

# WORKING TOGETHER – DECIDING TOGETHER

FOLLOW UP  
MEETING  
CHERNIHIV  
12 DEC. 2014



## *Purpose of seminar:*

*To inform and explore how civil society can gain influence on Public Hearings.*

*To create an overview of stakeholders and their level of motivation and influence.*

*To work on a strategy for an advocacy campaign.*

## *Civil participation in decision-making at the local level; what needs to be done?*

*On 12 December more than 30 representatives from local government, NGOs and media met at Hotel Ukraine to explore how civil society could get more influence in Public Hearings.*

*During the first part of the seminar a recent case from a local Public Hearing was presented by City Councillor Mr Vyacheslav Liebid.*

*After that the representatives from the UCIPR shared general information about Public Hearings and how to create an advocacy campaign.*

*The afternoon was spent, working in smaller groups on this issue.*

*The first part of the afternoon was spent creating an overview of the relevant stakeholders and their level of motivation and interest in improving participation in Public Hearings.*

*The second part of the afternoon was spent planning an actual advocacy campaign for the above.*

*The purpose of the campaign was to ensure the adoption of an improved process for Public Hearings for Chernihiv.*

*The following is a short summary of the days' events.*

## **WELCOME**

Anastasia Krasnosilka Dashkevych , UCIPR, welcomed everyone. She first shared that Government has played a trick and pushed through an action plan, which means that in the next 3 - 5 years the local self-government reform will not be implemented.

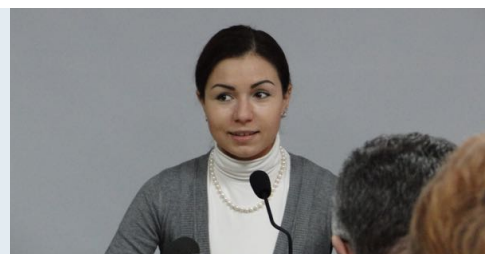
She then reminded that we are the people who know best how to organise life in the city. We the people need to rescue ourselves. We can activate the community for implementation of local policy.

Public Hearings, General Initiatives and Local initiatives are areas we can influence and can start implementing reforms.'

“WHEN WE FACE A CHALLENGING SITUATION IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE AUTHORITIES.

WITHOUT A DIALOGUE IT WILL BE VERY CHALLENGING”

MR. VYACHESLAV LIEBID



## A STORY FROM A RECENT PUBLIC HEARING

Mr Vyacheslav Liebid, a member of the City Council of Chernihiv shared his experiences from a Public Hearing held the day before (Dec. 11). He was, together with other citizens, advocating to save and re-establish a park in Chernihiv that was under threat to be demolished. The allocation of recreational areas in Chernihiv is much below the general European standard.

Mr Liebid described the challenging and complicated journey to save the park. The journey started by a phone call June 16, from a concerned citizen watching the trees in the park being cut down.

An address to Councillors was prepared and a meeting with the Mayor and Councillors was set up. Citizens were ready to demonstrate, they did not want to lose their park and a local MP supported the action. A suggestion was presented to the Executive Committee to withdraw the plan to build the two houses that would destroy the park. The regional prosecutors office was contacted. A miracle happened the permission was cancelled on June 18. A decision was made to establish a park for leisure and cultural activities.

The biggest achievement during the process was to collect 4000 signatures between September 2.-16.



***"This was a democratic process and discussion, clarifying all opinions and details and ending up in a unanimous decision."***

*Mr. Vyacheslav Liebid*



## THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND THE LOCAL PRACTICE

**Ivan Lukerya** was recapping what was said in the previous meeting, e.g. that 3000 signatures were needed to call a Public Hearing.

Preparation for a Public Hearing can take four months. The question is how one could work to simplify mechanisms for Public Hearings?

One major simplification would be to lower the amount of signatures needed to call a Public Hearing.

A discussion followed about the amount of signatures and the practise seems to vary greatly from place to place. In some cases 30,000 signatures are needed in Uzhorod only 30 are required. In most cases 50-100 signatures might be enough.

Any NGO or organisation representing civil society can organise a Public Hearing. The website concerning the Public Hearings should include all issues that will be dealt with.

Authorities receive many requests and initiatives from the public. People who submit constructive proposals can more easily gain influence.

**Sergiy Pinchyk** reminded everyone that Information owned by state authorities is public information unless it is stipulated that a particular information is confidential.

Information re. local government is public and anyone can access. The relevant information should be available on the City website.

City Council sessions should be held in a public way, anyone can be present, procedures are stipulated by the law. In Chernihiv the City Council regulated that citizens only have access in certain situations. This is in conflict with national law.

This law not only covers authorities but covers users of public information, including legal entities. Authorities also need to publish regulations, draft resolutions, terms and conditions to provide services etc. All this information should be easily accessible.

In the Q&A following Serghyi's in-put the possibility of legal action was discussed. A representative of the local executive authority appealed to use dialogue rather than take to legal measures. - *"You can receive a lot of information without a scandal."*

## INTRODUCTION TO AN ADVOCACY PLAN

Ivan Lukerya explained the difference between advocacy and lobbying. Lobbying is about protecting the interests of individuals or individual companies, and is fine if it is done in a transparent manner. Public organisations can be involved in lobbying as well.

*Advocacy means involvement of public and protection of public interests.*

There are six steps of an advocacy campaign from defining the problem, to proposing a possible solution, to analysing the field by identifying stakeholders and their level of motivation and influence, to identifying the main messages of the campaign, to involving the right partners both inside and outside the Council and creating a team that can advocate to get the City Council to adopt the changes.

An advocacy campaign needs to be “massive” i.e. operating on many fronts and involving many people.

### STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The afternoon’s group work started with an analysis of stakeholders and the respective key messages. A matrix consisting of the two axis of motivation and influence was the tool used in the analysis. Four groups worked on the stakeholder analysis independently. The experts coached the groups during the work. In the end the findings were collected into a shared overview, shown in the matrix below.

After the exercise Ivan commented on the results. Most of the messages were actually slogans. A key message is to distil the main idea behind the slogan. In other words: *“The key message is what remains in peoples’ minds when the campaign is over.”*



*Toke Møller, together with one of the translators demonstrated through Aikido, how one can avoid a confrontation and engage constructively*

## FROM INFORMATION TO CO-CREATION

After the input in the morning Toke Paludan Paludan Møller and Monica Nissen from InterChange, Denmark facilitated the afternoon’s work.

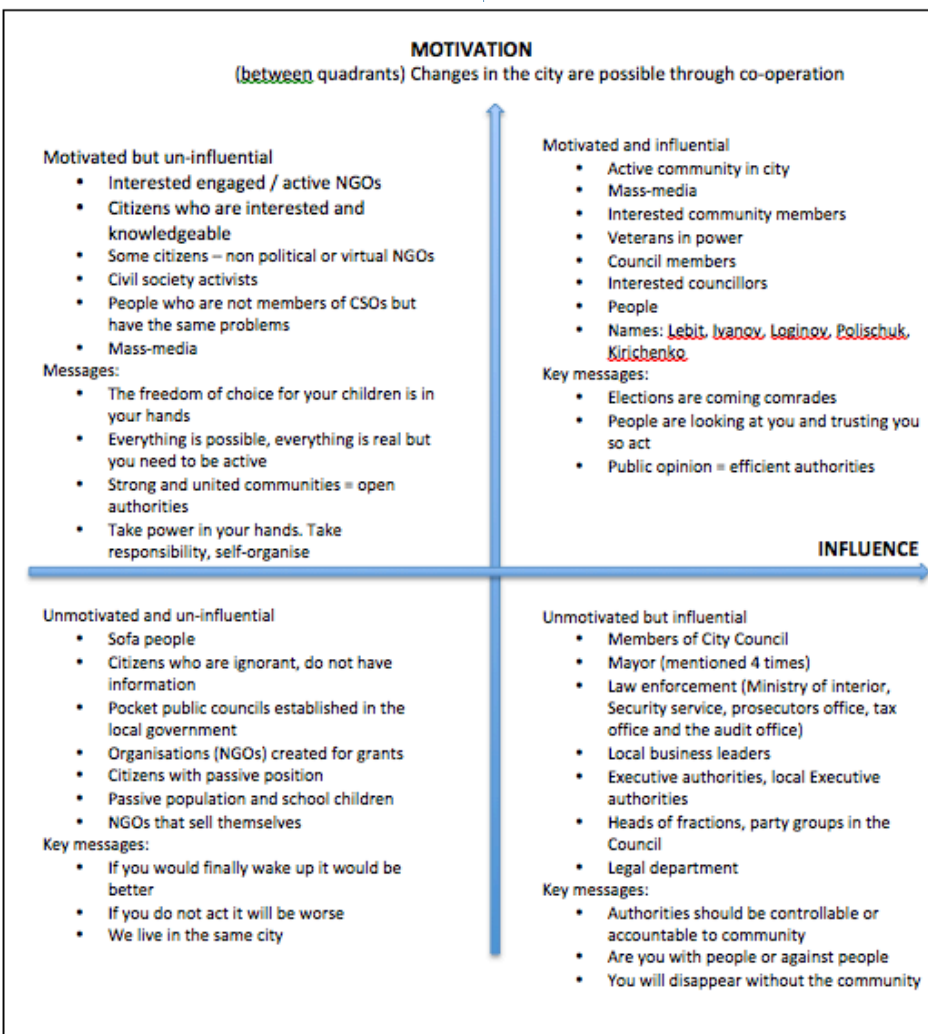
Toke started by explaining the meaning of dialogue. It comes from Latin “dia” and “logos” which means creating meaning through words. So the invitation was to make sense and meaning together and shift to a collaborative way of working, where every ones knowledge and intelligence can contribute to the purpose.

This means to listen to understand the other person’s point of view and to speak what you know is true for you.

Toke demonstrated through Aikido how it is possible to step out of the line of attack and join your opponent or counter part in seeing solutions together rather than getting into a fight.

Creating an advocacy plan is the content, collaboration the process. The best results are created when content and process work well together around a common good purpose.

**“With all respect for experts, you are the ones who have to do it.”**



## CO-CREATING THE ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

The second part of the afternoon consisted of actually co-designing the advocacy campaign in four separate groups. Experts coached the groups during their work.

After the four groups had worked on their advocacy campaign the results were shared.

The campaigns had slightly different approaches, but all included many of the similar elements ranging from; *addressing the Councillor that was present at the meeting, publishing drafts in media, generally use of media articles at critical points, awareness campaigns by use of social media and networks, use of experts both in initial phases and later, round table discussions, personal contacts to key stakeholders at decisive moments, including the Mayor and by rallying active supporters in different ways. One of the groups suggested to bring tires or a dust bin to the meeting with officials, just as a symbolic reminder.*

Ivan reflected on the advocacy campaign proposals and mentioned that some of the proposals had elements of street democracy rather than real democracy. This resulted in a longer discussion on what means to use to gain influence.

Serghyi commented that any kind of action has a counter action as Toke demonstrated through the Aikido when he put his body in alignment with his opponent's. Councillors are people. We may look like a mad crowd depending on the measures we use. We cannot use the same argument or measures on everyone.

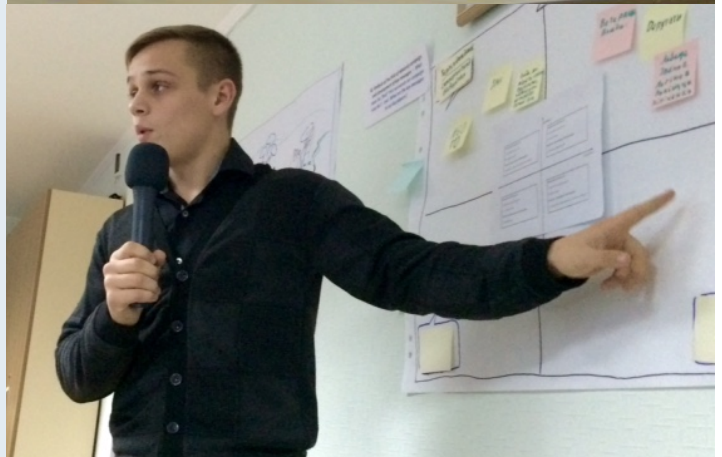
There is no point starting an advocacy campaign focusing on difficulties. If you are result-oriented there is a better chance to win. You need to be persistent and not see your laws as personal abuse.

## THANK YOU AND CLOSE

Anastasia thanked everyone for their input and mentioned that UCIPR was ready to assist in their endeavours.

One of the younger participants expressed gratitude to the team for "holding these sessions and helping us create new positive things and be united in cooperation."

Lastly an invitation was extended for an "All Oblast Forum for NGOs" taking place in 2015. This is a cooperation including the executive branch and City Council, a shared responsibility to develop the local level.



UCIPR offered support if any of the participants needed help.