

Ukraine – Voter Education for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

The Central Election Commission of Ukraine, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and a network of libraries, conducted a voter education initiative throughout Ukrainian libraries during election periods in 2014 and 2015. In its first year, the voter education program was designed for internally displaced persons, and in 2015 the target audience was broadened to the general public.

In 2015 the program started with a training for oblast-level (region-level) librarians to educate them on key election procedures and equip them with the knowledge and information needed to answer election-related questions from voters visiting libraries, as well as from the lower-level librarians who distributed voter information leaflets. Following the seminar, a webinar was conducted for rayon-level (district level) libraries to share knowledge on when and how voters can exercise their voter rights, as well as the electoral system and novelties of the local election law.

Election posters and leaflets were produced to explain voting procedures, and key features of Ukraine's new electoral system that was used in the 2015 local elections. The posters and leaflets were placed in public libraries nationwide. 100,000 informational leaflets and 10,000 posters were produced and distributed to educate voters as they prepare for local elections.

The program was designed for oblast (24 regions) and rayon libraries (450 across the country); librarians participating in the program reported that the topic was of high interest to voters. Librarians trained their colleagues from lower-level libraries using established curricula, further disseminated printed materials into rural areas, and went out to streets to meet with voters and educated them before the Election Day (more than 13,500 voters received personal consultations in the three-week period before the Election Day).

Informing and educating through PSAs

Taking into account the, at-times, rapidly changing electoral legal framework in Ukraine, it is crucial that stakeholders and citizens are aware of and understand the changes and how those changes affect them. Voters are often left confused and do not understand or know about important changes to their country's electoral framework.

In response to this, in 2015, the Central Election Commission developed 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) that addressed the new electoral system and how to vote, while another focused on women's representation and Ukraine's new party-list gender quota, both broadcasted on television and social media during the weeks before Election Day.

Following major reform to Ukraine's political finance system and legislation, in March 2016, local NGOs developed two informational videos devoted to educating the public on ongoing political finance reform and what it means to them. The first video, which in 30 seconds highlights the importance of direct public funding of political parties, restrictions on private donations and disclosure/ transparency requirements in the new Political Finance Reform Law (adopted in October 2015), aimed to raise public awareness and support for the political finance reform. The

second video, approximately ten minutes in length and targeted mainly at political parties, national experts, civil society activists and other stakeholders, explains the new rules governing political finance in Ukraine in more detail. PSAs are currently being broadcasted on TV and Internet.

Also, for each election, the Central Election Commission develops training videos for precinct election commissioners outlining key electoral procedures, including delivery and receipt of ballots and other sensitive election documents, voting, vote counting and tabulation procedures.

The role of the media in elections

The media play an indispensable role in a vibrant democracy. Perception of the fairness and integrity of elections often depend on media messages disseminated among the population. For the past four years, regional NGOs conducted trainings on election topics for journalists throughout Ukraine.

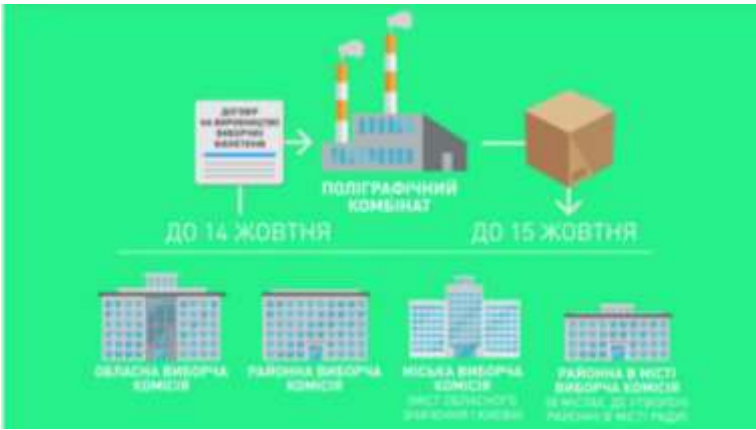
The trainings include briefing for journalists on key provisions of election laws; detailed explanations of legal provisions relating specifically to media, including rules governing campaign coverage and the publically funded campaign advertising system; identification of key issues and problems likely to arise during elections; and special sessions for new media journalists on issues relating to the internet and social media in the election campaign.

In 2016, a training to strengthen media capacity on highlighting political finance reform and developments was conducted. The training emphasized effective tools for monitoring and reporting on political finance violations and the abuse of money in politics and incorporated interactive, adult-learning methodologies.

Source: IFES



Election poster which explains voting procedures (below).



PSA that addressed the new electoral system and how to vote (above).

Journalist training (below).

