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



MEMORANDUM

Re: Citizen's Engagement in AC: what lessons we can draw so far

From: Pact Inc

To: Interested parties

Date: September 26, 2018

Summary

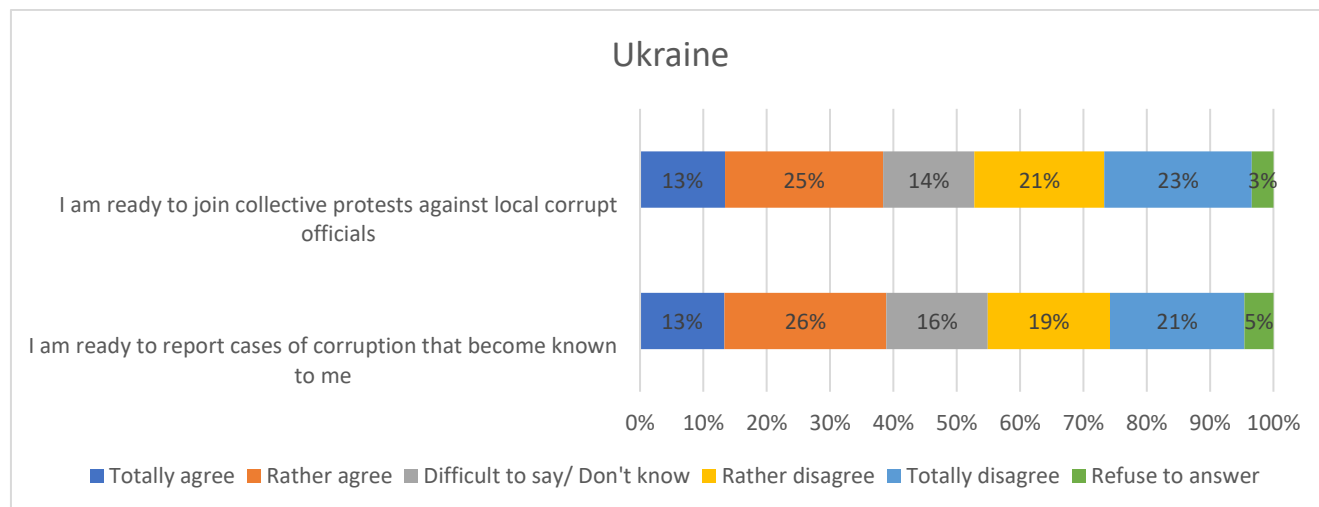
This memo summarizes lessons learned by USAID/ENGAGE and its partners from the work we do in the sphere of engaging citizen into anti-corruption activism, monitoring and implementation of the anti-corruption reform in Ukraine.

It consists of three main parts, each using different data. In the first part we discuss data from the third wave of the National Civic Engagement Poll, commissioned by USAID/ENGAGE and conducted by GFK-Ukraine in May – June 2018. In the second and third parts we describe views of our partners based on their experience on engaging citizens to anti-corruption activism through their project activities and conducting national anti-corruption communication campaigns.

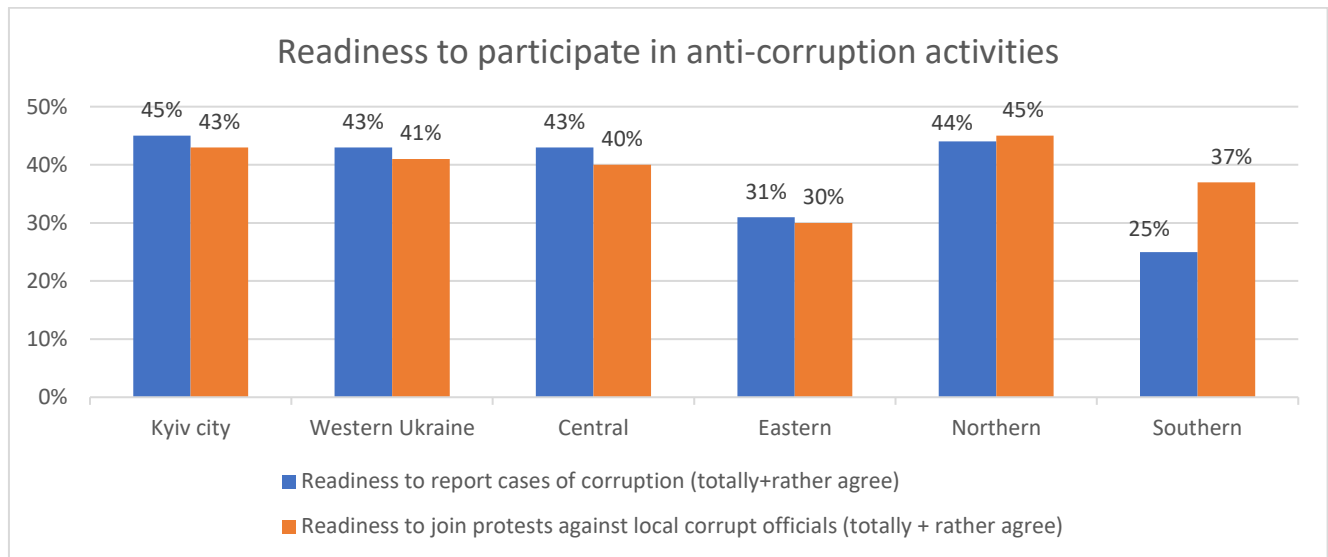
Civic Engagement Poll: what triggers anti-corruption activism?

National Civic Engagement Poll contains the data from the representative sample of Ukrainian population with the margin of error equal to 2.2 %. It contains data on different form of civic engagement, including several key aspects of engagement into anti-corruption activities.

According to the poll, up to 39 % of Ukrainians are ready to participate in anti-corruption activities. Thirty eight percent rather or totally agree to join collective protests against local corrupt officials, and thirty nine percent rather or totally agree to report cases of corruption that become known to me.

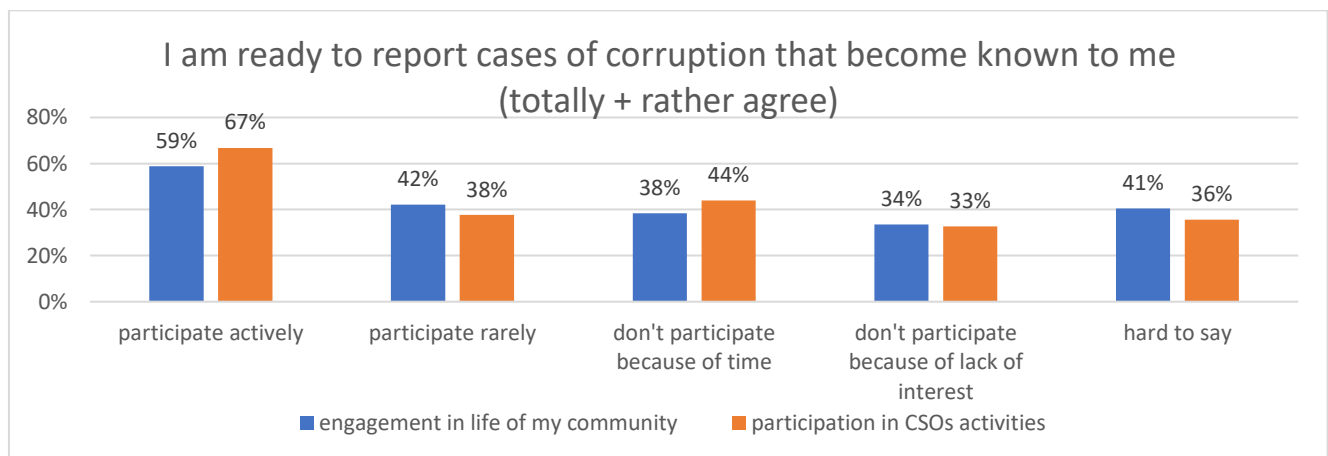


Kyiv, North Western Ukraine report bigger readiness to anti-corruption activities: 45% of Kyivans, 44% of respondents of the Northern Ukraine, as well as 43% of population of Western Ukraine are ready to report cases of corruption (totally and rather agree). This attitude decreases in the East and South of Ukraine.

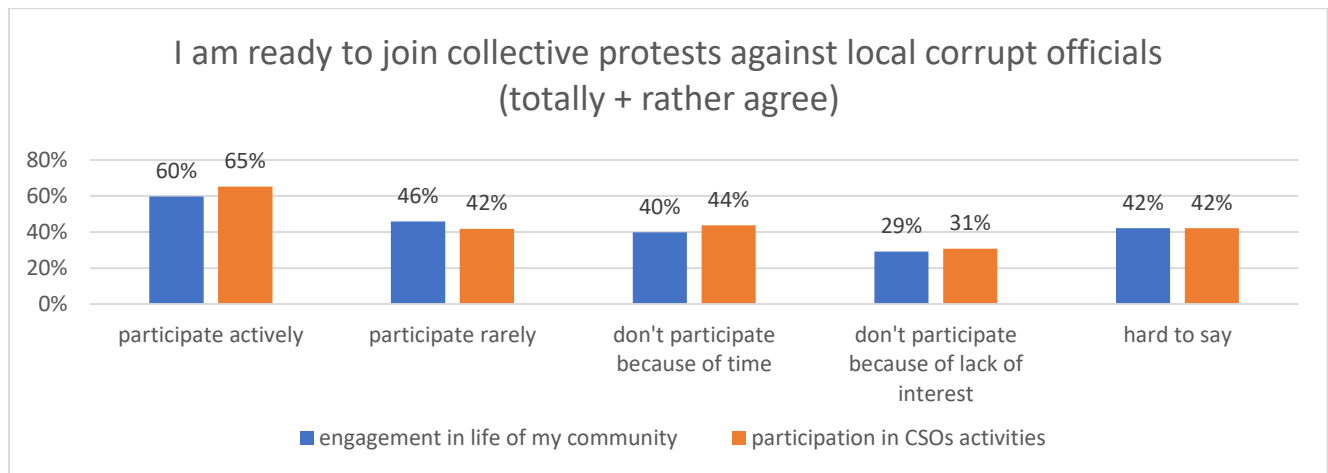


When we were looking for factors to predict readiness to participate in anti-corruption activities, we found out that it can be explained as part of the larger phenomenon of active citizenship. Engagement in community life and CSOs are the major factors that dramatically increase willingness to participate in anti-corruption activities. All other characteristics did not change the anti-corruption attitude as significantly.

Fifty nine percent of those actively participating in the life of community and 67% of people actively participating in CSOs activities are totally and rather agree to report cases of corruption (compared to 39% of the general population).



Sixty percent of those actively participating in the life of community and 65% of people actively participating in CSOs activities are totally and rather agree to join collective anti-corruption protests.



Two main takeaways from the poll data are the following:

- in terms of the regional differences, representatives of the East and the South of Ukraine are less eager to participate in anti-corruption activities compared to other parts of Ukraine;
- anti-corruption activism is part of the broader notion of civic activism; those actively engaged into the life of their communities or CSOs activities are the best audience to recruit anti-corruption activists.

This largely means that every successful effort to engage citizens to civic activities would also contribute to their engagement to the anti-corruption activism. From the AC CSOs perspective, this means that **the easiest way to engage more people to AC activism is to transfer relevant AC tools and skills to those, already engaged in other forms of civic life.**

1. Lessons from partner CSOs engaging citizens in AC activism

Citizens engagement is one of the key activities supported by USAID/ENGAGE, and a lot of our partners experiment with different ways of engaging people into anti-corruption (AC) activism. Based on our discussions with such partners as AntAC, Nashi Groshi, Anticorruption Headquarters, ACREC, and TI, we can make the following conclusions.

One of the key problems that prevent AC CSOs from effectively engaging citizens to AC activism, is that most CSOs know only how to train individuals to be CSO activists (or journalists). Civic engagement is still “taught” as a full-time job.

Majority of engagement activities and trainings in the sector are targeted at volunteers or beginners in investigative journalism who would later engage professionally in monitoring of public procurement, politicians’ assets or analysis of specific policies. While there is a need to bring more people to the sphere of professional donor-funded civic activism, this niche is limited in scope and geography. The problem is that only few partners can move out of this niche.

Right now, our partners work on rethinking citizen engagement, defining specific situations where individuals would eagerly take some elements of AC activism in their daily lives, and design best ways to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills to exercise these skills. The most obvious example of this work includes creation of different kinds of feedback mechanisms (online maps, mobile apps etc) that enable individuals to report on corruption or misuse of public funds. More sophisticated ideas include:

- engaging schoolchildren's parents to control schools' funds,
- engaging village and small towns *intelligentsia* to equip to harvest and disseminate relevant public information (who owns local land, how local budget is spent etc),
- engaging active students to advocate for transparent procedure of housing allocation

Preliminary lessons learned from our partners are the following.

CSOs should design long term and multi-stage activities to give prolonged support to potential activists

One-time engagement efforts (be it trainings, info-campaigns or else) produce very little conversion of potential activists into regular ones. Approaches that combine trainings with post-training support, mentoring and provision of other services, work much more efficiently and allow to differentiate people with potential to be engaged in AC activism, and focus on supporting their work.

From our partners experience, “packaged” and prolonged support programs create much better response from potential participants and allow more competitive selection of potential activists.

CSOs should stop using “one-size-fits-all” approach in training potential civic activists

It is true that potential activists need to learn quite simple tools to start engaging in AC work. Sometimes this requires only to know how to send public information requests and use open data tools available online. This provokes CSOs to approach potential activists with generic trainings and information materials that contain basic information on anti-corruption and transparency tools (advocacy, communication, access to public information, harvesting data from open data portals) and mix different audiences of potential activists in one event.

This approach decreases the efficiency of these activities; at the initial stage, when participants are very new to the topic, it is better to approach them with tailored trainings that adapt information to specific needs of the group and use practical examples from their realm.

CSOs should pay more attention to targeting and identifying new potential activists

It was complained too often that those CSOs that are looking to expand their networks of partners and activists in different localities, bump into the same group of people who migrate between different events and campaigns implemented locally. These people have some qualifications and knowledge about anti-corruption and transparency tools, and are connected to information sources, used by Kyiv-based CSOs to communicate locally. Therefore, for Kyiv based organizations it is sometimes hard to move besides the circle of “usual suspects” and truly expand the scope of its contacts and partners locally. CSOs should make efforts to tune their communication patterns and selection criteria to accommodate this reality.

2. Experience on national AC communication campaigns

So far, TI Ukraine is the only civil society organization that has extensive experience of conducting national level anti-corruption advertisement campaigns in Ukraine. The biggest campaign of TI in Ukraine was the #IDon'tBribe initiative, supported by USAID/ENGAE and conducted in November 2017 – January 2018. Previous campaigns included “Wake up, corruption kills!” in 2013 – 2014, “They would not be silent” campaign in 2014 – 2015, and “Corruption should be noticed” campaign in 2016, all three supported by USAID/UNITER. These campaigns mainly used such tools as outdoor advertising, TV and audio clips, which were limitedly broadcasted on national TV and radio networks.

TI Ukraine sees these initiatives as contributing to their strategic priority of establishing zero tolerance to corruption among Ukrainian citizens. Still, each of the above campaigns had its nuances and specific focus (two of them raising awareness on the instrument of whistleblowing, and other two addressing the issue of petty corruption). Based on communication and discussions with TI Ukraine representatives on this experience, following conclusions for the future AC communication activities could be made.

AC communications should be focused at achieving specific results (call to specific actions or discuss specific issue)

From TI experience and knowledge, one communication campaign, even being successful, would not change general attitudes towards corruption in a statistically significant manner. For example, although 21.6% of Ukrainian adult population were aware of the #IDon'tBribe initiative and most of them regarded it as a success, it did not change attitudes and perception on bribes in a statistically significant way.

The more focused, however smaller in scale “They would not be silent” campaign, which called citizens to blow the whistle about corruption, produced slightly better results. It did not change the behavior of citizens (2 % reported on corruption before and after campaign), but it changed the reported readiness to report about corruption from 13 % to 45 %. This may indicate that the general perception towards whistleblowers changed for better quite radically.

These results may indicate that it is much easier and more productive to try changing public attitude towards specific aspects of the problem of corruption, rather than try communicating comprehensive and all-inclusive anti-corruption messages¹.

AC communications should accompany real-world policy process and not contradict to the reality

Any AC communication campaign should take a responsible approach towards the audience. If we ask citizens to stand up against corruption, we should make sure the individual will not regret if (s)he follows our advice. Otherwise, this communication would be perceived as non-trustworthy and part of the window-dressing initiatives of politicians. For example, TI Ukraine experts openly admitted that they would hesitate to launch communication campaign promoting AC whistleblowing in the political context where whistleblowers are not protected by the responsible government agency.

Ideally, AC communication campaign should promote and support genuine anti-corruption efforts of the champion institutions (government or non-government), rather than be a standalone initiative. In too many cases corrupted politicians launch loud “anti-corruption campaigns” to imitate the real fight against

¹ To be clear, representatives of TI Ukraine do not share this opinion. They rather believe that that more general AC communication campaigns should be conducted together with those focused on specific issues. Their effect could be felt on a longer time periods (however it could not be easily measured).

corruption. A standalone campaign, not supported by tangible policy changes, has very high chances to be regarded as one of this “fake” initiatives and receive skeptical response.

To become successful and noticeable, AC communication campaigns should take a provocative form

Given the amount of information noise and limited resources for conducting AC campaigns, the only way to make people notice them is to make them provocative. From TI experiences, more provocative creative concepts were better received by media and better remembered by general population. Still, it is important to check that the concept does not distort the intended message of the campaign.

In Ukrainian context, one should avoid conducting campaigns with several waves and complicated logistics

CSOs and USAID implementing partners do not run advertising campaigns as commercial customers. They usually rely on the so called “PSA quotas”. According to the law, TV channels, radio stations and billboards’ owners are obliged to allocate some of their resources to disseminate PSAs.

TI Ukraine learned, that while it is possible to conduct decent and widely-noticeable advertisement campaign using only “PSA quotas”, one cannot guarantee timely execution of the campaign on these terms. It is almost impossible to coordinate this type of campaign in time with high level of precision. This means that simple one-wave campaigns give the most predictable results.

For example, TI Ukraine experienced problems with execution of the #IDon’tBribe campaign because it was intended to be a two-wave initiative. The key message and key-visuals were supposed to change after the first month of the campaign execution. However, TI Ukraine had limited capacities to control the process, which resulted in rather poor implementation of the concept, especially on a local level.

Target specific regions and age groups, although this complicates the task

The practice of using the “PSA quota” limits the toolkit for reaching and targeting specific audiences and, therefore, dictates the need to conduct nation-wide campaigns. However, data suggests is not enough to conduct one-size-fits-all nation level campaigns, as Ukrainian audience differs in its corruption-related perceptions significantly, depending on region and age group.

Survey data suggests that representatives of the East of Ukraine and Kyiv city have higher rate of tolerance towards corruption and are significantly more often to engage in corruption practices. Also, Ukrainian youth, contrary to popular sentiment, is quite tolerant to corruption despite small exposure to corrupted practices. These facts suggest that corruption-related attitudes of different segments of Ukrainian population are motivated by quite different socio-economic factors and need to be targeted by tailored communication campaigns.