

Annex 7. Pact USAID/ENGAGE: Educating the Next Generation of Civil Society Leaders



ENGAGE
Enhance Non-Governmental Actors
and Grassroots Engagement



MEMORANDUM

Re: Educating the Next Generation of Civil Society Leaders

Date: March 10, 2020

Executive Summary

Ukraine's civil society is a defining aspect of its democracy. Today, Ukrainian youth is positioned to play an important role in understanding the damaging effects of corruption, holding the government accountable at national, regional, and local levels, and becoming young advocates for change in post-Euromaidan Ukraine.

The findings of the winter 2020 Civic Engagement Poll, commissioned by Pact in January 2020, indicate that young people value their freedom and would like to live in Ukraine. They care about the level of corruption in their country but are waiting for the consequences of reforms to improve their well-being. Young people feel discriminated against, but not in the way that average citizens would think of. And most importantly, young people are sociable but not socially active.

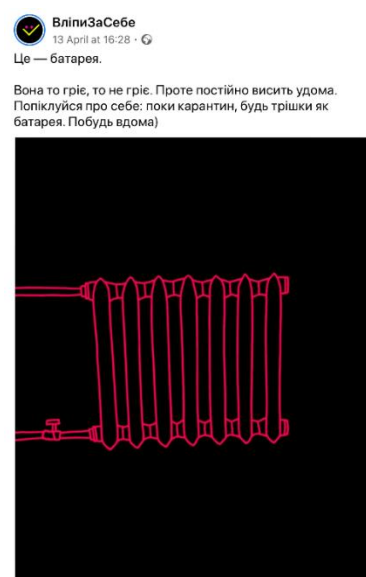
To reach young Ukrainians, to grasp their attention and transform their interests into action, it is high time for not only education, but new creative approaches to learning, such as edutainment.

USAID/ENGAGE has taken a multi-dimensional approach to support younger generations of Ukrainians, ensuring that there are a wide array of opportunities—both inside and outside of the classroom—for youth to develop as citizens while having fun with peers, learning about civil society organizations, finding causes that motivate them, and growing into community leaders.

Mainstreaming Civic Participation: New Civics Course Produces Results in Public Schools

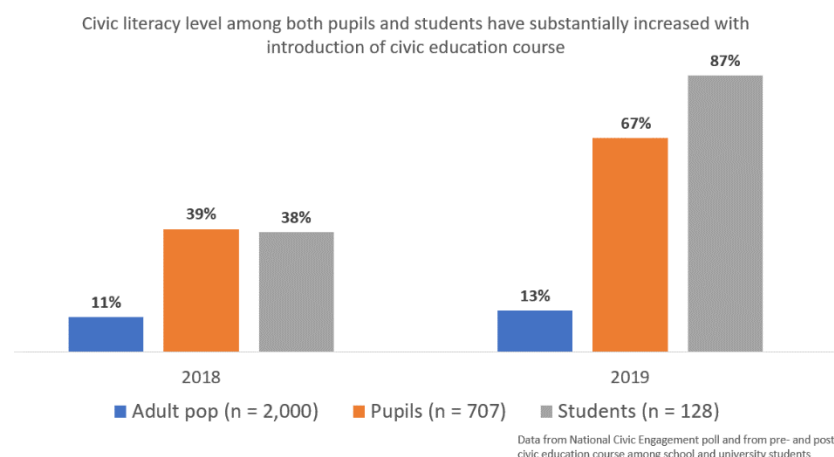
In 2019, USAID/ENGAGE built upon the success of the civic education course that was implemented in the tenth-grade curriculum of Ukrainian secondary schools thanks to efforts of USAID/ENGAGE partner Nova Doba. The course, titled “3DDemocracy: Think, Care, Act,” is being taught in all schools across the country with civics teachers becoming more confident with teaching the course and improving their teaching methods.

Over 2,480 Ukrainian schools have implemented the course, reaching approximately 60,00 tenth graders each year¹. The new civic education course also boasts innovative teaching methodologies. A survey of the course revealed that students responded well to group work activities, interactive games and simulations, and interactions with civic-minded speakers. To ensure that students are met with competent, educated, and motivated teachers, a new course at pedagogical universities will train teachers in civic education methodologies.



¹ This is a number of school children educated in civics during the first year of mandatory course in 2018-2019 school year.

Even in its nascent stages, “3D Democracy: Think, Care, Act” provides some promising results. After completing the course, 69% of students improved their civic literacy levels, the number of students able to pass a civic literacy course increased by 28% percent (correctly answering 10 out of



13 questions), and one in four students were able to score perfectly on a civic literacy test. By way of comparison, the tenth graders scores are higher than those of Ukraine’s adult population—who themselves had answered civic literacy questions during the National Civic Engagement Poll in May 2019—indicating the promise of the curriculum and a new generation of empowered youth.

Ensuring Youth Participation and Engagement in Decision-Making at National, Regional and Local Levels

Effective youth participation in democratic governance creates opportunities for young people to be involved in influencing, shaping and contributing to policy at national, regional and local levels. In order to enhance young Ukrainians’ participation in elections, USAID/ENGAGE has been working with partners to mobilize youth towards democratic rights and responsibilities through extracurricular civic education activities and innovative information campaign.

The nationwide #ЙдиОбирай (#GoElections) campaign by Global Office based on innovative tools and use of social media was supported by off-line activities in eastern and southern oblasts of Ukraine to enhance the effect of information campaigns and to mobilize local youth communities.

VlipyZaSebe video aimed at popularizing involvement of youth in the process of elections generated 1,000,000 views on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube during the first two weeks after the launch of the campaign and was followed by a series of pre-electoral youth hackathons from around Ukraine aimed at raising the awareness of smart and rational voting among youth.



Campaigns That Influence Behaviors of Young Ukrainians

As a part of promotional campaign of the civic education curricula, the Chat Bot #smthwentwrong, was developed to popularize the topic of civic literacy by explaining the influence of civic literacy on everyday life. Playing as an expert, a teenage gamer helps to resolve a situation with his or her virtual friend, learn competences to defend his or her rights in everyday situations. During autumn 2018, more than 3,800 teenagers used the chatbot, simulating 30 everyday situations in school, shops, and public transportation. For example, in one scenario a teacher takes a student’s phone without a reason. In others, a young person is kicked off of a bus in rain because he had no student identification card with him or situations are presented related to bullying in schools.

A recent Facebook campaign, “Stay at Home,” explains why during COVID-19 times, it is important to do small actions that impact all members of society, and encourages youth to be socially responsible. The campaign uses simple objects and images, and well as interviews with opinion

leaders to call to stay at home during the quarantine, properly washing hands or keeping social distance, in order to flatten the curve.

Engaging Youth Through Fun and “Edutainment”

Learning to become an engaged citizen should not be confined to the classroom. USAID/ENGAGE has worked with partners to connect with and extend opportunities to engage youth through interactive games and popular cultural events across the country.

For example, young people are able to experience decision-making processes through interactive games. City Z is one such game—a role-playing advocacy game for civic activists. City Z enables youth to participate in the decision-making process at the local-level through simulation of real situations. In the course of the game, young people take different social roles, such as politicians, local entrepreneurs, and people with disabilities, among others, to understand their interests, simulate actions and decisions about real problems and situations in the city.

An online simulation of elections at a civic education platform found at www.citizen.in.ua for school students was administered in 2019, in light of the presidential elections in Ukraine. By voting for selected politicians from the past century (such as Winston S. Churchill, Vaclav Havel, Yosef Stalin and others), students learned to understand the importance of detailed analysis and a conscious choice of one or other politicians, as well as to learn about the possible influence of such choices on society. More than 1,400 students participated in these mock elections and played the role of first-time voters they are to become in couple of years.

USAID/ENGAGE’s state-building simulation game is an interactive tool that enables youth to immerse themselves in the complexity of state-building, while learning about the difficulties in creating an ideal society and government. The game was administered ten times during 2017-2019, gathering 900 participants. Through a series of simulated negotiations and decision-making processes, youth come to understand the elements, complexity and mechanisms of state institutions and procedures. The game emphasizes the importance of networking and coalition-building.



GROWMADA NGO Alley at Atlas Weekend Festival, July 2019

In addition to educational gameplay and entertainment, USAID/ENGAGE connects with youth at various music and cultural festivals across the country. With the aim to promote inclusion among youth with disabilities, raise environmental awareness, and promote civic activism, concert and festival organizers developed interactive cultural and learning activities at outdoor events during the summer and autumn. The civic-minded activities also galvanized Ukraine’s mass music organizers around socially important issues. During 2017-2019, 15 festivals brought together 1,400,000 participants (including adults).

Edutainment helps to reach new audiences. #(@)&\$0 with Michael Shchur is a weekly TV show program that balances news segments delivered as satirical monologues with the latest developments in-country, political situations, and the work of civil society actors. The aim of the program is to inform Ukrainian citizens about current social and political situations, and therefore engaging citizens into active social and political life, as well as raising their awareness on the ongoing reforms and promoting the role of civil society in the country. The recent episodes were devoted to the coronavirus pandemic and the impact of the quarantine on the lives of Ukrainians. Ukrainians enjoy this top-rated television program, providing a witty and satirical take on politics, government, and civil society news, broadcasted on YouTube as well as Channel 24 and UA Perhshiy.

Advocating for Youth Policies at Regional and National Levels

USAID/ENGAGE recognizes the importance of strengthening the operating environment for youth councils and civil society organizations engaging youth in civic life, so that young Ukrainians will develop into informed citizens and civil society leaders.

Influencing the policy-making process at the local-level helped to establish youth councils in Khmelnytskyi, Dykanka, the village of Machukhi and Mykolaivka villages of the Poltava Oblast, villages of Pryut, Voinivka and Kosiv of the Kirovohrad Oblast, and Lytovezh, Zymne, Ustyluh, Smidyn and Knyahynynok, amalgamated communities of the Volyn Oblast, all contributing to youth development and efficacy.

Due to the efforts of USAID/ENGAGE partners, the Ministry of Youth and Sports adopted two draft regulations (Decree of the Cabinet of Minister No. 1198) that will enable youth councils to serve their constituents at the city and oblast levels. Meanwhile, the All-Ukrainian Youth Association continues to unite civil society organizations and support efforts to build youth centers and student governments. And a new online platform, youthcouncil.com.ua, serves as a helpful and accessible informational resource for creating youth councils, which together with USAID/ENGAGE's many activities ensure that all young Ukrainians find an opportunity for civic participation—whether it be in a village, settlement, or city.

Supporting and Investing in Youth Leadership

Partnering with an organization committed to support youth and their initiatives, USAID/ENGAGE has improved the organizational capacity of the Ukrainian Leadership Academy. Support to the Academy ensures its sustainability, meaning that the organization is primed to continue its legacy in positioning young Ukrainians to take on important social and community roles in society, holding themselves—and elected leaders—accountable to the public interest.



KOLO Fellow presenting group work

In addition, in 2017-2019 USAID/ENGAGE provided opportunities to inspire youth through a leadership program and its KOLO Fellowship. KOLO Fellows participated in a year-long learning and coaching program. Over 41 KOLO Fellows have participated in the program, implementing ten local projects and developing countless skills and new insights into community organizing and action. An overwhelming majority of program participants expressed the usefulness of the program (97% of both KOLO1 and KOLO2 participants tend to agree they received new skills and

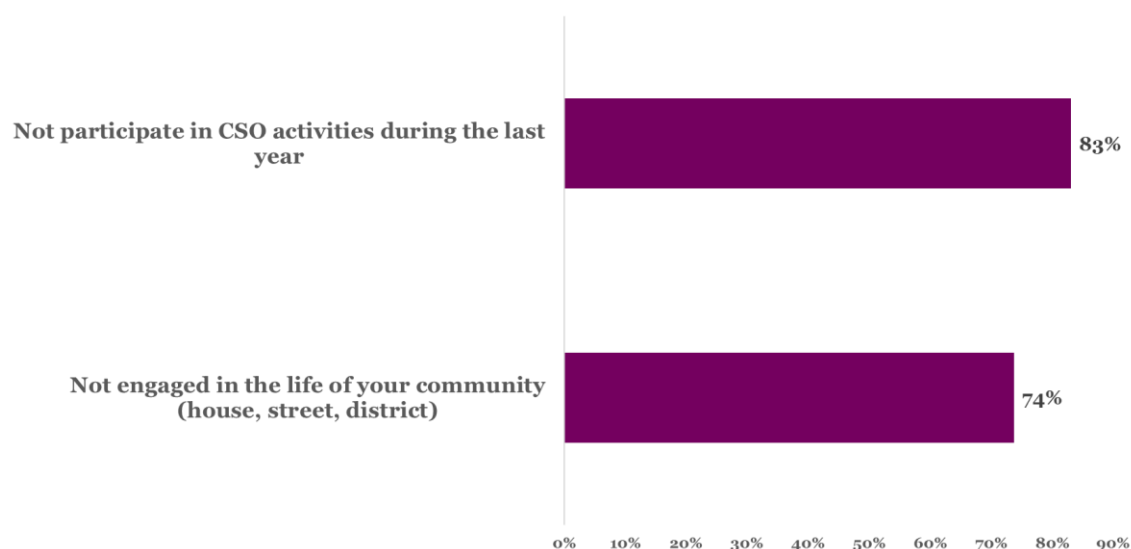
knowledge resulting from this program). Both theoretical and practical parts of helped to provide youth leaders with program management skills to develop networks and conduct small-scale projects in their local communities. All alumni of the program continue to actively involve in other USAID/ENGAGE and its partners projects.

In 2018-2019 a separate 12-month program was conducted by USAID/ENGAGE in partnership with Ernst&Young to build charismatic and influential senior CSO staff with the capacity and experience to lead their organizations, interact with government and convey their importance to the public. The program's comprehensive approach—combining training sessions with individual coaching sessions and peer-to-peer learning groups—has helped young CSO leaders to develop their adaptability, emotional intelligence, communication, team leadership, and business acumen skills.

Picturing Young Ukrainians

While there is much to discuss in the way of the importance of youth in building the future of the country, there is in fact little research² on the characteristics of this demographic, how young people stand to be involved in activities and become responsible citizens. The Civic Engagement Poll, though not designed to study youth exclusively, provides good insight into the behaviors, preferences, expectations and challenges of Ukrainian youth.

Based on the data collected in January 2020, young people aged 18-34 are rather sociable, meeting with friends, relatives or work colleagues several times a week. At the same time, there is a limited circle of people with whom they are ready to discuss intimate and personal matters (more than one-third of young people stated that they had two such people, while some had one or three).



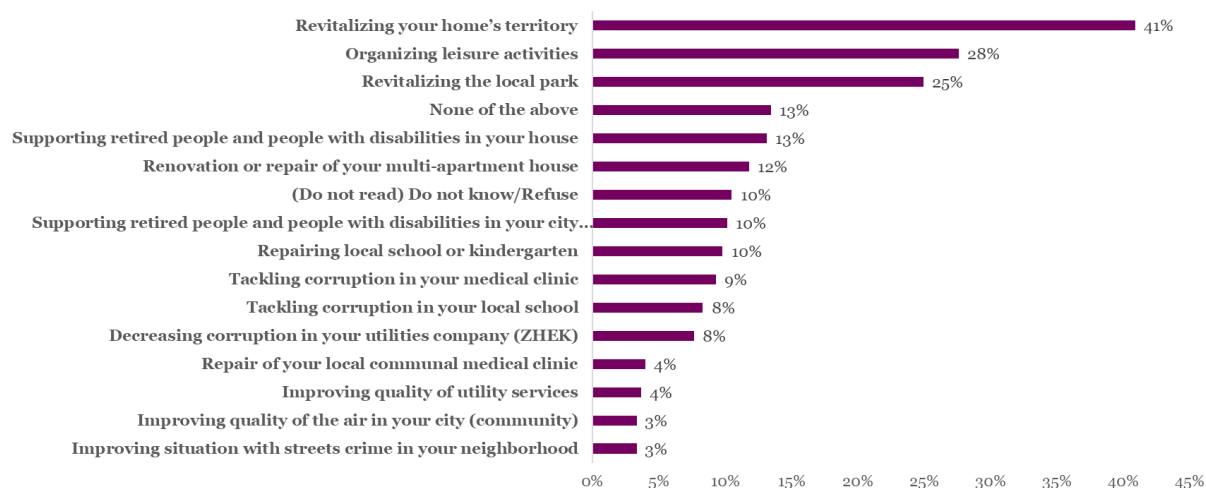
Young people are not actively engaged in neither their communities nor in CSO activities (74% and 83% respectively), for the reason of not having time and interest.

Regardless of the form of democratic participation—whether it is engagement in the work of community committees, public hearings, peaceful assemblies, reporting on infrastructural issues, or lodging or signing electronic petitions—youth have been uninvolved and are interested in almost none (between 59% to 77% of the respondents said that had not done and are not interested, depending on the activity).

Meanwhile, 92% of young people cannot name any civil society initiative, movement or organization.

While those figures could lead one to conclude that youth inactivity is cemented, the answer to the question “In your opinion, which activities could citizens implement by uniting their efforts with others without relying on (local) government?” could give some hope.

² Among research the following provide some overview “Ukrainian “Generation Z”: Attitudes and Values” by the New Europe Center in 2017 <http://neweurope.org.ua/en/analytics/ukrayinske-pokolinnya-z-tsinnosti-ta-oriyentyry/>, “Attitudes of your people to reforms in Ukraine: sociological monitoring 2015-2019” by UPLAN (a network of regional analytical centers led by the Centre of Policy and Legal Reform) in 2019 <https://uplan.org.ua/analytics/stavlennia-molodi-do-reform-v-ukraini-sotsiologichnyi-monitorynh-2015-2019-rokiv/>



Every two in five young people believe that revitalizing a home's territory could be self-organized, while organizing leisure activities and revitalizing a local park is also possible without the government's support. Moreover, among young people aged 25-34, 48% would like to stay in their local communities in the near future.

Interestingly, among the top issues for Ukraine today, young people choose corruption and the crisis in the Donbas. The finding of the same poll reveals that 38% of youth aged 18-34 are ready to protest against corrupted national/local officials and politicians and the same percentage of young Ukrainians are ready to report corruption. At the same time, more than 73% of Ukrainian youth does not fully or partially justify corruption.

Poverty is named the most as an issue for themselves and their family. "Positive growth rates of the country's economy" is selected by almost half (48%) of young people as a sign of the irreversibility of reforms, while more than half of young Ukrainians want to see the impact of reforms within the next five years.

Freedom is an important value for young Ukrainians, they are not ready to sacrifice it even for greater security and well-being. Yet, young people feel vulnerable. More than 60% of young Ukrainians consider themselves as not being socially protected. Youth often feel discriminated, especially in terms of rights to religion (92%), to express one's will (91%), and in courts (89%).



Challenges:

Taking into account the latest data on youth available as well as looking critically on what was done USAID/ENGAGE and its partners to draw the lessons learned, there are set of challenges that should be:

While according to the teachers' feedback on their experience of the first year of the civic education course collected by CSO Nova Doba, teachers do try to make course interactive (97% of

teachers started each topic within the course with the discussion of when and how students may use civic knowledge and experience gained in school to raise students' motivation to study the course and allow for better understanding of its importance), re-training of teachers remains the biggest challenge for effective civic education curriculum in schools. Teachers require on-going assistance to change from the lecturing teaching style to creation of democratic environment in class-rooms and to introduce more engaging and innovative after school activities (e.g. community projects, engagement with local CSOs, etc.) for students to allow for new experience and formation of practical skills of students.

When developing Chat Bot *#smthwentwrong* it was hard to predict that teenagers would be too active using it. Short after the launch of the chat bot we have started to get a lot of questions of a sinister nature from teenagers to messengers during the chat-quest. Taking into account that some of the questions were disturbing, we could not leave them unanswered and therefore involved La Strada (the only center in Ukraine that has a hotline for teens) into cooperation. The hotline was provided to teens who needed it. The results showed that the number of requests to this hotline in September increased significantly, namely by 2000 (this is 13% of the total number of requests). This demonstrated the lack of attention to teenagers' problems and lack of tools for support or insufficient communication around them among young Ukrainians.

After gauging an interest in *#smthwentwrong* Chat Bot among teenagers during the campaign, the future of the Chat Bot was not planned carefully and in advance, resulting in a communication gap with potential active users of other program tools.

A set of videos within *#smthwentwrong* campaign served well to catch the attention of young users, but additional promotion of the videos outside of the FB and landing page of the campaign could reach even more teenagers. In addition, the form of cartoon could have been more effective and useful for young audience.

Though the program anticipated in the beginning that vloggers would be interested in joining and reaching teenagers with important messages, all efforts to attract bloggers and bloggers have unfortunately failed to produce the expected results. Vloggers were not interested in the topic of civic education, because it is complex, difficult to communicate and would not bring them a growth in subscribers. Vloggers did not agree to join the campaign unless well paid. Therefore, the program could not secure their involvement.

VlipyZeSebe campaign was initially planned for a longer time, but due to early elections, the time for the campaign shortened. Partners were able to adapt fast, reorganize their plan and reach huge number of young people within just two weeks, but at the same time, campaign lacked an equate promotion through media due to time constraints.

Young people need more tools and opportunities to be heard. Although youth policies are being adopted and youth councils are created in separate places, there is still a road ahead to make it a nation-wide experience.

Young CSO leaders face a range of challenges, such as the need to balance their activist and managerial roles. Receiving coaching and mentoring support for some time is useful and help build critical skills, but continuous leadership programs would bring more benefit.

Recommendations:

- New on-line interactive tools and educational videos shall be produced continuously to make civic education more interesting and interactive. Civic education through digital tools, social media usage increases the interest of school students and youth in the subject.
- Communities and local government shall be proactive in engaging youth into decision-making processes and create more possibilities for young people to design and implement community activities for and by the youth, including but not limiting to youth councils, youth advisory boards, participatory budget.
- Schools and universities shall promote self-governance in their educational establishments as the first practical mechanism for civic activism and decision-making by youth.
- All schools shall complement mandatory civic education curriculum with extra-curricular civic education. Community services shall be widely promoted, and youth is more encouraged to join.

- Effective on-going teacher training programs shall be offered to teachers of civic education. Teachers shall learn practical tools that they can utilize immediately in the classroom. Trainings shall focus on building teachers' skills and confidence in using interactive and participatory teaching pedagogies.
- When developing campaigns around the topic that heavily rely on political actions or events, funders should work more with CSOs to develop possible backup plan on how adapt if case the change of timeframes or political agenda occur.
- When developing campaigns around ICT tool or involving it, a due focus should be placed on the future of the ICT tool after the finish of the campaign. Such thinking should be incorporated into campaign itself. For instance, there should be a clear understanding that such tools as chat bots require further support and work after the campaign, and what such support could look like.
- ENGAGE should continue to work with young CSO leaders to develop their ownership and leadership capacities to be trailblazers of the CSO sector.