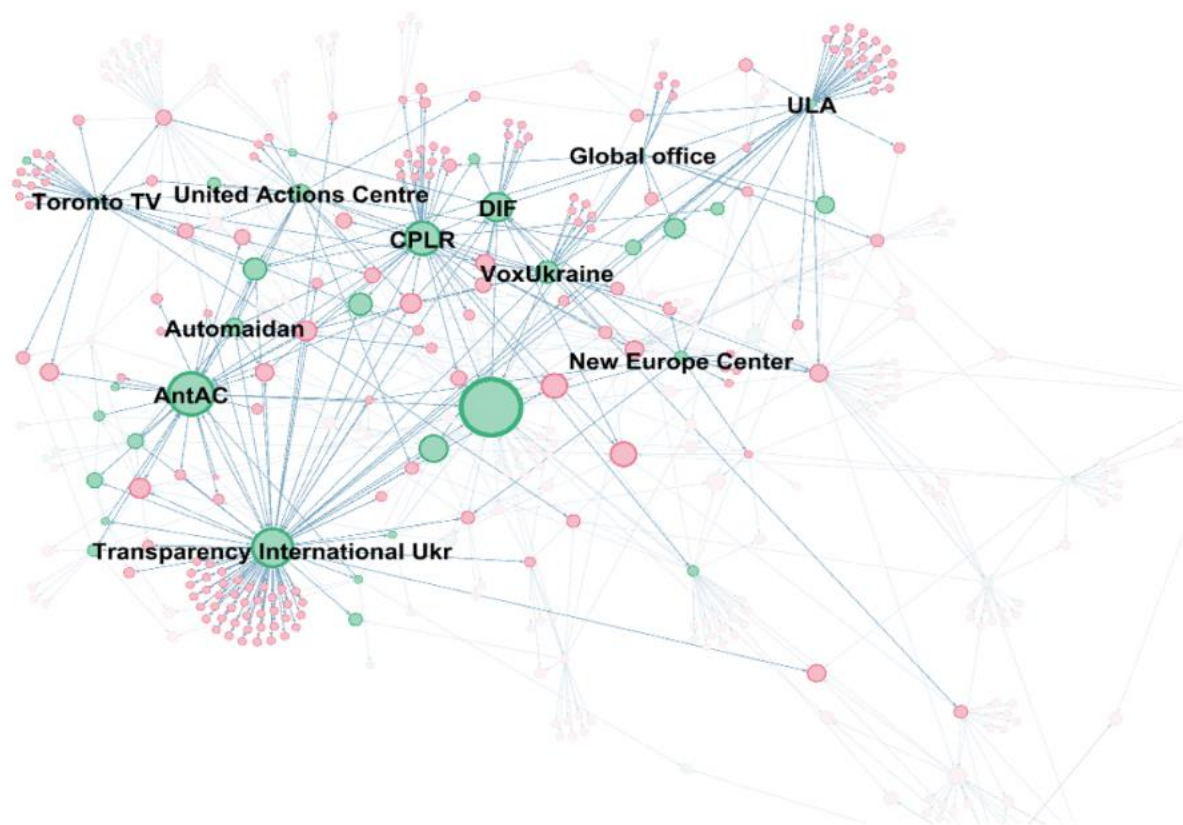


Figure 6. Position of eleven ENGAGE key partners in the network regarding all types of connections

Measuring against the *In-Degree* indicator showed that several organizations (AntAC, TIU, DIF, CPLR, VoxUkraine, Automaidan) can be seen as sectoral opinion leaders in the network (ONA Q1). Thus, their activities and communication materials are most frequently checked by other CSOs with the aim to keep up to date with developments in the sector. This allows them to ride the crest of the information flow and mainstream their values, principles and trends. The sectoral ONA results prove that CPLR occupies a leadership position in terms of cooperation with counterparts across Ukraine (ONA Q2). It has the highest In-Degree rate regarding ties of cooperation. TIU, AntAC, Centre UA, VoxUkraine, DIF and Automaidan also demonstrated a good level of connections with regional and local CSOs with the aim to collaborate on issues of common concern. TIU, AntAC, CPLR, Centre UA and VoxUkraine can be considered as leaders in offline networking (ONA Q3), whose public events are regularly attended by counterparts. CSOs public events as platforms for offline networking are important to civil society sector which needs more intense interorganizational and interpersonal communication to be more coherent and collaborative. Concerning the desired cooperation (ONA Q4), surveyed CSOs indicated that in the future they want to cooperate TIU, CPLR and AntAC, DIF, Centre UA, NEC and Automaidan more than with any other CSOs.

Measuring against the *betweenness* indicator shows (Figure 7) that CPLR and TIU have the highest indicators of *Betweenness* sharing leadership in bridging CSOs to ensure the informational exchange (ONA Q1), collaboration with CSOs in the sector (ONA Q2), offline networking (ONA Q3) and desired cooperation (ONA Q4). Noting that *Betweenness* quantifies the number of times a CSO acts as a bridge along the shortest path between two other CSOs, TIU and CPLR can be considered as ones of the main info brokers and hubs for collaboration in the given sectoral network. They most frequently act as powerful intermediary actors and have the potential to make or break overall network effectiveness. This also means that TIU and CPLR hold up the flow of information and have the potential to become a “bottleneck,” slowing down overall network dynamics and effectiveness if they ease up on their efforts within the network.

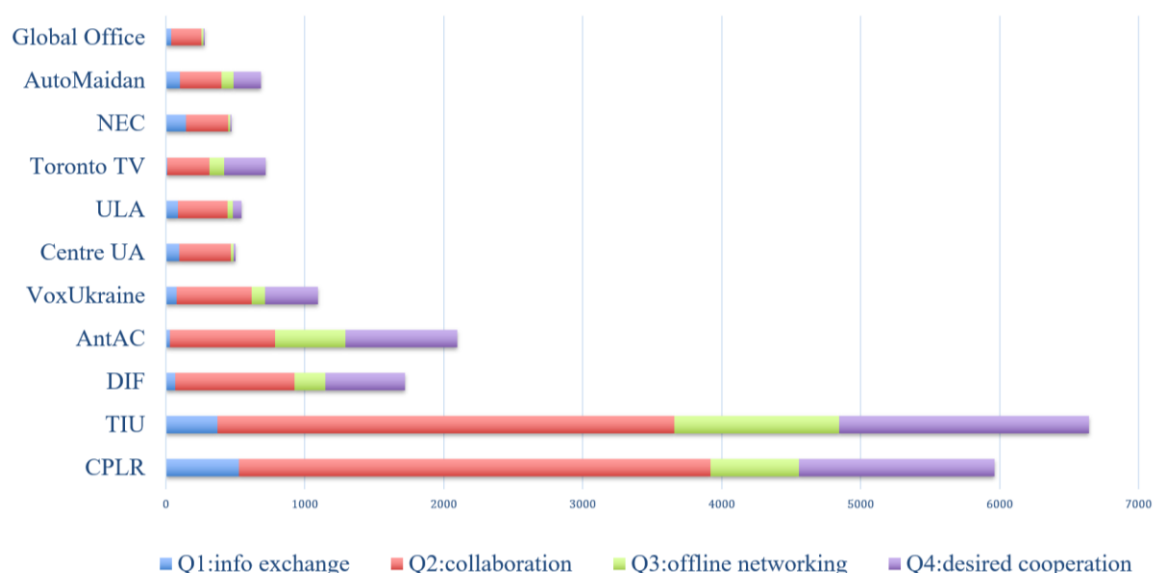


Figure 7. Level of betweenness of the key USAID/ENGAGE partners

In turn, ENGAGE’s main partners, such as AntAC, DIF, VoxUkraine, Toronto TV, and Automaidan demonstrate a generally good level of *Betweenness* in the network with regard to all types of connections. In contrast, ULA, Centre UA, NEC and Global Office have a relatively low level of *Betweenness*, which indicates the distant positions of these CSOs in the given network.

In general, it is encouraging to see that for all ENGAGE key partners collaboration in its different displays tops their relationships in the sector. Each of them has certain specific roles in the network. For example, some CSOs could do more in the offline arena, and some seem to have great gravitas being a desired partner.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The Sectoral ONA allows to visualize the wide network of ENGAGE partners and non-partners with leading positions in different sectors of civil society. In can be argued that the given network constitutes an integral and fundamental part of the whole civil society sector in Ukraine.
- The data obtained from the Sectoral ONA visualizes the structure of relationships in the civil society sector and identifies leadership both overall and in the different network’s clusters. It allows to understand the framework of interactions between CSOs and their roles in the given network (core positioned actors, actors on the periphery, info brokers, gatekeepers etc), as well as demonstrates bottlenecks, underutilized resources and opportunities, communication “failures” and other issues. This kind of data identify the patterns of influence and those actors who shape the content and structure of cooperation inside the civil society sector having the ability to transfer knowledge between CSOs which are not linked directly. In addition, it gives a sound notion of which regional and local CSOs have strong positions in the network and can provide potential points of convergence across country and its regions. This data could potentially be used by both donors and CSOs themselves for programmatic purposes, in particular, for decision-making on future direction of cooperation and development goals in terms of network enhancing and sectoral leadership.
- The analysis proves that investments in CSOs which are the sectoral leaders and network brokers have the potential to reach significantly higher number of CSOs with regard to the number of organizations connected through network linkages.
- Better network cohesion can be reached through strengthening ties in terms of ensuring both more frequent and intense interactions; fostering cross-clusters cooperation through the gatekeeping actors; and stepping up efforts to achieve greater multiplicity of ties. In

order to ensure that every actor can reach other actors as more as possible in an easy and effective way, the network should strive to ensure as many reciprocal ties as possible, as well as bring peripheral members and those poorly embedded into the network closer to the network center involving them into different types of relationship.

- It is recommended to repeat the Sectoral ONA in 2021 to track the dynamics of development in the network over time and verify the baseline assumptions.