



CIVIC LITERACY IN UKRAINE

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

METHODOLOGY

The national public opinion survey '**Civic Literacy in Ukraine**' was carried out by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology throughout July-September 2016 within the framework of UNDP Democratization, Human Rights and Civil Society Development Programme. A total of 2,000 respondents were surveyed according to a national representative sample. Moreover, in August-September three focus group discussions with the citizens took place in Lviv, Kharkiv and Dnipro along with two focus group discussions with the NGO experts in Kyiv and Kherson.

The similar surveys were simultaneously arranged in Belarus and Moldova. The survey methodology was based on **the Vision for 21st Century Citizenship**. The questionnaire for Belarus was developed by Pact Inc, for Ukraine and Moldova – by UNDP. The focus was made on how Ukrainians understand the principles of interaction between the state and the citizens, how they are involved into public life at the local and national level, and what knowledge they need in this regard. In addition, the survey questions measured the prevalence of various values and attitudes concerning human rights, democratic governance and interaction between various communities in the country.

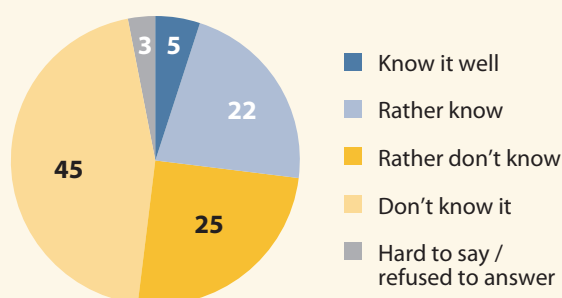
The main findings are set out in **four sections** – civic knowledge, civic behaviour, civic attitudes and beliefs, and perspectives of civic education.

1. CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

In a section on civic knowledge, Ukrainians were asked basic questions on how the state works: rights and duties of the citizens, state and local budgeting, taxation, main provisions of the Constitution, procedure of organizing public events, operation of the elected authorities, international organizations, symbols and administrative arrangement of the state, media literacy and censorship.

- According to the Constitution of Ukraine, **a citizen has a number of rights that the state should guarantee**, as well as a number of duties to perform. Social and economic rights – right to work (25%), to education (18%) and healthcare (13%) – dominate amid the rights most often referred to by the respondents. These findings were confirmed during the focus group discussions, whereas these were the rights that – according to respondents – are violated the most. Ukrainians often face unemployment, dismissal, corruption in healthcare and education. A positive trend noted by experts is that 20% Ukrainians also mentioned the freedom of speech as one of important civil rights. It can be explained by recent social transformations in the country which made a fight against censorship for the freedom of speech a public priority. Along with such promising trends, it is also worth mentioning that 35% Ukrainian are not aware of their civil rights. Another issue requiring clarification is the difference between the citizen's rights and human rights, as very few focus group participants were able to tell it.
- When it comes to **the citizens' duties to the state**, a majority of Ukrainians – 39% – could not answer this question, partially because they have more expectations from the state than from themselves. Top-3 duties mentioned were: to comply with the law and order (32%), pay taxes (21%) and serve in the army (15%). The respondents underlined that paying taxes is important because of the role of taxes for the state functioning and the need to counter shadow economy.
- This is to say, the civic education should clearly articulate the basic rights and duties. Other **civic knowledge of Ukrainian also fall short of the desired level**. For example, 40% respondents are sure that the source of authority in Ukraine is the President (while according to Article 5 of the Constitution, this is people, and only 41% said so). As few as 14% and 11% Ukrainians were able to say the name of the MP or member of local council (respectively) elected from their district. The reasons why citizens are largely unaware of how the legislative and representative authorities operate are: no feedback system between the constituents and members of councils is in place; the latter neglect their duties to keep citizens updated on their activities; mass media do not provide sufficient coverage of their work; and no modality is there for the citizens to recall their elected representative. Voting for the political party brand rather than for specific person is quite common in Ukraine, although the party system is a far cry from a democratic model, raises a lot of concerns among Ukrainians and needs reforming. To make a difference, it is necessary to personalize the responsibility of a citizen who votes for certain candidate by clearly explaining the constituents that they actually delegate their vote to a representative thus exercising their voting right through the representative democracy modality.
- **Knowledge of the public finance** is also inconsistent. 46% Ukrainians know that the state budget is adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Much more – 66% – are aware that local budgets are adopted by the local councils. This rate is quite high. However, only 27% claimed that they had a clue on how that state budget is generated and spent. In addition, the self-reported knowledge of tax rates also proved to be relatively low – only one third of respondents claimed to know which part of the income the citizens pay as a tax. However, in fact only every fourth knew that personal income tax rate is 18%.

Do you know how the state budget is made and spent?
% of all respondents, N = 1998



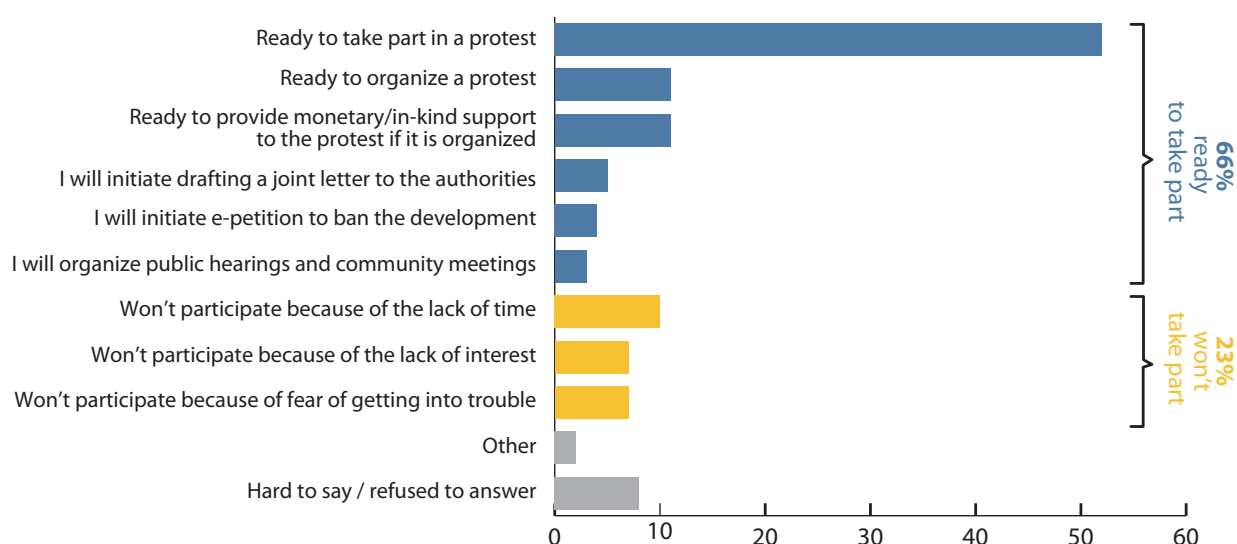
- The reason for such a low level of awareness of the public finance is that only few people pay taxes by themselves. This is mostly the accounting department of the company where the employees work that pays taxes for them. A lot of self-employed persons don't pay taxes at all. Therefore, the citizens don't feel personal responsibility for paying taxes, and they don't care what the share of tax revenue is in the state budget and what expenses they cover. The civic education programmes should also promote the financial literacy, pinpointing that the local and state budgets are generated from the taxes paid by citizens. It is important to demonstrate the budgeting mechanisms (how the money from the budget is spent) and stress that public officials administer budget funds rather than own them; while the budget funds are the money of a community that pays taxes. Thus, the citizens who fairly pay taxes have a right to obtain high-quality services to be provided by the state and to exert control over how the budget is spent.
- The rate of **citizens' awareness of the EU-Ukraine cooperation and mutual obligations** is quite low as well. 50% are sure that the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement enables visa-free travel to Europe, and 28% believe that this Agreement bans any trade with Russia, although both statements are false. A positive trend is that 61% respondents know that the Agreement requires local producers to switch to the EU standards.

2. CIVIC BEHAVIOUR

In this section the respondents were asked questions about the participation in community life, readiness to take part in various community actions to protect their personal rights, rights of other social groups, and in providing solutions to various social problems. It is worth noting that **Ukrainians claim high level of civic activism**. For example, 66% are ready to counter illegal industrial construction near their house by various means; 52% are ready to take part in protest events, and 11% – to organize such events. 23% won't take part in them because they lack time, interest or are afraid of getting into trouble.

**Imagine that a toxic industrial development is planned next to your house.
A peaceful protest against it is proposed. How will you act?**

% of all respondents, N = 1997 (several answers are acceptable)



- Even more Ukrainians – 72% – claim readiness to clean up local area around their house. The most significant problems that could probably make Ukrainians to take part in street protests are the price hike, increased utility tariffs, income decrease, violation of human rights and environmental problems. When it comes to **real civic activism** (as compared to the respondents' readiness), slightly more than a half of respondents reported taking part in cleaning up local area, organizing joint actions with neighbours, attending the meetings of local residents or taking part in signature collection. According to other surveys by the GFK and the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, in 2014 15% Ukrainians were volunteering (in

2015 – 13%). The reasons for such a high level of both readiness and real civic activism in Ukraine are that after the Maidan events and start of the military conflict in Donbas they got used to do a lot by themselves rather than rely upon the government. In addition, more than a half of respondents (58%) are sure that getting united in a civic association (NGO) is an efficient way to protect own rights and interests. Only 38% believe that political parties are helpful in this regard.

- Notwithstanding the high rate of civic activism, the focus group discussions were able to **reveal a distrust towards the activities of NGOs and civic initiatives**. Some of the participants claimed that the NGOs were often used to protect projects of politicians, were paid up and could get engaged into fake charity and grant funds abuse. The volunteers enjoy somewhat better attitudes, although they can be a part of NGOs, too. Moreover, Ukrainians tend to downgrade or conceal their readiness to contribute to civic initiatives – only 27% are ready to identify themselves as socially active persons.
- An important meter of civic participation rate is how citizens assess their **influence on what is going on in Ukraine** (at the national level) **and in their municipality** (local level). Almost two thirds stress they can't exert any influence on the national life, while a half can't affect the life in their municipality. The most efficient ways to interact and influence on the authorities are national and local elections (40% and 43% respectively), rallies and protests (18%). At the same time, almost 60% vote at the elections while only 6% take part in rallies and protests. Although the level of reported readiness is high, the real participation rate could and should be increased. To this end, a positive connotation of the word 'volunteer' should be promoted along with positive attitude to volunteer activities through visualizing successful examples and experience ("act like me"). Civic education in various forms (lectures, workshops, trainings) could be another important motivating factor, whereas it not only provides knowledge but also incentivizes the participation and helps to meet new people.
- Most Ukrainians – **75% – care about the developments and news in the world as a whole**. The world topics most important for Ukrainians are the military conflict in Donbas (91%) and the annexation of Crimea (72%). Only 20% Ukrainians consider the war in Syria and migration crisis in Europe important for them, while Brexit was referred to by 12% respondents.
- 30% speak at least one foreign language. Only 26% Ukrainians travel abroad, while a half doesn't even go abroad every year. Top reasons for travelling abroad are vacations and family visits. As few as 12% Ukrainians took part in the events or activities of international importance. It means that today Ukraine finds itself mostly in local rather than global context.
- 25% citizens would like to emigrate from Ukraine, mostly to improve financial status, gain social guarantees and access to high-quality healthcare.

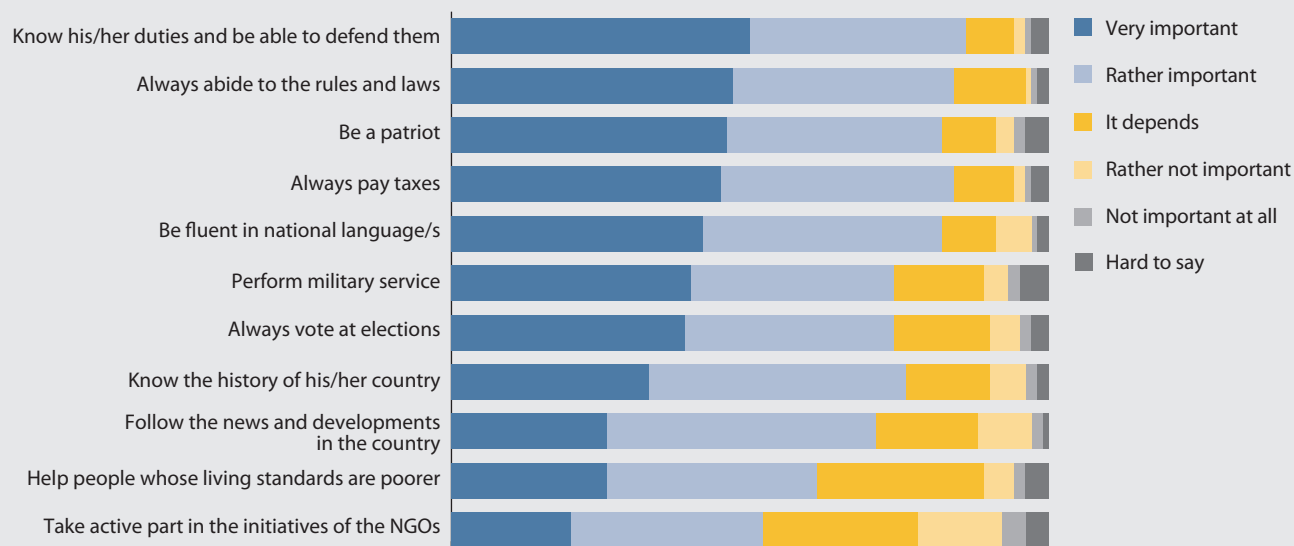
3. CIVIC ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

Questions in this section concerned the values important personally for the respondents and for all the Ukrainians, expected features of a 'good citizen', stereotypes towards various populations, acceptance and recognition of their equal rights, readiness to support them in fighting for their rights, and attitudes to various economic and political ideas.

- **The most important values for Ukrainians personally** are: respect to human life (48%), human rights (42%), social justice (36%), law obedience (34%), and personal freedom (31%). The focus group participants also pointed out that another important value for Ukrainians was a family.

- According to the respondents, a **'good citizen'** is a person who is aware of his/her rights and duties (87%), is law abiding (85%), always pays taxes (84%) and votes at the elections (74%). Only 52% claimed it important for a good citizen to take part in civic activity.

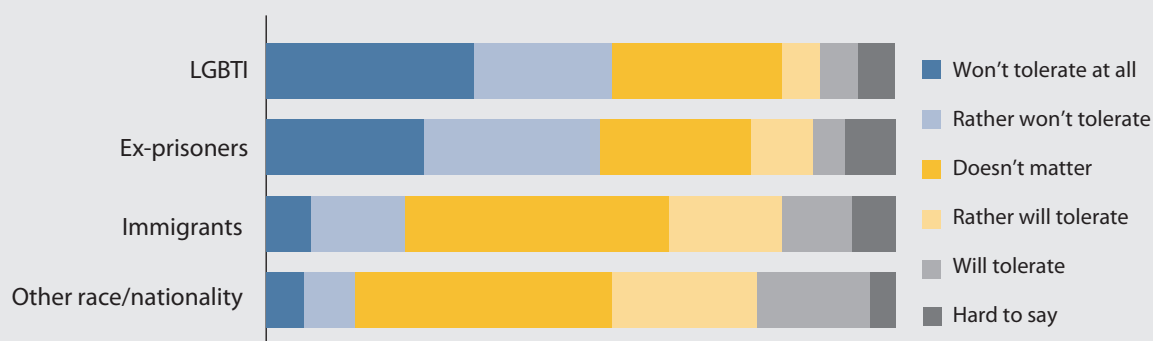
There are various opinions on who can be considered a good citizen. Evaluate each statement by its importance. % of all respondents, N = 2000



- Tolerant attitude to the populations who are different is a necessary feature of a citizen in a democratic society in which all persons irrespective of their origin, religion, sexual orientation, etc. enjoy equal rights. However, the survey findings prove that Ukrainians have strong stereotypes against other people. More than a half of respondents (55%) won't tolerate living next to LGBT community or former prisoners, 22% – immigrants, 16% – people of other race or ethnicity.

Will you tolerate living next to the following populations?

% of all respondents, N = 2000



- Over a half of respondents don't agree that economic growth should be a priority if it harms the environment. 70% Ukrainians consider the free competition to be the best drive of economic well-being, while 56% prioritize the state regulation of certain economic areas in this regard. 60% agree to extend the powers of law enforcement authorities and increase the severity of punishment for illegal possession of weapons to maintain order and security, while 58% believe that allowing citizens to protect their life, health and property with weapons is a better way to secure this objective.

- Ukrainians tend to have quite inconsistent beliefs, as a lot of them support controversial ideas. For example, more than a half of respondents who consider tolerance an important value don't tolerate living next to LGBT community; while the respondents who prioritize the values of human rights, democracy and freedom usually don't support the freedom of speech or public rallies to protect the rights of national minorities. This is a manifestation of immaturity of the system of beliefs, lack of education, and closeness of the country – the problems that civic educators could address in their activities.

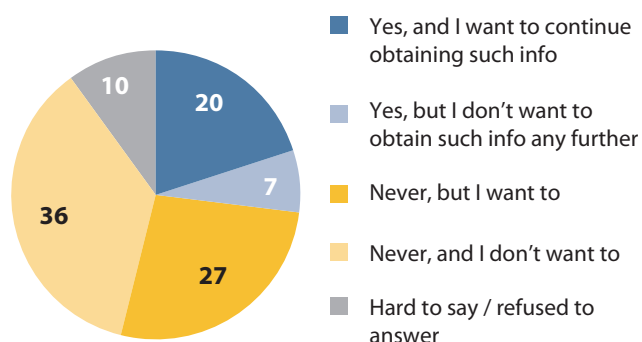
4. PERSPECTIVES OF CIVIC EDUCATION

In the section on formal and informal civic education, the respondents were asked questions about violations of their rights, needs for civic knowledge and skills, preferred ways to obtain them, and experience of participation in informal education projects.

- Ukrainians believe that **violations of human rights systematically take place in such areas** as healthcare (51%), law enforcement (50%), courts (49%), retail sales/consumer rights (44%), labour relations (32%) and education (30%). In terms of personal experience, the top areas where respondents' rights were violated are health care and retail sales. Only 27% never suffered any violations of their rights. Therefore, the overwhelming majority (90%) is sure that civic education is extremely important in Ukraine.
- **The most preferred topics for the respondents** are human rights (29%), foreign languages (14%), business and entrepreneurship (11%). The most preferred skills that Ukrainians want to build are: to protect their rights and interests (30%), critical thinking, business development and conflict solution (9% each). As of September 2016, 27% respondents have already received some civic education, and 47% want to continue or start it.
- These respondents are mostly young, better educated and enjoy better financial status. 43% of those interested to receive civic education are men and 57% are women, 71% are city residents and 29% live in rural areas. 30% are 30 y.o. or younger, 33% are 30-44 y.o. 25% are 45-59 y.o., and 13% are 60 y.o. or older. 39% of them have graduate or incomplete higher education, 29% – vocational technical education.
- According to experts from the non-profit sector, **the basic civic education** should be taught in schools with engaging NGOs, while older people should get access to it through informal education system. The curricula should reflect the information needs and time availability of the students of various age and professional groups.

Have you ever received training on citizens' rights and/or skills (lectures, training programmes, etc.)?

Have you ever read materials on civic and legal issues? % of all respondents, N = 1994



UNDP in Ukraine

1, Klovskiy uzviz

Tel.: +38 (044) 253-93-63, fax: +38 (044) 253-26-07

www.ua.undp.org