PUBLIC REPORT 20

CENTRE UA
CENTRE OF UNITED ACTIONS

ЦЕНТР СПІЛЬНИХ ДІЙ. ГРОМАДСЬКА ОРГАНІЗАЦІЯ
Inna BORZYLO, Executive Director

As a rule, major behavior changes do not happen quickly and require changes in value orientations. But these challenges actually motivate us to commit and do everything we can! When we chose making democratic change irreversible as our goal, we clearly realized that it was a marathon. Because for the change to happen, we need not just social demand, the infamous political will and passed legislation. We also need informal practices, an army of followers and their positive experience which will reinforce formal change. That is why last year we focused on spreading the experience of public policy development and local decision making (down to the level of amalgamated communities), brought all our efforts together to push for the electoral reform (and realized that we need change even in the wider political context), monitored (dishonest politicians and party finances, developed several instruments for political education of Ukrainians, and did many other things. And most importantly, we optimised our own work: we passed several important decisions about ceasing and starting partnerships, made our organization’s work and our internal policies more structured, and elected the new Supervisory Board.

Oleh RYBACHUK, Head of the Organization

2019 is a year of challenges. It’s not just the year when the government and the opposition will face the mirror of reality to understand if they have moved in the right direction in the post-Maidan period. It’s also the year of a midterm test for the civil society, because we will also have a chance to look in the mirror of truth and see how well we are working.

The two election cycles will allow civil activists, think tanks and expert unions to see how effective their work has been. The behavior of candidates, headquarters, parties, journalists and voters will be the litmus test for the civil sector. Because we can discuss things in comfortable conference halls all we want, but we’re not worth a penny if our activities do not affect anyone among those who are going to shape our reality during the election process.

Centre UA dedicated a considerable part of its activities last year to make sure that the reality that will come to be when the exit poll results are announced does not scare us, but gives us an understanding that we as a country are moving in the right direction, and the question is only about the speed of the change.

We enter the long and traditionally turbulent election cycle having learned the lessons of reform making in the post-Maidan Ukraine, with an updates strategy for the next 3 years, motivated and recharged for the hard work, and we’re going to use the next “window of opportunity” to the maximum on order to make democratic change irreversible.

Inna BORZYLO, Executive Director
NGO Centre UA (Centre for United Action) is a non-profit organization which combines an advocacy and policy analysis department and a watchdog hub.

In order to spread the best practices across Ukraine, Centre UA has formed a regional team and now has representatives in all regions. Our systematic work with local governments has empowered citizens to affect local policy making through citizen engagement in the development and implementation of changes and promoted the development of local democracy.

In 2016–2018, our team focused on creating the conditions for irreversible democratic change in the political system of Ukraine. We worked in the following directions: developing and promoting changes in national and local policies; public control over transparency, accountability and openness of government agencies, politicians and parties; and community development.

Every idea, every project initiated and implemented by Centre UA aims to create the society of open access through united action by citizens.

In the 2016–2018 strategic cycle, our team focused on creating the conditions for irreversible democratic change in the political system of Ukraine.

We implemented socially important change through the efforts of the following teams:

+ CHESNO, the civil movement that keeps watch on the transparency and accountability of politicians and parties
+ Policy team, the analysis and advocacy center that works to solve national and local problems by promoting policy change with the involvement of stakeholders
+ Strong Communities, the platform that creates the conditions for sustainable democratic development in the communities of Eastern Ukraine
+ Vybory Vybory, the joint project in cooperation with the online-media Ukrayinska Pravda that aims to communicate electoral reform

Our team’s key goals for 2016–2018:

+ Equal access to politics
+ Citizens’ access to decision-making and public control of the government

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Our team’s key goals for 2016–2018:

+ Equal access to politics
+ Citizens’ access to decision-making and public control of the government
Our goal is to create the conditions that would allow Ukrainian citizens to be elected by free and fair elections. During our policy study involving the key stakeholders, we developed The Green Book of Problems and The White Book of Solutions.

The defining systemic solution from The White Book, to introduce the electoral system with open regional lists for the parliamentary election, was included in the Electoral Code draft (3112-1).

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AREA:**
- Social support for replacing the current election rules with a proportional open-list system reached the record 40.8% (according to the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Rating Survey Group, fall 2018)
- Improvement of election legislation has become a priority topic for national and local media
- The Parliament voted on the Electoral Code in the first reading in November 2017
- The working group has completed the preparation of the Electoral Code for its consideration by the relevant parliamentary committee and in the session hall in the second reading

**INSTRUMENTS OF 2018:**
- We initiated and co-organized two large-scale national rallies that demanded to pass the election reform which was supported by about 10,000 representatives of stakeholder groups in all Ukrainian regions
- We had over 100 advocacy meetings with MPs, leaders of political parties, international partners and experts
- 829,226 unique users and potential voters read the materials about the characteristics of the electoral reform, the problems of political corruption, political memory and responsibility of politicians at the Vybory Vybory platform
TRANSPARENCY OF POLITICAL FINANCES

We worked to help voters start taking into account the transparency of political finances of parties as a key criterion of their choices to vote for certain parties or their representatives.

INSTRUMENTS OF 2018:

+ we published 23 analytical materials about party funding in regional and national media

+ we published 20 news articles about party funding and 2 overview materials about trends in party funding and government funding

+ we held 6 workshops for representatives of political parties

+ we added the data about the finances of parliamentary parties in 2016–2018 to the Gold of the Parties tool

+ TV channels Channel 24 and ZIK, as well as TV shows Bigus.info and Schemes, started to cover the funding of political parties in their episodes

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AREA:

Gold of the Parties remains the main source of information about the finances of political parties.

We did not manage to introduce the electronic form for party reports: the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption rescheduled the launch of the format for 2019. However, we initiated the NAPC call for the parties to submit their reports in the Excel format to facilitate quicker report analysis.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL MEMORY

We improved the knowledge of Ukrainians about the responsibilities and activities of MPs, analyzed e-declarations, cases of button-pressing, skipped session meetings; we demonstrated how to recognize populism and offered voters some approaches for quality comparison between candidates before elections.

In 2018, we focused on shaping the public demand for responsible politicians and political forces who have a clear action plan and report about its implementation.
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AREA:
+ upon our request, 8 complete checks of officials’ declarations were initiated, and 4 criminal investigations were launched; in January 2019, the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office announced that a former Poltava Regional Council member who featured in our material is a suspect; another suspect was convicted of corruption
+ mayors of cities and united communities, heads of regional councils and administrations, heads of departments of culture, health care, education, finances, communal property and other city management areas across Ukraine reported about the results of their work
+ Polithub.org became a popular platform for obtaining information about the lawmaking activities of politicians and about the cases when they violated the law; it has over 1,400,000 unique users
+ CHESNO Movement increased its recognizability and influence among civic analytic platforms: its media reach is 40,000 unique mentions (including unique publications about CHESNO in social media), and the average reach of materials posted on the CHESNO Facebook page is 24,592 per day

INSTRUMENTS OF 2018:
+ we created the zvit.org portal where MPs can easily publish reports about their work in the Parliament, either using the structure we offer or in a free form, and users can learn about the results of MPs’ work in a convenient way
+ we made 10 cycles of shows within the #Reports_Live project across Ukraine (in cooperation with UA:Suspline) to eliminate the outdated format of reporting by officials and introduce real-time interactive interviews
+ we launched Polithub (former Political Memory), the national independent database about all politicians and parties, which contains the profiles of over 90,000 politicians and 270 parties and blocs
+ we developed the online course Politicians: How To Vote And Not To Feel Sorry Later at the Prometheus platform; it is about the responsibilities of the President, MPs, local and regional councilors, political finances and sources of income for lawmakers, and about the main methods of manipulative influence on the public opinion
+ we published 16 overviews about the history and the activities of Ukrainian political parties and their political finances
+ we published 17 articles about violations we discovered in e-declarations, and we demanded that the NAPC checks the information from the investigations
We wanted to demonstrate that Ukrainians are capable of participating in decision-making and to motivate people to discuss the content of bills rather than just their titles. During the national You Change tour, we managed to engage thousands of Ukrainians in making government policies in health care, education system, equal access to politics, the use of public finances, and citizens’ access to decision-making.

Some suggestions regarding the development and implementation of policies in the education system and health care were directly worked out by the participants of consultations, and taken into account by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health Care when they prepared legislative changes.

In 2018, we spread the practice of public consultations among local government bodies to help them solve socially important problems on the regional and local level in an inclusive manner.

**Instruments of 2018:**

- We presented The Green Book about the problems and instruments of involving citizens in decision-making in local governments.
- We conducted 110 public consultations about solving relevant local problems and involved 3,200 consultation participants in them.
- We organized 43 meetings to form interest groups in order to advocate for solving local problems.
- We conducted 43 meetings with representatives of political parties in 12 Ukrainian cities in order to define the general principles of internal democracy within parties.
- We organized trips for 22 journalism students to all Ukrainian regions, where they could report on the changes in local policies that resulted from stakeholder involvement in the dialogue.
INSTRUMENTS OF 2018:
+ we prepared the study “The analysis of the existing regulations of the system of control over the use of public finances in Ukraine” (in cooperation with GIZ). The study was based on 5 consultations with stakeholders (Vinnytsia, Dnipro, Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa)

CONTROL OVER THE USE OF PUBLIC FINANCES
We laid the foundation for democratization of the system of public finance management in order to ensure accountability and control over the use of public resources and the activities of controlling bodies.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AREA:
+ we developed and improved 9 local policies: the Provision “On the public budget of the city of Rivne,” the program of control over pets and household animals in Chuhuyiv, the Provision “On creating a Youth Center in Khmelnytsky,” the Provision “On the public budget of the city of Kherson,” draft resolution “On introducing quality approach to greeneries” in Rivne, draft decision on the “Procedure for the placement of outdoor advertising” in Khmelnytsky, the decision about the development of the Safe City program in Shostka, the program for promoting the development of the civil society in Sumy, the program for the development and preservation of green areas in Rivne.

+ we established the practice of public consultations with stakeholders to solve local problems by searching for optimal solutions in cooperation with the community

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AREA:
+ we actualized the problem of inefficient use of public finances among the key stakeholders and developed The Green Book of Problems.

Given that the stakeholders prioritized other directions for reforming the system of public finance management, we decided to postpone the promotion of the relevant changes until the next Parliament starts its work.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES
We worked to provide the foundation for creating strong communities in Eastern Ukraine, so that the residents could start to use self-organization forms in order to solve local problems and exercise effective control over local governments.

In 2018, we focused on uniting the efforts of active citizens in Donetsk and Luhansk regions to make changes in health care, education, business management and landscaping, and helped to improve the transparency and accountability of local governments.
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AREA:
+ we helped to revive historical monuments in Sloviansk, construct a local leisure area in Toretsk near the front line and improve the situation with traffic safety in communities
+ we succeeded in putting an end to the dubious activities and removing from office the head of the Slovyansk Police Department who initiated an illegal search in the residence of Oleksiy Yukov, a local activist
+ we initiated the working group for reconstructing the Shovkovychny Park in Sloviansk; we’re currently controlling the reconstruction and covering it in the media

INSTRUMENTS OF 2018:
+ we united the efforts of 1000 active residents of Luhansk and Donetsk Regions within the Effective City project in order to create better conditions for businesses, improve local landscaping/beautification, and solve urgent safety problems in communities

+ we monitored the effectiveness of MPs and local councillors in Donetsk, Luhansk and Dnipropetrovsk Regions, as well as the work of central and local government bodies

+ we published 40 materials that reached 100,000 viewers about the best practices of controlling local governments and the successful cases when communities united to solve problems in the East

+ we provided 40 legal consultations for active citizens in the East about access to public information, conflict of interest, and public discussions
Every year, we organize an international art competition to raise awareness about freedom of speech among active citizens and to prepare the grounds for discussing and making progressive political decisions. A few years ago, the Stop Censorship! Citizens for Free Countries competition was included in the global top 100 best information campaigns for freedom of speech, according to the British organization Index Censorship.

The special topic of the 5th competition is Women. Equality. Politics, aimed to improve women’s representation in the Ukrainian political system and to build the society of equal opportunities by fighting gender stereotypes.

**Instruments of 2018:**

- we collected 610 works in various media formats (images, tests, slogans, poems)
- representatives from 109 countries watched the competition
- we organized an exhibition of the best works and public discussions in Kyiv and 5 regional centres
- we published the list of winners determined by a jury and an online vote
We are grateful to our partners who support us, believe in us and make the achievement of our goals possible!

Cost structure by funding sources in 2018

UAH 32,271,135

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost structure by funding sources in 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTNERS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Omidyar Network Fund, Inc.</td>
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<td>Pact Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative in Ukraine (EUACI)</td>
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<td>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</td>
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<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)</td>
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<td>Chemonics International Inc.</td>
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<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)</td>
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<td>International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Ukraine (IFES)</td>
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<td>National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)</td>
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<td>International Renaissance Foundation</td>
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<td>Individual contributions for statutory activities</td>
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IN TOTAL: UAH 32,271,135
CENTRE FOR UNITED ACTION: INTERACTION FOR CHANGE

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