



Ukrainian Foundation for Democracy «People First»
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THE RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN UKRAINE

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SUMMARY

It is impossible to build a legal democratic country without a developed civil society. Only citizens who are active and not indifferent are capable of jointly controlling the government and keeping it from expanding its powers.

In the "Assessment of the State of Civil Society Development and Citizens' Participation in Ukraine" the civil society is considered through a wider lens, not only as the sum of its institutions, but also as "space for voluntary consolidation of people and social interaction networks formed to guard family, faith or interests". The foundation of civil society is a citizen who is aware of his interests and prepared for action independently or through voluntarily joining associations. The associations not only fill the space, but also represent and protect community's interests and values. Accordingly, the research is focused on civil society institutions (CSIs) as well as citizens' civic activity outside civil society institutions. This approach is a novel one for Ukraine and it allows visibility of the civil society in two planes and thus, to conduct its fundamental analysis.

The main conclusion of the research is the suggestion that Ukrainian civic society is currently under transformation into an atomic society which is a chaotic gathering of spiritually separated individuals unable to counteract any actions of the authorities. This is characterised by economic and social factors, enhanced by the underdevelopment of the middle class and people's languid reaction to the limitation of democratic freedoms. At the same time the research has shown the Ukrainian citizens have huge potential: one out of every four poll participants take part in at least one type of civic activity, and half of the Ukrainians are ready to take part in improving their community life. The citizens concern themselves with the problems of their communities based on morals and values and not on pragmatic calculations. A wish to improve their community's life serves as an impulse towards civic activity, which requires knowledge, experience, free time and self-confidence. This, in turn, requires support and interest from community members, a place to conduct civic activity, local authorities' support and finally, resources. Unfortunately, civic activity conducted through participation in civil society institutions is complicated by the fact that their role and activities remain limited and unknown for most Ukrainians. Active citizens refrain from joining CSIs giving preference to individual activities or acting as participants of informal groups together with neighbours, colleagues or friends.

However, the research has not yet shown where citizens typically gather for civic activity. The places where civic activity occurs include, but are not limited to: educational institutions, workplaces, churches, places of mass recreation and leisure, Internet and social networks. Another finding is a range of examples of successfully using traditional establishments, such as libraries and recreation centres, for organising citizens' civic activity.

The research has found a number of obstacles that complicate active citizens' intentions regarding their civic activity. Some of those obstacles have historical and cultural roots, including Ukraine's geographical position, its history before and after Soviet times and the citizens' experience of participating in Soviet civil organisations. Other obstacles are connected to the people being very busy and having very little free time, lacking skills in self-organising and uniting for common purposes, low level of civic education, the CSIs being unable to inform the citizens on their role and attract them to their activities, lack of understanding and support from the government regarding civil society role and value, and citizens' opportunities for civic activity, among others.

The novelty of approach in this research lies in its viewing the civil society as a complex of institutions, informal unions and separate citizens; it studies motivation impulses, resources and conditions for citizens' participation; it determines the active groups of citizens, their priorities in civic activities and better understanding of reasons for the active citizens to give preference to independent and informal civic activity instead of acting as parts of CSIs. The research in no way pretends to give complete and exhaustive answers to all questions. A survey of this scale was intended only to determine certain tendencies and pose new, deeper questions for further research. The next researchers could direct their efforts into studying the level of trust towards informal citizen unions and individuals conducting civic activities, society's demand for active citizens and organised citizens' participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Research results give grounds for offering certain recommendations to civil society participants as well as all those interested in its development and strengthening.

For civil society institutions

1. To inform the citizens and offer them knowledge and skills regarding: their role and opportunities in building the country's future offered by a democratic society; instruments for influencing the authorities' actions, both as separate

individuals and as members of CSIs; opportunities for civic participation, social capital and using them effectively; instruments and successful practices of civic activity.

2. To increase legitimacy of CSIs through: improving the regulatory and legal framework for regulating the activities of CSIs and citizens' participation; educating civic activists and CSI leaders on working with citizens, their mobilisation, organisation and self-organisation; systematic attraction of mass media and Internet resources to throw light on civic activity of citizens' participation and CSIs; distributing success stories and practices of citizens' participation and CSIs; attracting various institutions (libraries, clubs, schools, recreation centres, etc.) as social platforms where caring citizens can find out about the opportunities to be involved in civic activities; attracting socially responsible businesses to support citizens' participation and CSIs and stimulating civil society development campaigns.

For social sphere specialists

1. To develop and introduce courses on the basics of functioning of democratic institutions and local democracy, on the development of civil society and its institutions, on the importance and ways of interaction between authorities and the public together with CSIs during the forming and implementation of state, regional and local policy into professional development programs for public servants and local officials;
2. To develop education courses on civil society development and functioning of CSIs for introduction in general and higher education institutions with mandatory internships in CSIs;
3. To develop and conduct easily understandable information campaigns for widening citizens' legal education, promoting the role and importance of citizens' social participation and activities of CSIs.

For public authorities

1. To create a transparent mechanism for competitive financing of citizens' initiatives on the national, regional and local levels.
2. To simplify government procurement conditions for CSIs and increase opportunities for offering social services at budget expense.
3. To introduce officials in local executive public bodies responsible to start work with citizens and the CSIs.

For charities and foreign donors

1. Widen the range of organisations that are attracted in the programs in the sector of civil society development. To invite leaders and activists of informal civic movements, cultural centres, students and youth unions, social networks and blogosphere representatives for participation in these programs and stimulate their collaboration with business associations.
2. Give priority to projects that promote the legitimacy of CSIs and their direct interaction with citizens and communities.
3. To assist in establishing a close interaction between Ukrainian CSIs and international organisations that have efficient models for attracting citizens to solving local problems, charity development, volunteering, social enterprising, etc.

INTRODUCTION

"Assessment of the State of Civil Society Development and Citizens' Participation in Ukraine" was aimed at examining the development of civil society in Ukraine and the real level of citizens' participation, understanding the motivation of citizens for civic activity and determine the obstacles to it. The research was also aimed at answering a range of questions, such as: Who are the members of Ukrainian civil society? How do Ukrainian citizens get involved in civic activities? What is the extent of citizens' trust to the civil society participants? What motivates the citizens to unite, which questions make them unite and where do they gather? Which resources are required to involve the citizens in civic activity and what should be done to intensify it?

The research was conducted in several stages. It started with a desk study, i.e. an analysis of existed sources, surveys, articles and materials regarding citizens' engagement, the role of civil society organisations and the civil society development stage in Ukraine and other post-USSR countries. Its results were used to develop research instruments. The field research included 10 expert and 30 individual interviews, 20 focus group discussions with experts, heads and leaders of CSIs, state officials, representatives of business, religious communities and mass media, public thought leaders and regular citizens. Representatives from each category were selected by set features, for example, middle class was selected by education and income level, state officials by their contact with third sector activity, mass media representatives by media types, etc. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in two waves. One hundred and eighty four respondents from five Ukrainian regions took part in the first-wave individual and group interviews. Those regions were: Centre (Cherkasy oblast), North (Kyiv and Kyiv oblast), South (Kherson oblast), East (Kharkiv and Kharkiv oblast), and West (Lviv and Ternopil oblast). In each of the five regions the research was conducted on oblast, city and district levels. The results of the interviews were then analysed and presented for discussion on second-wave focused interviews in 17 cities of five regions with 331 participants. Also the research results were reviewed by Dr. Olga Bezpalko, the Director of the Institute of Psychology and Social Work of Kyiv Grinchenko University, and Michael Edwards, the Distinguished Senior Fellow at Demos in New York.

The novelty of approach in this research includes several points. Firstly, it views the civil society as a complex of institutions, informal unions and separate citizens. Secondly, it studies motivation, impulses, resources and conditions for citizens' participation; it determines the active groups of citizens, their priorities in civic activities and better understanding of reasons for the active citizens to give preference to individual and informal civic activity instead of acting as parts of CSIs.

Despite its novelty the research in no way pretends to give complete and exhaustive answers to all questions. A survey of this scale was intended only to determine certain tendencies and pose new, deeper questions for further research. Among its limitations it is necessary to mention that it involved the citizens who are already the most active and motivated for public activity. Also, to a great extent the research was grounded on its researchers' personal experience that could have added subjective opinions. A limited number of citizens took part in the research and they represented only a fifth of Ukrainian administrative regions. The limited time for conducting the research has influenced the choice of methodology. Finally, the research of citizens' engagement in Ukraine has not received adequate attention yet. Because of this, the researchers have found a weak terminology base and poorly documented data regarding research questions.

TERMINOLOGY. This research defines *civil society* as the public space outside family, state and market, "the space for voluntary consolidation of people and social interaction networks formed to guard family, faith or ideology that fill this space"¹. The foundation of civil society is a citizen who is aware of his interests and prepared for action on his own or through joining into voluntary associations to provide for these interests².

The research uses the definition of "*citizens' participation/engagement*" as "individual and collective actions aimed at identifying and addressing issues of concern to the population"³. In the report these terms are used interchangeably with the term "civic participation/activity".

Two types of citizens' participation were considered: formal, i.e. participating in activities of formally registered associations of citizens, councils, consultations etc., and informal, i.e. participating in solving problems of individuals, groups of individuals and whole communities, volunteering, participating in acts and demonstrations outside registered associations. *Three forms* of civic activity were considered: political, public participation and activity aimed at solving particular social problems⁴.

¹ N. Deakin. In Search of Civil Society.-N. Y.: Palgrave, 2001.- 256 p..

² S.S. Ryabov. On the problem of defining the concept of "civil society" // www.archive.nbuu.gov.ua/portal/soc_gum/haukma/Spec/2002_20-1/60_ryabov_ss.pdf

³ American Psychological Association, 2009

⁴ NCOC, 2008

- *Political activity* means actions the citizens take that influence the functioning of political system: activities to support parties and candidates in election campaigns; professional political activities; participation in activities of parties and political movements; participation in meetings, political gatherings, demonstrations etc.⁵
- *Public participation* is a continuous process of interaction between the institution responsible for decision-making or the different-level government bodies regulating certain types of activities and the public, whose interests are affected by the direct or indirect consequences of the planned decision. Public participation includes referendums, public discussion, public hearings, citizens' jury, public expertise etc.⁶
- *Citizens' participation in solving particular problems* is the activities conducted by citizens free of charge to solve particular community problems without any limitations in form or contents.

⁵ www.politics.ellib.org.ua/pages-2442.html

⁶ www.biodiversity.ru/coastlearn/pp-eng/introducingpp.html

RESEARCH RESULTS

1. STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN UKRAINE

The civil society concept remains vaguely defined in Ukrainian academic discourse. Researchers and scientists keep arguing about its essence, meaning and role. The research considers two components of the civil society: civil society institutions and citizens' civic activity outside civil society institutions.

1.1. Civil society institutions

The Concept of Promoting the Development of Civil Society by Executive Power Bodies passed in 2007 was the first document to legally establish the concept of civil society institutions in Ukraine. It does not give an exhaustive list of civil society institutions and includes public organisations, professional and creative unions, employers associations, charity and religious organisations, non-government mass media and other non-entrepreneurial unions and institutions⁷.

In recent years a statistical increase in the number of registered CSIs is noted. According to the official statistical data as of the beginning of 2012 there were 71,800 public organisations registered in Ukraine, 27,800 trade unions and their associations, and 13,500 charity organisations. At the same time by evaluation of CCC only 4-5% of all registered non-government institutions conduct systematic activity, i.e. around 4,000⁸. Unfortunately, the increasing number of the registered civil society institutions has almost no influence over the number of their members. According to the data provided by the Institute of Sociology of National Academy of Science of Ukraine the number of citizens who do not belong to any civil society or political organisation or movement hovered around 82-87% between 1994 and 2010 and the share of citizens who are members of CSIs and parties in 2011 was only 5%⁹.

CSIs in Ukraine could be formally separated into three groups:

1. **Membership organisations:** various associations by interest (including religious) that are focused on satisfying the needs and development of their members and react to outside challenges in cases where problems concern their members immediately;
2. **Service organisations** that offer services to certain population categories that need them (orphaned children, people with developmental defects, the ill, pensioners, etc.). Their activity is normally focused narrowly on the subjects of their care and their interaction with the outside world mostly around issues of concerns for their beneficiaries;
3. **Advocacy organizations** that work to improve the situation not only for specific population groups but for particular villages, cities, regions and the country in general, as well. These organisations represent and protect the interests of citizens, matters of restructuring certain areas of the country's life and the country's development in general.

Among the functioning CSIs there are those that have had positive experiences in solving particular problems of their communities, and have gained the trust and authority among the population¹⁰. But the better CSI practices remain unknown and unstudied which leads to a greater number of organisations utilizing ineffective management methods, imperfect strategic and operational management and relies on chaotic attracted financing. Ukrainian CSIs have learned how to gather information and determine problems, but formulating and further defending the accepted position, mobilisation of supporters and effective civic representation campaigns as well as monitoring the execution of the decisions taken remain weak. Their low accountability to their target groups and insufficient legitimacy in the eyes of the community remains a significant problem for civil society organisations. One of the research participants has noted:

"... There is a separation between civil society organisations and communities. The community does not finance its organisations and this constitutes the problem. As a head of CSO I am financed by American funds. As a citizen I can not come to an organisation and say, 'I give you \$100 and I want to, say, see all trees green'. There is no connection between communities and civil society organisations. Our organisations should work with communities, but they work with sponsors spending 10 times more time on them rather than on working with the community."¹¹

⁷ About the approval the State Concept of Promotion by Executive Authorities of Civil Society Development (with amendments under the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers N858-p as of 22/07/2009)

⁸ The most consistent and regular research of civil society organisations that include civil associations, charity organisations and funds, youth and feminine organisations, brain and analytical centres from all regions of Ukraine is conducted by CCC Creative Centre

⁹ www.peoplefirst.org.ua/img/PDF/LIFE_VALUES_PRIORITIES_AND_PROBLEMS_OF_UKRAINIANS_UK.pdf

¹⁰ www.peoplefirst.org.ua

¹¹ Primary research material

1.2. Citizens' participation outside of civil society institutions

As of today informal citizens' participation prevails in Ukraine. The research of the People First Foundation has shown that Ukrainian citizens are rather active, but conduct their civic activities mostly not as members of registered organisations but on their own and/or as parts of informal unions work and study groups, together with their friends, family or neighbours. Specifically, as much as a quarter of the respondents have participated in at least one type of activities on the community level. Half of the respondents expressed readiness to engage in further initiatives at the local level, where every tenth of the respondents was prepared to act as an organiser or activist and over a third as a participant. However, most of respondents think that the main obstacle to the implementation of its community's priority objectives is inaction and passivity of people in resolving their problems¹². But most respondents are certain that the Ukrainian national idea should be characterised by the words "unity", "solidarity", "consolidation"¹³.

The Ukrainian citizens are socially active, they understand the importance of civic activity and the necessity for consolidation of efforts, but mostly they avoid organisations. In this, Ukraine is not the exception among the other ex-socialist countries, since, as Marc M. Howard has noted, appearance of individual choice opportunity, which the people received only after the collapse of communist regimes¹⁴, has led to massive non-participation of the people in the activity of CSIs.

1.3. Citizens' trust to the civil society

Indicators of trust to CSIs remain relatively stable, albeit rather low. Social monitoring conducted by the Institute of Sociology of National Academy of Science of Ukraine shows that between 2004 and 2010¹⁵, the share of citizens who trust the civil society organisations mentioned has not changed and remained only at about 15%. In 2010 the respondents who did not trust charitable foundations at all was 22%, compared to 27% in 2004.

Regardless, half of Ukrainians are certain that CSIs are necessary for the country and a quarter consider their activities important while only every tenth Ukrainian considers CSIs unnecessary. Those familiar with the activity of CSIs in general have a positive attitude towards them. Two thirds of Ukrainians agree with the statement that CSIs engage in solving the problems not solved by the government and are certain they make an important contribution to Ukraine's development, and half of the population think that CSIs represent the whole Ukrainian society¹⁶.

The research has also found that the concept of social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition"¹⁷, has not as of yet gained sufficient use and understanding in Ukraine among the CSIs as well as among the population. Besides, there was a drop of social capital in Ukraine in 2012¹⁸.

1.4. Cooperation between civil society institutions and active citizens

Socially active citizens have an opportunity either to join the already existing civil society institutions or to create new ones. To join the already existing CSIs it is necessary to at least know of their existence and activity. However the research¹⁹ indicates that the people of Ukraine know fairly little about the activities of CSIs; only 13% of respondents know active CSIs, half of the respondents don't know them and a third said that they do not know any CSIs at all. The study of civil society organizations²⁰ shows the tendency towards a decrease in the number of CSIs with growing membership. Two years ago half of the CSIs have stated that the membership has increased compared to the previous year, but only a third stated the same last year. Only a tenth of the organisations carry out special campaigns, places advertisements and distributes information on recruitment while the rest rely on initiative of new members and personal contacts of their members and employees. Besides the fact that CSIs do not take active measures in order to involve new active citizens, the research found that certain CSIs are closed for the public, lack transparency, compete with each other especially for limited resources, and lack skills for attracting new members while strengthening ties with existing ones.

Creating new CSIs still remains a challenge for active citizens in Ukraine. Apart from certain legal difficulties the participants of second-wave focus groups have named a range of reasons for their unwillingness to join organisations²¹.

¹² www.peoplefirst.org.ua/img/PDF/LIFE_VALUES_PRIORITIES_AND_PROBLEMS_OF_UKRAINIANS_UK.pdf

¹³ www.peoplefirst.org.ua/img/PDF/LIFE_VALUES_PRIORITIES_AND_PROBLEMS_OF_UKRAINIANS_UK.pdf

¹⁴ Marc M. Howard. *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*. Aspekt Press, 2009, 192 pp.

¹⁵ www.i-soc.com.ua/institute/smonit_2010.pdf

¹⁶ IFES 2012

¹⁷ P. Bourdieu 'The Forms of Capital' / *The Economic Sociologies of Pierre Bourdieu* – Vol. 3. No 5. 2002. 60-74 p.

¹⁸ Legatum Prosperity Index 2012 // www.prosperity.com/Ranking.aspx

¹⁹ IFES 2012

²⁰ CCC, 2012

²¹ Annex 1

The main reasons were: weak potential of the population, disbelief in positive results of the association, lack of necessary information and knowledge on mechanisms for organising people and positive examples, fear, distrust in government institutions, politicians, state and population, and lack of decent leaders.

Although some of the reasons given offer little to no opportunity for influence, other obstacles could be removed through focused efforts of CSIs, the government, local and international donors. There are mandatory and extracurricular courses explaining the meaning of civic activity in study programmes of general and higher education institutions, but currently it is more of an exception than a rule. The same relates to professional development programmes for officials of state and local government bodies in charge of interaction of authorities and community. The absence of officials in local and regional authorities responsible for providing help to the active citizens in organising implementation of their civic intention is an obstacle. Also, failure of fulfilling the Plan of top priority measures for implementing the State Strategy of Civil Society Development Support in Ukraine would solve these problems²². As one of the discussion participants said:

*"Do not tell us theory. Tell us what other university students do to prevent the prices for student dormitories from rising: step one, step two, step three... What should the people living in a specific residential building do to not allow the construction of a parking place in their yard: step one, step two, step three... I will think of the next algorithm myself..."*²³.

2. CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION: FORMS AND TYPES

Below the results of research on different types and forms of civic activity of Ukrainian citizens are given.

2.1. Citizens' participation in solving problems of the community

A survey on life values of Ukrainian population²⁴ shows that a priority form of citizens' participation is activity aimed at solving specific social problems at the community level, i.e. improvement of community territories, environmental protection and improvement, creating conditions for active leisure and sports, especially for children and youth, improving health care and education services, etc.²⁵ There are many examples of Ukrainians that finance the solution of community problems themselves and not relying on outside donors. For example, in the last 10 years in Ukraine there appeared and successfully functioned about 20 community foundations that act to mobilise community members and their resources for solving their own problems²⁶.

The research has identified the priority of civic activities. The most urgent problem that most of respondents are willing to help in solving is helping various categories of children, i.e. orphans, talented, sick children and kids from poor families. A third of respondents expressed desire to implement environmental projects ranging from education of the people to the protection of specific parks, forests and rivers. Another third expressed desire to engage in educational activities, i.e. lectures, workshops, preparation of training materials for various social groups. A fifth of respondents believe in activities aimed at promoting healthy living in different areas from the prevention of disease to combating addictions and bad habits—particularly smoking, the promotion of healthy eating, etc. Another fifth would like to engage in charity and encourage the people to participate in activities addressing specific social problems, organise Internet resources improving the activity of public organizations and other forms of citizen activation.

Another successful example of citizens uniting to solve specific problems could be home owner associations where citizens unite to improve the quality of housing and communal services. These associations also try to influence the development of curtilage and the whole neighbourhood. As of 2012 there were over 14,000 of these associations registered which cover 10% of apartment houses in Ukraine²⁷.

Volunteering is an important element for any activity aimed at solving social problems at the community level. Analysing the situation with volunteering in Ukraine in 2012, we can conclude that volunteering was not massive, but spread widely enough to be considered a social phenomenon. The research has shown that 3% of respondents consider themselves volunteers which is the same percentage as people considering themselves to be members of political parties²⁸.

²² The Order of the President of Ukraine № 212/2012 "On the strategy of state policy of promotion of civil society development in Ukraine and priority measures for its implementation" as passed on 24 March 2012

²³ Primary research material

²⁴ www.peoplefirst.org.ua/img/PDF/LIFE_VALUES_PRIORITIES_AND_PROBLEMS_OF_UKRAINIANS_UK.pdf

²⁵ Annex 2

²⁶ Community fund: new opportunities for business / O. Vinnikov, A. Gulevska-Chernysh, D. Nepochatova, L. Palyvoda, V. Sheigus; under gen. ed. by L. Palyvoda – K.:2010. – p. 24

²⁷ www.viche.lutsk.ua/u-lucku-vidbulasya-rada-goliv-osbb-id10593/

²⁸ www.peoplefirst.org.ua/img/PDF/LIFE_VALUES_PRIORITIES_AND_PROBLEMS_OF_UKRAINIANS_UK.pdf

According to a UN report²⁹, in Ukraine only 10% of volunteers were involved in volunteer activities by the CSIs. The remaining 90% engage in informal help to the needy on their own accord, together with colleagues or fellow students or neighbours.

2.2. Public participation

Public participation is the second most common type of civic activity in Ukraine. In the recent years there appeared many instruments that allow citizens and CSIs to influence the decision making process. Those are public and expert councils, advisory bodies, ability to provide consultations and recommendations. As of today, civil society institutions do not have a significant impact on the decision-making process, since neither them nor the authorities have enough experience or skills in using public policy and consultation procedures. For example, the CSIs have obtained the right to conduct public expertise of executive authorities functioning but for the entirety of 2012 only three public expertise were conducted and entered into the Register of Public Expertise³⁰. Government institutions refer to civil society organisations to various degrees in order to legitimize their own decisions, thus often making the consultation process a formality.

A survey³¹ shows that although the majority of Ukrainians believes that understanding and having access to public information on the activities and decisions of government institutions are very important, in practice only 3% executed their right granted to them in under the law 'On Access to Public Information' and sent inquiries to the authorities.

The research has shown that weak public activity of the people of Ukraine in addressing the authorities is mainly the result of them not believing that their actions can make any difference. In addition the crisis of representative democracy manifested in a very low credibility of the Parliament and the disappointment in the idea that elections can bring positive changes in the country has ruined the link between MPs and their constituents. Half of the Ukrainians does not know who represent their districts and over 80% do not know how to contact their elected representatives³².

Today the world trend is digital mobilisation of citizens to influence the politics which gives the citizens opportunities for sign-ins and expressing public opinion on one matter or another. A successful global platform is Avaaz.org, uniting 17 million members, including 26,000 registered from Ukraine³³. Unfortunately, in Ukraine itself Internet activism is still developing rather slowly. Ukrainian community initiatives were as of yet unable to mobilise a significant number of citizens around a single platform although there is a number of successful local projects. For example, UkrYama project (www.ukryama.com, an equivalent of the British FixMyStreet) unites around 1,000 users who take pictures of damaged streets and send maintenance queries to the State Auto Inspection. The initiative Let's Make Ukraine Clean unites 200 locations and around 5,000 volunteers who for several years already clean out trash from public places. The We Are Europeans movement (2,500 members united in Facebook only) often conduct street acts in support of European integration of Ukraine³⁴.

2.3. Political participation

Political participation is not common for Ukrainian citizens. According to the Institute of Sociology of National Academy of Science of Ukraine data³⁵ no more than 3% of Ukrainians take part in activities of political parties. IFES survey³⁶ showed that the majority of Ukrainians participate in elections despite the fact that over half of them do not think that voting provides opportunity to influence policy making process in the country as opposed to the third who believe that they make a difference. Low political participation of Ukrainians is caused by their misunderstanding of political parties' roles and whose interests the parties protect. Thirty seven percent of respondents believe that political parties only protect their personal interests, and 17% of the population think that political parties defend the interests of the population of Ukraine. Every ninth Ukrainian believes that political parties serve the interests of the elite by supporting their business interests or their political ambitions³⁷.

Still, in the recent years the increase of activity of party movements and NGOs connected to political parties is observed in Ukraine. Political parties have been actively working with local civil society groups including associations of women, sports, environmental, business, education and other organisations to create movements indirectly related to

²⁹ UN Report on the state of volunteerism in the world, 2011

³⁰ Public expertise is conducted according to the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 976 "On enactment of the Order of promotion of public expertise regarding executive powers activities" passed on 5 November 2008

³¹ IFES, 2012

³² www.dif.org.ua/ua/events/polovina-nruzi.htm

³³ www.avaaz.org/ru

³⁴ www.ukraine-europe.eu

³⁵ www.tyzhden.ua/News/8476

³⁶ IFES, 2012

³⁷ www.dif.org.ua/ua/events/polovina-nruzi.htm

political parties. Some political leaders often actualize their political presence not only within a party, but also through movements used for mobilisation and communication with the people.

Protest is one of the most popular forms of political participation. According to the monitoring of protests for 2012 conducted by the Centre for Society Research³⁸ only every fourth protest in 2011-2012 was related to politics. Traditionally citizens' protest activity grows during election campaigns. In 2012 there was a rapid growth in the number of public protests before the elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (52 in August, 125 in September and 264 in October)³⁹.

3. FACTORS INFLUENCING CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

To understand the state of citizens' participation a formula developed by British scientists was used⁴⁰. The formula suggests that civic activity is the total of individual motivation, impulse to participation, individual resources and existing conditions of participation (Figure 1)

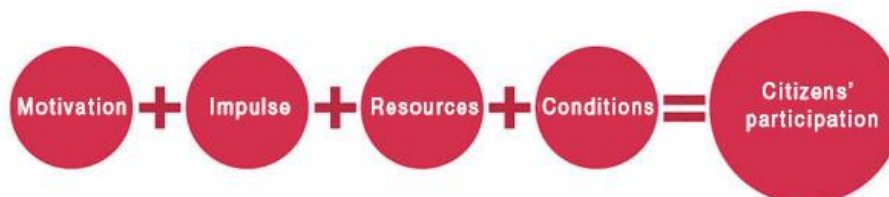


Figure 1. Citizens' Participation Formula

For most Ukrainians the motivation relies on their values and moral principles⁴¹. The majority of respondents have been motivated for civic activities by *"a sincere desire to make a difference"* (in a city, for a group of people or specific individual). Almost two thirds participated because it was dictated by *"their living principles"* while a third has wanted to be *"part of a common cause"* or have *"personal benefit or interest"*. The benefit or interest included self-realisation, upgrading their personal skills, training, employment opportunity, etc. And only 13% of respondents participated in social initiatives because they were asked to do so by a *"respected person whom they could not refuse"* and 12% were *"tagging along"*.

The study examined the impulses pushing people to citizens' participation. The research has demonstrated that the main impulse for 80% of respondents was *"a desire to improve something at the local level"*. A distinctive characteristic is that the older a person gets the more he/she wants to improve something in his/her habitat. Sixty three percent of respondents aged between 16 and 19 and 96% of people over 55 also mention the same.

Information from outdoor and Internet advertising as well as announcements in other media became an impulse to activity for 13% of respondents, but its importance declines with age. Information as an impulse is important to 17% of people 16-19 years old, to 7% of people 20-24 years old, 21% of people 41-54 years old and not important at all for respondents over 55 years of age. Every eleventh respondent indicated that they started participating *"after changes in their personal circumstances"* - retirement, enrolment, birth of children, etc. Every twentieth mentioned *"personal self-realisation and interest"* as the main reason for participation.

The analysis of existing mass media has shown that there are publications, most often electronic, that are directed to attract individuals to giving charity help, most often to sick children.

Respondents consider the main resources necessary for citizens' participation to be knowledge and experience (68%), free time (62%), self-confidence (58%) and financial support (13%). Financial support is an important resource for any public participation, but not the primary one as confirmed by other studies.

The research showed that knowledge and experience as well as self-confidence depend directly on the previous experience, so, the earlier a person gets involved in various types of activity the more knowledge, skills and self-confidence he or she gets. Unlike Europe and North America, where a certain experience range of civic activity gives the young people certain privileges for admission to colleges and universities, Ukraine has no such practices.

The free time resource has a special meaning in Ukraine since in 2012 Ukraine was included into the rating of nine countries with the highest employment status (over 95%). The CIA agency states that there are many workers in Ukraine

³⁸ www.commonsworld.org/ua/?p=13451

³⁹ Social criticism magazine «Spilne», O. Kutchma, 6 November 2012 «There will be no fights» Access mode // www.commonsworld.org/ua/?p=13451#note-13451-1

⁴⁰ www.pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk

⁴¹ Annex 3

who are unregistered or employed part-time, but more than half of Ukrainians work full-time⁴². There is a concept of “spinning” among the population describing the situation when people have two, three or more jobs⁴³. This high employment does not promote citizens' participation but does not preclude it either. Also in Ukraine there is little practice of using professional skills on volunteer grounds that would not require a lot of time from a person. This could be a consultation of a qualified lawyer once in three months, taking part in helping young workers in their workplace, etc.

In this research the conditions for citizens' participation mean various situations that allow or give the citizens opportunities to implement their civic intentions. The research has determined that over half of respondents need community support and community members being interested in resolving particular issues. A third of respondents, particularly youth, require space for activity and/or hosting events. The support of the local government is important to every fifth respondent and only every seventh needs logistics and maintenance support.

The statement of the lack of mutual support inside a community is a very dangerous factor, since “the community that is a chaotic gathering of spiritually separated individuals”⁴⁴ is an atomic society that is the antipode of civil society. Atomicity is a property of society and not of a political regime and it leads to authoritarianism and then to totalitarianism⁴⁵. The indicator of this is the fall of democratic freedoms in Ukraine and it is being reclassified into a partially free country⁴⁶.

The research has also confirmed the lack of a distinct activist groups among the population, since the number of activists is roughly the same in all socio-demographic groups. And while in countries with developed civil society middle class representatives are its base the situation in Ukraine is different. The data of President's National Institute of Strategic Research⁴⁷ states that there is a part of the population with high professional and educational preparation receiving higher income than average. But the legitimacy of this income is often questionable and thus it prevents those people from fully and openly participating in civic activities. Unfortunately, most highly qualified workers in legal sector of economy who should be the core of middle class are on the verge or outside the verge of poverty. Potential middle class representatives who took part in the research also do not view themselves as the society base⁴⁸. As a result the immaturity and absence of middle class complicates the process of establishing a fully functional civil society⁴⁹, but reinforces its atomicity.

The research has found retirees to be active members of civil society. But most of them consider the best country development perspective linked to returning social welfare sphere to the Soviet Union model. In their understanding the responsibilities are placed on the state which must formulate the national idea, unite the population, manage the civil society functioning, etc.

It was also found that representatives of small and medium sized businesses with income below median who suffer from businessmen close coopted with authorities were active supporters of political participation. But this activity is temporary and is linked with specific problems at the time. It is possible that in case of positive solution of these problems the small business representatives will drop out from the active citizens' category.

4. PLACES FOR ACTIVE CITIZENS' MEETING

Speaking of citizens' participation it is important to understand where active citizens gather and have opportunities to meet. The study has revealed that at this point in time there are no places in Ukraine where citizens can go in order to participate in civic activities. But there are many places where it already takes place: education establishments, workplaces and offices, churches, collective leisure and sports centres, etc. The Internet, particularly social networks, is a communication platform for many active citizens, especially volunteers. But it is also very important to know that social networks are often used mostly for ‘virtual activity’ which still rarely translates into physical actions.

The research has identified two successful examples of using traditional places for citizens to meet. In the first example, a community centre becomes the centre of local activity. Creating centres of local activity based on cultural centres was started in 1999 by Creative Initiatives Support Centre, the Institute of Socio-Cultural Management and their partners to make the citizens participate in solving local problems. A model of local activity centre allows a club and local community to become active participants in the civic activity of the whole community. Dwellers of a small town or village unite around their community centre to solve important issues and improve their lives. It is significant that under this model a

⁴² Ukraine has entered the rating of countries with minimal unemployment // www.ukranews.com/uk/news/ukraine/2012/05/07/69916

⁴³ First-wave focused group materials

⁴⁴ Explanatory dictionary of social sciences terms. N.E. Yatsenko. 1999

⁴⁵ V.I. Mikhailenko. Modern research on totalitarianism // Ural State University Bulletin – 2011. – No. 1(86)

⁴⁶ Freedom House: Ukraine among the world leaders in democracy decline // www.lb.ua/news/2013/01/16/185741_freedom_house_ukraine_mirovih.html

⁴⁷ www.niss.gov.ua/articles/265/

⁴⁸ Primary research materials

⁴⁹ “Middle class as the foundation for civil society development in Ukraine: the problems of formation” // www.niss.gov.ua/articles/265/

club can be socially active without compromising its core functions as an institution which creates necessary conditions for creativity and impacts community through artistic activity⁵⁰.

Another example of successfully using traditional establishments is libraries. The 'Bibliomist' Project of the Bill&Melinda Gates Foundation⁵¹ has provided computers to over 2,000 libraries all over Ukraine in two years' time. As a result 3.9 million users have received access to the Internet; at least 400 school graduates used libraries to register for external independent evaluation; 9,800 people applied for the compensation of their Soviet deposits; thousands of library visitors received an opportunity to freely communicate with their friends and relatives from Ukraine and other countries. Other than being centres for reducing informational inequality and providing free access to information for people of various social groups libraries also reduce technological gap between the city and village, provide leisure, self-development, education and communication opportunities.

These successful examples only underline the fact that the real problem lies not in existence of active citizens, but in opportunities and places for them to implement their socially useful intentions. As of today the choice of such places is limited and unknown to potential activists as well as the society's demand for socially active citizens.

5. OBSTACLES TO CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

The researchers view the low citizens' participation of Ukrainians as a result of several complementary historical, cultural, and societal developments; specifically:

- Geographical position of Ukrainian fertile lands on the cross-section of trade routes between Europe and Asia, the increased interest of other countries to coming into possession of Ukrainian territories and, therefore, frequent change of authority. This has formed in Ukrainians a mentality of increased adaptability, assiduity, persistence, the ability to survive under any government, concentrating on solving local problems and appearance of Magdeburg Law in Ukrainian cities as early as XIII century.
- History of Soviet era with its wars, famines and repressions of the already existing mentality have added a fear of authority and unwillingness to unite.
- Gaining freedom from participation in public organisations was considered a blessing since there was no more need to pretend and talk of high ideas that not many people have believed. Participating in activities of CSIs became a reminder of Soviet past as well as the civic activity itself.

Other significant obstacles are:

- The main resource for citizens' participation has always been and remains their free time because of their high busyness;
- Another problem in Ukraine lies in that while it has a significant overall social capital people and community cannot and often do not know how to use it in regular conditions. This is further complicated by the fact that for most Ukrainians their life during independence was concentrated on economic survival and not on individual spiritual growth.
- As of today there are minimum conditions for self-organisation in Ukraine which is demonstrated by lack of information on civic participation opportunities and practices⁵², insufficient knowledge about influencing authorities by the means already available to citizens and civil society organisations, lack of qualification in mobilising and organising citizens among leaders and activists of civil society organisations, motivation of people, establishing partnership with official power bodies, business representatives and other civil society actors. After the appearance of new civil society organisations with foreign financing there was not enough attention given to the matters of civic activity and citizens' participation. This created a gap between citizens and civil society organisations. For most citizens their role remains not fully understood while CSIs do not understand the wishes and needs of the citizens.
- An important obstacle for citizens' civic activity lies in insufficient support and motivation from authorities. It is worth mentioning that the opinions on state support have split: some people think it important and the other oppose it completely. This is often supported with the idea that the necessary support can be gained from business and international donors. The attitude of authorities towards the existence and functioning of CSIs: Most often "traditionalist" state officials view the activity of these organisations as uncontrolled, unaccountable to them and at best useless but impossible to cancel. This is the reason the state officials announce the need for them to increase their influence on CSIs, to direct their activity onto something understandable and useful for them. This attitude leads to the appearance of "pocket" organisation created by authorities and their full control.

⁵⁰ Community centres. <http://www.lacenter.org.ua/>

⁵¹ Bibliomist Programme <http://bibliomist.org.ua/>

⁵² Annex 4

- The absence of structural and organisational conditions significantly impairs citizens' participation. The Concept of State Support of Civil Society Development passed in 2012 and creation of Coordination Council for its implementation were rather formal and are more for creating an appearance of support than actual support. Ukraine has no system for teaching civic activity skills in education establishments which later leads to inexperience and lack of confidence; cities and villages have no professionals responsible for organising citizens and providing the functioning of CSIs; there are no places where people interested in civic activity could gather which significantly complicates implementation of their wishes.
- Other obstacles to citizens' participation include high corruption, citizens' and authorities' disillusionment in the necessity and possibility of civic influence on political processes (Paul D'Aniery, 2010); absorption of the most active representatives of civil society into government structures following "colour" revolutions (Nicklaus Laverty, 2008); disappointment in democratic system (Pew, 2011), mismatch between problems that CSI work on and the problems that are important to the citizens, lack of an institutionalisation culture (people are prepared to help others informally, declare their religious beliefs but are not members of any organisation and rarely go to church); economic factors (unemployment, financial difficulties) (USAID, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion of the research is the hypothesis that the civil society in Ukraine is currently under transformation into an atomic society, which is a chaotic gathering of spiritually separated individuals who are not capable of resistance to any actions of the authorities. This is characterised by economic and social factors, deepened by the immaturity of the middle class and weak reaction of the population to the fall of democratic freedoms in the country. Ukrainian civil society is characterised by informality and chaotic citizens' participation, absence of consolidation and cooperation of separate citizens as well as organised institutions. Civil society as a whole and its institutions are underdeveloped and do not rely on the mass support of population. Despite the yearly increase of the number of CSIs the share of active CSIs remains insignificant and their membership low. Most CSIs have low legitimacy; the role and importance of their activity are little known, misunderstood by regular citizens and do not meet the expectations of their target groups or of society as a whole. Despite half of the people considering CSIs necessary and two thirds believing that they make an important contribution into the country's development the trust in CSIs is steadily low.

Despite the level of citizens' participation currently not being sufficiently high the research has shown that Ukrainian citizens have huge potential: a quarter of respondents participate in at least one type of socially useful activity and half of Ukrainians are ready to take part in improving the situation in their communities. Ukrainians give preference to independent civic activity or cooperate with colleagues and neighbours but do not join existing civil society institutions. Part of the blame lies on low legitimacy of the CSIs that do not distribute information on their activity, do not understand citizens' needs, do not attract population to their activity, and are weak presenters and protectors of citizens' interests before the authorities.

The most popular form of citizens' participation is solving specific social problems at the community level. Citizens' participation has necessary legal support for participation in state and local decision-making processes, but is not fully used by the citizens nor by CSIs. The lack of necessary knowledge, experience and citizens' disbelief in possibility of influencing the government, as well as the crisis of representative democracy and separation of members of parliament from their constituents are the factors that demotivate Ukrainians. Political participation is not widely spread which is the result of their not understanding the essence of political parties, whose interests they represent and protect. But despite their disappointment in politicians most Ukrainians keep going to elections despite their not believing in having a chance to influence something in the country. Ukrainians protest, but only a quarter of the protests is political and their number grows only near the elections.

Analysis of citizens' participation components has shown that the citizens concern themselves with community problems motivated by their moral principles and values and not by pragmatic calculations. The momentum for civic activity is the citizens' wish to improve the life in their community and for this they need knowledge, experience, free time and self-confidence. They also need community support and interest of its members, places to conduct civic activity, support from local authorities and material support. Active citizens refrain from joining CSIs, giving preference to individual activity or activity as part of informal groups together with neighbours, colleagues or friends.

However, the research has not yet shown where citizens typically gather for civic activity. The places where civic activity occurs include, but are not limited to: educational institutions, workplaces, churches, places of mass recreation and leisure, Internet and social networks. Another finding is a range of examples of successfully using traditional establishments, such as libraries and recreation centres, for organising citizens' civic activity.

The research has found a number of obstacles that complicate active citizens' participation. Some of those obstacles have historical and cultural roots, including Ukraine's geographical position, its history before and after Soviet times and the citizens' experience of participating in Soviet civic organisations. Other obstacles are connected to the people being very busy and having very little free time, lacking skills in self-organising and uniting for common purposes, low level of civic education, the CSIs being unable to inform the citizens on their role and attract them to their activities, lack of understanding and support from the government regarding civil society role and value, and citizens' opportunities for civic activity etc.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

CITIZEN'S NON-PARTICIPATION IN CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS: REASONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR REMOVAL

Reasons for unwillingness to join	%	Opportunity for influence
Weak inner potential of the population	21	Little opportunity for influence
Disbelief in positive results of association	14	Possible influence through the popularisation of positive experience and successes of unions
Lack of necessary information, knowledge, mechanisms of organising people and positive examples	12	Possible influence through a continuous supply of information and knowledge, description and distribution of association mechanisms, and positive examples of their implementation
Fear	10	Little opportunity for influence
Distrust in government institutions, politicians, state and population	8	Little opportunity for influence
Lack of education	6	Possible influence through the changes of education curricular of secondary schools
People do not see reasons in CSI	6	Little opportunity for influence
Lack of decent leaders	5	Possible influence through targeted selection and training of civil leaders.
Lack of time	5	Little opportunity for influence
Inability to act and distrust related to civil society institutions	4	Possible influence through targeted institutional support of civic institutions
Imperfectness of regulatory and legislative framework	4	Possible influence through the improvement of regulatory and legislative framework
Lack of motivation	3	Influence through media
Financial difficulties	2	Little opportunity for influence

CITIZEN'S READINESS TO PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC ACTIVITY

(Share (in %) to Total Number of Respondents)

Field of social activity	Participate in social activities	Are ready to participate as activists/moderators	Are ready to participate as followers/administrators
Improvement of public areas	13	4	33
Protection of environment, preservation of city parks	13	3	31
Environmental improvement	12	3	29
Improvement of residential buildings	11	2	26
Organisation of public leisure and sports activities	9	2	22
Discussion of important community-based issues	9	2	21
Creating public youth education centres	17	1	18
Social control over local public spending	8	1	18
Protection of human rights against unjust actions of state institutions	9	2	16
Repair of existing and construction of new roads, bridges and junctions	9	1	16
Open access to public documents for the people	7	1	16
Arranging of housing development	9	1	15
Improvement of the quality of public utilities	8	1	15
Improvement of the quality of preschool and school education	9	2	14
Provision of social services to vulnerable citizens	7	2	14
Fight against crime	7	1	14
Creation of new jobs (support of small and medium-sized business)	11	2	13
Improvement of public medical care	17	1	12
Construction of affordable housing	19	1	11
Gas supply development in villages	12	1	10
Development of suburb and inter-city public transport	10	1	9
Development of public transport	7	1	8

MOTIVATION, IMPULSES, RESOURCES AND CONDITIONS FOR CIVIC ACTIVITY BY THE RESPONDENTS' AGE

(Share (in %) in Each Age Group)

Age of respondents	16-19	20-24	25-40	41-54	55 and older	Total
MOTIVATION						
Sincere desire to make a difference	77	96	80	81	73	81
Dictated by living principles	50	69	70	65	55	62
Involvement in a common cause	30	42	53	19	32	36
Personal benefit or interest	33	31	37	23	18	29
Asked by a respected person	20	12	3	15	14	13
Tagging along	23	4	23	0	5	12
IMPULSES						
Improving something at the local level	63	72	90	83	96	80
Information as impulse	17	20	7	21	0	13
Changes in personal circumstances	7	8	3	8	14	8
Personal self-realisation and interest	10	8	3	0	0	5
RESOURCES						
Availability of necessary knowledge	50	73	77	77	64	68
Availability of free time	83	62	70	42	46	62
Self-confidence	60	62	47	69	55	58
Financial support	13	8	20	12	14	13
CONDITIONS						
Support, interest among people	64	53	50	56	54	55
Availability of space for meetings and discussions	41	38	20	28	8	29
Professionalism of organisers	19	34	45	6	31	28
Support by local government	5	29	30	28	23	22
Effective management	14	29	40	0	23	21
Logistics and maintenance support	9	19	20	28	0	16
Proper usage of information	5	5	15	6	8	7

PRACTICES OF CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

Type of participation	How citizens are engaged?	Wherefore they are engaged?	Successful models
Community organizing	Citizens are members of local branches, which form a network to pressure policy makers and advocate policy change locally or nationally.	Impact on policy decisions and community development to lobby for their interests.	Citizens UK, www.citizensuk.org ; Transition Network, www.transitionnetwork.org .
Community Foundations	Citizens make contributions into the local charities and prioritize the investment of these funds.	Local problems solution and local philanthropy development.	Milton Keynes Community Foundation, www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk .
Digital mobilization	Citizens sign-in digital petitions. The participation is often virtual. This mobilization is used by various civic initiatives, CSOs to mobilize supporters' network development and influence policy.	Delivering public opinion and influencing political decisions.	www.avaaz.org www.change.org ; 38 Degrees, www.38degrees.org.uk
Hybrid social movements	Members in social movements, which combine online platform and off-line activities.	Community interests protection, policy influencing, local and national campaigns.	GetUp, www.getup.org.au ; Recovers, www.recovers.org .
Community forums and consultations	Citizens participate in discussions to shape their policy positions, settle conflicts, develop joint action or decide on priorities for community development.	Development and delivering public opinion to the community and government.	The National Issues Forums, www.nifi.org ; Civic Voice, www.civicvoice.org.uk .
Local cooperatives and trusts for municipal property management	Citizens can be both investors and members or volunteers.	Improving the quality of local services, creation of public spaces with open access. Development of local businesses, which take into account the environmental aspect (energy saving, local producers support).	People's Supermarket, www.thepeoplesupermarket.org ; Transition Network, www.transitionnetwork.org .