

## Public Awareness Materials about the Ukrainian Judiciary Developed by the USAID FAIR Justice Project are Efficiently Used by Citizens to Raise Their Legal Awareness

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The USAID FAIR Justice Project (FAIR) successfully continues the activity established by the USAID Ukraine Rule of Law Project with regard to active participation in public awareness events, forums, fairs and wide dissemination of public awareness materials about the Ukrainian judiciary.

Among the recent events in which the USAID FAIR Justice Project participated is a Modern Library: Developing Communities Fair. The Fair was co-organized by Bibliomist, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, National Parliamentary Library of Ukraine (NPLU), Ukrainian Library Association (ULA), GURT Resource Center, USAID Parliamentary Development Program II (PDP II), and Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy on May 21, 2012. During the event FAIR disseminated public awareness kits containing 'Getting Acquainted with the Court' video, brochures, leaflets, and posters on the judiciary. CSOs, libraries, scientific communities, and experts attended the Fair.

Besides, in the framework of joint activities of the USAID FAIR Justice Project and Parliamentary Development Program II (PDP II), public awareness kits including those about the Ukrainian judiciary were disseminated among more than 400 libraries and Citizen Access Points (CAPs) all over Ukraine.

The feedback received by FAIR from the users of the disseminated public awareness kits indicates that these materials are very timely and there is a need for further comprehensive work on raising public legal awareness.

One of the success stories about how citizens used the obtained knowledge to protect their rights was described in a letter received recently from the Central City Library for Adults of Kirovsk City Centralized Library System:

*In 2010 the Central City Library for Adults of Kirovsk City Centralized Library System joined the Citizen Access Points (CAP) network which allows readers to find official information and get answers to such topical questions as:*

- *time and source of publication of a law;*
- *legislative and normative documents on various issues;*
- *amendments to the laws;*
- *publications which contain normative acts on accrual and payment of pensions etc.*

*Visitors use CAPs resources with pleasure.*

*Thus, Klara Ovcharenko, a regular visitor of the library, asked for help. She sued a public utility company which provides services to the city block where she resides for undue discharge of its official duties on providing services to consumers. In such a way the pensioner initiated organization of a group of activists consisting of the residents of her city block united by a common aim to assert their consumers' rights. But the court rejected her claim in favor of the public utility company since it was represented by a professional lawyer. However, Ms. Ovcharenko decided not to give up but to stand on her rights. To do this she needed legal assistance in formalization of documents, therefore she requested the library employees for assistance. Having received relevant public awareness materials about the Ukrainian judiciary developed and provided by the USAID FAIR Justice Project, the woman was much more confident and qualified in appealing against the court decision. From the public awareness materials she learned how to apply to court and went even further lodging an application with the European Court!*

*Review of the application is still ongoing but the pensioner has already achieved considerable progress: the leadership of the public utility company paid attention to the problems of the city block residents and made decisive steps in improving living conditions in the houses.*

*Thus, it is much easier for a legally literate person to reclaim justice. Very often visitors come to the library to use CAPs resources, which helps them to obtain significant legal experience. They also get this experience through the Internet, where they obtain additional legal consultations of the legal centers of Ukraine and communicate with the representatives of legal associations. The Central City Library for Adults of Kirovsk City Centralized Library System is always happy to help its readers to broaden their knowledge.*

Based on positive experience and taking into consideration numerous favorable appraisals received during public events both from ministries and agencies (the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, State Judicial Administration of Ukraine and other) and common citizens, FAIR continues its activity on updating and improving public awareness materials about the judiciary. Currently, the development of a brochure on peculiarities of criminal proceedings is very topical in view of a new Criminal Procedure Code coming into force in November 2012. Also, with regard to adoption of the Law of Ukraine on the Bar and upgrade of the functionality of the Unified State Register of Court Decisions, FAIR shall update public awareness materials about the judiciary.

[http://www.fair.org.ua/index.php/en/index/news\\_single/93](http://www.fair.org.ua/index.php/en/index/news_single/93)