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**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**

DEVELOPING CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCIES IN UKRAINE

Ukrainian civil servants attending a course in citizenship and human rights.

The DOCCU Project aims at supporting Ukraine in implementation of the Council of Europe's Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship/Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) through dissemination of knowledge on EDC/HRE in Ukraine. This will be achieved via in-service practical trainings on EDC/HRE for civil servants and officials of local governments as well as for teachers and school principals.

The SDC is seeking to promote a pluralist, democratic environment in Ukraine. Some 2,400 teachers, head teachers, civil servants and local administrators are benefiting from courses in citizenship and human rights. In view of the period of instability that began at the end of 2013, it has become increasingly important to develop a strong civil society in Ukraine.

In 2010, Ukraine signed the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. In so doing, the country undertook to implement the Charter's recommendations. The SDC project for the Development of Citizenship Competencies in Ukraine (DOCCU) is running courses to raise awareness of these issues for government employees and local authorities as

well as for teachers and head teachers. The courses enable these key persons to acquire knowledge of democratic citizenship and human rights together with the methods for teaching them. Some 2,400 teachers, head teachers, civil servants and local administrators are benefiting from the training. Their new knowledge has a direct bearing on approximately 9,000 students and, indirectly, on their parents and the village communities managed by the civil servants concerned.

TRAINING FOR GREATER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Ukraine's school system, a legacy of the past, is characterised by an authoritarian, bureaucratic approach to education. Training head teachers in these subjects is a way of bringing about change and fostering responsible, transparent management. The aim of the courses for teachers is to change the methods of teaching and learning history, geography, languages and so on, thereby equipping students with knowledge and skills which will motivate them to become more involved in school life, and contributing in the long term to greater civic engagement.

For their part, the Ukrainian authorities are struggling to establish a form of working with civil society that is truly participatory. Since 2010, hundreds of "civic councils" have been set up at different levels of government (national, regional and local), but NGOs working in Ukraine denounce this as mere window-dressing. The basic problem is the absence of a tradition of active grass-roots participation in community life in Ukraine. Even though some – mainly local – authorities would really like to engage in dialogue with their people, they are sadly lacking in experience and ability in this area. Training government representatives and local authority staff in these skills promotes the principle of good governance.

As a result of the courses – which cover the rights and duties of the citizen in a democratic system, the separation of powers, the rule of law, and fundamental values such as respect for minorities and

gender equality – we are seeing the emergence of a community of professionals who are trained in citizenship education and are able in turn to train others. This "train-the-trainer" concept is reinforced by the establishment of an internet platform for sharing information and for continuing education and training.

A PROJECT BASED ON DIALOGUE

If it is to be successful, education in democracy and human rights must be adapted to the local context. For this reason, the project is based on sharing on an equal footing with Switzerland's Ukrainian partners. Since 2008, the International Projects in Education (IPE) Centre of the University of Zurich, working closely with, among others, the National Academy of Public Administration in Kyiv (NAPA), has been developing an educational programme for democratic citizenship and human rights geared specifically to the needs of Ukraine. The work has consisted in translating and adapting educational materials (teaching manuals for primary and secondary schools, background manuals for teachers and educational advisers), developing teaching aids (brochures, books, CD-ROMs) and writing training modules for the different target groups. And the response has been encouraging: the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science and National Agency on Civil Service have supported and promoted the teaching materials developed as part of the project.

A STRONG, MORE DEMOCRATIC CIVIL SOCIETY

It has become increasingly important to strengthen civil society in Ukraine since the current period of instability began at the end of 2013. Following the Maidan revolt in Kyiv which led to a change of government, the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the self-proclamation of the People's Republic of Donetsk and People's Republic of Luhansk, Ukraine finds itself in a situation with an uncertain outcome. Democratic institutions and processes have rapidly deteriorated. Hence the importance of strengthening civil society, so that it is able to demand higher standards of governance and better services from the authorities.

COUNTRY FACTS (Source: World Bank)

Population (2014)
Ukraine : 45,4 million
Switzerland : 8,1 million

Life expectancy at birth (2013)
Ukraine : women 76 years, men 66 years
Switzerland : women 85 years, men 81 years

Gross domestic product per capita (2014)
Ukraine : 3 082 USD
Switzerland : 85 594 USD