STUDENT HANDBOOK

DEMOCRACY: from Theory to Practice

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND EXPANDED

Author: DR. GREER BURROUGHS
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“Democracy works when people claim it as their own.”

Bill Moyers,
Jan. 22, 2007, American journalist and former White House Press Secretary
Why is it necessary for citizens in a democracy to “claim it as their own,” and how can they do this? The course you are studying, Democracy: from Theory to Practice, will help answer the first part of that question. Through course readings and assignments, you will learn about conditions that must exist for a democracy to flourish and the role of citizens in maintaining a healthy democracy. Democratic systems offer great promise for citizens to participate and raise their voice in hopes of influencing the process. This is not just an advantage of democracy, but rather an imperative. When citizens fail to monitor their governments, leaders may choose to represent only their own interests and may even become abusive of human rights. Clearly, it is in the interest of the individual and society that there be an active citizenry.

What actions are necessary for citizens to protect and advance their rights and interests and the democratic system as a whole? Many scholars on this subject agree citizens must possess knowledge of the system and their rights. The course textbook and class activities will help you to understand this. However, knowledge alone is not enough, effective democratic participation requires certain skills. Some of these skills are presented in the introduction of your textbook. They are also reprinted here for you to review.
**SKILLS ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP**

1. Think critically  
2. Make informed, responsible decisions  
3. Analyze information  
4. Evaluate information  
5. Discuss issues and consider multiple perspectives  
6. Recognize the role of bias, point of view and context, as well as assess the credibility of a source  
7. Examine current issues and events  
8. Formulate questions based on information  
9. Use effective strategies to locate information  
10. Summarize information in written, graphic and oral formats  
11. Work cooperatively with others to achieve a goal  
12. Provide leadership  
13. Solve problems  
14. Build an effective and rational argument

How do citizens develop these skills? As with all skills, they must be learned and practiced. This process of learning and developing skills is the primary goal of the Student Action Project. The goal of this handbook is to assist you in this process. Some of the activities in this book are designed to help you improve the skills you need to conduct research, build an effective argument and solve problems. Other skills you will have opportunities to develop include interacting with community members and leaders; taking leadership roles and organizing; and, executing tasks to advance your cause. These experiences will provide you with a deeper understanding of the role you can play as a citizen in your society and help you to develop useful skills.
THE STUDENT ACTION PROJECT

Through the Student Action Project, you will become engaged in a critical examination of a problem you identify in your community or society. It will be important to research the problem thoroughly to understand the causes, related issues and different perspectives on the issue before drawing conclusions and developing a plan of action to address the problem. There will be many steps in this process that must be followed. You will also be required to consider each of the four themes of the course in relation to your issue: 1) whether there are issues of human rights and what remedies are needed; 2) the government’s responsibility and possible actions it can take; 3) the role civil society is playing or could play; and 4) actions individual citizens could take.

The Student Action Project has several components to fulfill. Some aspects of the project will be completed with a team of students; however, there will also be many tasks that each member of the team will complete individually. Small teams of students (3-6) will be determined based on interest in addressing an identified problem at your university or in your community, city or region in Ukraine.

Following the steps outlined in this handbook are essential for completing the project correctly. For each step there are directions and resources to guide you in this handbook. The steps in the project are:

**STEP 1.** Identify a societal problem to research

**STEP 2.** Design a research plan to learn about the problem

**STEP 3.** Implement the research plan

**STEP 4.** Learn from the research

**STEP 5.** Evaluate the issue from the perspective of the 4 course themes

**STEP 6.** Form a proposal and action plan

**STEP 7.** Implement the action plan

**STEP 8.** Prepare a group presentation

**STEP 9.** Deliver the presentation to class and respond to questions

**STEP 10.** Write an individual reflection of one’s learning based on the project
Completing the steps will require work through the entire semester. The 15-week timeline below should be used to help guide your work week by week.

**Week 1** – Introduction to project and begin to identify problems

**Week 2** – Select topics and form research groups (Step 1, begin Step 2)

**Week 3** – Research (Step 2, begin Step 3)

**Week 4** – Research (Steps 3 & 4)

**Week 5** – Research (Steps 3 & 4)

**Week 6** – Research (Steps 3 & 4)

**Week 7** – Research (Steps 3 & 4)

**Week 8** – Evaluate the issue from the perspective of the human rights and government actions (Step 5)

**Week 9** – Evaluate the issue from the perspective of civil society and citizen participation (Step 5)

**Week 10** – Form a proposal and action plan (Step 6)

**Week 11** – Form a proposal and action plan (Step 6); Begin implementing action plan (Step 7)

**Week 12** – Implement action plan (Step 7)

**Week 13** – Implement action plan (Step 7); Prepare for group presentation (Step 8)

**Week 14** – Presentations (Steps 9 & 10)

**Week 15** – Presentations (Steps 9 & 10)
EXAMPLES OF STUDENT ACTION PROJECTS

The course, "Democracy: from Theory to Practice," was started in Ukraine in the fall of 2018 at 5 universities and expanded to 3 more universities in the spring of 2019. During the first year, hundreds of students at these eight universities across Ukraine completed the Student Action Project. Many topics were researched and students proposed solutions and took actions to make changes in their communities.

You will analyze four examples of Student Action Projects. As you read about the examples of Student Action Projects, consider the following questions:

1. What was the problem?
2. Which of the course themes were relevant to the project?
3. What actions did students take?
4. What steps led to the success?

Student Action Project Example 1
“REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS AMONG MINORS”

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Students observed that there was substantial growth in the sale and consumption of alcoholic and tobacco products by minors. All of the students had frequently observed teenagers drunk in the streets late in the evening and underage persons smoking. The students felt that this was a serious threat to the health of young people and the future of Ukraine, so they chose this as the problem to work on. To gain a deeper understanding of the issue students conducted research of many sources. One source they studied was a survey conducted by the Oleksandr Yaremenko Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies. This survey showed that 83.4% of students had at least once in their lives consumed alcoholic beverages, 34.5% said it is easy for them to buy alcohol in shops; and, 12.2% of students smoke on a daily basis. They also reviewed existing laws about the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors and found it was illegal. Student learned many individuals who sell the products do not know current laws.
Based on the student’s research, they formulated a goal to reduce consumption of alcohol and tobacco among minors. To achieve this goal, they determined that they would need to increase awareness among minors of the problems and health risks of consuming these items; to warn the sellers about the possible liability of the sales of these products; and, disseminate information in society to build overall awareness of the problem and the laws. To reach these goals, they planned to target different audiences: Minors of 16-18 years, shop assistants and regular people in the community. The students also believe laws need to be changed to increase the penalties on shops that sell the products to minors, but this was goal was not included in their project proposal.

THE ACTION PLAN

1. Find and order stickers on the ban of selling alcohol and tobacco products to minors.
2. Take the stickers, ‘tour’ the shops in our area to remind shop assistants of their liability and to glue stickers in shops.
3. Disseminate information on the Internet concerning the damage to health caused by alcohol and tobacco.
4. Create a page on Instagram to reach teenagers via social media.

ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Instagram account was created1 and two photos were posted to show how the alcohol and tobacco affect human organisms. As of July of 2019, the Instagram page had 137 subscribers. The tour of local shops included 12 shops in Kharkiv. Students spoke to shopkeepers and assistants to warn them about their liability under the law for the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors and they posted the stickers stating, ‘We don’t sell tobacco and alcohol to persons below 18’ on their shops. Students plan to continue to use social media to educate others.

1 / Instagram page of the “Reduce consumption of alcoholic and tobacco products among minors” student project, https://www.instagram.com/stop_alco_and_tabak/
Student Action Project Example 2

“#ELECTION”

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Students were concerned about the lack of awareness and passiveness of students of Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University regarding elections. They noted their generation is responsible for building democracy in Ukraine; but their generation feels disgust about corruption, political fraud and abuse of power by the authorities. However, the common response is not to vote; instead, the students refuse to ‘fight with windmills’ and dream of going abroad. The students were concerned about this lack of civic and voting engagement among youth, particularly as the 2019 Presidential election approached. They believed most students had little knowledge about political processes.

Several sources were used to research the problem. Students read a study titled “Ukrainian Generation Z: Values and Guidelines,” conducted in 2017 by the ‘New Europe’ Center, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and survey research firm GfKUkraine. They surveyed 104 students of Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University on the topic of participation in the future elections and preliminary knowledge of the election process. They also interviewed Anatoliy Maslov, an expert in social choice theory, doctor of economic sciences and associate professor of the Department of Economic Theory, Macro and Microeconomics of Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University. Research findings confirmed students’ initial beliefs on the status of knowledge about elections and the level of political and civic activity among students.

The goals of the students’ proposal were to 1) increase the level of election awareness of students; 2) increase students’ levels of political and civic activity; and 3) reduce the level of voter absenteeism among students. The target audience was students of Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University.

THE ACTION PLAN

1. Hold an ironic workshop game, “How to Become a Successful Corrupt Official,” conducted within the project “Innovative Art Activities Aimed to Counteract Corruption,” organized by the public organization “Tochka Dotyku,” supported by the European Union’s Anti-Corruption Initiative in Ukraine (EUACI).

2. Work with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES Ukraine) and deliver an interactive lecture on the election process as part of the information campaign “Youth Does Not Like. Youth Votes!”
3. Show and discuss the movie “Power” (2018) at the university.
4. Create a campaign for students to influence views on the lack of political and civic engagement.
   Create ironic photos about the indifference of young people to political processes and stereotypes about elections in Ukraine.
5. Conduct repeated surveys of the participants who attend events.

**ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The students held interactive lectures along with IFES, which included the game, “Brain Ring” and mock elections; they showed the movie “Power” at their university; they conducted a workshop on “How to Become a Successful Corrupt Official;” and, created and disseminated ironic photos on Facebook and Instagram. They also went beyond their initial plan of action and conducted mock elections and the game “Brain Ring” (an intellectual game addressing election topics) at several universities. In addition, the students have formed the NGO, “Democratic Platform of Ukraine,” to conduct additional activities to increase the knowledge on elections of youth.

Lastly, students administered surveys administered after the action plan was implemented and which showed that the students were engaged in public affairs topics, increased their knowledge of the topics and were now more likely to follow political events and vote. Some comments from students in the audience were, “Everybody around keeps saying that corruption is bad. You have shown us an absolutely different approach and have not said any trivial things. It appeals to me” [Maksym, a third-year student], and “Due to this interactive lecture I finally got into the register of voters . . . I stood in a queue, I even had to argue with someone, but I still did reach my goal. You keep motivating!” [Olha, a second-year student added].

Students who conducted this project summed up their experience by stating, “Each of us has felt an inner change and we don’t intend to change our “IN for OFF,”” said Nataliia Mandebura. To keep this “ON” they plan to continue working at election awareness-raising before the parliamentary elections, work within their newly established NGO to unite citizens around democratic ideas and raise the level of education of young people.
Демократія раз у 5 років!

Критикую і не голосую!
Обижаю по фейсу!

Люблю экстрич, особенно "каруселі"!
Student Action Project Example 3

“THE RIGHT TO LIFE”

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Students started with the belief that all individuals in society deal with the issue of ‘otherness’. This led to their interest to study what life is like for people with disabilities in order to broaden their outlook and to help others who need it.

Research conducted to investigate the issue included surveys of regular Lviv residents. They were asked questions on their views of what life might be like for persons with disabilities, how they would describe persons with disabilities, is the city adequately adapted for people with disabilities and what actions they thought needed to be taken to improve conditions. Other surveys were conducted among individuals who are blind, have impaired vision or who use wheelchairs. These surveys sought to learn about these individuals’ lives, about their educational and professional experiences, problems they face and their dreams and goals. Students also contacted the organization, “Lviv Happiness Workshop,” and arranged to interview deaf persons and heads of organizations to ask similar questions. The students also conducted interviews with Lviv City Council deputies and an advisor to the mayor from the executive committee.

As a result of the research, students learned that the main problem people with disabilities are faced with is the attitude of other people. People are not tolerant and lack knowledge about people with disabilities. The students also learned that people with disabilities have many negative experiences with issues such as, teachers who do not understand how to teach persons with disabilities, unsatisfactory road conditions connecting the academic buildings of Lviv Polytechnic National University, discrimination from public transport drivers, poor social assistance provided by the state and general misunderstanding and stereotyping by the public.

The goals of the project were to 1) highlight problems people with disabilities are faced with on a daily basis; and 2) to change the common opinion that the lives of people with disabilities is incomplete and limited. The group identified two target audiences. The first was public authorities that have the authority to improve life conditions of people with disabilities. The second target audience were people above the age of 15 who were residents of Lviv and the Lviv region.

THE ACTION PLAN

1. Address the vice-rector of the Lviv Polytechnic National University on research and seek more accessibility for students with special needs.
2. Address the deputies of the Lviv City Council on the issue of discrimination and insufficient financial support provided by government to persons with disabilities.
3. Provide financial support to the nonprofit organization “Lviv Happiness Workshop.”
4. Produce a film of the group’s research and actions and create the movie “The Right to Life.”
5. Address the news media to disseminate the group’s research and their movie to the public.

ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The students stated that they had implemented everything they planned. The dialogue with the authorities was the most successful part of their project – they were invited to the city council to raise topical issues covered by their project. The movie “The Right to Life” was also very impactful. It encouraged people to think more deeply about the lives of people with disabilities and overcome some of the existing stereotypes. Students were invited to present the movie at the Lviv City Council and talk about their project on local television.

The students plan to continue their work in order to reach a wider audience and educate more people on the issues. They are very encouraged that their efforts will continue due to the fact that one of the authors of the project has been invited to officially work in Lviv as a city council assistant deputy.

Students also believe they have changed by working on the project. They explained, “we learned to notice problems that are not related to us personally, learned to do something for others, with no benefits for ourselves,” and “Our vision of democracy has changed drastically. We have changed our opinion about the inactivity of the authorities in this country. We have come to realize that if one’s opinion is conveyed in a correct way, you will be heard and the authorities having some influence on the life of the city will be open for a dialogue with you.”

2 / The movie “The Right to Life.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48FB8FuN9n0
Student Action Project Example 4

“SPARK THE EYES OF YOUR BLIND FRIEND”

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Students noticed that there were many children in their city who were blind or had limited vision. They thought that the life of these children must be very different from theirs and they became concerned about what leisure activities the children had available to them.

The students first used Internet sources to find information about people who are blind or have visual impairments, securing of their rights and leisure activities available in Ukraine. They also made an inquiry to the Lviv City Council for public information about the number of blind people in Lviv. In order to understand how society views securing the rights of blind people, the students also conducted a survey through Facebook and Instagram.

From their research the students learned many things. First, they learned that in Lviv there is just one card game for blind children and it is very expensive. From the public information inquiry, they learned that as of early 2019 there are 3,455 children living in Lviv who are blind or who have low vision with sight impairments. From the survey, administered to 482 people, it was learned that 59% of respondents have some acquaintances who are blind or have low vision. Also, 89% of respondents believed blind people in Ukraine are not provided with sufficient conditions for entertainment and 93% felt that the authorities are not efficient in solving this problem. Respondents also overwhelmingly supported the idea of producing a game for visually impaired children.

Based on the research, the students’ goal for their proposal was to help children who are blind or have low vision by providing more awareness of the problems they faced and by creating a card game for blind children above 10 years of age.

THE ACTION PLAN

1. Create a game for children who are blind or who have low vision.
2. Coordinate development and production of the game which included identifying organizations that would produce the game for low cost.
3. Produce a short video to engage the public in helping to raise money for production of the game.
4. Deliver a lecture at the “Institute of Social Initiatives” in order to share about their project and to urge people to solve such problems.
5. To make a publication in the weekly of Lviv Polytechnic National University “Audytoriya.”
ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Students were successful in creating a card game called “Think-ers,” that four children above the age of 10 could simultaneously play. The goal of the game is to give examples that start with a certain letter and correspond to the words on the player’s cards. All the cards had Braille text the students could read. The students made many inquiries to find a low cost means to have the game produced. Through this process they learned that the Resource Center for Persons with Special Needs of Lviv Polytechnic National University had a Braille printer. The center’s staff agreed to cooperate with students and did all the work for 300 UAH, which was significantly less than 3,500 UAH other organizations cited. Due to the lower cost of production, the students were able to raise money needed from donations of people who reacted to a short video the students produced.

The student video can be viewed at https://youtu.be/v_-NBW1hYaQ. Students were able to raise awareness of the issue through their work and they donated the game they created to a school for blind and visually-impaired children.

Their hope now is that, “Our game will urge the authorities to improve securing the rights of persons with disabilities,” and that they “Would gladly continue promotion of the game in Ukraine and, maybe, even in the world.” However, they realize that will require money and possibly more collaborations with NGOs. Students also shared that “We have realized that we have many tools to change the life of our city and country.”

Based on the information you’ve just read, consider the following questions:
1. What did the projects have in common?
2. What was different about the projects?
3. What have you learned about the Student Action Project?

Now that you know a little bit more about the Student Action Project, it is time to begin your own project. You will do this by completing the steps and activities in this handbook.

3 / Video of the “Spark the Eyes of Your Blind Friend” student project, https://youtu.be/v_-NBW1hYaQ
The Student Action Project
STEP 1.
IDENTIFY A SOCIETAL PROBLEM TO RESEARCH

The first step is to brainstorm a list of issues you and your peers view as problems in your local community, region or Ukrainian society. The issues should be important, ones that present problems for a significant number of individuals and will most likely require the action of more than a single individual to remedy. Before you select your issue, there are some important steps to take. This section will guide you through this process.

During the brainstorming stage, it is important to not evaluate problems as you list them. All you want to do at this point is to generate a list of possible problems you and your peers might consider for your action project topic. By concerning yourself only with generating a list, you might be more open to listing issues you might have not considered if you had previously made a decision on your topic. You might find it difficult at first to identify problems. If this is the case, it is a good idea to speak with your friends and family, as well as other members of Ukrainian society and ask them what issues they consider problematic in the community or for all of Ukraine. Another possibility is to listen to and watch the news or read news articles. Many different issues of concern should be presented through the news. Your textbook for this course might also help you identify problems. By scanning topics in future sections, you might find an issue of interest.

Once you have an initial list of problems, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What do I already know about this issue?
2. Why do I think this is an important problem that needs attention?
3. Do I know enough about the issue to determine how serious it is?
4. How interested am I in learning more about this issue?

By answering these questions, you will probably find that some of the items on the initial brainstorming list can be eliminated. Next you should choose, or your professor will assign, one of the topics on the list to conduct preliminary research on. Others in your class will conduct preliminary research on other topics from the brainstorming list. This preliminary research will be shared with your peers to help educate everyone about different topics before final topics for the Action Projects are determined. Information might be shared in class or through an electronic format depending on the instructions by your professor.
To prepare for your initial research, complete the *Worksheet 1 – Preliminary Research of Topics for the Student Action Project*. It will be useful to help identify issues and select a final topic for your project.

**GUIDELINES TO SELECTING AN ISSUE**

You do not want to select problems that are personal or affect only a few individuals. You also do not want to choose an issue that can easily be remedied through the cooperation of a few individuals. An example of this might be an argument two individuals in an apartment building have over parking visitor’s cars. An issue like this can usually be resolved through an agreement between these individuals. However, suppose the issue is much larger and there are arguments breaking out among many tenants and perhaps cars are being vandalized because there are not enough safe parking places available. This might be a problem that a few individuals or a community group could address and petition the local government for more parking areas, or for police patrols to monitor the area.

Another possible action could be for members of the community to form patrols to watch over the cars. To achieve their goal, these individuals or the community group might need to raise awareness of the problem and build support from other members of the community. This is an example of how individuals and groups of people can take action when they see a problem in their community or larger Ukrainian society. Democracy creates opportunities for people to exercise their rights to improve their lives and the lives of others. This means citizenship in a democracy should be active, not passive.

**SELECTING THE TOPIC FOR YOUR PROJECT**

Based on your and your peers’ preliminary research, you will be better informed about several issues and you can choose which you feel is most important to you or that you are interested to learn more about. Once you have determined which topic you wish to select, your professor will assign you to a group with other students who are interested in the same topic.
WORKSHEET 1
PRELIMINARY RESEARCH OF TOPICS FOR THE STUDENT ACTION PROJECT

Preliminary research is important to educate yourself more about topics before you make a final decision on the topic to research for the Student Action Project. Use the table below to aid in this process. It will be important to conduct this research and share your findings with your peers. During this stage of the research, you should focus on evidence that there is a problem that could be addressed through government, community or individuals’ actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT QUESTIONS DO I/WE HAVE ABOUT THIS ISSUE?</th>
<th>WHAT SOURCES CAN WE USE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS ISSUE?</th>
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After you have completed preliminary research answer the questions below. Your answers may help you when choose the topic you want to work on for your Action Project.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT THE ISSUE?</th>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN RESEARCHING THIS TOPIC FURTHER?</th>
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<table>
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<th>HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS ISSUE TO YOU, YOUR COMMUNITY OR THE COUNTRY?</th>
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STEP 2.
DESIGN A RESEARCH PLAN TO LEARN ABOUT THE PROBLEM

It is very important that research is conducted to learn about the issue before a proposal to address the problem can be created. When you do extensive research and look at the issue from different perspectives, you really grow to understand the complexity of an issue such as why this problem has persisted, what has already been tried and what is currently being done and with what degree of success. Without sufficient research, you will not fully understand the problem and therefore you may not be able to create a plan to address the problem adequately. Sometimes when a plan of action is created too early it does not actually address the real problem. The example below helps to illustrate what can happen when students identify the solution before they have enough information.

THE CASE OF THE MISDIAGNOSED PROBLEM

As you read the case below consider these questions:

1. What led to the students misdiagnosing the problem?
2. What actions led to a deeper understanding of the issue and the real problem?
3. Was the students’ initial plan to raise money for afterschool programs practical to address the problem they identified with more research?
4. What actions helped the students formulate a new plan to address the problem?

A group of students living in a city in the northeast of the United States identified delinquent behavior among teens as an issue to work on for their action project. The students all knew or had heard about individuals who had been in trouble with the law. As the students researched the issue, they learned that most crime among teens in the U.S. was committed between the hours of 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Additionally, interviews with teen delinquents revealed that many young people claimed they got into trouble when they were bored and looking for fun. Based on this information, the group of students concluded the problem was that there were not enough supervised afterschool activities for teenagers. Based on their understanding of the problem, students proposed raising money for afterschool programs and asking schools and local government to contribute money and space for these programs.
Students sought to understand issues related to juvenile delinquency and define a problem they could address through their own actions. When the students met with government officials to propose their plan, they learned such afterschool programs already existed. So now what should the students do? Were their work and good intentions for nothing? Where had the students gone wrong? The problem is the students misdiagnosed the problem because they defined the problem too early in their research.

Fortunately, they were committed to working on this issue and learning more to understand the problem. Students decided to conduct a survey to identify how many teens knew about these afterschool programs. If someone was aware of the programs, questions were asked about why the individual did not attend. The survey data revealed that most teens surveyed did not know about the programs. Among those who did know about the programs, teens were most likely to explain they did not attend because they had no way to get to the program facilities.

Now the students recognized there were two problems to consider. The first was a lack of awareness of afterschool programs. The second problem was transportation to the facilities. With this new information, students were able to work with school and government officials to better publicize the programs and recommend low-cost bus routes to reach the facilities. The above example highlights how important it is to try to learn as much as you can about the issue you select before trying to define what the problem is you would like to address. It is also important to remain flexible and recognize that as you learn more about your topic, the problem may need to be redefined.

**CREATING A RESEARCH PLAN**

For this phase of the project, you will need to learn as much as you can about the issue you have selected. This will require accessing information from different sources and researching the problem from different perspectives. Formulating a research plan with other members of the group and sharing the research responsibilities is very important.

**GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL WORK**

In this project, there is work that will be completed as a group and work that is done individually. Coordinating with other members of your group is crucial. All members of the group should agree to plan to divide the work and share in the responsibility of the project. Individual work should regularly be completed in accordance with the timeline and directions in the handbook and shared with the group. This can be done in person and/or through another method of information sharing such as a common Google folder. Group tasks and worksheets should be completed as a group.
INDIVIDUAL DOCUMENTATION JOURNAL

All of the individual work should be collected and submitted to the Individual Documentation Journal. Each individual should prepare the Individual Documentation Journal based on the directions from your professor. Your professor may choose to check this regularly so be sure to stay up to date with your work. It is also important for all individuals to share their work with other members of the group so that everyone in the group shares responsibility for the research and work and everyone learns from each other.

Your plan must include multiple methods to gather information from different sources. Researching multiple sources will provide your group with different perspectives on the topic and should increase your understanding of the issue. As a group, discuss sources from the lists below and determine which would be useful to learn more about the problem. During the research phase of the project, each member of the group must access information from different types of sources, and everyone must choose to use both literary and active methods for research. Typically, you must research a different source each week. Your professor will tell you the number of sources required for your project. All sources must be properly cited (guidelines are presented in the next section on implementing your research plan) and listed in the Individual Documentation Journal. It is each group member’s responsibility to summarize what they learned in 1-2 paragraphs. This information must be included in the Individual Documentation Journal and shared with the group. It is recommended that all groups use a digital means to share their information such as a Google Folder.

Student Action Project Individual Documentation Journal Rubric is available in Annex 1.
There are two types of research you must conduct to learn about the topic you have selected. First, your group should choose from the literary research methods.

**LITERARY RESEARCH METHODS**

You should plan to read and view multiple sources in order to get different perspectives and confirm facts and to validate what is reported or said. During the first few weeks of research, it is often best to focus on information obtained from literary sources. This will help you to build background knowledge of the issue and determine what additional information needs to be obtained through active methods of research (see Active Research Methods below). Thus, your research plan should initially focus on literary methods and expand to include active methods as you move forward. An exception might be to interview an expert early in your research to learn about the issue or to gather preliminary data on a topic to better understand how a group, [i.e, students, persons with disabilities, etc.] feels about the issue.

As you create your plan consider the timeline for when the different sources and methods will be focused on. Keep in mind that this is a “plan” and will likely change as you learn more about the topic (this point is elaborated on in Step 4).

Remember that all sources should be checked for bias and validity of the sources [this is outlined in Step 3 as a reminder to continue this process as you implement the research plan].

- Read news articles
- Analyze public documents
- Listen to podcasts
- View YouTube or other videos
- Review related websites
- Read brochures or documents published by organizations

Once you know more about the issue, you are ready to use active research methods. When choosing methods from the list below, consider what you still need to learn about the topic and which of the methods will be most helpful to obtain the needed information.

**ACTIVE RESEARCH METHODS**

When conducting active research, it is very important to consider the experience or position in society of sources and how these can influence one’s point of view and create bias. It is also important to include sources that represent different perspectives on an issue.
In the first few weeks of research, it is useful to consider who could be interviewed and/or surveyed, what meetings would be useful to attend, etc., however, it might be best to wait a few weeks before finalizing the active research methods and creating surveys and preparing for interviews. When your group agrees that you are ready to prepare for interviews and surveys, follow the guidelines presented and use the worksheets referenced.

- Conduct Interviews
- Attend a meeting of an organization related to the topic
- Make a request for public information and analyze the information
- Create and administer a survey
- Other ideas for how to investigate a topic should be discussed with your instructor

When preparing for active research, be sure to follow guidelines presented in the “Assistance for Conducting Active Research: Public Information Request, Attending a Public Meeting or the Meeting of a CSO, Survey and Interview in Research” section.

Your research plan should be created as a group. Each week the plan should be updated based on what the group has learned and decisions that are made on what still needs to be researched. Using the Worksheet 2 – Creating a Research Plan, will help the group identify research sources suited to the research goals and divide the work among the group. Your professor may choose to review your research plan with you to provide feedback and even to assign a grade.

### WORKSHEET 2
**CREATING A RESEARCH PLAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH GOALS FOR WEEK</th>
<th>SOURCES TO INVESTIGATE</th>
<th>NAME OF WHO WILL COMPLETE THE RESEARCH TASK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You can have several goals for research each week. Some of your research goals may stay the same from one week to the next; however, goals will also change since new questions will arise as you learn from your research.</td>
<td>Remember that you will want to investigate varied sources to get different perspectives. Use the list of research sources to guide these decisions.</td>
<td>Each member of the group should contribute to the research each week. It is possible that two or more people can work together, if it is necessary, such as to create and administer surveys to a large number of people or conduct interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSISTANCE FOR CONDUCTING ACTIVE RESEARCH: PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUEST, ATTENDING A PUBLIC MEETING OR THE MEETING OF A CSO, SURVEY AND INTERVIEW IN RESEARCH

Once you have selected your initial sources to research, you will probably need to create a public information request, survey or interview, or attend a public meeting or the meeting of a CSO. Follow the guidelines in the next section which will assist you with these tasks.

REQUESTING PUBLIC INFORMATION

If your group finds it useful to access public records as part of your research, the information here will be useful.

According to the Law of Ukraine “On Access to Public Information,” every citizen of Ukraine has the right to request public information from public entities; the entities must respond no later than five
working days after the date of receipt of the request, or 20 business days if the request calls for a large amount of information.

What is public information? Public information is information held by a public institution that, upon request, should be made available. This can include information such as the amount of money the government paid for a construction project or a public event/concert. Any citizen has the right to public information unless it is considered a commercial secret, private information or state secret. To request public information, you need to draft a letter with the name of the institution you are addressing at the top of the letter (the institution that possesses the information) followed by your name and contact information. Once that is completed, write your question and sign and date the bottom of the letter. Requests do not cost any money.

If the public entity refuses to provide information, it must notify the citizen and the refusal must include steps that inform the citizen how to lodge a complaint about the refusal.

**ATTENDING A PUBLIC MEETING OR THE MEETING OF A CSO**

Your group might find it useful to attend a meeting held by public officials or by a civil society organization. Follow the guidelines below to prepare for this action:

1. Determine in advance when and where the group will meet.
2. Determine what the agenda for the meeting is. Although a group might meet regularly, the topics for the meetings may vary, so find out in advance when the topic you are interested in is scheduled to be addressed.
3. Call or email someone from the organization in advance to tell them you will be attending. There might be special instructions you need to follow.
4. Prepare to take notes on the meeting.
5. Prepare questions in advance so you will be ready if you have an opportunity to ask questions.

**SURVEY AND INTERVIEW**

**PEOPLE AS A SOURCE FOR RESEARCH**

People can also provide you with information about the topic and should be interviewed or surveyed when possible. You can choose to speak with experts, individuals directly involved and others who are not directly involved but might have had similar experiences or opinions. Surveying or interviewing a variety of people will not only help you learn more about the issue, but you will understand different perspectives on the topic. When you can look at a situation from different perspectives, you are better prepared to consider an action plan that addresses the needs and concerns of the people involved.
Returning to the example of parking among tenants of an apartment building can help you understand why it’s important to obtain different points of view. Consider how many different perspectives there might be on the parking issue. It is a good idea to make a list of all the people and groups who might be affected by the issue or have a related concern. In this example, the list might include: tenants in the building who regularly host guests; tenants who rarely or never have guests; tenants who live closer to the street; tenants from nearby buildings; children who play in the streets next to the apartment building and their parents; the local police; the mayor; and, drivers of other emergency vehicles who use the street. Ask yourself what views these different individuals might have about this issue. It is possible that many would agree there is a problem and desire a solution, but might not all agree on what the solution should be. For example, some might be satisfied if there are spaces for parking on the street and guests may park there only when they are available. Which group might have this view? Another group might see this as an inadequate solution and demand more parking spaces be created at a location near the apartment building. What group or groups do you think would support this idea? By surveying or interviewing different groups you can learn about these different perspectives. Sometimes people think they understand a problem and have the right solution, only to learn the people most affected see things very differently.

**CONDUCTING SURVEY**

Surveys are great tools to gather large amounts of information from people relatively quickly. Surveys are generally a written set of questions that a large number of people are asked. Asking the same questions allows the researcher to draw conclusions about how people surveyed feel about an issue. However, just as with organizations, individuals will often have a bias depending on their relationship to the topic and their life experiences. Another potential problem with surveys is getting information that accurately reflects the views of the population studied. There are many techniques used by researchers to reduce the effect of bias and obtain a representative sample.

**SAMPLE POPULATIONS**

It is not necessary to survey everyone in a population. For example, if you were researching a problem associated with the elderly in one of the regions in Ukraine. It would be nearly impossible to survey all of the elderly, but you would still want to get feedback from a portion of the elderly population you felt was representative of the larger group. Such a sample consists of a smaller model of the larger population that represents the interests and views of the whole. To have a representative sample, there are two issues that must be addressed. The first is that to be representative, every member of the larger population must have an equal chance of being chosen to participate in the survey. The second issue relates to whether or not individuals who respond to the survey actually represent the larger population. To understand these concerns, consider the following example.
A group of students is researching problems associated with housing for the elderly in a region. To learn more about the issues, they decided to send surveys to a local facility that provides housing to elderly persons. Information from the survey should be useful to gain insights into issues from the perspective of those who are directly affected. However, consider if a few of the students went to the housing facility and handed out surveys to anyone they met that day. Even if those people were helpful in providing information, their experiences and views do not necessarily represent those of others living in the facility. For instance, what if many of the individuals who lived at the facility were unable to leave their beds most of the day, and therefore were not able to meet with the students. Or perhaps there are other residents who are very active and leave the facility during the day to take walks and meet with friends and family, and therefore they were not available. It is important to understand, in this case, the survey results only represent views of individuals who are active enough to leave their rooms; but who do not regularly leave the facility or who happened to be present that day.

This example highlights two important concepts of random selection and sampling a cross-section of the population. The first, random selection, means all individuals in the population being studied, in this case, elderly persons living in a particular facility, should have an equal chance of being surveyed. For instance, everyone could be given the survey to complete, so all had a chance to participate. Another method researchers use to narrow down the population is to randomly select individuals to give the survey to. Sometimes all individuals in the population are assigned a number and then the survey is given to every third person, for example.

However, even if a process of randomization had been used to give surveys to people living at the facility, there might be a problem obtaining a representative sample. In this example, views obtained by the students were most likely representative of only a small group, those who were able to leave their rooms and were present to receive the survey. What if every third person who received the survey was also someone who was more likely to leave their room on a daily basis? The views represented would then only represent the experiences of mobile residents, which would most likely be different than views of individuals confined to their rooms.

A technique called “stratification” is used to address this. To stratify a population, it is necessary to identify sub-categories. For instance, in this example, the population might be divided into three categories: those primarily confined to their rooms, those who regularly leave their rooms but primarily stay within the facility and those who regularly leave the facility. How you identify subgroups is based on what you are trying to learn. So, if you wanted to know if the age of a resident was important in understanding their needs, then you would identify categories based on age. Once subgroups are identified, you could select a random population within each subgroup to survey. However, keep in mind that you would only want to use a random sample if the total population was too large to survey. If you were surveying residents at many facilities, a random sampling method might make it easier to administer and collect the surveys and interpret the results.
Keep in mind as you conduct surveys or polls that it might not always be possible to collect data using a random sampling method or by identifying a cross-section. The most important thing is that you are aware of the limitations of gathering data without using scientific methods. You may still find the data useful, but you must consider the shortcomings before drawing conclusions. It is also important to share the methods used to collect data, form conclusions based on analysis of the data and possible limitations of the analysis when presenting your data to build an argument or persuade others.

**VALUE AND LIMITS TO SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media has become a popular method to conduct quick polls and surveys. However, there are serious drawbacks to relying too heavily on it. A survey given on Facebook, for example, will most likely not be representative of a population, nor is it likely to be random. One instance where a Facebook poll might be useful is if a survey or poll is administered to a specific Facebook group, such as members of a university club. The population would then be defined as members of the university club. If all members had adequate notice and time to complete the survey, then the results could be representative of the group, but this still depends on who and how many people answer.

When planning for a survey through social media, keep in mind who is likely to use the media. It will often be necessary to use another method to include the views of individuals who do not regularly use social media. If this is not done, whole groups might be overlooked and this could seriously impact your data findings. Always consider who you want to get information from and what is the best way to reach a large and representative number of people in that group.

**DEVELOPING SURVEY QUESTIONS**

Developing a good survey is not as simple as it might seem. Poorly-designed questions can lead to misinformation or useless data. However, well-designed questions can help you access the needed information. There are several tips to consider when creating your survey:

- Be clear on what information you want to obtain. Identify your reasons for giving the survey before designing questions. Then confirm that each question will help you obtain the desired information.
- Keep questions simple. Each question should be clearly stated so there is no misunderstanding about what is being asked.
- Avoid questions that actually ask two questions in one. An example of this is, “How have parents and students responded to the new requirements?” Although you might be interested to know how both parents and students have responded, the answer for each group might be different, and should therefore be asked in two separate questions.
• Shorter questionnaires are better, so ask only what you need to. Try to limit it to six to 10 questions so people do not become frustrated or bored and stop providing serious responses.

• Avoid leading or biased questions. Questions should be worded in a neutral manner that does not reflect your views. For example, a survey question that asks, “Do you think the new cafeteria lunch menu offers a better variety of healthy foods than the old one?” suggests to the reader that the new menu is better and may therefore influence the response. A better question would be, “How do you feel about the new cafeteria lunch menu compared to the old one?”

• Present questions in a clear, organized layout. A clear layout will make it easier for people to respond.

• If you offer a choice of responses, be sure there are enough items to reflect a full range of views. For example, if you are asking a question about how frequently people do something, sufficient range of options would include “always,” “usually,” “sometimes,” “rarely” and “never.” Otherwise, people might feel compelled to choose a selection that does not accurately reflect their views or habits.

**SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS**

Here are sample questions a government agency might use to get information about how they are performing. There are several different types of question types used: multiple choice questions, rating questions, and open-ended questions. As you review these samples, notice how tips for developing survey questions are incorporated.

**MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

**Example 1:** Are you a citizen? Please circle the correct response

Yes / No

**Example 2:** How old are you? Please mark your choice on the line provided

A) 18-25  B) 26-35  C) 36-45  D) 45-60  E) 60 and older
Example 3: How many times have you called our agency about this issue in the past month? Please mark your choice on the line provide:

- Once
- Twice
- Three times
- More than three times
- Don’t know/not sure

RANK ORDER SCALE QUESTIONS

Example 4: Please rank the following factors from most to least important to you when interacting with our agency by checking the appropriate box for each statement. 1 = Most important, 5 = Least important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service feature</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call wait time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call hold time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative’s customer service skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative’s knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution of issue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 5: The customer service representative was knowledgeable. Please mark your choice on the line provided.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- No Opinion

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

Example 6: How could we have improved your experience with our agency today? Please list one or two suggestions that can help us improve our customer service.
**CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS**

Interviews are a useful way to obtain more in-depth information from individuals. Interviews are also an opportunity for individuals to explain their responses to the interviewer, allowing room for follow-up questions. It is also a chance for the interviewee to share information important to them that might not be addressed through a survey.

Before beginning interviews, it is important to determine the goal or reason for conducting the interviews. The answers will help you to determine who to interview and the interview format. For instance, if you are interested in getting factual information, it might be best to interview an expert. If you want to learn more about the perspectives of a particular group, say elderly people, you should consider several candidates from this group that have different circumstances [some living in a facility for elderly persons, some living with family members, some living on their own] to see if the answers are similar or different in important ways. Determining your goals will help you decide how many people you need to interview and how to structure questions.

There are two basic ways to design an interview – a structured interview approach and an unstructured approach. In the structured approach, you create questions in advance that you will ask all individuals you interview. One advantage of this approach is that you are able to focus the interview on information you are interested in. A second advantage is that you are able to compare the response of interviewees to see if there are common experiences or important differences. The disadvantage is that the individual interviewed may have additional information that could be important to you, but there is no opportunity to provide it because the questions are predetermined. Sometimes the interviewer will ask if there is anything the individual being interviewed would like to add at the end of a structured interview. This gives the individual a chance to share information important to them and potentially important to the researcher.

Another way to approach the interview is to conduct an unstructured interview. In this approach, the interviewer engages in more of a conversation with the interviewee and generally asks questions based on the interviewees’ responses. This format may be useful to get more in-depth information from an individual, but does not allow for the same comparisons between interviews that a structured format does. Unstructured interviews are also more difficult to control and a novice researcher may come away from an interview realizing they did not get answers to important questions. For these reasons, it is suggested that you plan to conduct at least part of your interview in a structured format while conducting research for your project.

To prepare to create a survey or interview questions, use the *Worksheet 3 - Preparing a Survey* and *Worksheet 4 - Preparing for Interviews*. 
WORKSHEET 3
PREPARING A SURVEY

Taking the time to prepare before you conduct a survey will help ensure that you get information that is useful to your research. Answering the questions below and following the guidelines will help you create a well-constructed survey.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the goal of the survey? Think through what you would like to learn from the survey. Your goals will help guide other decisions concerning the survey.

2. Who should the survey be given to? Think about the goal(s) you identified, what people are in a good position to provide the information you are seeking?

   A. Will we try to identify a random sample? If so, what are our plans to do this?

   B. Will we try to sample a cross-section of the population? What subgroups should we identify?

   C. If we do not plan to randomize and/or sample a cross-section of the population what will the implications be for our survey results?
3. Determine if you will need to create multiple surveys to administer to different groups based on your research goals. For example, if you have determined it is important to survey students and teachers when learning more about an educational issue, should the same survey be used for both groups or should you administer different surveys to each group?

4. Look carefully at identified goals and guidelines for creating survey questions, then begin to create your questions.
   
   A. Do the questions adhere to the guidelines?

   B. Do the questions help you access the information you desire and to meet your goals?

   C. Are there any questions we can eliminate?

5. How will we administer the survey? Consider potential pros and cons of various methods such as the use of technology, verbal surveys or written surveys.
WORKSHEET 4
PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

Taking the time to prepare before you conduct interview will help ensure that you get information that is useful to your research. Answering the questions below and following the guidelines for conducting interview will assist you in this process.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the goal of the interview(s)? Think through what you would like to learn from the interviews. Your goals will help guide other decisions while preparing for and conducting interviews.

2. Who should you interview? Think about the goal(s) you identified, what people are in a good position to provide the information you are seeking. Will it be important to interview people from different categories, such as, experts on a topic, individuals who are directly affected by an issue, friends or family members of individuals affected, politicians, individuals working for NGOs who are concerned with the issue? All of these individuals could provide insight and different perspectives on the issue. List all that you would like to interview and consider how you can contact them and ask for their cooperation.

3. Review the list you completed in Question 2 and consider if the type of information you will seek from these people differs.
4. Based on your answers to Questions 1, 2 and 3, determine the format you will use for the interviews and the questions you will ask. Be sure to review guidelines for preparing for interviews.

5. Review your plans and questions to determine if they will help you access information you seek and reach your goals. Bring your questions to the interview.

6. How will you record the information from the interview? Will you take notes or use a recording device? If you choose to use a recording device be sure to get permission first.
STEP 3.
IMPLEMENT THE RESEARCH PLAN

The formal research phase will be conducted over the first eight weeks of the semester. Research can be conducted individually and collaboratively. For example, two or more people may create a survey together (collaboration) and then each individual administers the survey and collects data (individual). The group research plan should be followed and each week group members should inform each other of the research they have done and what they have learned. This information should also be summarized and added to the Individual Documentation Journal for each member of the group. The Worksheet 5 – Bias Detection, and guidelines presented below for conducting effective research should always be followed.

TIPS FOR RESEARCHING THE ISSUE

RESEARCHING WITH PRINT SOURCES

When conducting your research, it is very important that you critically assess all of the resources you review to determine how useful they are to your research. In general, all materials should be analyzed in each of the following areas:

- Relevancy
- Author
- Accuracy
- Bias
- Timeliness

RELEVANCY

The relevance of a resource is the first thing you should determine. Never before has so much information been available to individuals. A simple Google search can return thousands of informational hits. How can an individual stay focused on what information is important to the research and not become
distracted by irrelevant or inaccurate material? One way to address this issue, whether through a web search or through a library database, is to be specific in the key words used in a search. Narrow down potential items returned by adding words that are as targeted at possible.

For example, in the case presented, if students had begun a search with “juvenile delinquency” they would have received a mountain of returns that could take weeks and even months to scour. More specific terms or phrases such as, “reasons for juvenile delinquency among youth living in cities in the United States,” is more likely to narrow the field and yield fewer returns.

Once the field has been narrowed, it is still likely you will encounter resources that are not very useful. Skim materials with a few key questions in mind. For instance, the questions might be: How is the issue defined? Is this definition consistent with my topic? Is there new information presented here that I do not already have? Does this source help me better understand the issue?

If you answered yes to most of these questions, the source is likely to be relevant to your research.

**AUTHOR**

The next step is to determine who the author or authors are of the source. For news or scholarly journal articles, this should be very easy. Once you have the name of the author, it is important to determine this individual’s position of authority on the topic. If it is a scholarly article, determine where the author works and if they have a degree in a related field. This is especially important if you want to cite this person as an expert. If you are using print media to conduct your research, you will want to learn about the professional ethics of the source. An Internet search of the media source can help you learn how others view the organization. It is important to determine what other journalists and organizations representing journalists say about your source. All publications are not viewed equally in journalistic scrutiny. If you find interesting and relevant information from a news source that is not highly-regarded, search for related stories from more respected news sources so you can validate the accuracy of the information.

When relying on an Internet source, it can be a bit more complicated to get information about the author[s]. For Internet sources, you must at least determine the name of the organization publishing the information and administering the website. If the author’s name is available, it is useful to conduct a quick search of the individual to see what else he or she has written; what organizations he or she may belong to; and the impression the author has left on others. If there is only an organization listed on a website, it is important to learn more about the organization as you would with an author.

This information may be useful in determining if this individual (or organization) is an expert; what the source of his or her knowledge is; and, if he or she has a personal agenda. This idea will be discussed
more under the section, "Bias." If you cannot find an author[s] or the name of a website publisher, this could be an indication the source is not worthwhile.

It is not necessary to cite only experts on a given subject. Lay people can add insight to an issue, particularly if they have been personally involved. However, when conducting your research, it is important to distinguish between researched-based findings, which are generally presented in scholarly articles; government databases; databases of well-respected national and international organizations or well-regarded news sources; and, anecdotal findings. In general, the experience of one or two individuals is anecdotal, and may even represent extreme and uncommon cases. Therefore, if you choose to cite an individual in your research, try to find additional sources or individuals to validate that this is not an isolated case.

**ACCURACY**

Accuracy relates to the credibility of a source. You will want to confirm you can trust the information you use to understand your problem and eventually build an argument in favor of your action plan. This is why it is so important to trust the sources you are using. Quotes of individuals, particularly those who are not experts, may be distorted or inaccurate. Some individuals may simply be misinformed while others may intentionally be trying to misinform. Always check your sources to determine credibility. If the information is researched-based, provided by an expert or published by a well-respected organization, you can generally trust it is true. Some examples of such organizations are: the United Nations, Amnesty International or major news outlets like CNN or the BBC. However, it is always a good idea to look for corroboration among sources. The more support you can find to validate information from additional sources, the more confident you can be of the accuracy.

**BIAS**

As mentioned, it is important to determine if the author or organization has an agenda when sharing information. Information can be used, even statistical data, to tell a story from many different points of view. Take the case of a school district deciding how to budget funds. Recent test scores indicate many students in the district are performing below grade level in math and science. Now imagine how different groups might use this information to lobby school authorities to budget money in different ways to support each group’s goals.

For instance, some may be interested in setting new standards for hiring, retaining and promoting teachers. For this group, the use of student test scores could support the idea that several teachers should not be rehired and money should instead be spent on recruiting and salaries for teachers with advanced degrees in math and science. However, another group primarily made up of teachers might
Step 3. Implement the Research Plan

interpret test scores very differently and advocate for a different way to address the problem. This group might ask school authorities to allocate money for after-school enrichment programs in math and science, arguing that students simply need more help in these areas and new programs would lead to increases in test scores. It is possible a third group sees the issue as a problem of the school’s curriculum. This group argues the test results reveal the curriculum is outdated and needs to be revised to reflect content knowledge assessed on the standardized tests administered to students. This group suggests that money be spent on hiring experts to rewrite the school’s math and science curricula.

A final group has an altogether different goal, rather than wanting to see the school find a means to improve students’ test scores, this group is interested in using the data to discredit the school. This group is interested in attracting students to attend a private school and will use the data to convince parents the public school is not able to successfully educate their children. Perhaps some parents will also support this idea and will use test data to tell other families that they should not send their children to the public school.

Which of the above groups is right? All of the groups are relying on the same data to advocate for their goals. While the data is accurate, the different interests of each group create a bias, which affects how each group discusses the data. It is not enough to accept a group’s conclusions because they offer data. The goals of the individual or group must also be considered.

Here is another element to take into account: has the data been manipulated in some manner to support a group’s goals? Suppose the test data was scrutinized more closely and it was determined the scores of one particular subgroup were well below the average scores of the majority of students. In fact, the majority of the students were passing the tests with satisfactory scores, but the subgroup’s scores were so low that the overall average was lowered for the entire population. This subgroup might represent students with a variety of different needs and characteristics.

Perhaps this is a group of students with learning disabilities, or perhaps children of immigrants who perhaps speak a different language in their home. In any of these cases, this new information would be very important to know before any decisions were made about how to spend school funds or where to send a child to school.

However, this new information would not be useful to all groups described above. It might be more advantageous for these groups to share only the overall average scores when presenting their case. Are the overall scores false? No, but that does not mean they are useful in understanding the truth about students’ test performance either.

What does this case reveal about the use of data? What does this case suggest to you about the kinds of questions you should ask when researching? It is important to develop a critical stance when
conducting research. Questioning should become the norm. As you conduct research throughout the project you should use the *Worksheet 5 – Bias Detection* as a guide to determine the potential for bias and consider how to deal with a biased source. A biased resource does not need to be discarded, but it does need to be understood. It is important to consider the usefulness of such sources and plan to find additional options. In general, if you determine a source is biased, seek additional sources that will offer different perspectives or that will corroborate the information.

**TIMELINESS**

When the information was obtained and published is very important. Information that is compelling but based on research conducted 15 years ago might not be relevant anymore. For example, a statistic that 60 percent of children cannot read at an acceptable level might be very useful to support the expansion of educational programs. However, if the data was obtained years ago before a reading program was introduced, it might not be relevant in the present. In fact, more recent data might indicate that as a result of the program, 60 percent of children are currently reading at an acceptable level. Therefore, the timeliness of the research must be considered when choosing to include a source. In general, always begin with the most recent information available and then work backward in time. Scholarly information older than 10 years old is generally considered outdated unless other sources confirm the issues and data are still relevant.

**TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION OF MEDIA**

Next time you click on a link that your friend has posted or read an article about a current or historical event, consider asking yourself these questions:

- Who made this?
- How was this made?
- Why was this made?
- When was this made?
- What is this missing?
- Where do I go from here?

The IMVAIN method, listed below, offers a helpful reminder of what type of sources we should be looking for to lessen the likelihood of us consuming or sharing disinformation:

- **Independent** sources are preferable to self-interested sources.
- **Multiple** sources are preferable to a report based on a single source.
- Sources who **Verify** or provide verifiable information are preferable to those who merely assert.

---


• **Authoritative** and/or **Informed** sources are preferable to sources who are uninformed or lack authoritative background.

• **Named** sources are better than anonymous ones.

**DOCUMENTATION**

A final point about research with printed and Internet sources is to be sure to accurately document the source. This is very important so you or others may go back to a source to verify a point or learn more and also give proper credit to the source. Documenting sources at the time you conduct research will help you remain organized. This is particularly important when using a source that might later be difficult to access, like a website. There are a few different styles used to cite sources. Below are basic, generally accepted guidelines. However, it is a good idea to find out if your professor requires a specific style.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

**CITING A BOOK**

**Structure:** Last, First M. Book. City: Publisher, Year Published. Print.


**CITING A NEWSPAPER**

**In Print**

**Structure:** Last, First M. “Article Title.” *Newspaper Title* [City] Date Month Year Published: Page(s). Print.


**Newspaper found on a website**

**Structure:** Last, First M. “Article Title.” *Newspaper Title* [City] Date Month Year Published: Page(s). *Website Title*. Web. Date Month Year Accessed. <URL>.


**CITING A MAGAZINE**

**In Print**

**Structure:** Last, First M. “Article Title.” *Magazine Title* Date Month Year Published: Page(s). Print.


**Magazine via Website**

**Structure:** Last, First M. “Article Title.” *Magazine Title* Date Month Year Published. Website Title. Web.

---

6 / General guidelines for documentation of sources are based on the Modern Language Association (MLA) method.

CITING A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL

In Print

CITING A JOURNAL PUBLISHED ONLINE
Structure: Last, First M. "Article Title." Journal Title Series Volume. Issue (Year Published): Page[s]. Website Title. Web. Date Month Year Accessed. <URL>.

CITING INFORMATION FROM A WEBSITE

Articles
Structure: Last, First M. “Article Title.” Website Title. Website Publisher, Date Month Year Published. Web. Date Month Year Accessed. <URL>.

Data from website
Structure: Organization name. Name of website. Website publisher, Date Month Year Published. Web. Date Month Year Accessed. <URL>.
## WORKSHEET 5
### BIAS DETECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Does there appear to be a bias?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the goal[s] of the organization or the individual sharing the information?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is there information provided also available about how the data was obtained and analyzed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Were multiple points of view provided?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Who is the intended audience?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the responses above, answer each of the following questions [This can be done alone or with your group members]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the potential for bias make this information invalid?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other sources can I check to validate this information?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How should this information be used?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 4.
LEARNING FROM THE RESEARCH

The research phase of the project is an ongoing process that spans 6-8 weeks. As you learn more about your topic from your own research and that of your group members, you will likely discover that you have new questions and need to plan for additional research approaches to get answers.

Some of the data collected will need to be analyzed before conclusions can be reached. Data analysis can be conducted by the individual(s) who collected the data or as a group.

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY AND INTERVIEW DATA

Survey and interview data can help researchers understand a lot about people’s attitudes, understanding, and experience related to a topic. However, such insights come only with careful analysis of the data. There are two main goals in your data analysis. The first is to determine if there are significant similarities or differences in the participant’s responses. Second, do these differences follow patterns based on subgroups? When analyzing data to answer these questions, it is not necessary to find a 100 percent agreement or similarity in responses. What you want to look for is trends, or common patterns, across responses.

GETTING STARTED WITH DATA ANALYSIS

Before you can look for common trends, it is first necessary to tally or “code” responses. Coding is a term that means to organize data based on categories. Depending on the type of questions you used, closed or open-ended, you will need to use different methods to analyze data.

Surveys with closed answer responses are easy to tally. A closed answer response is one in which the choices are provided for the individual taking the survey. For example:

Which of the following choices reflects your actions when it comes to paying the fare to ride the public bus?

Choices:  A) I always pay  B) I usually pay  C) I sometimes pay  D) I rarely pay  E) I never pay
To tally the responses, you simply count how many there are for each of the choices. For instance, a tally could be, of the 133 people surveyed:

- 64 answered A
- 45 answered B
- 16 answered C
- 8 answered D

Surveys or interview questions that are open-ended are more difficult and will require you to make decisions about responses. It is best to predetermine a few categories that open-ended responses might fit into, such as:

A. people who strongly support the issue;
B. people who support the issue;
C. people who have no opinion on the issue;
D. people who are opposed to the issue;
E. people who are strongly opposed to the issue.

While you read over the data you can assign each response one of the predetermined letters. Once identification and labeling of responses are complete, you can tally how many of each letter there was, similar to how you tally the close-ended response items.

A note of caution – sometimes a response does not fit into any predetermined categories. In this case, it is best to set the response aside. When you have finished categorizing the rest of the data, return to responses that were set aside to determine if there are similarities or differences among them. It might be that you determine a new category you had not previously identified. When this occurs, researchers say the data is “telling the story.” It is important to keep an open mind as you read responses, so you do not miss a chance to hear the story data might have to tell. On the other hand, the response might be an anomaly, or what researchers call an “outlier,” meaning a response that falls outside the normal range of responses and does not represent the commonly held view or experience. In this case, the response would not be seen as significant.

After all of the data is categorized or tallied, it is time for data analysis. The analysis of data is the process of looking for meaning. The most common way to do this is to see if there is a majority view or trend among responses. Looking at the above example of survey responses regarding paying the fare on a public bus, take a minute to review the survey results and see what they suggest.

It would be reasonable to assert that, based on the results, the majority of people surveyed stated they are likely to pay the fare to ride the public bus. However, beyond this observation, what other interesting information is conveyed? Closer analysis reveals slightly more than half of respondents
do not pay the fare at least some of the time. This is a significant response rate if you are trying to understand if there is a problem in paying public bus fare.

To gain a deeper understanding of who is likely to pay the fare and who is not, the second type of analysis based on subgroups is needed. Assume survey respondents were asked to identify their age range and gender on the survey, you could now look at the responses by subgroups. Look at the following sample data, what patterns do you see? Is there a subgroup that is most likely to pay the fare? Are there any subgroups that are less likely to pay the fare? To keep the sample simple, there are only three age groups. You are likely to have more, depending on your topic.

Survey Question: 
“Which of the following choices reflects your actions when it comes to paying the fare to ride the public bus?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>AGE 16-25</th>
<th>26-40</th>
<th>41 AND OVER</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - I always pay</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - I usually pay</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - I sometimes pay</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D - I rarely pay</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E - I never pay</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>AGE 16-25</th>
<th>26-40</th>
<th>41 AND OVER</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - I always pay</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - I usually pay</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - I sometimes pay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D - I rarely pay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E - I never pay</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You should be able to identify a few trends based on the data from this example. Some of these are:

- younger people are more likely to not pay the fare when using public buses;
- males 16-25 are the least likely to pay the fare on a regular basis;
- individuals over 40 are the most likely to regularly pay the fare.

Now you have more information to help you understand the problem. Knowing it is younger people who are least likely to pay the fare can help you determine a course of action to remedy the situation. Remember the case of the misdiagnosed problem and how the students needed more information to understand the problem and take action? In general, more accurate information will help you throughout the process as you research and understand your problem. It will help you determine a course of action you believe will be the most useful in addressing the problem.

A warning about data analysis: you cannot claim direct causal relationships between an event and a variable. For example, although data suggests younger people are less likely to pay the bus fare, you cannot conclude that being young is the cause and as people age, they will most likely start paying the fare. In order to learn more about the causes for the behavior among young people, more research would have to be done to examine why young people might not pay the fare.

This leads to the last stage in data analysis, which is to look for trends across data. You might find that data collected on other survey or interview questions can help you understand the reasons for behavior. Perhaps you asked what the reasons were on the survey. You would go through the same process of analyzing those answers to see if there were patterns. Then you would look to see if there was the indication of a relationship between results on different questions.

For instance, among reasons for not paying the bus fare, the most common reason might be a lack of funds. If it were then determined this was the reason most often provided by individuals in the 16-25 age group, you could draw a conclusion it is a lack of money leading to so many young people not paying the fare. Now, you would be in a position to make a recommendation for addressing this problem, such as a reduced fare for students.

**PLANNING FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

When your group meets to discuss research findings, each member should share what they have learned. This can be done verbally, shared through written summaries or through a combination of these.

Once all of the information has been shared and analyzed, the group will need to determine what steps to take next in order to continue studying the issue. This means conducting further research. Therefore, you will find that there is a continuing cycle between Step 3, implementing the research plan, and Step 4, learning from the research. The diagram below illustrates this process.
As you move forward in your research you should begin to narrow the topic and refine the problem statement. For example, early in your research you may have identified the problem as “Bullying among children.” However, as you research this issue to understand what are the conditions and situations that exist that contribute to this problem, you would likely refine the problem statement to address a more specific aspect of bullying among children such as: there is a lack of education in primary (or secondary) schools to prevent bullying among children. With a narrower and clearly defined problem it will be easier to find a solution that could address the problem.

To assist you in this process, your group should complete the **Worksheet 6 – Learning from the Research**. After answering these questions, the group should update the **Worksheet 2 – Creating a Research Plan**, and divide up the work to conduct further research. This process should be repeated each time the group meets to discuss research.
WORKSHEET 6
LEARNING FROM THE RESEARCH

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What sources were researched?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>What was learned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>What questions do we now have about the issue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>How can these questions be answered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What new sources should be investigated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>What are the next steps in our research plan?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 5. 
EVALUATE THE ISSUE FROM 
THE PERSPECTIVE OF 
THE 4 COURSE THEMES

Implementation of the project requires that actions be taken to reach the proposed goals. However, prior to developing the plan of action, each of the course themes, the role of government, human rights protection, the role of civil society and mechanisms of individual participation should all be considered. This step of the project will also span several weeks and should be completed with your group using the worksheets. Your group might find that you need to conduct additional research to complete all of the worksheets.

EXPLORING THE PROBLEM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

You will need to analyze your problem to decide if there is a significant human rights issue. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that people have a broad range of rights, including aspects of life, such as the right to rest and leisure, cited in Article 24. Meanwhile, Article 22 states that, “Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.” These statements of rights are so broad that it might be possible to assert that an individual is entitled to almost any personal desire as part of their “free development of personality,” so it is important to determine if an issue should really be categorized as a human right. Section 2 of the textbook can help you understand what rights should absolutely be viewed and protected.

To determine if there is a human rights violation and what actions might be appropriate to take, complete the Worksheet 7 – Human Rights and Your Research Topic.
WORKSHEET 7
HUMAN RIGHTS AND YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Are individuals or groups suffering or being harmed?</td>
<td>Describe who and what the harm is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>List any human rights issues you think might apply to the situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Identify any laws, treaties or conventions that define the right[s] in question.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Identify mechanisms that exist to remedy abuses you have identified. List each human rights issue and the mechanism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPLORING THE PROBLEM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GOVERNMENTAL REMEDIES

There are many ways problems in democratic societies can be addressed and sometimes it is best if the government takes action. In this task, you must consider if action through government mechanisms are appropriate to address the issue. In order to do this, you need to understand the government’s responsibilities, the rights of Ukrainian citizens and laws already in existence. You will probably need to review aspects of the Ukrainian Constitution. You might also need to do some additional research on laws related to your selected problem. This could include researching government documents and interviewing government officials. To help you in this process complete the Worksheet 8 – The Role of Government and Your Research Topic.

WORKSHEET 8
THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the Ukrainian government have a responsibility to address the issue you have selected? Explain your response and cite specific aspects of the Ukrainian Constitution or principles of democracy to support your view.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What actions has the government already taken in regard to the issue? Give specific examples of actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have these actions been successful? Cite specific evidence to support your response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think the problem persists if there is already a government remedy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is this a problem of enforcing the law? How do you know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does there need to be changes to the existing law? What might these changes be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You may find that sometimes there is no law in existence to effectively address a problem and therefore it might be necessary to bring this to the attention of government officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If this is the case, what law would you propose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which government authority should you address to propose this new law?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPLORE THE PROBLEM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is a vital feature of healthy democratic societies. When individuals come together to work on common causes, they can share resources in pursuit of their goals. In this manner, civil society organizations can often achieve what individuals cannot on their own. Civil society plays many different roles. Some groups form to lobby lawmakers to make changes in the law, while others might form to lobby for protections and enforcement of existing laws. Still, other groups might see their role as one of building awareness of issues and educating the public, while some might be action-oriented in seeing their effectiveness as working directly to address an issue. Some larger civil society organizations may even incorporate two or more of these features in order to address societal needs. The goal of this task is for your group to consider what role civil society can or is playing in relation to the issue you selected.

To complete this task, you will need to know if there are organizations that are working on the issue you are studying and what actions they are already taking. It is important to remember that, by definition, civil society organizations are purpose-driven, and therefore may be biased. For these reasons, you will want to learn as much as you can about existing organizations and their record of success.

Complete the Worksheet 9 – Civil Society and Your Research Topic.
## WORKSHEET 9
### CIVIL SOCIETY AND YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the organization effective in helping the populations they are trying to serve?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the organization been effective in working with lawmakers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the organization directed funds and/or other resources to address the problem?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the organization educated the public on issues?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the organization is doing enough or could more be done?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What else do you think a civil society organization could do to help address the problem?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPLORE THE PROBLEM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INDIVIDUAL CIVIC PARTICIPATION

In a democratic society, individuals are free to take actions on their own initiative to improve or contribute to their society. The exercise of this freedom is considered an integral part of the maintenance of a healthy democratic society. There is no single definition or act to represent what is meant by individual civic participation. Rather, this is a concept that encompasses a broad range of behaviors. You should reference the many mechanisms for individual citizen engagement described in the textbook to complete this task.

Review many mechanisms that are available to citizens in Ukraine. After selecting methods that your group thinks can be used, complete the Worksheet 10 – Individual Civic Engagement and Your Research Topic.

**WORKSHEET 10**
**INDIVIDUAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC**

<p>| What is the method we are considering? (Add as many boxes as your group needs) | What would our desired outcome be if we used this method? | What would we need to do to effectively use this method? | What are the pros of using this method? | What are the cons of using this method? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the method we are considering? (Add as many boxes as your group needs)</th>
<th>What would our desired outcome be if we used this method?</th>
<th>What would we need to do to effectively use this method?</th>
<th>What are the pros of using this method?</th>
<th>What are the cons of using this method?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tbody>
</table>

After you have completed the chart, consider if it makes sense to use more than one method. Which methods do you think could be most effective?
In this step, you are required to design a proposal and action plan to address the problem you have been researching. By now you know there are many ways problems in society that can be remedied. It is possible to work through government processes; seek protections from international organizations or the courts in Ukraine; work through civil society; or take actions as individual citizens. Different approaches may work better when addressing different types of problems. You will need to review the work you did up to this point to determine what is the best course of action for your group to take to try to bring about change and address the problem. You may choose to focus on only one of the course themes; for example, supporting the work of an existing civil society organization to help them reach the goals related to your issue. You may also choose to incorporate your knowledge from more than one theme. For instance, you could decide that a new law is needed and you will appeal to the local government; but, actions by individual citizens might be required to reach this proposal goal. In your advocacy, you might gather signatures on a petition and attend public consultations. Use the Worksheet 11 – Identify Project Goals for the first part of this step.
WORKSHEET 11
IDENTIFY PROJECT GOALS

Before deciding on any course of action, it is important to define your goal(s) in relation to the problem you have been researching. The problem might be so big and complex that no single proposal or individual actions will be effective in offering a complete remedy however the goal(s) you identify should be directly linked to an aspect(s) of the problem.

1. Briefly list the most important issues you learned about from your research. For example:
   - 83.4% of students had at least once in their lives consumed alcoholic beverages;
   - the law to prohibit selling alcohol to underaged students exists but 34.5% of students say it’s easy for them to buy alcohol in shops;
   - consumption of alcohol is unhealthy to the development of teenage brains; etc.
2. Review your list of issues and decide which you most want to focus on in your proposal and list them here. Remember, you probably cannot solve all aspects of an issue and it might be best to focus on steps in the process of change. For example:

- The lack of enforcement of the law that prohibits selling alcohol to underage students.
- Consumption of alcohol is unhealthy for teenagers.

3. Write goals that are specific to the issues you identified in Number 2. The goals should clearly identify changes you would like to see occur. When goals are specific it is easier to make plans to achieve them. Remember to review the work you did when analyzing your issues from the perspective of the course themes and actions your group thought might be useful to address the problem. It is not necessary to include all four themes from the course, but often a combination makes sense. For example:

- Educate salespeople and underaged students about the health risks of consuming alcohol.
- Raise awareness about the law among salespeople and underaged students.
- Improve enforcement of the law that prohibits selling alcohol to underaged students; etc.
CREATING A PROPOSAL

In the next stage of the project, you need to develop a proposal to meet the goals you identified in Worksheet 11. A proposal should include specific actions and steps that are needed to achieve the project goals. You will also need to consider the resources required to reach the goals.

Making changes in society usually requires building support for the change. This is particularly true if the change requires new behaviors or attitudes among the public. For this reason, part of your action plan will be to educate others about the problem and to convince people that the change is needed (to advocate for it). In doing this, you will need to be well prepared and persuasive. Your group must choose approaches from the list below, Actions to Educate and Advocate, as part of your action plan. When thinking about these actions, consider which of them do you think will be most effective in getting the attention of your audience? Questions such as, where is this group most likely to get information, might help. Every member of the group must choose to work on one item to educate and one to advocate. The items you choose must be implemented as part of Step 7 – Implement the Action Plan.

Review the list to consider potential actions, but before you make decisions read the next section on identifying and working with stakeholders and then complete the Worksheet 12 – Creating a Project Proposal.

ACTIONS TO EDUCATE AND ADVOCATE

- Create a website (this counts as 2 and can involve more than 1 person).
- Create an IT product/component (mobile application, Telegram channel, bot, etc.).
- Create a media or social media campaign (must include multiple forms of media).
- Organize and conduct event/direct actions (planting trees, cleaning the territory from garbage, etc.).
- Create a piece of art to inform/motivate others (flash mob, performance, dance evening or an art master class).
- Offer a dramatic, artistic or musical presentation.
- Create and distribute posters, leaflets, newsletters.
- Volunteer at an awareness event.
- Create, publish and present video.
- Work with the media.
- Hold symposia (master-class, training, workshop).
- Write and send letters (collective appeal of citizens in writing form with the list of signatures).
Step 6. Form a Proposal and Action Plan

• Start a petition.
• Hold a table/information campaign on campus.
• Schedule and attend a meeting [in the local community, at the university/dormitory, etc.].
• Conduct a meeting with a deputy or other public servants on matters concerning the project, to publish information about this meeting.
• Analyze information and publicize the report on spending public funds by public authorities or other relevant administrators.
• Apply for a local participatory budget “grant.”
• Meet with the CSO working on this issue.

IDENTIFYING AND WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Before you develop your plan, consider these points about identifying and working with stakeholders. Although individual actions can be meaningful, sustained change or improvement of a problem generally takes the work of more than one person. For this reason, it is practical to consider who else might be interested in the problem you have identified and see if you can enlist other parties in helping you achieve your goals. When you considered your resources, you probably recognized you could use additional support. Individuals who are interested in the problem might be interested in helping you implement your action plan. Civil society might also have many resources. Look for organizations doing work to address the problem or a similar problem and see how the organization might help you. As an example, during their project, a group of university students identified a lack of adequate training on how to use a defibrillator, which can be a lifesaving piece of equipment when used properly. The students partnered with an NGO that provided free training on the proper use of the equipment. In this way, the students achieved their goal by partnering with an organization that had resources they did not.

When dealing with government and policy-making, it is important to demonstrate public support for government action. Asking interested parties to sign a petition; calling or visiting government officials; or, attending demonstrations are all ways the public can communicate their support for an issue to the government. You might want to consider how you can identify interested parties and get them involved in expressing their views to government officials as part of your action plan.

Sometimes to address the issue you need to change the behavior or views of individuals. An issue might involve discrimination against certain persons, such as persons with disabilities. Perhaps as part of your proposal, one of your goals is to educate the public on contributions some of these individuals make to society and the talents they possess to better inform the public about the realities of disabilities.
Now you are ready to create your project proposal. Complete Worksheet 12 – Creating a Project Proposal to assist you with this. When you create your proposal, you will need to state your project goals, actions to achieve the goals, the steps that must be taken to enact the plan. Here is an example of what this might look like:

**GOAL 1.**
Educate salespeople and underaged students about the health risks of consuming alcohol

**Action 1.1**
Educate young people about the health risks of consuming alcohol through an Instagram campaign

- **Step 1.1.1** Create an Instagram account
- **Step 1.1.2** Identify memes to use or create them
- **Step 1.1.3** Determine who will be responsible for posting to the account, etc.
- **Step 1.1.4**

**Action 1.2**
....

- **Step 1.2.1**
- **Step 1.2.2**
- **Step 1.2.3**

**GOAL 2.**
....

Also, you will need to consider the resources required to reach the goals. Be specific about financial needs, time and human resources that will be needed. It is important to be realistic about the resources you have available. Don’t be worried if you don’t have all the resources you anticipate needing but consider options for how you can get more resources. For instance, you may decide to work with an existing NGO and therefore benefit from their resources. Or through your research you identified government is funding a program related to the topic of your project and you can participate in this program.
**WORKSHEET 12**  
**CREATING A PROJECT PROPOSAL**

Your proposal should be a clear plan of the actions and steps that are needed to reach the goals. Answering the questions below will help you prepare the proposal.

1. What is necessary to achieve the goals you identified? Be specific about the actions and resources needed (the people and organizations necessary to work with, materials you might need, labor and money) to reach each goal. You are not limited in how many actions needed to achieve the goals, therefore add more rows as needed. It is important to include actions to educate others and to build support for your proposal. Review the list, Actions to Educate and Advocate, and determine which are best suited to help your group meet your goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>Action 1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action 1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2</td>
<td>Action 2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action 2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal ...</td>
<td>Action ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. List the steps that must be taken for each of the actions identified. Add as many rows as necessary to list all of the steps needed to realize each action. It is also important to consider that some steps can be taken in the short term (during the time remaining in the course), while other steps might require more time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Steps</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.1</td>
<td>Step 1.1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1.1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1.1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.2</td>
<td>Step 1.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1.2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action ...</td>
<td>Step ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Develop a timeline for the implementation of the actions needed to reach the proposal goals. For example, you might plan to visit a government official [action]. List when that should occur and consider what events should proceed and follow the visit (steps). Sometimes opportunities present themselves on short notice and you might not be able to plan in advance for these, this is perfectly fine. This is only a plan to help you organize and think through what you will need to do. It is possible that your timeline will be modified more than once as you implement your plan.
### Step 6. Form a Proposal and Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>Action 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2</td>
<td>Action 2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Action 3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
PREPARING TO TAKE ACTION

As you prepare your actions to educate others and advocate for support to reach your project goals, the guidelines below should be considered. Read the guidelines and then complete the Worksheet 13 – Preparing for Action.

Guidelines to share information with others:

• **Find a way to capture your audience’s attention.** To accomplish this, your introductory message should appeal to the emotions and intellect of the target audience. There are many different ways to achieve this: eye-catching images, memorable slogans or a few compelling facts. Remember, this is only an introduction to the issue; the idea is to make the audience want to know more.

• **Your message should be concise.** If the message is in writing, keep it short and stick to the point. If you are presenting information verbally, then practice what you plan to say and stick to your message.

• **Use facts and examples to support your message.** Evidence is essential in convincing others a problem is real, so be ready with specifics to share. However, showing the human side of an issue is also very powerful, so be ready to share specific examples of how individuals or communities have been affected by the problem.

• **Share your goals with the audience.** If you are asking the audience to take an action, be specific about what the action is and explain why it is important.

• **Tailor your message for your audience.** For example, you will probably choose a different approach to share your message with an audience of university students then you would with members of local government. Perhaps humor would be successful with the students, whereas a serious, professional approach would be best with government officials. You might also discuss an aspect of the problem specific to the concerns of the audience.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is the audience we are sharing information with?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is our goal in sharing information with this audience?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a specific action we would like the audience to take?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does this audience have interests or concerns that relate to our problem?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next step is to prepare what information will be important to share with the audience. Answering the next set of questions will help with this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What data and facts do we think are important to this audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What examples do we have that would interest this audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What method(s) do we think will be most effective in getting the attention of this audience? Consider questions such as, where is this group most likely to get information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What resources do we already have to implement this method?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You must determine the best method(s) of capturing the attention of the audience and persuading them to support your plan. Review and answer the questions below to help you with this.
Step 6. Form a Proposal and Action Plan

After you answered the above questions you can plan for implementation by answering the next questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What resources will we need?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When, where and how the information will be shared?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How will your group divide tasks to take the actions you select?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 7.
IMPLEMENT THE ACTION PLAN

Implementing the project requires that actions be taken to reach the goals proposed. However, this doesn’t mean the final solution you propose can always be reached in a single semester. The work you do to educate and advocate for this change may be part of the solution. Some of you might continue to work to solve the problem beyond the course, which is what actively engaged citizens do when they care about a problem in their society.

Everyone must work individually or collaboratively to complete two or more of the actions the group agreed on in Step 6 [from the list Actions to Advocate and Educate]. For every action you take be sure to write a brief description of what you did and submit this to your Individual Documentation Journal.
STEP 8.
PREPARE A GROUP PRESENTATION

In the final steps of your project, you will develop a presentation to deliver to your class. Recommended time for the presentation at class is 20 minutes but your professor will provide you with more guidance on this. In the presentation you must include all of the following components:

1. Define the problem. When defining the problem, it is important to demonstrate the problem exists. The best way to do this is to incorporate facts, data and examples you found through your research. Also, be sure to clearly explain what the problem is for those who might not be familiar with the issue.

2. Discuss your analysis of how the issue relates to the 4 major themes of the course.

3. Describe the proposal your group has identified. Explain the reasons why you think this is the best approach to address the problem.

4. Describe your plan of action to advocate and educate others. Be sure to include aspects such who the interested stakeholders are and the intended audience.

5. Share examples from your work, explain why you took these actions and describe the impact of your actions.

6. Provide an analysis of factors that led to both successes and limitations to reaching the proposal.

7. Describe the steps that your group thinks still need to be taken next to achieve implementation of the solution proposal.

As you prepare for the presentation, you will also want to think about how you present your information to capture the audience’s attention. PowerPoint is useful when making presentations, but it is most effective when you follow a few simple tips:

- Less is more: limit the amount of text on each slide to a few key phrases or facts. If there is too much text, the audience may spend time reading the slides rather than listening to you.

- The slides are not the presentation. Information on the slide should represent what you are saying, but should not take the place of your oral presentation. PowerPoint slides should serve to interest the audience so they pay attention to your information.

- Slides should capture the attention of the audience, therefore color and animation can be useful, but only if they are not distracting. Too much color or animation can become difficult for an audience to absorb, and may actually lead them to lose interest in the presentation. Use these tools sparingly and only to interest the audience in listening to what you have to say.

- Visuals can be a very powerful way of getting an audience’s attention. However, complex, detailed images such as data tables may require too much inspection by the audience, taking their attention away from your presentation.
STEP 9.
DELIVER THE PRESENTATION TO THE CLASS AND RESPOND TO QUESTIONS

Your peers are an audience you are seeking to educate. How you speak to your audience is also very important. Your speech must be loud, clear and directed at listeners. Make eye contact with individuals and speak to different sections of the room so all feel included. If you are using notes during your presentation, it is important to look up every so often and connect with the audience. You also want to let your audience know you believe the issue is important, so you should show how passionate you are. Avoid speaking in monotone or a manner that suggests a lack of interest on your part. If you do not show you care about the issue, you cannot expect the audience to. Above all, practice your presentation before you deliver it. Practice will give you confidence, and confidence will help you speak persuasively.

Student Action Project Presentation Rubric is available in Annex 2.
STEP 10.
REFLECT ON YOUR EXPERIENCE

Take some time to think back to when you first entered this course and began the project. Try to remember how you felt and what you believed about your own capacity to help make a change and about the democratic system you live in. Then consider if these ideas changed during the course and try to identify how and why. If you had no preconceived ideas at the beginning of the course, then reflect on your experiences and how they influenced you. After giving this some thought, complete the final Worksheet 14 – Reflecting on My Experience. Your professor may require you to submit this form with your Individual Documentation Journal or to write it as an essay for part of your final evaluation.

WORKSHEET 14
REFLECTING ON MY EXPERIENCE

1. Have my views on my role in society changed? In what ways have my views changed? What aspects of the experience do I attribute these changes to? If my views on my role in society haven’t changed, is there any reason I can point to explain this?
2. Have there been changes in how I view myself? Have I discovered positive traits or characteristics about myself during this process? Have I discovered characteristics or traits during the process that I would like to change?

3. What have I learned about creating change in society?
4. How do I think I will use this experience in my life after this course?

5. Is there anything I would do differently if I did the project (or a similar one) again?

6. Is there anything else about the experience I think was important for me?
## ANNEX 1

### STUDENT ACTION PROJECT INDIVIDUAL DOCUMENTATION JOURNAL RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research 1.</strong> Choice 1 was clearly documented. The method selected was well-suited to research the issue. The value of the research was explained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research 2.</strong> Choice 2 was clearly documented. The method selected was well-suited to research the issue. The value of the research was explained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research 3.</strong> Choice 3 was clearly documented. The method selected was well-suited to research the issue. The value of the research was explained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research 4.</strong> Choice 4 was clearly documented. The method selected was well-suited to research the issue. The value of the research was explained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research 5.</strong> Choice 5 was clearly documented. The method selected was well-suited to research the issue. The value of the research was explained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educate/Build Awareness.</strong> A clear message based on the research project was presented. The connection to the message was evident.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educate/Build Awareness.</strong> A clear message based on the research project was presented. The connection to the message was evident.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocacy Action.</strong> The method was appropriate for the audience. The message clearly aligned with the issue and the individual’s goal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocacy Action.</strong> The method was appropriate for the audience. The message clearly aligned with the issue and the individual’s goal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Reflection.</strong> The student provided a thoughtful response to the questions in Step 10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ANNEX 2

### STUDENT ACTION PROJECT PRESENTATION RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Requirements</th>
<th>5 - Superior Performance</th>
<th>4 - Strong Performance</th>
<th>3 - Satisfactory Performance</th>
<th>2 - Unsatisfactory Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students should be evaluated based on indicators presented for each category</td>
<td>All of the indicators were met with clarity and depth of understanding</td>
<td>All of the indicators were met but the responses were weak in one or two indicators</td>
<td>Most of the indicators were met but responses were weak in two or more indicators</td>
<td>The discussion was very weak and did not demonstrate knowledge related to the indicators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Identification of Problem Indicators:
- The problem is clearly explained and evidence is used to demonstrate the seriousness and scope of the problem
- The students show an understanding of the history of the problem
- The students show an understanding of current practices or policies impacting the issue
- The problem is clearly discussed related to the course themes
- The students discuss who is impacted by the problem and show an understanding of the stakeholders’ views

### Research
- Evidence is presented to effectively support claims
- The evidence comes from multiple sources
- The evidence comes from reliable sources
- Multiple perspectives were researched
- Evidence is presented to effectively support claims
- The evidence comes from multiple sources
- The evidence comes from reliable sources
- Multiple perspectives were researched

### 4 - Strong Performance
- The students demonstrated a strong understanding, slightly above average for university students

### 3 - Satisfactory Performance
- The students demonstrated understandings consistent with expectations for university students

### 2 - Unsatisfactory Performance
- The students did not demonstrate proficiency expected of university students
### Proposal
- The proposal clearly and logically addresses the problem
- The proposal is clearly connected to the students' research
- Students considered many factors and different perspectives when formulating their plan
- The proposal is realistic based on the realities of the problem and the resources available
- The students describe factors that have led to the successful achievement of proposal goals
- The students discuss limitations to reaching proposal goals
- The students present ideas for future actions for the proposal to be fully implemented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All of the indicators were met with clarity and depth of understanding</th>
<th>All of the indicators were met but the responses were weak in one or two indicators</th>
<th>Most of the indicators were met but responses were weak in two or more indicators</th>
<th>The discussion was very weak and did not demonstrate knowledge related to the indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Plan of Action
- The students present examples of actions they took to educate and raise awareness of the problem
- The students explain actions they took to advocate for a solution to the problem
- The actions were clearly and appropriately directed to a logical target audience
- Advocacy actions were logically linked to government agencies or individuals that can bring about the changes sought
- The action items were persuasive and used data or facts effectively
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Presentation</strong></th>
<th>All of the indicators were met with clarity and depth of understanding</th>
<th>All of the indicators were met but the responses were weak in one or two indicators</th>
<th>Most of the indicators were met but responses were weak in two or more indicators</th>
<th>The discussion was very weak and did not demonstrate knowledge related to the indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The information was clearly presented</td>
<td>- The students made a strong and persuasive case for their proposal</td>
<td>- Presenters appeared prepared and confident in their work</td>
<td>- Effective presentation skills were demonstrated</td>
<td>- All members of the group made a contribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presentation • The information was clearly presented • The students made a strong and persuasive case for their proposal • Presenters appeared prepared and confident in their work • Effective presentation skills were demonstrated • All members of the group made a contribution