



Newsletter

March - June • 2019

The Council of Europe Project

'PROMOTING CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING IN UKRAINE'

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WHO ARE WE?

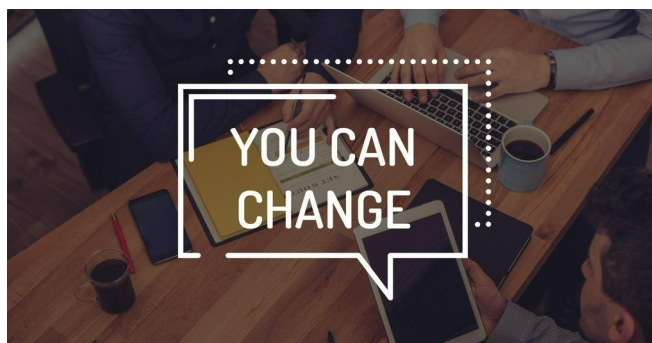
We are a Council of Europe project that helps create an environment for stronger civil participation and citizen engagement in the decision-making process at the local and national levels in accordance with the Council of Europe standards and international best practices.

WHOM DID WE WORK WITH?

- The Kyiv City State Administration (KCSA) civil servants, employees from the Kyiv City Council Communal Enterprise "Centre for Public Communications and Information"
- NGOs and Kyiv community residents;
- representatives of local self-government authorities and the public in Zhytomyr and Drohobych;
- the Association of NGOs "Kyiv Public Platform"
- representatives of national minorities — the Roma NGOs in the Donetsk Oblast, local authorities in Mariupol, Vuhledar and Toretsk

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED IN MARCH-JUNE 2019?

- During a meeting of the project Steering Committee, discussed project goals with the key project partners and beneficiaries, approved the work plan and areas of cooperation for 2019–2020;
- together with the Centre for Public Communication and Information, the Kyiv City Council's communal enterprise, studied Warsaw's experience of involving the public in the decision-making process and public consultations, as well as development trends in public budgeting;
- strengthened the Centre for Public Communication and Information CE employees' awareness of gender-sensitive approach to the decision-making process;
- held the Academy of Civil Participation together with the KCSA, Kyiv residents and NGOs;
- worked with members of the Kyiv Public Platform to build up its institutional and strategic development;
- helped the Zhytomyr City Council to develop and adopt its city charter and regulations on civil participation;
- studied best civil participation practices in Drohobych (digital technologies and civil participation);
- discussed and agreed a plan to assist the Drohobych City Council in the development and implementation of the updated charter and the regulations on civil participation;
- disseminated and shared experiences with other communities;
- worked with representatives from Roma NGOs in Donetsk oblast



OUR GOALS ARE TO HELP:

- improve legislation for effective civil participation and civil society development;
- improve the mechanisms of citizen and NGO impact on decision-making;
- establish communication between NGOs, citizens, and local authorities;
- build up NGO capacity to advocate for changes and engage with public authorities in the decision-making process.

WHERE DID WE WORK?

Zhytomyr Kyiv

Drohobych

Toretsk

Vuhledar

Mariupol

for institutional development of organisations, building up and strengthening of practical skills to implement initiatives of Roma communities;

- delivered an expert opinion on the draft Law of Ukraine 'On amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine as to the forms of citizens' direct participation in addressing the issues of local importance and statutory rulemaking' on the basis of CoE standards and international practices;
- conducted two studies of: a) legislation on citizen engagement in the decision-making process at the local and national levels; b) mapping of entry points for citizens into the decision-making process in Kyiv;
- developed a booklet on best practices in regulating civil participation tools at the local level in Ukraine;
- developed guidance documents, booklets, manuals on civil participation.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



March 2019 – a training session with the Warsaw Center of Public Communication representative Justyna Piwko for the Centre for Public Communications and Information CE employees

FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

- Study Warsaw’s experience in public consultations and communications with the public in the decision-making process;
- An introduction to the model of operation of the Centre for Public Communication in Warsaw;
- public budgeting in Warsaw and Kyiv — accomplishments, trends, challenges.



Feedback:

‘It took Warsaw 15 years to set up the Centre and elaborate its model of operation, while it took us only a year to do the same. On a more serious note, we’ve learned about new formats of public consultations, the level of awareness-raising on the available participation tools, we’ve compared the structure of the Warsaw office to that of the Kyiv office, learned about the information campaign and participatory budget model in Warsaw,’ says Mariya Akulenko, an expert of the Centre for Public Communications and Information.

Outcomes:

1. Functional responsibilities were clearly defined and reallocated efficiently — among the Centre’s employees, performance indicators have improved by 20 per cent, job descriptions for each employee have been outlined.
2. Following Warsaw’s example, student trainees were employed on a pro bono basis. This has boosted the number and quality of events, the materials posted on the Centre’s webpage have become more interesting, the use of (digital) communication channels has increased 1.5 times, and the trainees have acquired hands-on experience.
3. After new digital communication channels (the FB chat bot, Instagram, Twitter, etc) were deployed, the Centre started accepting communication requests from the Departments for various target groups.
4. The Khreshchatyk advisory office has started offering advice not only on the public budget, but, like in Warsaw, also on all participation tools.
5. Adjustments were made to the concept of the Centre’s first information campaign, resulting in a 32.57% growth in the number of website users and a 34.34% increase in the votes cast for the projects in 23 days.
6. Using Warsaw’s example, a new format has been initiated for public discussion of the Regulations on the Kyiv public budget. The first of the 7 meetings has been held (target groups and stakeholders have been identified).
7. A new format of public consultations in the districts has been introduced, such as mobile locations (10 successful events) and non-typical advertising (photo zones, banners, fences, bus shelters), increasing audience coverage up to 2.3 million people.
8. New ideas have been inspired by Warsaw’s experience — a competition among the best projects stemming from the government-society-social engagement is to be held later in the year.

11 April 2019 – a round table in Zhytomyr and expert support

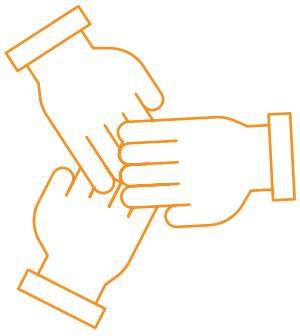
FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

- Create an environment for effective civil participation in the decision-making process;
- expert support in drafting the Zhytomyr City Consolidated Territorial Community Charter;
- introduce the range of civil participation tools.



Feedback:

‘Zhytomyr Community residents are now able to submit local initiatives for the local council’s consideration. To do this, they must collect 200 signatures, initiate a public hearing with 200 signatures, hold a general meeting of the community residents, a public expert examination, public consultations, listen and put questions during reports by the city chairman, councillors and starostas,’ says Maksym Latsyba, Director for Social and Economic Development Programmes, the Ukrainian Centre for Independent Political Research.



19 and 22 April 2019 – a training session for the Centre for Public Communications and Information CE employees

Outcomes:

The Zhytomyr City Charter and the Regulations on civil participation tools have been developed and adopted, including:

- the Regulations on public hearings;
- the procedure for submission of solutions by citizens through local initiatives;
- the procedure for expert examination of the activities of the city council's executive bodies, etc.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

- Combatting stereotypes and ensure respect for human rights;
- a gender-sensitive approach in the decision-making process and citizen engagement;
- gender mainstreaming in the development of programmes, projects and action plans;
- wider cooperation with non-governmental organisations and effective implementation of inter-agency projects involving gender mainstreaming.

Feedback:

'Now I can apply the acquired knowledge in my work. Thanks to the organisers for giving me the opportunity to attend the training!' says Yuliya Dmytrenko of her impressions.

'Each document and urban policy should begin with industry gender profiling. Documents should be neither gender-blind nor gender-neutral. Gender-based legal expert examination is mandatory for all regulations,' says Oleksii Kovalenko, Deputy Director of the Centre for Public Communications and Information.



23–24 April 2019 – a workshop and a strategic planning session with the Kyiv Public Platform NGO

Outcomes included better engagement and outputs from consultations (events), namely:

1. The target audience is gender profiled before each event, based on the topic.
2. Draft regulations on public consultations are elaborated on based on a gender-sensitive approach in the decision-making process and citizen engagement.
3. Preparing analytical reports has become much easier, when one knows how to segment an audience.
4. Gender mainstreaming has been integrated in the enterprise annual activity plan.
5. The gender component was taken into consideration when developing the information campaign plan in the digital segment, which has boosted the quality of the target group coverage and allowed for the advertising costs to be cut by half — \$0.6 instead of \$1.2 per impression, which means actual savings.
6. Any consultations are now scheduled with the gender component in mind. We also take into consideration the convenience of the time and venue for the respective target group.
7. Together with the Kyiv Public Platform, gender profiling of the industry has been scheduled, starting with social protection (the pilot audience included that of public budgets).

FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

- Strengthen the Platform's organisational development;
- develop strategies and advocacy plans;
- build up the Platform participants' skills in advocacy and engaging with authorities.

Feedback:

'This event helped us prioritise the Platform's areas of operation, as well as understand the strengths, resources, needs of the Platform participants. Meanwhile, thanks to the support from the Council of Europe and international experts, gaps in the Platform's activities have been identified, including in the preparation and implementation of advocacy campaigns, the holding of creative media events and the broader involvement of the public in coordinating the Platform's areas of operation. There is some work to do!' says Vasyl Goncharuk, Chairman of the Board.

Outcomes included the development and adoption of:

- the Platform's rule of procedure,



- the Platform's rule of procedure,
- the Platform's structure,
- the areas of operation according to priority policies,
- the structure of the secretariat,
- the 2019 schedule of events.

15–17 May 2019 — the first module of the Academy of Civil Participation



FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

- enhanced application of tools and formats for citizen involvement in the decision-making process;
- deeper mutual recognition and engagement between NGOs and public servants, as well as open and constructive communication between them;
- real cases when civil society has impact on determining the final form of the policy.

Feedback:

'We worked on the problem of the lack of a culture of recycling and no market for secondary raw materials. We realised that one of the first things that could be actually put into life and that works in other (although smaller) Ukrainian cities is the ban on the use of plastic bags by service establishments and supermarkets. Our team made it their goal to get this decision from the Kyiv City Council. I'm sure that together we can preserve nature for future generations,' says Academy participant Oleksandr Yurchenko.

'For me, trust in the authorities still remains the key indicator of civil participation. This trust is low now. I hope that the groundwork at the Academy would increase trust in the authorities,' says Maksym Filipov, the Acting Director of the Centre for Public Communications and Information CE.

'When I am 200 years old (as a doctor, I'm sure that a recipe for longevity is around the corner), I will be showing this photo to my great-great-great-grandchildren, saying, "Those were the days when the fate of the by now customary dialogue, effective communication and an active, well-developed and conscientious civil society depended on the courage, confidence and determination of these people!'

Here are Kyiv's first public servants who met the community's demands for open dialogue and new opportunities in communication.

Next to them are social activists who had launched the by now popular movement 'I care for animals'...

Here, slightly to the right in the second row, are the great people who had introduced a new system of waste sorting — their project was supported, given a chance, and now the streets are clean and the lakes are clear.

Who is to the left of the centre? These are the Council of Europe leaders who had made us believe that the impossible may become a reality.

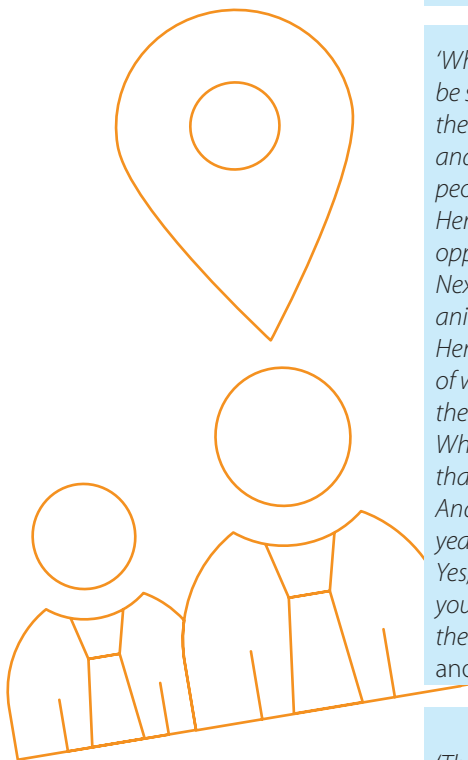
And more to the left are the people who had made social services affordable and effective 130 years ago."

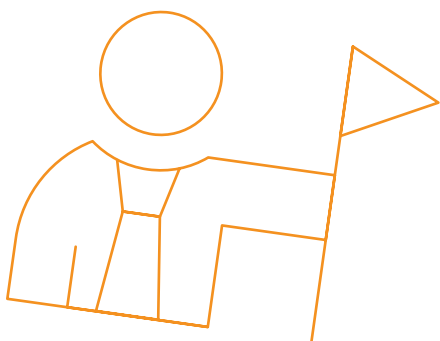
Yes, it sounds funny now. But you'll never get results if you don't set ambitious goals! Believe in yourself, believe in friends, believe in peers. I do believe. So, it is to be continued... even 157 years down the road,' says Oleksii Kovalenko, Deputy Director of the Centre for Public Communications and Information.

'The Academy has given us an understanding and practice of:

- *how to cooperate with the KCSA authorities and district state administrations;*
- *what to do and where to go to solve a problem facing a microdistrict or district;*
- *how to build effective communication with authorities;*
- *the Council of Europe's civil participation standards.*

I have acquired effective experience of building relationships with the authorities and will use it in my work,' says Oleksiy Yefimenko, European Apartment block Co-owners Association.





'The main thing that the Academy has given me is the opportunity to systematise existing and new knowledge. I'm sure that direct contacts with officials at different levels would simplify the implementation of current plans. For example, we have agreed with Roman Lyalyuk to pilot the engagement between our TV studio and the Obolonska DSA. We are going to implement this arrangement now and, after summarising our experience, will be able to issue recommendations to other DSAs and to our peers in other districts,' says Serhiy Yarygin (Toloka Association NGO, Ukrainian Pirate Community NGO).

Outcomes - participants of the Academy (both activists and officials) have developed joint action plans in the following policy areas:

- 'Paketam torba' (Plastic for Fabric) — a campaign for substituting plastic bags with paper and fabric bags in supermarkets;
- the provision of new social services for children and young people with disabilities in Kyiv, in connection with the Law of Ukraine 'On Social Services', which puts social services within the powers of local authorities, becoming effective on 01/01/2020;
- 'Let's care for animals' — raising awareness of pet-keeping rules;
- Kyiv's communication strategy as the basis for dialogue and partnership between the KCSA and the public in political decision-making.

A hands-on manual on effective tools for implementing public participation in the decision-making process has been prepared and disseminated:

<https://bitly.su/kKhKhEAz>

30 May 2019 – meeting the Drohobych City Mayor and the Drohobych City Council



FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

- Study Drohobych's best practices of citizen e involvement in the decision-making process and city governance;
- discussing possibilities for disseminating Drohobych's experience throughout Ukraine;
- discussing an expert appraisal of Drohobych's legal framework concerning civil participation tools and recommendations on the improvement of the legal framework for civil participation;
- beginning work on updating the charter of the territorial community in Drohobych, as well as on those provisions that regulate civil participation.

Feedback:

At the Drohobych City Council session, Mårten Ehnberg, Head of the Council of Europe Office, noted that *'It is impossible to achieve development and high quality of life if the residents are not part of the process of making the critical decisions that concern them. A prerequisite for a functioning democracy and better quality of public life is to ensure good democratic governance — a model of public administration based on 12 principles and around the exercise of the powers of local self-government authorities, in close cooperation with the public and all stakeholders in order to improve the quality of public life and community development, where an individual is in the focus of all democratic institutions and processes.'*

Outcomes:

An expert review and recommendations have been prepared concerning an updated legal framework for local democracy in Drohobych.

April to June 2019 – a series of 9 training sessions for Roma NGOs in Toretsk, Mariupol, Vuhledar

FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

- Increase the number of institutional organisations;
- get acquainted with the tools of engagement between city authorities and communities;
- examine tools such as queries, appeals, e-petitions, local initiatives;
- analyse one's own resources and capacity;
- address the problem of issuing passports to Roma as well as their employment;
- learn how to proceed from the one individual's ideas to a step-by-step project plan;
- find out who stakeholders are and how to work with them;
- understand how to communicate one's projects properly to gain more support and supporters for the projects;
- learn how to raise funding for socially important ideas and whether funding the projects is always necessary.



Feedback:

'One of the problems that the Roma community seeks to address is issuing passports to the Roma and their employment. The Council of Europe project in Ukraine continues to train representatives from three Roma NGOs in the Donetsk Oblast,' says trainer Olga Gvozdk. She also notes that most of the Roma living in the region have been affected by the lack of passports, and thus are unable to receive the services stipulated by the Constitution of Ukraine. 'We are working to address this and other problems during our training sessions in Toretsk, Mariupol and Vuhledar.'

Outcomes:

- participants interact with the city, hold cultural events, work with urban amenities;
- send letters and queries to city councils;
- are able to formulate their own initiatives for public projects.

7 June 2019 – preparation of an expert opinion of the draft Law of Ukraine 'On amendments to certain legislative acts of Ukraine as to the forms of citizens' direct participation in addressing the issues of local importance and statutory rulemaking', available at <https://bit.ly/2WADBL2>

FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

- Improve the legal framework for civil participation in accordance with the CoE standards and good European practices;
- a positive step towards systematisation of applicable laws on local self-government in terms of functioning of 'representative' bodies, such as city councils, and 'participation' of citizens in the management of local affairs through civil participation tools (local initiatives, consultations, referenda, bodies of self-organisation, etc.).

Feedback:

'This opinion is only the beginning of the intensive work towards improving the mechanism of civil participation in the decision-making process in accordance with the Council of Europe standards and best international practices. We look forward to further fruitful cooperation with the authorities in developing the best legislative initiatives,' says Volodymyr Kebalo, the Council of Europe Senior Project Officer, "Promoting civil participation in democratic decision-making in Ukraine".

The expert opinion offers article-by-article comments on each law to be amended vis-à-vis international standards and practices:

- the Code of Administrative Procedure of Ukraine
- the Law of Ukraine 'On Local Self-Government in Ukraine'
- the Law of Ukraine 'On Public Self-Organisation Bodies'

June 2019 — preparing the booklet 'Best practices in regulating civil participation tools at the local level' <https://bitly.su/DTsTJ8>



The booklet highlights best practices in regulating civil participation tools at the local level, namely:

- local initiative;
- public hearings;
- general meeting of citizens at their place of residence;
- e-petitions;
- public consultations;
- public expert examination;
- public budget;
- e-consultations.

OUR PLANS

June–August 2019

The project will launch a monitoring study on the progress in implementing the National Strategy for Civil Society Development in Ukraine in 2016–2018. Findings of the study will be presented during events to be attended by representatives of civil society and public authorities, as well as by experts to discuss achievements, challenges and proposals concerning the development of an action plan to implement the Strategy in 2020, and recommendations on a new strategy.

June 25

Launching the a series of the Academy follow-up workshops “Civil participation: elements for strengthening the engagement between public authorities and community” – in partnership with the Kyiv City Council’s Centre for Public Communications and Information and Kyiv Civic Platform.

End of June

A working meeting on advocacy for Regulations on public consultations and on setting up the ‘Public Consultations’ online module.

4–7 July 2019

Summer Advocacy School for activists representing NGOs in Donetsk and Luhansk oblast — preparing analytical materials, facilitating and implementing changes.
<https://bitly.su/TsOC3eDx>

25-26 July 2019

Further Academy follow-up workshops “Civil participation: elements for strengthening the engagement between public authorities and community”
An expert round-table discussion of public consultations and urban planning documentation, spatial planning.
Signing a memorandum of partnership between the KCSA and the Kyiv Public Platform.

July to August 2019

Meet with the Academy of Civil Participation alumni; assist in implementing action plans for the selected policies; online courses on public consultations and civil participation.
Hold a round table on the deployment of an online public consultation module in the KCSA structural subdivisions.
Develop a draft decision and elaborate (integrate) the gender component in the ‘Regulations on Public Consultations’.
Expert assistance in the Kyiv Public Platform’s organisational development.
Study communities’ best practices of implementation and use of civil participation tools across Ukrainian municipalities and develop a best-practice booklet, share experience.
Expert assistance towards pilot communities in development and implementation of legal frameworks for civil participation tools, including in amalgamated communities





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For further information:

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