

UKRAINE CIVIL SOCIETY ENABLING ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITY

**Semi-Annual Report
October 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016**

Implemented by Ukrainian Centre for Independent Political Research (UCIPR)

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development
Regional Mission for Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Cyprus
Cooperative Agreement AID-121-A-14-00002

March 31, 2016

I. Summary

Overall purpose of the program is to improve the legislative and policy environment to become more conducive to civil society needs and to reflect European standards. The Program envisages strengthening of public oversight and engagement in governance, which is only possible through improvement of legislative/policy environment for media and civil society, as well as forming CSO ability to engage citizens and to represent their interests.

UCIPR's unique approach covers the full cycle of improvement of legislative and administrative environment for civil society development in its key areas. Namely, UCIPR combines analysis of shortcomings and opportunities, monitoring of emerging challenges, development of proposals for improvement of legal acts and administrative practices, initiating and leading advocacy campaigns as well as offer awareness campaigns, methodological support and monitoring of adopted legislation for civil society development.

In addition, the program also covers organizational development of UCIPR to make the Center able to sustain its activities and to serve as a leader and driver of civil society legislative efforts.

II. Current Context and Problems

Although the current political climate is in flux, Ukraine has made some advances toward democratic reform in its recent history. The progressive legislation that was passed between 2010 and 2014, along with mechanisms for civil society engagement in governance that were developed, helped Ukraine move closer to the Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union (EU). The Law on Public Associations provides an overarching framework for all non-governmental organizations in Ukraine. The Law on Charity and Charitable Associations, the Law on Access to Public Information, the Law on Volunteerism and the GOU Strategy of Government Policy on Civil Society Development and Priority Action Plan are supporting legislation and policy that have helped to establish a positive framework for Ukrainian civil society, which remains committed to supporting and furthering these gains.

Nevertheless, even with these significant and progressive civil society enabling legislative reforms, much more is needed to ensure a regulatory framework that is conducive to civil society and protects political and civil rights in Ukraine, and to prevent possible rollbacks. Remarkably, civil society and government have been unable to agree upon a legislative approach to governing assemblies, which has enabled law enforcement agencies to apply administrative charges against civic activists engaging in peaceful protests. The legal status of peaceful assembly has become more important and convoluted as citizens, opposition and the government struggled over prosecution for those engaged in the nation-wide EuroMaidan protests.

Moreover, politicians commonly toy with the idea to control international funding to NGOs. Legislation labeling civil society organizations that receive funds from international donors as "foreign agents" attempts to restrict operations through high taxation, negative public image and stringent governmental controls, essentially leaving NGOs unable to function. At the same time, Ukrainian citizens are excluded from decision-making process at the national and local levels. Ukrainian public authorities remain closed and non-accountable to its citizens. Therefore, during the second year, UCIPR team was also focused on local democracy development and redrafting the law on local referendum.

Besides that, new changes to the Tax Code came into effect on January 1, 2015, brought new challenges to NGOs. With comprehensive amendments to the Tax Code on July 17, 2015, NGOs received better tax regime and better procedures for obtaining non-profit status. At the same time, the procedures for forming of non-profit registry have still to be developed.

In addition, homophobia is a commonplace in Ukraine and violence and discrimination against LGBT activists routinely goes unpunished. Discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity is broadly accepted by society and further legislative and policy protection of victims of discrimination is of paramount importance.

Finally, the absence of the special legislation on peaceful assemblies allows manipulating this instrument and freedom for own purposes. Using instrument of “freedom of peaceful assembly”, separatists and criminals shake the society and prevent stability

III. Program Approach

Building on successful legislative efforts of the current civil society program Ukraine National Initiatives to Enhance Reforms (UNITER), this activity supports CSO efforts to ensure proper implementation of the recently adopted progressive NGO legislation; to further develop and introduce more favorable policies; to protect against attempts to roll back progressive legislation or introduce new restrictive laws; and to improve the overall CSO enabling environment sustained through the development of local funding mechanisms. Efforts also include educating CSOs and appropriate government bodies on emerging legislative changes and encouraging compliance. In addition, UCIPR develops its technical and organizational capacity by implementing recommendations from a recipient contracted audit conducted in the summer of 2013, USAID’s Non-U.S. pre-award survey (NUPAS) and UNITER/Pact evaluations. This improves its internal capacities and further UCIPR growth as a leader and driver of civil society legislative efforts.

UCIPR identified as priorities the below mentioned issues and the programmatic approach to improving the quality and content of legislation and policy for civil society through annual implementation plan and monitoring and evaluation plan. During the second year, the project was focused primarily on expanding citizen and civic participation in the development and monitoring of legislation and policy that is in line with European standards. UCIPR focused its activities on proactive improvements to the legislative and policy environment for Ukrainian civil society, as well as responded to and prevented any attempts to limit democratic governance through legislation and policy.

IV. Purpose, Objectives, Results and Activities

All proposed activities fall under the three objectives of the Cooperative Agreement.

B. Activities by Objectives

Objective 1: Quality of relevant civil society enabling legislation and policy improved

During October 2015 – September 2016, UCIPR continued to drive the Ukrainian civil society agenda as the lead CSO advocacy group on civil society legal improvements as part of the *Reanimation Reforms Package* platform and other similar civic platforms. UCIPR continued advocacy campaigns for better tax environment for non-profits and charities, better procedures for contest-based public funding of NGOs as well as for better design on state policy for civil society in general and securing of freedom of peaceful assemblies. At the same time, UCIPR made permanent monitoring of legislative initiatives in order to respond to attempts to restrict civil society’s ability to operate. UCIPR continued all activities, envisaged by the Objective 1, which were started during the first year of the project implementation. The legislative priorities of this period were:

- Changes to the legislation on establishing favorable tax environment for non-profits, charity and transparent public funding for non-profits to simplify CSOs operation (Draft Laws on Amendments to the Tax Code related to taxation of non-profits No. 3630 and 3357; Draft Law on Fight against Fraud in Charity Area No.3215); draft Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

Decree on Procedures for Acquisition of non-profit status); Amendments to the legislation on public funding of CSOs to increase opportunities of competitive financing for NGOs (amendments to Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Decree No. 1049 on contest-based financial support of NGOs);

- Improvements to legislation on CSO registration (By-Laws for implementation of the Draft Law on Registration of Legal Entities, Private Entrepreneurs and CSOs No. 2983);
- Improvements to legislation on freedom of peaceful assembly (Draft Law on Peaceful Assembly No. 3587 and 3587-1) in order to ensure that the legislation is in line with European standards (Draft Law on Guarantees for Holding Peaceful Assemblies); and
- The Law on Local Referendums No. 2535-1 (alternative drafts - 2145a-3, 2145a-2 and 2145a-1) to improve democratic principles of citizen participation in local decision-making.

Finally, UCIPR advocated for the development of Civil Society Agenda to foster civil society development in Ukraine.

While working on legal reforms for civil society, UCIPR ensured participation of a wide group of organizations in program activities, including charities, organizations of co-owners of apartment houses etc.

Results

- 1.1. Broad and effective civic networks formed that advance civil society legislative reforms.
- 1.2. Advocacy efforts at national and local levels lead to positive changes in civil society legislation.
- 1.3. Appropriate by-laws adopted to ensure implementation of progressive legislation (e.g., the Laws on Access to Public Information and on Public Associations).
- 1.4. CSOs enabling legislation developed with significant input from CSOs (e.g., draft Law on Peaceful Assembly, Tax Laws, policy initiatives outlined in the Civil Society Strategy, Final Draft Law on Local Referendum).

Indicators

- Number of CSOs receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions (*Foreign Assistance Framework standard indicator*)
- Number of CSO advocacy campaigns supported by UCIPR
- *Number of public policies adopted, repealed, changed or implemented with USG assistance⁹ (*Civic Oversight Project indicator*)
- *Percentage of CSOs with improved oversight capacity (*Civic Oversight Project indicator*).

a. Activities

Within this objective, second year of the project was focused on legislation on registration and status of NGOs, public participation in decision-making and policy monitoring, financial sustainability of NGOs, peaceful assemblies, state policy for civil development and access to public information. These issues were crucial for development of civil society as leading to formation of participatory and accountable government. Therefore, to reach goals of the Objective 1, UCIPR continued the work started during the first year:

Expected result 1.1: Broad and effective civic networks formed that advance civil society legislative reforms

Networks to advance civil society legislation reforms

During October – December 2015, UCIPR formed a coalition of charities to advance tax legislation for charity. On November 2015, UCIPR held a meeting of seven key charitable foundations in order to identify the most critical gaps in tax legislation for charitable activities. In the course of this discussion, UCIPR developed legislative proposals for improving tax environment for charities, which should be included into the new Tax Code.

Meeting of Coalition



On December 15, 2015, seven organizations signed the memorandum of demands of charities towards tax reform. The following biggest charities joined the memorandum:

- Ukrainian Forum of Philanthropists;
- Tabletochki Charitable Fund;
- Ukrainian Market of Charity;
- Foundation “Ours” (Svoi);
- Charitable Fund “Social Partnership”;
- Foundation “Zaporuka”
- Volunteer Organization “Dobrovolia”.

Memorandum and coalition are open for all interested charities.



Members of coalition ran joint advocacy campaign to advance tax legislation for charity. Top priority of the coalition for now are draft laws on charitable text messages (SMS) No. 3467 and No. 2297. Current activities include flesh-mob with the demand for Parliament Tax Committee to issue positive conclusion on the draft laws.



In addition, UCIPR together with partner CSOs relaunched the work of the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly Coalition to foster the adoption of the Law on Peaceful Assembly in Ukraine. The coalition developed the draft law, which was submitted to the Parliament and registered by a number of MPs. From the beginning of our work on the drafting of the text, the most successful was the cooperation with the Center of Political and Legal Reforms. In addition, the cooperation with ECNL was renewed and we received their support in conducting expertize of the draft law on freedom of peaceful assemblies. Particularly successful was the communication with the European Union Advisory Mission, which helped to build relationship with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In the framework of cooperation with partners, we managed to register draft law on securing the guarantees on freedom of peaceful assemblies with the Parliament.

Expected result 1.2: Advocacy efforts at national and local levels lead to positive changes in civil society legislation

The UCIPR team took part in meetings of governmental and parliamentary working groups and other types of consultations with decision-making on issues of local democracy (local level), public funding of NGOs (central level) and public participation in decision-making (central level). The UCIPR team made quarterly monitoring of draft laws submitted for consultation to Parliament and of legal initiatives of central executive authorities that cover framework for operation of NGOs and general rights and freedoms. If significant risks were identified, UCIPR launched relevant advocacy efforts.

Advocacy campaign for positive changes into Law on CSO Registration

Since August 2015, UCIPR ran its campaign for introducing changes into Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on State Registration of Legal Entities, Private Entrepreneurs and Civil Society Organizations. In the course of this campaign, the UCIPR team managed to advocate for free registration of CSOs and charitable organizations, as well as introduction of “single window” system for submitting documents for registration and obtaining non-profit status by the civil society organizations. In the course of the campaign, UCIPR team and coalition members held meetings with the Parliament Committee on Industrial Policy and Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine. After the adoption of the Law on Registration of Legal Entities, Private Entrepreneurs and CSOs, UCIPR experts were involved into advocacy campaign for development of the Procedures for registration (adapted by the Ministry of Justice according to the Law). These Procedures allow for submission of CSO registration documents to Centers of Administrative Services.

Secure the right to freedom of peaceful assemblies

During the reporting period, project team continued advocacy campaign for repealing local acts that limit freedom of peaceful assemblies in four cities of Ukraine (Kharkiv, Korosten, Bucha and Kyiv).

The program team also launched advocacy campaign for supporting the Draft Law on Securing Guarantees for Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies. It foresaw advocacy campaign for registering of the Draft Law, participation in the working groups, development and submission of recommendations and concussions about positive legislative changes. UCIPR engaged external expert for drafting amendments to the draft law and for developing proposals for the second reading. In the course of campaign, infographic and leaflet were developed to explain why the adoption of this draft law was essentially important for society and authority.

In December 2015, UCIPR experts together with their partners developed and submitted to the Parliament the Draft Law No. 3587 On Guarantees for Freedom of Peaceful Assemblies. The draft law was registered on December 7, 2015, by 13 MPs, including representatives from the Parliamentary majority factions and groups. The most important provisions of the draft law envisages guarantees for protection of peaceful assemblies, ensuring the possibilities to hold counter-assemblies and simultaneous assemblies, spontaneous peaceful assemblies, as well as clear definition of Organizer's responsibilities and grounds for restricting peaceful assemblies.

At the same time, the campaign for abolishing of the local acts on restricting freedom of peaceful assemblies lasted for six months. UCIPR engaged Mr. Viktor Palnyuk, lawyer, to draft and file complaints to the courts against Kharkiv, Korosten, Poltava, Krasnohrad, Bucha City Councils and Novopetrivsk Village Council for illegally restricting the right to freedom of peaceful assemblies. The project efforts were focused on two court cases (in Kharkiv and Poltava). In Poltava, the court decided in favor of the city council. The results of this court campaign were outlined during the press conference on November 25, 2015.

Expected result 1.3: Appropriate by-laws adopted to ensure implementation of progressive legislation (e.g., the Laws on Access to Public Information and on Public Associations)

Improving procedures for public funding of NGOs (Cabinet Decree No. 1049)

UCIPR continued advocacy efforts on improvement of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Decree No. 1049 on procedures for contest-based financial support to NGOs. UCIPR held a number of successful meetings with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Youth and Sports and NGOs to reach consensus on the procedures.

As a result, on February 2016 the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted amendments to the Decree No. 1049, which allowed for:

- Access of 10 000 youth organizations for funding on national level (previously only limited number of all-Ukrainian youth NGOs were eligible to apply);
- Opportunity for projects to start at the beginning of the year instead of the second half of the year (previously, contest procedures took up to half of the year in which projects were meant to be implemented).

Advocacy campaign for adoption of the Cabinet Decree on Registry of non-profits

In October 2015 – March 2016, UCIPR developed draft regulations on the Registry of non-profits and organized consultations with decision-makers. The Registry shall establish procedures for acquisition and cancellation of non-profit status of NGOs.

UCIPR had to push the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine to engage in consultations with NGOs; initially, the Ministry attempted to develop and adopt the procedures without public consultations. In order to force the Ministry to open consultations, UCIPR held a protest at the building of the Ministry.



In November 2015 - February 2016, UCIPR initiated three meetings on this issue with the mid-level officials of the Ministry of Finance and the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine, one meeting with the Deputy Head of Presidential Administration and the Deputy Minister of Finance and raised the problem during the meeting with the President of Ukraine.

As of the end of February, 80% of UCIPR's proposals were considered in draft regulations on the Registry of non-profits. UCIPR continues consultations with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine to ensure consideration of key proposals in final draft of the regulations.

Expected result 1.4: CSO enabling legislation developed with significant input from CSOs (e.g., draft Law on Peaceful Assembly, Tax Laws, policy initiatives outlined in the Civil Society Strategy, Final Draft Law on Local Referendum).

Proposals to new Law on peaceful assemblies, proposals for improvement of tax legislation for NGOs, legislation on social contracting and on tools of local democracy were developed with significant input from all interested NGOs.

Focus Group for Identifying Problems with registration of CSO and charitable organizations

On March 29, USAID "Citizens in Action" project conducted the focus group in order to identify issues and difficulties faced by civil activists in the process of the state registration of civil society and charitable organizations.

Focus-group participants discussed the following issues:

1. Difficulties during initial registration/registration of changes to information about the civil society organization.
2. Difficulties in the process of gaining non-for-profit status for CSOs and charitable organizations.
3. Difficulties in the process of confirmation of all-Ukrainian status of organizations, registration of separate units (branches, representative offices).
4. Evaluation of competences and performance of state registrars by civil activists.

Most of participants noted that following the changes to the rules and procedures of the state registration that became effective on January 1, 2016, CSO registration process became easier. There are still a lot of problems, though.

The following burning issues were identified during the focus group:

1. Incompetence and lack of qualifications of the state registrar.
2. Lack of technical capacities by the state registrars to comply with the new registration rules, to scan CSO statutes and upload them to the database of the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities, Private Entrepreneurs and Civil Society Organizations.
3. Lack of technical capabilities for online registration of CSO and charitable organizations.
4. Partial liquidation of district and local justice departments before May 2016. Nobody knows who can perform registration beyond May 2016 in the cities where justice departments will be liquidated.
5. Charges for registration of changes to information about CSOs and charitable organizations.

Focus group will produce proposals to the Ministry of Justice and Department of the State Registration of the Ministry of Justice as well as changes to the effective legal acts intended to address the above issues and simplify CSOs registration procedures.

Development of amendments to tax legislation for better tax incentives for charity

During November – December 2015, UCIPR in partnership with Ukrainian Forum of Philanthropists developed proposals for second reading of draft laws No. 3357 and No. 3630 on tax reform. These proposals address the needs of key charitable foundations in Ukraine. To study these needs, on November 4, 2015, UCIPR held a focus group with seven largest charitable foundations and volunteer groups.

On February 2016, UCIPR and the Ukrainian Philanthropist Forum held a session on strategic advocacy for better tax environment for NGOs at the Annual Philanthropic Conference. As a result of the session, 20 participants developed joint advocacy plan and took joint responsibility for pushing better tax environment for charity.

Promoting local democracy tools at the local level

During October 2015 – March 2016, the project team worked on analyzing the situation with local democracy in Ukraine. It selected three experts who would conducted research on “Monitoring of legal environment for local democracy mechanisms in Ukraine and develop the research methodology that would envisage the analysis of the legal environment for introduction of the 20 instruments of local democracy that would ensure openness and transparency of the local councils, as well as the accountability of the members of the local councils and city mayors.

The research covers 50 cities of Ukraine, including oblast centers and the biggest cities in each oblast. Based on the methodology, request for information required for the monitoring was developed and submitted to the local self-governance bodies. After the local self-government, bodies provided information and documents, experts started analysis of the local democracy mechanisms in 25 cities of Ukraine. The complete results of monitoring will be available after April 14, 2016.

Following the monitoring, recommendations were developed regarding the improvement of the local democracy, legal environment for ensuring transparency and openness of local councils; these were submitted to the local councils in 50 Ukrainian cities. In addition, interactive map was developed that shows the results of research and contains expert assessment per each city.

Efficient Local Council Partnership

In October 2015, UCIPR and Institute of Political Education created Efficient Local Council Partnership. The Partnership is aimed at developing model local acts for introducing mechanisms of local democracy, ensuring openness and transparency of the local councils, as well as accountability of the members of local councils and public officials of local self-government authorities.

In December 2015, 12 most important local acts were drafted for the local self-government bodies. This package contains the following documents:

1. Rules of Procedures for Local Council;
2. Typical Amendments to the Rules of Procedures for the Executive Committee of Local Council;
3. Regulations on Permanent Commissions of Local Council;
4. Regulations on Assistant of Local Council Member;
5. Regulations on Local Initiatives;
6. Regulations on Informing about Operation of Public Utilities Companies;
7. Regulations on E-Petitions;
8. Regulations on Public Hearings;
9. Typical Amendments to Territorial Community Charter;
10. Procedures for Reporting of Community Head, Executive Committees, Permanent Commissions and Local Council Members;
11. Regulation for Public Consultations;
12. Regulation on procedures for Conducting Public Expertise for Assessing of the local self-government bodies and public officials.

Developed regulations take into consideration the best practices, new standards of local democracy in Ukraine and all legislative acts of Ukraine, including Laws on Local Self-Governance in Ukraine, on Status of Local Council Members, on Access to Public Information.

The draft regulations were distributed among all local self-government bodies and major political parties (Petro Poroshenko Bloc (Solidarity), Batkivshchyna, Self-Reliance, Democratic Alliance, People's Force).

Moreover, model draft regulations were developed for Kuznetsovsk City Council (Regulations on public consultation, on procedures for reporting of mayor and local council members, on public expertise); Zhytomyr City Council (Regulations of Public Participatory Budget); Ivano-Frankivsk City Council (Regulations on Public Budget, on e-procurement, on procedures for reporting of local council members and executive bodies, on publication of financial declarations of local council members); and Uzhgorod City Council (regulations on public participatory budget). Currently, these draft regulations are under consideration of the local councils and will be adopted during next sessions.

In the framework of the Efficient Local Council Partnership, UCIPR and Institute of Political Education will develop second package of the regulations, necessary for city councils, namely:

1. Regulations on Town Hall Meetings in the Area of Residence;
2. Regulations on Public Participatory Budget;
3. Regulations on tendering Procedures for CSOs, Neighborhood Associations and Condominiums Owners;
4. Regulations on Steering Committee of Public Utilities Companies;
5. Regulations on Consultative and Advisory Bodies under Local Council;
6. Other legislative acts for ensuring efficient work of the local council.

Objective 2: Capacity of public officials and CSOs to ensure effective implementation of legislation and policy increased

The earlier adopted progressive civil society legislation was a significant step forward, but it would not improve the regulatory environment unless legislation is properly implemented. Organizations and public officials at the local level are often uneducated about new legislation and lack skills, capacity and support to effectively implement or use it at the working level. Further, civic and governmental stakeholders do not often monitor outcomes of implemented regulations in order to make adjustments and improvements. Therefore, it is important to assist local stakeholders in meaningful implementation and use of civil society enabling legislation and policy through awareness-raising, technical support and monitoring efforts.

During the reporting period, UCIPR educated stakeholders on key issues in NGO enabling legislation. Its awareness raising included the following laws and mechanisms:

- Legislation on Public Associations and Public Councils;
- Tax incentives for non-profits and charitable organizations
- Introduction of new legal instruments (e.g., endowments) outlined in the Law on Charity and Charitable Organizations; and
- Opportunities for increased access to information and participation in government policy and decision-making through recently adopted legislation.

Additionally, UCIPR continued to administer hot line to provide support to CSOs, published brochures, and infographics and used new information and communication technologies to explain new legislation and its implication.

Moreover, it provided consultations, methodological recommendations and organized Forum for NGOs and public officials regarding proper implementation and use of new legislation. UCIPR provided legal assistance to NGO partners related to NGO functioning and operation.

Finally, UCIPR monitored the implementation of civil society enabling legislation at local and national levels.

Results

- 2.1. Newly adopted progressive legislation and policies related to civil society properly implemented (i.e., Laws on Public Associations, on Charitable Foundations and on Access to Public Information, and the Strategy on State Policy for Support of Civil Society Development)
- 2.2. CSOs better informed about the improved legislative enabling environment
- 2.3. CSOs increase use of the improved legislative enabling environment
- 2.4. Implementation capacity of public officials improved
- 2.5. Procedures for citizen participation in local decision-making improved
- 2.6. Citizens better informed about opportunities to participate in local decision-making

Indicators

- Number of unlawful registration rejections of public associations
- Number of consultations on CSO legislation provided to public officials and CSOs
- Number of methodological recommendations¹⁰ developed for public officials and CSOs
- Number of training days (on CSO legislation) provided to public officials and CSOs
- Number of CSO legal aid offices or center in the regions
- Number of regional legal support coalition members

Activities

In 2015-2016 UCIPR plans to conduct following activities to reach results of Objective 2:

Expected result 2.1: Newly adopted progressive legislation and policies related to civil society properly implemented (i.e., Laws on Public Associations, on Charitable Foundations and on Access to Public Information, and the Strategy on State Policy for Support of Civil Society Development).

UCIPR monitored whether the Laws on Public Associations, on Charitable Foundations and on Access to Public Information, and the Strategy on State Policy for Support of Civil Society Development are properly implemented. It also trained CSOs to use instruments provided by CSOs enabling environment legislation (i.e., Laws on Public Associations, on Charitable Foundations and on Access to Public Information, and the Strategy on State Policy for Support of Civil Society Development). It also monitored the implementation of civil society enabling legislation at local and national levels. This was done through in-house monitoring, analysis, and partnership with

other NGOs and public officials. UCIPR encouraged partner organizations to improve their monitoring and oversight capacities through NGO Capacity Building Marketplace.

Ensuring proper implementation of new tax legislation for non-profits

UCIPR launched awareness campaign on new tax legislation for NGOs, which includes presentations on entrepreneurial activities of NGOs. Awareness campaign on a new regulation on non-profits will be held when appropriate by-laws that ensure implementation of new provisions of the Tax Code regarding non-profits are adopted.

During October – December 2015, the program team advocated for creation of monitoring committee at the Presidential Administration for proper implementation on new tax legislation for NGOs. As of March 2016, the working group was created on an informal basis and is not operational until by-laws with new regulations for non-profits are adopted.

Analysis of situation with the implication of the Law on Public Associations

Project Experts constantly communicate with the representatives of responsible departments of the Ministry of Justice. The team systematically informed the Department of State Registration on typical issues and problems in the course of the CSO registration. Our team also managed to arrange the meeting with the Ministry of Justice and State Fiscal Service regarding the procedures for registration and acquisition of non-profit status through the “single window” system.

In addition, UCIPR team published interview and blogs of Anastasiya Shymchuk, expert in CSO registration, to provide additional explanation about new registration procedures. She also held a webinar “How to register civil society organization” on the ISAR/Yednannia platform.

In January 2016, Anastasiya Shymchuk, delivered training on the new procedures for CSO registration to the representatives of the Helsinki Human Rights Union, upon the invitation of the Compass Auditing Firm. The training included new requirements to CSO registration, new deadlines for harmonization of the statute documents in compliance with current legislation.



Taking into account the demand for information about new registration procedures for CSOs and charitable organizations, we developed infographic that described the major innovation in a simple way.



Expected result 2.2: CSOs better informed about the improved legislative enabling environment.

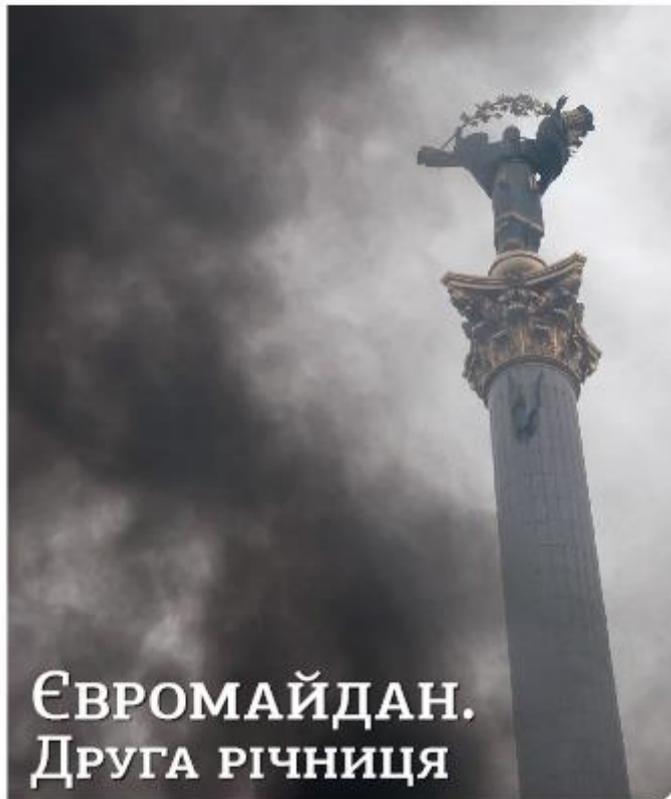
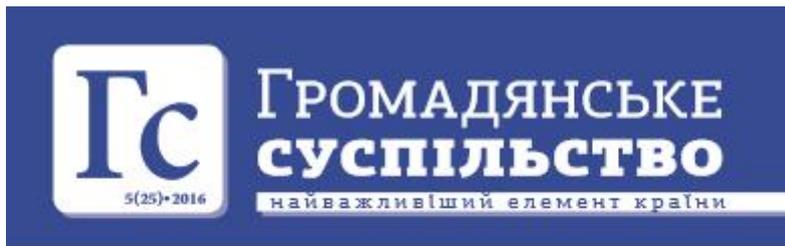
UCIPR educated stakeholders on key issues in NGO enabling legislation. It conducted trainings on recent civil society enabling laws and decrees as well as the main changes brought about by new legislation, such as Law on Public Associations; Decree No. 996 on Public Councils; new Tax Code and new legal instruments (e.g., endowments) outlined in the Law on Charity and Charitable Organizations. UCIPR provided legal assistance to NGO partners related to NGO functioning and operation.

Development of information materials for improving awareness among target audience

During the reporting period, UCIPR team developed and disseminated around 2500 information stickers about availability and functioning of hotline for public associations and charitable foundations and 1000 business cards with hotline contacts. The information stickers contained information about hotline for providing consultations on registration of CSOs and charitable organizations. The stickers were disseminated among CSOs, Charitable Foundations, Registry Offices and local self-government bodies during project and partners events.

In addition, on December 2015, UCIPR prepared and published 5th edition of the Civil Society Magazine. The magazine reviewed year's achievements and set forth the plans for civil society in Ukraine. Moreover, magazine editorial team described the most interesting startups of civic activists and informed about the changes in legislation regarding CSOs. The focus was done on the

following Laws: Law on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, Law on Local referendum and Amendments to the Law on CSO Registration¹.



Hotline on CSO registration and operation issues

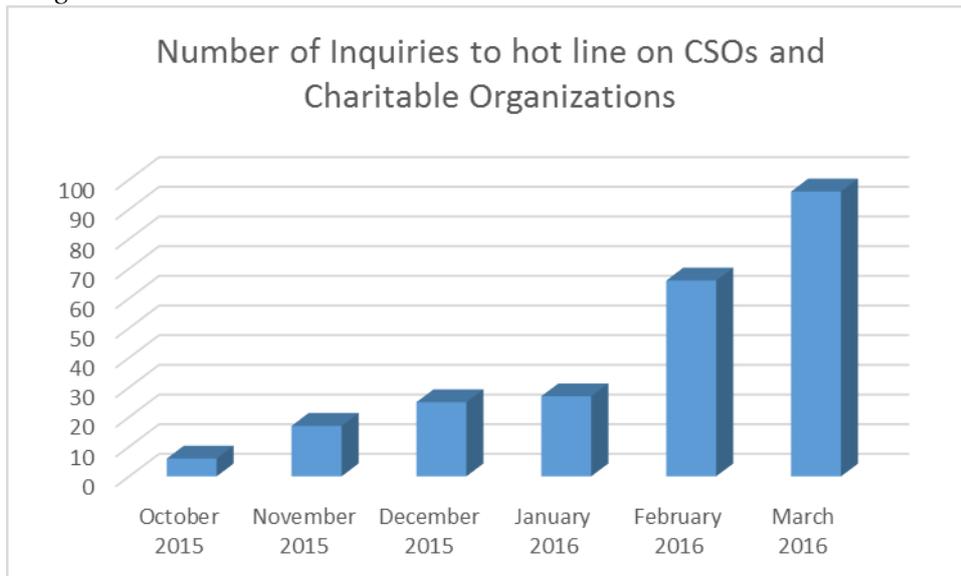
During the reporting period, UCIPR continued to administer hot line for assisting CSOs, charitable organizations and volunteers on application of the Laws on Public Associations, on Charitable Foundations, Volunteerism, and new tax legislation for non-profits and on amending statutes according to new Tax Code. In addition, the hotline was a valuable resource for those CSOs, which are registered on the territories uncontrolled by the Ukrainian authorities. Hotline provided information through phone, email, Facebook, and Google forms. The hotline launched last year, extended the number of issues on which you can receive consultations. In addition to CSO registration, it provides consultations regarding volunteerism, peaceful assemblies, tax regime for CSOs and charitable organizations. UCIPR engaged a separate expert responsible for hotline administration, gathering of information, making records of inquiries, preparing reports and FAQs.

The hotline was advertised and promoted using promotional strategy. The Strategy was handled by Ms. Yuliya Lytvynenko, Hotline Administrator, who processed requests and inquiries.

¹ http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/userfiles/!N5_GS_Book_www.pdf

During the last 6 months only, hotline received about 240 inquiries. After adoption of the new Law on registration of Legal Entities, Private Entrepreneurs and CSOs, the number of inquiries to hotline increased four times (see diagram 1).

Diagram 1.



The majority of inquiries were from women (women 52%, men 48%) and women are better represented in civil society organizations. In terms of the regional representation, Kyiv City and Kyiv oblast were the most active. However, we received inquiries from all regions, including Lviv, Mykolaiv, Zhytomyr, Kharkiv, Donetsk oblast etc.

New regulations for registration of CSOs and charitable organizations entered into force since January 1, 2016. From that moment on, registration of CSOs and charitable organizations is regulated by the Law on Registration of Legal Entities, Private Entrepreneurs and CSOs (Law No. 755-IV). At the same time, specific laws regulating operations of the civil society organizations and charitable organizations include the Law on CSOs and Law on Charity and Charitable Organizations.

Therefore, the most common issues addressed to the hotline were about new procedures for registration and package of documents to be submitted for registration. Hotline inquiries were not only limited to the new regulations, though. The below issues were of huge interest:

- Organization and legal form of the future organization;
- Structure of governing bodies;
- Name and location of organization;
- Harmonization of the Charter;
- Obtaining non-profit status etc.

Workshops on burning issues in CSO legislation

In the framework of the project, the UCIPR team strengthens knowledges and abilities of partners and civic activists. To this end, workshops with practical cases were developed that gave opportunity to interact with each participant. These activities are in addition to trainings and consultations.

During October 2015 – March 2016, the project team held two workshops on burning issues of legislation for CSOs, charitable and volunteer organizations and their operations. The workshops were an extension of the first year activities, which showed high demand for such practical trainings and positive results from such small groups training. During small workshops, there is a possibility to discuss all cases, to analyze all issues and to provide consultations to each participant. Besides that, the similar topics and issues help build cooperation among participants.

During the workshops, the UCIPR team provided samples of registration documents and other useful materials, as well as consulted participants after the workshop completion. The workshops were organized in the UCIPR office, designed to be the most practical and the most useful. After completion of the workshop, the participants had an opportunity to fill the assessment form and assess the quality of the training. All participants were selected by the UCIPR team based on their needs. Namely, the survey questionnaire included the questions about quality of the workshop, whether it corresponded to their expectations, their recommendations for improvement.

All UCIPR workshops were highly positively assessed by participants.

Winter School of Civic Engagement

On February 16 – 19, 2016, the project team held Winter School of Civic Engagement, an educational project aimed at training representatives of initiative groups and small CSOs. The target audience included 25 civic activists from all regions of Ukraine. The four-day school was organized in the form of debates, lectures, work in groups, presentations of cases, completion of home assignments, integrational games and teambuilding.

13 speakers of the school covered such topics as how to be successful in civic activism; secrets of the cooperation with partners, media and authorities; how to “charge” your team to work; success stories from the “sharks” of civil society about golden rules of communication.

The target audience of the school were young people between 18 and 26 years with not very extensive experience but with good motivation to make changes in their own cities. 312 young people from all regions of Ukraine applied to School (13 people per one seat). After careful consideration of all applications, 24 people were selected to take part in the school. In addition, reserve list was formed in case selected candidates were not able to take part.

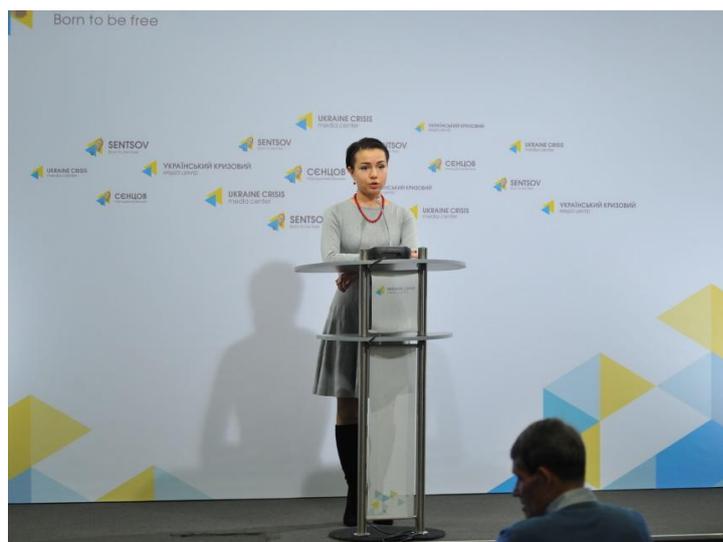
Trainings, press conferences and media monitoring

In November 2015, UCIPR organized press conference devoted to civil society related issues. Restriction to freedom of peaceful assemblies by local authorities was selected as still important topic. The project team informed society and media about results of the court campaign ran in 6 regions, where local acts on restricting of freedom of peaceful assembly were adopted²



² <http://press.unian.ua/pressnews/1193814-pravo-na-mirmi-zibrannya-v-regionah-zalejit-vid-politichnoji-voli-vladi-na-mistsyah-ekspert.html>

In November 2015, UCIPR held press-briefing voicing civil society demands to New Tax Code. During this event, Anastasiya Krasnosilka, project expert, stated major requirements to be included into the new Tax Code by MPs³.



In December 2015, UCIPR presented Four Demands by Charities to the New Tax Code. During this event, representatives of charitable and volunteer organizations presented the list of demands/issues to be included in the new Tax Code. They also signed the memorandum between charitable and volunteer organizations regarding the support for these demands⁴.



In February 2016, a flash mob for organized in support of the Draft Law No. 3467 on charitable text messages (sms). It was attended by 40 representatives of charitable foundations and volunteer organizations that agreed to publicly speak about the need to develop SMS Charity and adoption of this Law⁵.

Expected result 2.3: CSOs increase use of the improved legislative enabling environment.

UCIPR provided consultations and trainings for both state and civil stakeholders on proper implementation and use of new legislation (e.g., trainings for tax officials and NGOs to insure legal status through new registration requirements). It conducted training sessions on the effective facilitation of Public Councils. These trainings brought together government officials, council

³ <http://uacrisis.org/ua/37291-5-vimog-do-novogo-podatkovogo-kodeksu>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1DM8LR78sI>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/citizensinactionUA/posts/1272074876141124>

members and NGOs to clarify their roles and improve their capacity in fulfilling them in order to ensure efficient and transparent councils.

Establishment better communication between public officials and civil society activists

In October 2016, UCIPR held Civic Society Forum “Civil Society and Public Authority: Friends or Enemies” aimed at discussing the most burning issues of civil society in Ukraine. The Forum focused on the issue of whether civil society and public authorities were supportive friends or fighting enemies. During the Forum, National Civic Agenda was presented which served as the basis for the National Strategy for Civil Society Development.

The Forum brought together 226 participants, including MPs, representatives of Presidential Administration, Ministry of Justice, Ombudsperson office, civil society and media. Representatives of NGOs and public authorities held sectoral discussions on policy priorities for civil society development and together compiled National Civic Agenda, a list of tasks for renewed state policy for civil society development.



Focus groups volunteers problems

During November – December 2015, the UCIPR team held three focus groups to identify the problems in the volunteers’ work. Focus groups were held in Kharkiv, Kyiv and Kramatorsk). Focus groups were organized in cooperation with experts from volunteer community. About 10 people attended focus groups, including ATO volunteers. The results of the focus group were used for development of recommendations for amending the legislation on volunteerism.

Expected result 2.4: Implementation capacity of public officials improved.

UCIPR provided consultations and methodological recommendations to public officials on proper implementation and use of new legislation. UCIPR developed methodological recommendations for public officials and CSOs and provided training (on CSO legislation) to both public officials and CSOs.

Expected result 2.5: Procedures for citizen participation in local decision-making improved

Working groups were formed and drafts of local acts that regulate local democracies procedures were prepared and submitted to local councils in five pilot cities. As a result, citizens received simplified and available tools for participation in decision making on local level.

Advocacy Clubs for improving civic activism

1st Civic Engagement School: Advocacy Club (December 22-23, 2015)

On December 22-23, 2015, UCIPR team organized and held first advocacy club “Civic Engagement School: Advocacy Club”. Advocacy club included two-day practical training for active citizens for improving their knowledge and skills in advocacy and in influencing local authorities. The target audience of this club included the representatives of local organizations. The purpose was to create the network of regional civil society organizations to run successful advocacy campaigns and to carry oversight of local authorities. It was expected that after holding advocacy club and training of regional CSOs on how to run advocacy campaign, a network of local NGOs would be formed to run advocacy campaigns at the local level. After forming the network, UCIPR will help them run successful advocacy campaigns at the local level. UCIPR will provide consultative and expert support in the course of campaigns.

The selection process showed that there was a huge demand for such trainings from the side of CSOs and civic activists. 370 young activists from all region of Ukraine applied to the advocacy club. The selection of the participants was divided into two stages – reviewing of application and skype interviews. Only 21 participant from 16 cities of Ukraine were selected by the selection committee (17 candidates per 1 seat), including representatives of civil society organizations and movements, active citizens of territorial communities. The advantage of this advocacy club was the fact that it allowed representatives of small towns (Kahovka, Kherson oblast; Berdychiv, Zhytomyr oblast; Stryy, Lviv oblast) to take part in this training.

The training covered such issues as structure, functions, and powers of local authorities; media and mass communication; strategy and practice for running advocacy campaigns; forming of coalitions and building partnerships; instruments of civic lobbying.



2nd Civic Engagement School: Advocacy Club (March 25-27, 2016)

On March 25-27, 2016, UCIPR team held second advocacy club “Civic Engagement School: Advocacy Club”. Advocacy club included two-day practical training for active citizens for improving their knowledge and skills in advocacy and in influencing local authorities. The target audience of this clubs was the representatives of local organizations. The purpose was to create the network of regional civil society organizations to run successful advocacy campaigns and to carry oversight of local authorities. It was expected that after holding the advocacy club and training of regional CSOs on how to run advocacy campaign, a network of local NGOs would be formed to run advocacy campaigns at the local level. After forming the network, UCIPR will help them to run successful advocacy campaigns at the local level. UCIPR will provide consultative and expert support in the course of campaigns.

The selection process showed that there was a huge demand for such trainings from the side of CSOs and civic activists. Only 24 participants (out of 320) from 16 cities of Ukraine were selected by the selection committee (14 candidates per 1 seat) to participate in the advocacy club. The selection of the participants was divided into two stages – application review and skype interviews.

The advantage of the second advocacy club was the fact that the participants had an experience in running advocacy campaigns, in cooperating with local authorities and they are active citizens in their own cities.

In the course of advocacy club, the participants developed plan of own advocacy campaign to solve problems of their cities. In addition to practical assignment, they had an opportunity to learn more about structure, functions, and powers of local authorities; work with media; strategy and tactic for running advocacy campaigns; forming of coalitions and building partnerships; instruments of civic lobbying; cases of successful advocacy campaigns.

As an outcome of both advocacy clubs, a network of civic experts in advocacy was formed to support advocacy campaigns at the local level. Coordination and experience sharing will be secured by the newly established communication platform in Facebook and through google groups.

UCIPR will continue to provide expert and information support to all participants of the network through providing support to advocacy campaigns.



Round tables on introduction of local democracy tools

On March 1, 2016, the UCIPR team in cooperation with Zhytomyr City Council held round table “Uniting for Reforms: Cooperation between Authority and Public”, which was aimed at discussing an introduction of local democracy tools and improving citizens participation in decision-making at the local level as well as solving budget issues in the course of decentralization in Ukraine.

In the course of the round table, participants discussed the issues, which became even more important after the decentralization process started, including introduction of mechanisms for public participatory budget in Zhytomyr city; approving of the new edition of the Territorial Community Charter and Regulation on local democracy tools. In addition, UCIPR team presented draft regulations in the area of local democracy and draft regulations on public participatory budget. Moreover, they presented best practices and standards of the citizens participation in city management, successfully applied in other cities of Ukraine.

The round table gathered Secretary of Zhytomyr City Council, local council members, representatives of civil society and journalists. In the course of the round table, working group was formed to polish and finalize the draft regulations on public participatory budget and Territorial Community Charter, regulations on public hearings and local initiatives. Final draft regulations will be considered by Zhytomyr City Council during following session.

On March 10, 2016, the UCIPR team in cooperation with Ivano-Frankivsk City Council held round table “Road Map of Reforms for Ivano-Frankivsk City Council” aimed at presenting draft regulations on budget process, on introducing e-procurement, on ensuring transparency and accountability of the city council.

The round table gathered representatives of factions of the local council, civil society, executive committee and media.

In the course of the round table, UCIPR team presented draft decisions on public participatory budget, on e-procurement, on procedures for reporting of local council members and executive committee, on disclosure of financial declarations of local council members. The above-mentioned draft regulations were developed in cooperation with the Institute of Political Education under Efficient Local Council Partnership.

Presented draft regulations will be finalized by the working group under the local council and will be discussed during following session of the city council. UCIPR will provide expert and information support as well as will participate in polishing of draft regulations.

Expected result 2.6: Citizens better informed about opportunities to participate in local decision-making.

During the reporting period, citizens received knowledge and develop own skills regarding usage of participatory democracy tools on the local level. For this purpose, the UCIPR team organized awareness campaign, which included dissemination of information materials (booklets and experts’ articles) about the right for local referendum.

Objective 3: UCIPR’s technical and organizational capacity increased to serve as a leader and driver of civil society legislative efforts

During the second year, UCIPR continued to work on strengthening its own technical and organizational capacity by improving its internal control, procurement, financial and HR systems. The focus was given on implementing NUPAS and audit recommendations. In addition, other aspects of its organizational development were strengthened as recommended by UNITER/Pact’s 2013 assessment and USAID OFM review.

At the same time, UCIPR also worked on strengthening its own technical capacity. It further developed its legal expertise, analytical skills, skills in project development and management.

Finally, UCIPR improved its communication with the international community, donors and other stakeholders by continuing to disseminate policy updates and introducing the practice of sending out information in English to key stakeholders. Besides expert roundtables and participation in government working groups, UCIPR worked more closely with citizens and NGOs whose interests the organization would represent. As a result, UCIPR improved its ability to influence the public agenda.

Results

- 3.1. UCIPR's organizational capacity strengthened – governance structure, procurement processes, financial and human resources systems, monitoring and evaluation, communication and outreach
- 3.2. UCIPR's technical capacity improved – legal analysis and expertise
- 3.3. UCIPR's capacity to influence a broad community of stakeholders increased – government, NGOs, citizens and the international organizations

Indicators:

- Number of NUPAS and audit recommendations implemented
- Number of CSOs partnering with UCIPR
- Number of international donors partnering with UCIPR
- Number of regular policy updates (in Ukrainian and English)

Activities

Expected result 3.1: UCIPR's organizational capacity strengthened – governance structure, procurement processes, financial and human resources systems, monitoring and evaluation, communication and outreach.

During the reporting period, UCIPR continued improving its HR, internal control and procurement systems using the requirements of 2 CFR 200 and other USAID regulations.

Improvement of the UCIPR internal control system

Since December 2015, UCIPR launched cooperation with the EBS Consulting Firm which was selected by FMCDI Project. The consulting firm analyzed whether UCIPR internal control system fully comply with requirements of 2 CFR 200, §200.303 (Internal controls, "Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government") issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and the "Internal Control Integrated Framework", issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO).

During November 2015 – February 2016, the UCIPR team developed the schedule for preparing and conducting audit of the USAID and Pact funded projects. It announced tender for a conducting external audit of both projects. On February 2016, the audit firm was selected by the procurement panel and the contract was sent to USAID for approval.

Implementation of NUPAS and audit recommendations

During the reporting period, UCIPR with the assistance of EBS consultancy firm improved HR system and policies. The improvements of HR policies include clear delineation and division of staff functions, responsibilities and subordination based on actual work being carried out in the Organization's different activities. In addition, it envisages upgrade of a pay scale for both permanent and temporary employees using the same rates for compensating staff for work on all projects as prescribed in OMB Circular A-122 Attachment B, Section 8, Compensation for Personal Services; upgrade of the overall compensation increase procedure.

EBS has also been working on setting the system for producing financial statements on a quarterly basis for overall assessment of financial position of the Organization. At that moment, the firm is in

the process of development of the Terms of Reference for configuration of accounting software 1C. IT team has started to work on it.

Strengthening of UCIPR's organizational capacity

On October 22-23, 2015, the UCIPR representatives participated in FMCDI Conference: “Financial Management and Development of NGOs: Strategic Planning, Budgeting, Audit Requirements and USAID Compliance”. During the conference, many important issues were discussed, including the following:

- Strategic Planning - How to Advance Your Mission;
- Business Canvas Models for NGOs;
- Nonprofit Accounting and Budgeting;
- Benchmarking Best Practices;
- Cost principles: Allowable vs Unallowable,
- Direct vs Indirect, Indirect Rates, Audit Requirements;
- Inspector General – Fraud Awareness Briefing.

On November 3-7, 2015, Organization Development Manager took training in Organizational Development and Staff Management. The training helped improve the skills in development of organizational policies such as pay scale policy, motivation policy, staff evaluation, internal staff training, and changes in corporate cultures.

On November 9 and 16, 2015, two-day training in project management was organized for the UCIPR staff. The training was divided into two parts – theory and practice. During the training the participants managed to form basic understanding about project management and learn about major approaches to project management (PMBok 2015, IS21500, Prince2, Agile/Scrum). During the practical part, the participants were presented the interface of two software products (Microsoft Project and Worksection).

The training was conducted by Oleksiy Prosnitskyy, Director of Consulting Firm Leo Consulting⁶.



⁶ www.leoconsulting.com.ua.

On December 25-29, 2015, the UCIPR team organized three-day training in time management and delegation, which was focused on improving the UCIPR staff abilities in planning, setting the goals, time management, delegating of assignments, asset management, timing analysis, setting the priorities. During the training, factors influencing the team and individual efficiency were analyzed. In the course of the training, the UCIPR employees improved their skills in planning, delegation of responsibilities, staff meetings planning and organization of efficient staff meetings. The training was conducted by Serhiy Stetsenko, partner of Training Center “Training Studio of Serhiy Statsenko”⁷.



On November 23 – December 23, 2015, UCIPR HR Manager took part in the training in Labor Legislation and HR management for improving skill of HR Manager organized by the HR Company Golden Staff (www.staff.ua). In the course of training, HR manager improved her competencies and skills in HR Manager, including such areas as:

- HR management
- Internal organization and regulations
- Employment contract. Recruitment procedures
- Termination of contract
- Working hours, leaves and holidays
- Business trips
- Individual labor disputes
- Staff reporting
- Control of labor legislation
- Responsibility in the area of labor relations.

On February 2016, the UCIPR representatives participated in Sub-grants Management Round Table organized by FMCDI in partnership with ISAR/Yednannia. During the round table, the UCIPR representatives had an opportunity to learn from ISAR/Yednannia experience in the area of sub-granting. There was also an opportunity to discuss practical issues regarding organization of the work of selection committee, communication rules with potential sub-grantee, requirements to the financial reporting etc.

⁷ www.st-up.com.ua

During January – March 2016, Project Monitoring and Evaluation Expert took part in on-line training in monitoring and evaluation organized by INTRAC. During the training, there was an opportunity to learn how to develop M & E system in organization, how to develop perfect indicators, how to assess the projects impact, how to conduct monitoring visits etc. The received knowledge will be used in the future work of the project.

UCIPR Internship program

During the reporting period, UCIPR continued its two-month internship program. Two interns were selected for conducting research. Namely, Hrystyna Kvartsyana was involved in research of the state financial support to civil society organizations at the local level and in organizing Civic Society Forum “Civil Society and Public Authority: Friends or Enemies” October 13, 2015, Kyiv.

Ihor Dubrovskyy was involved in research on the legal regulation for local democracy mechanisms. He was also engaged in the preparation and organization of Advocacy Club on December 22-23, 2015.

Expected result 3.2: UCIPR’s technical capacity improved – legal analysis and expertise

During the second year of the project implementation, UCIPR team worked on the improvement of the quality of research papers and strengthening communication with other think tanks.

Subscription of Accounting Journal “Debet – Kredit” and Liga Zakon

On October 2015, UCIPR team made annual subscription of the Accounting Journal “Debet – Kredit” (www.dtkk.ua) and Liga Zakon (www.ligazakon.ua) to be able to receive all information about changes into legislation on a timely basis.

Expected result 3.3: UCIPR’s capacity to influence a broad community of stakeholders increased – government, NGOs, citizens and the international organizations

UCIPR’s policy updates

During reporting period, 6 monthly policy updates in Ukrainian and 5 policy updates in English were produced. All of them were disseminated among stakeholders and donors. The policy updates contained information about major changes in legislation which entered into force or which could be adopted in the nearest future. The updates also informed civil society about interesting events and opportunities for their development.

First Year Project Results Presentation

On December 9, 2015, UCIPR presented the results of the first year of the project. It was aimed at informing civil society representatives, donors and public officials about successes of the project and to inform about plans for the second year. During the event, the project team presented the major advocacy successes, shared experience and reopened plans for the future. Presentation was attended by representatives of USAID, ISAR/Yednannia, Council of Europe, International Renaissance Foundation, EUAM and EU Delegation to Ukraine and others⁸.

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.926780527370065.1073741838.149051388476320&type=3>



V. Mandatory Factors

A. Gender

During the reporting period, UCIPR tried to attract equal number of women and men to its trainings and activities. UCIPR supported Ukrainian coalitions or networks dealing with gender inequality in the application of government policies and practices. It incorporated gender in all trainings to increase awareness of gender gaps that helped facilitate inclusion of women in formal decision-making processes in civil society work. Moreover, conducting legislative and policy analysis, drafting and monitoring, UCIPR performed with a gender lens. All advocacy initiatives considered gender differences and perspectives from the onset in order to effectively represent all Ukrainians and their interests.

UCIPR also worked closely with other activities implemented under the Civic Oversight Project that focused specifically on the advocacy and monitoring initiatives and CSO organizational capacity building in order to strengthen women's participation in civil society activism and engagement.

B. People with Disabilities

UCIPR assisted DPOs and CSOs engaged in disability issues to understand and use legislative and policy changes. UCIPR helped these organizations improve their capacities to analyze and put forth recommendations on legislation. It invited people with disabilities to its workshops on new CSO legislation.

UCIPR worked closely with other Civic Oversight Project activities that assisted in advocacy and monitoring initiatives as well as provided institutional and management capacity-building support to DPOs and CSOs engaged in disability programming. UCIPR looked for synergies between this

program and other USG-supported initiatives, and presented additional areas for support to the issue of disability in civil society strengthening.

C. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community

This program assisted organizations focused on LGBT issues, along with other organizations, to support a legislative framework that protects and supports civil society. UCIPR engaged a breadth of civil society organizations working to improve the legislative environment, including those that engage on LGBT issues. UCIPR worked closely with other activities implemented under the Civic Oversight Project that focused specifically on the advocacy and monitoring initiatives and CSO organizational capacity building in order to support organizations representing underserved populations. It also invited LGBT organizations representative to all events and engaged them in all activities.

D. Sustainability

In order to achieve sustainability of the project in 2015-2016, the program team prepared Second Year Implementation Plan, built relationship with the Ministry of Justice as key Beneficiary and registered project with the Ministry of Economy. It also continued all activities that were started last year.

VI. Coordination

All this period activities were implemented in close collaboration with other Mission activities and projects, as appropriate, including those outside the democracy and governance sector portfolio. This helped identify complementarities, synergies and areas for collaboration. For instance, the Ukraine Civil Society Capacity Building activity provided with knowledge and skills on various different fields (e.g., advocacy and communication, international law and best practices). Other programs included (but were not limited to):

- The USAID/Strengthening Civil Society in Ukraine (also known as Ukraine National Initiative to Enhance Reform – UNITER);
- The USAID/Ukraine Financial Management Capacity Development Initiative;
- The USAID/Ukraine local governance programs, including efforts to increase levels of citizen participation and engagement with local officials;
- The USAID/Ukraine rule of law program dealing with administrative law reform, especially given the role of administrative courts as the nexus for resolving disputes between citizens and government;
- The USAID/Ukraine Responsible Accountable Democratic Assembly (RADA) program to spur civil society participation in legislative drafting and to monitor legislation implementation;
- USAID's Human Rights in Action Program
- USAID's ISAR/Yednanya Program on Capacity Building.
- USAID/ Financial Management Capacity Development Initiative (FMCDI).

The activity also worked in close collaboration with non-US government donors, including the International Renaissance Foundation, UNDP, Swedish, Canadian and other Embassies, the EU Delegation and EU projects implemented in Ukraine. Regular donor coordination helped better shape legislative agenda and allowed for more effective use of resources.