

# Annex 1 USAID/ENGAGE Civic Literacy



## ENGAGE Enhance Non-Governmental Actors and Grassroots Engagement



### MEMORANDUM

**Re: Civic Literacy**  
**From: USAID/ENGAGE**  
**To: Interested parties**  
**Date: September 30, 2019**

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#### **Background: Ukraine's Civic Literacy Levels and Development**

Over the course of its two years of activities, USAID/ENGAGE<sup>1</sup> has raised awareness among citizens and students<sup>2</sup> of their civic rights and responsibilities, providing them with the tools and opportunities to become more active citizens. In addition to its support for CSO-led civic education projects, during the past three years, with attention towards empowering future generations of civic-minded Ukrainians, ENGAGE has assisted the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) to develop and pilot a civic education curriculum.

This memo analyzes civic literacy levels of Ukrainian students and citizens, as well as notable tendencies in civil society during USAID/ENGAGE's activities. Drawing from data collected from a series of USAID/ENGAGE's Civic Engagement Polls, this memo assesses the changes resulting from pupils' attendance in the new civic education course taught to 10<sup>th</sup> graders. ENGAGE's poll data allows for a comparison of civic literacy levels among pupils and the general population. This memo provides notable findings, several demonstrating the impact of ENGAGE's civic society activity.

First, the general level of civic literacy among the adult population is growing. As expected, civic literacy levels have primarily risen among those Ukrainians with at least some higher education, while much more modest rates of growth are observable among the general population. The growth rate has been slow and spread unevenly across various subjects. For example, the results of the USAID/ENGAGE civic engagement poll shows that citizens struggled to correctly answer important questions concerning their rights but score quite well in other areas.

Second, a new civic education course—a critical element in ENGAGE's efforts to improve the civic education curriculum together with the Ministry of Education and Sciences—has provided promising results after its inaugural year. Data collected from the pupils enrolled in the course indicate: 1) that the course improves civic literacy rates; 2) that there are few learning gaps between subject areas; and 3) that the course's impact extends to pupils with some amount of higher education levels.

#### **Understanding Civic Literacy of Everyday Ukrainians: ENGAGE's Extra-Curricular Civic Education Activities and Polling**

Civic education consists of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to be an active, democratic, responsible and critical citizens. USAID/ENGAGE's conception of civic literacy and civic education is not limited to formal education experiences; it extends to extra-curricular and practical experiences. To boost civic literacy, during its last two years, ENGAGE has supported 43 projects focusing on extra-curricular civic education, implemented by Pact's partners. Both local and

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of USAID/ENGAGE is to increase citizen awareness of and engagement in civic activities at the national, regional, and local levels.

<sup>2</sup> The term "students" is used in this memo for both school and university students, if other is not specified.

national extra-curricular civic education initiatives were supported through two thematic RFAs and open-door mechanisms to promote learning, resulting in increased engagement.

In a course of three years, over 30,000 individuals took part in more than 500 various events, organized by sub-awardees. These events included trainings, forums, conferences, workshops, presentations, study visits, master classes, open public events (festivals, hackathons, fairs, film screening), pitching, site visits, webinars, public discussions, roundtables with the representatives of state authorities. Apart from that, 23.7 million people were affected by various informational campaigns, which also provided information on civic literacy.

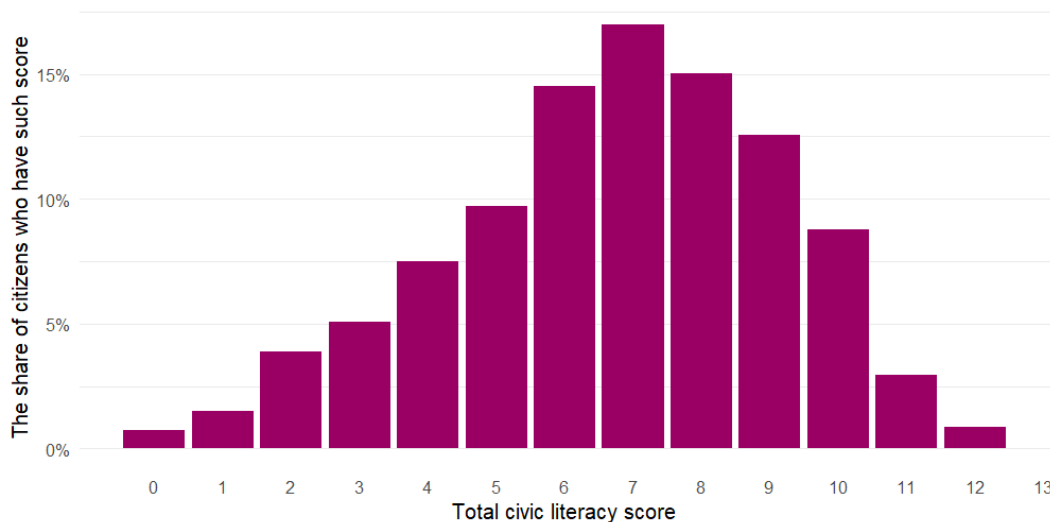
The main spheres of activities covered by partners within the civic education component of ENGAGE include:

- Empowerment and capacity development of CSOs to work with local state authorities to address local problems;
- Inclusive governance (internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, women, civic activists, elderly people etc.);
- Public oversight of strategic plans and programs introduced by local governments;
- Promotion of anti-corruption activities and transparency of local governance;
- Encouragement of citizens participation in social and political life; and,
- Measurement of an open democratic society, that values gender equality and antidiscrimination, through activities like the Civic Engagement Poll.

Extra-curricular activities demonstrated variety of fast-tracking results. However, as lessons learned from extra-curricular activities show, products of partners' activities are often underutilized. Apart from that, knowledge and participation in non-formal education is low across the population. Younger people (18-24) are more aware about non-formal educational opportunities but the most active in non-formal education are people aged 25+. People are primarily interested in activities that related to improving skills in spheres of personal income and protection of human rights.<sup>3</sup>

The distribution of civic literacy

According to National Civic Engagement Poll, commissioned by PACT in June - July 2019.



Through the Civic Literacy Test part of its National Civic Engagement Poll, USAID/ENGAGE measures civic literacy levels of the general population. The Civic Literacy Test of the survey provides citizens with 13 questions, mostly on rights and freedoms enumerated in the Ukrainian constitution, as well as other questions concerning general governance processes. The National Civic Engagement Poll is representative of the adult Ukrainian population. In the Civic Literacy Test of the survey, every correct answer award one point, and the total number of points is identified as the 'total civic literacy score.'

As illustrated in the above graph, the civic literacy score is normally distributed, with a peak score of seven correctly answered questions. In the last Civic Literacy Test, there was not a single

<sup>3</sup> For the details, see Annex 5 "Lessons of extra-curricular activities USAID/ENGAGE implementation" of USAID/ENGAGE semi-annual report for fiscal year 2019.

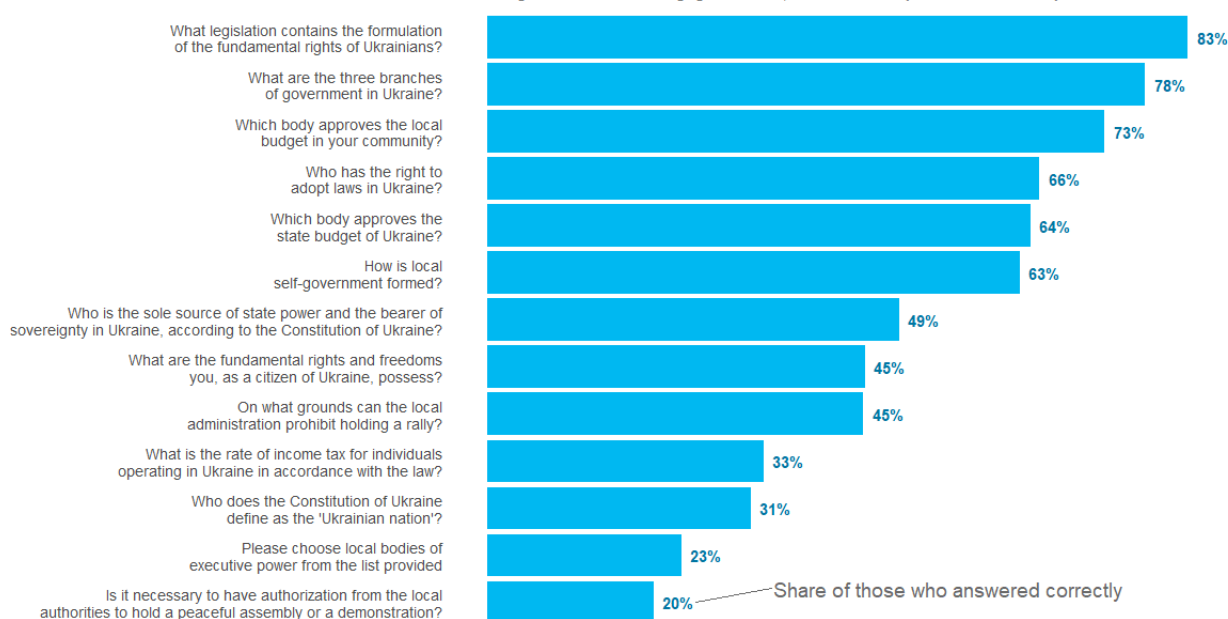
respondent who managed to correctly answer all questions, while there were a few citizens who could not give any correct answer.

The next graph (below) provides a top-down breakdown of each question from the poll, from the least difficult to most difficult. The results indicate that citizens' knowledge of topics relating to their basic interests are not necessarily their strongest areas of knowledge. For examples, citizens demonstrate relatively low scores on basic financial literacy: when asked about the income tax to be paid only 33% answered the question correctly. Conversely, citizens are well aware of fundamental constitutional principles, such as the three branches of power.

*The most difficult question for citizens to answer was, "It is necessary to have an authorization to hold a peaceful assembly?" Even as a "Yes" or "No," question, the high rates of difficult indicate a need for greater awareness of the right to public assembly.*

### Which Questions on Civic Literacy Raised Difficulties?

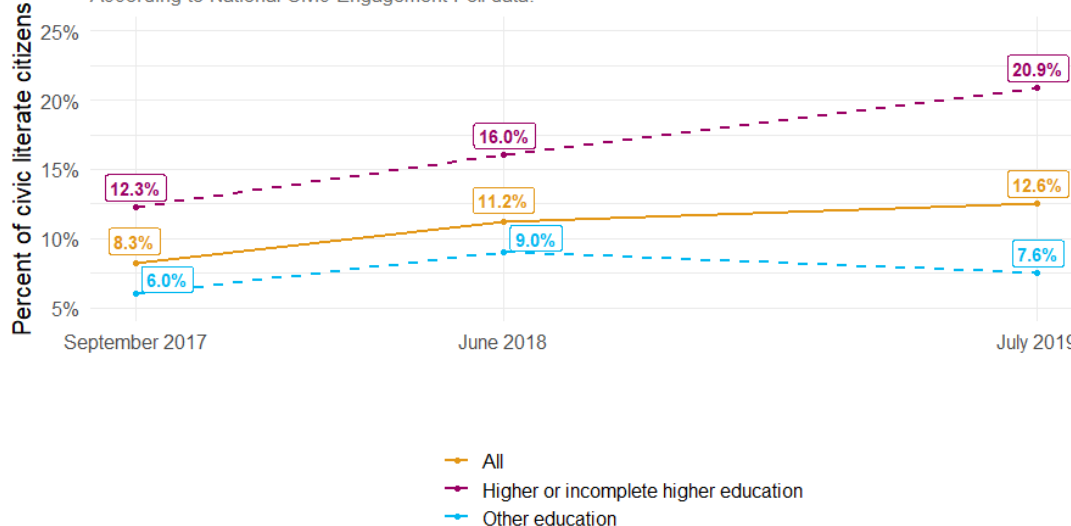
According to National Civic Engagement Poll, commissioned by PACT in June - July 2019.



The Civic Literacy Test of the general population were introduced first in the National Civic Engagement Poll in January 2017. Those who correctly answered at least 10 out of the 13 civic literacy knowledge questions were classified passing the test, or "civic literate." Since 2017, the share of civic literate citizens has grown from 8.3% to 12.6%, as illustrated in the below graph.

### Changes of Civic Literacy Rate over Time

According to National Civic Engagement Poll data.

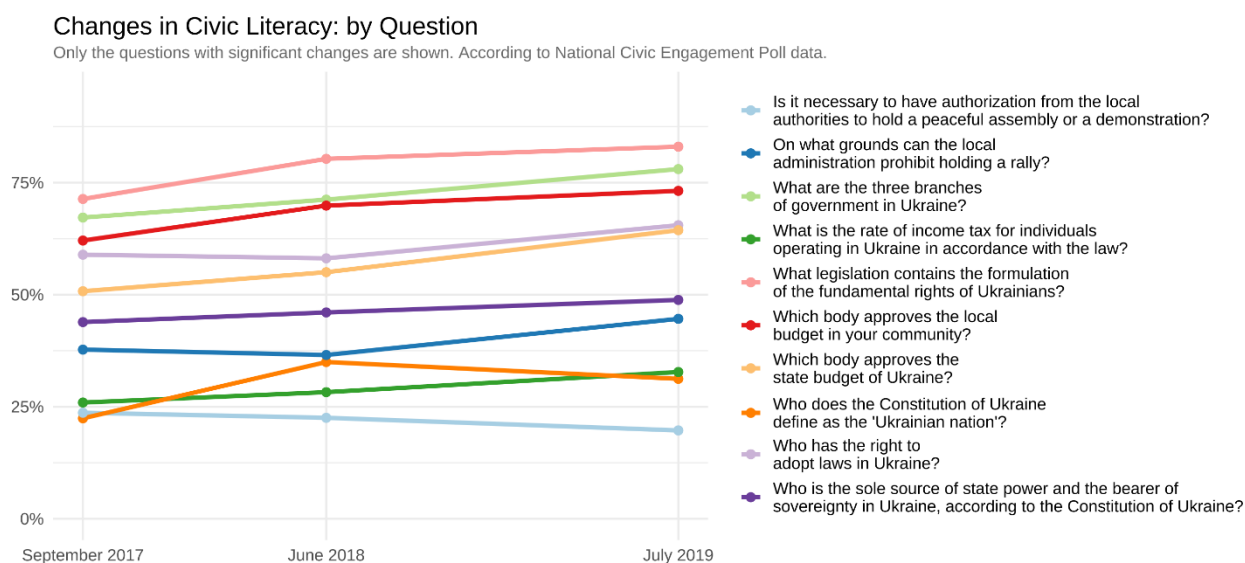


The growth in civic literacy rates is more remarkable among Ukrainians with some level of higher education.<sup>4</sup> In this group, growth in civic literacy rates has been more rapid—growing from 12.3% in 2017 to 20.9% in 2019. This propensity seems natural and somewhat expected, as education levels are expected to strongly correlate with knowledge.

When comparing the average score on the test for those who have some amount of higher education (7.2 correct answers out of 13) with the average score for those with no higher education (6.5 out of 13), the slight difference between the scores seems negligible. However, in past comparisons between the two groups' scores, the gap was actually narrower<sup>5</sup>, thus also indicating an issue of different civic literacy levels depending upon education. Therefore, raising civic literacy to the acceptable level among lower educated citizens, ensuring they are competent enough to make responsible choices, is a task that is yet to be solved.

The poll also provides insightful information about civic literacy levels based upon gender and geography. A higher civic literacy rate is associated with living in larger cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (19.1%), residence in Kyiv (21.4%) or living in southern Ukrainian regions (20.2%). Also, men score slightly higher in civic literacy than women—15.1% of men answered correctly ten or more questions, while only 10.5% of women have done so.

With respect to specific questions, test results show that knowledge levels in 9 of the 13 questions has grown since 2017 (exceeding the margin of error). In the period between June 2018 and July 2019, five questions have shown statistically significant growth, while none have shown a drop that exceeds the margin of error. The only question that shows a statistically significant drop in knowledge is whether one needs permission to organize a peaceful assembly in Ukraine. It maybe connected with the tendency of peaceful assembly ceasing to be the most frequent civic participation form<sup>6</sup> over past five years—if the practice becomes less prevalent, it is likely that associated knowledge of the subject may also become less common.



The following five questions showed the most significant improvement in scores from September 2017 to July 2019:

- What legislation contains the formulation of the fundamental rights of Ukrainians? (from 71% to 83%)

<sup>4</sup> This group constitutes only 37.5% of the general population.

<sup>5</sup> In 2018 those with complete or incomplete higher education had 6.7 mean score, while lower educated citizens had 6.2 mean score. In 2017 the mean scores for these groups were 6.3 and 5.7 respectively.

<sup>6</sup> According to data from National Opinion Polls, commissioned by Pact in 2014 – 2019 within Uniter and USAID/ENGAGE projects, in April 2014 9% of Ukrainians were involved in peaceful assemblies. By June - July 2019 this number dropped to 6%.

- Who does the Constitution of Ukraine define as the “Ukrainian nation”? (from 22% to 31%)
- What are the three branches of government in Ukraine? (from 67% to 78%)
- Which body approves the state budget of Ukraine? (from 51% to 64%)
- Which body approves the local budget in your community? (from 62% to 73%)

### **Raising Civic Literacy in Ukraine’s Future Generations Via Curriculum Development**

Over the last three years, USAID/ENGAGE has been assisting and working closely with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MOES) to design, pilot and rolled out to all primary schools an innovative new civic education curriculum for schools. ENGAGE support came to MOES at a rather fortuitous moment, shortly after the approval of the New Ukrainian School national program, during preparations to introduce innovations into Ukrainian schools.

To achieve this task, USAID/ENGAGE, the MOES, and a group of civil society organizations formed a civic education cohort. This network is built on previous work of five Ukrainian CSOs with a vast background and expertise in civic education. The MOES, USAID/ENGAGE and the CSOs with highly technical input from US and European counterparts designed civic education curricula for tenth graders. With the support of ENGAGE, a civic education course was introduced in the 2018–2019 school year, and it is now become a part of Ukrainian students’ tenth grade curriculum. Every Ukrainian school is required to have the new, mandatory civic education course for tenth grade students—designed with assistance from Pact, as well as civic education CSO partners, and in collaboration with and assistance to MOES.<sup>7</sup> The remainder of this memo analyzes the findings from Pact’s implementation of the new civic education course and its impact on pupils.

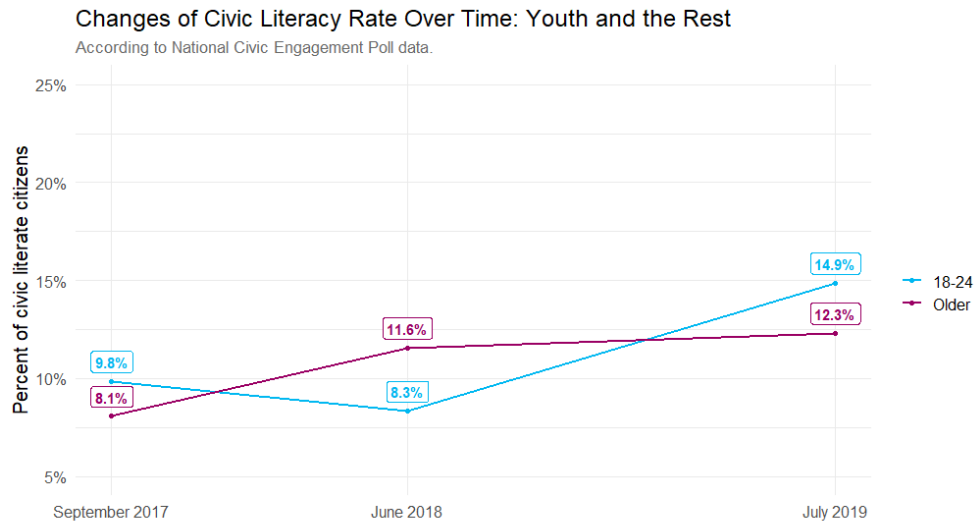
To measure the effectiveness of the curriculum, tests with identical questions as the Civic Literacy Test of the Civic Engagement Poll were conducted by the MOES among pupils both before and after the course. Among 34 schools from 14 Ukrainian regions participating in the testing, 707 pupils were present for both the pre-course and post-course tests. This data enabled the MOES to measure the effect of the new course on the level of civic literacy level. Though tenth graders, being citizens under 18 years old, did not participate in the National Civic Engagement Poll, comparison of their results with the general population can bring useful insights.

One remarkable finding from the analysis shows that tenth graders were more “civic literate” than the general population, even before the course. While the civic literacy rate among adults constitutes 11.2%, 38.5% of pupils have passed a civic literacy test before the specialized course. This is likely because of similar topics are lectured within other school courses, such as jurisprudence, economics, and history, among others.

All of the above-mentioned courses are taught in Ukrainian schools for several years, and it is to be expected that the youngest age group, who has just graduated from school, would be the most civic literate among adults. However, that is not always the case.

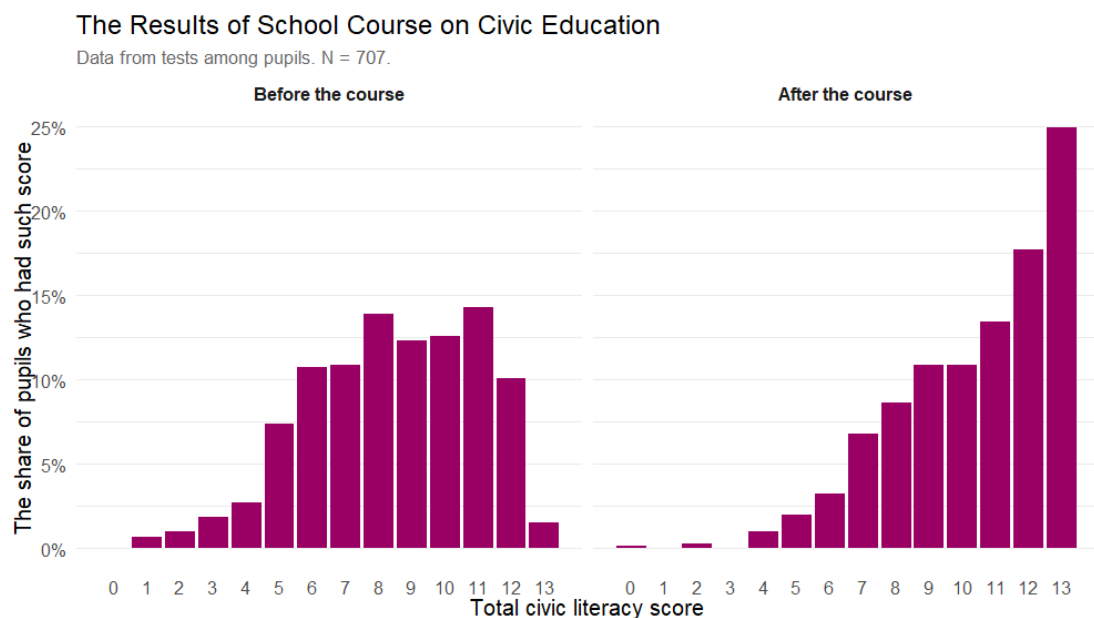
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<sup>7</sup> In addition, as a result of ENGAGE’s holistic approach to civic education curriculum development, during the 2018–2019 school year, Ukrainian primary and middle school students were introduced to civic education modules integrated in existing subjects taught from 1st–9th grades.



The above graph provides a temporal snapshot of rates among recent graduates and the general population. Given the fact that civic literacy rates among the youngest age groups have not always been greater than levels among the larger population, it is possible to suggest that the knowledge gained in school is not usually attained for a very long period of time. Hence, a civic education course should aim not only to increase pupils' knowledge but to ensure that all acquired knowledge will sustain for some time.

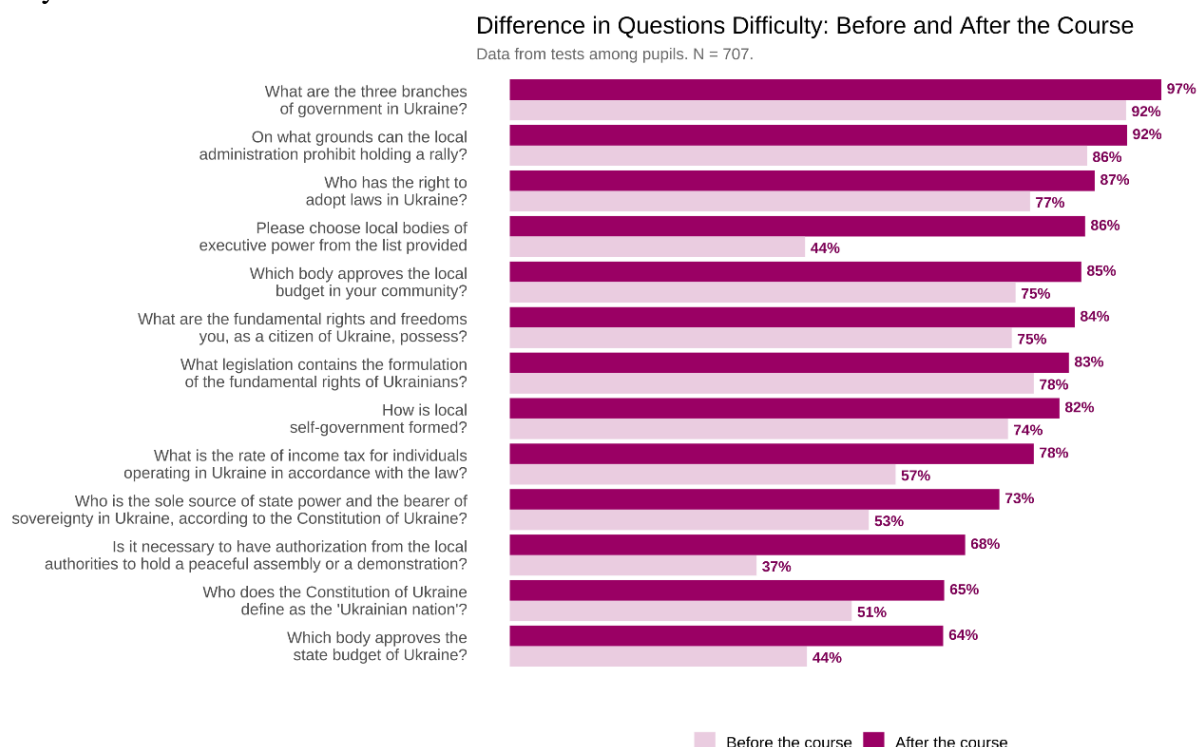
Pupils attainment of civic literacy knowledge after their formal education is also considered in this report. A before-and-after analysis of the civics education course is provided in the next graph. Notably, there was a significant increase in the number of students that answered all 13 questions correctly. And following the course, the proportion of civic literate pupils has become almost twice as large, constituting 67%. As the graph demonstrates, the entire distribution has shifted to the right, indicating overall improvement in civic literacy. The data shows that over two-thirds (68.6%) have improved their results after the course.



We also looked at question-by-question the scores of the Civic Literacy Test administered among students. The percentage of pupils' correct scores increased across all questions after taking the course. As a result of the course, the gap between questions has been reduced. Even with respect to the most difficult question—"What body approves the state budget of Ukraine?"—there was a marked increase in scores, from 44% before the course to 64% after the course. Strong increases in knowledge of local-level governance is also remarkable. The percentage of pupils that were able to

identify local bodies of executive power increased by over 40% following their participation in the course.

The questions that were the most complicated before the course, such as whether the peaceful assembly should be authorized by authorities, or what is the local executive power, have been answered correctly by the majority of pupils after the course. That means that during curriculum activity, the civic education is covered with much greater breadth, not leaving major holes in civic literacy.



In conclusion, an analysis of the results of the civic literacy tests indicate a strong improvement in knowledge across several fields. Looking forward, it is important to nurture the growth of the recipients of civic education, so that their newly acquired civic education course knowledge is retained after the course, better ensuring that the civic literacy project is sustainable. Also, it is necessary to pay more attention to lower educated citizens, helping them become civic literate. As for extra-curricular activities, it seems to be more productive to focus on topics, related to the skills in spheres of personal income and protection of human rights.