

CITY AS SEEN BY TEENS: NEW SURVEY REVEALS KEY CHALLENGES AND HOPES OF THE UKRAINIAN YOUTH

Ukrainian teens identify the problems of their cities and claim to be ready for changes: the results of the extensive survey by The City Is Me urban movement

September 25, 2024, Kyiv, Ukraine. The City Is Me urban movement conducted a survey that gave 1800 Ukrainian teenagers aged 10 to 17 a chance to express their thoughts on life in their cities. The survey revealed the factors that contribute to happiness in the respondents' environment, as well as the problems they encounter daily. At the same time, it has shown how committed teenagers are to actively participate in improving their urban environment.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CONCERNS OF THE UKRAINIAN TEENS?

Unsafe streets

21% of the surveyed kids and teens feel unsafe in their cities because of the aggression and threats they face, specifically after dark. This is especially true for girls.

Lack of green areas and recreation spaces

27% of young respondents reported a lack of places to spend time with friends and family, and 25% complained about the lack of green spaces and parks. This robs them of the opportunity to relax and socialize in a comfortable environment.

Environmental issues

20% of respondents named poor air and water quality as the main problem in their cities. The polluted environment raises concerns about health and quality of life.

Excessive traffic

19% of the surveyed teens note that cities are overloaded with cars, which makes traveling dangerous and inconvenient. Speeding and random parking put residents under constant stress.

THERE ARE A LOT OF PROBLEMS IN THE CITY, BUT THERE IS ALSO A WILL TO SOLVE THEM

Amidst all the difficulties, teens do not stay aloof and strive for change. They want to have an impact on the life of their cities and have practical suggestions.

Willingness to act

59% of young Ukrainians believe that their influence on the city is insufficient, but they want to be more involved. They offer solutions ranging from landscaping and road repairs to fighting corruption.

Environmental awareness

11% of teenagers point out the importance of greening cities, and 7% are ready to fight against litter and improve water and air quality. They understand that the environmental scene affects their daily lives and future.

THE CITY IS ME URBAN MOVEMENT

The City Is Me urban movement is an educational program that encourages youth to become actively involved in improving the urban environment. Starting September 1, 2024, the program will be introduced in 16 cities of Ukraine, where teens will have a chance to join discussions on important topics of urbanism, environment, safety, and sustainable development.

The program is inspired by the book *The City Is Me* written by Iryna Ozymok, Local Economic Development Director at Ukraine-Moldova American Enterprise Fund. The City Is Me urban movement offers young Ukrainians from all over the country a free opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of urbanism and actively participate in improving their cities. The program is supported by Ukraine-Moldova American Enterprise Fund. The first wave of urban movement reached more than 500 teenagers in 23 cities, and the second wave is already underway, culminating in a festival at the end of 2024.

Infographics

The Cities of Happy People survey uncovers key aspects of the Ukrainian youth city life, such as their feeling of happiness, the problems they deal with, and their desire to have an impact on their communities. These are the main findings of the survey:

1. Feeling happy about living in a city

62% of young respondents feel happy living in their cities, while 11% feel the opposite. Positive attitude is mainly driven by green areas access (22%); staying in touch with the close ones (17%); feeling safe at home (15%).

2. Key problems that make the youth unhappy

The main reported issues were: insufficient leisure areas (27%) and lack of parks and green zones (25%), as well as high level of street danger (21%). Other concerns include excessive traffic (19%), lack of cultural events (14%), and chaotic housing development (13%).

3. Critical city problems

The youth major concerns pertain to environment: 20% of the respondents complain about poor air and water quality, 15% mentioned littered spaces. War, specifically in the eastern and southern cities, is seen as a serious problem by 12% of the surveyed.

4. Youth involvement in city life

53% respondents believe their interests and needs are properly addressed in their cities, while 47% think the opposite. 22% want to have more socializing opportunities; 11% – more interaction with authorities; 8% – want more activist and volunteering opportunities.

5. Youth feel of impact on city

59% of the surveyed feel that their impact on the city is low and only 21% estimate it to be significant. In this case major obstacles come from poor awareness (25%) and age-dependent disregard (17%).

6. Youth suggestions on improving city life

The respondents would like to solve some key problems in their cities, doing road repairs (11%), increasing green areas (11%), and fighting against corruption (11%). A

significant number of kids and teens would also like to improve the environmental situation in their cities.

The survey illustrates that Ukrainian kids and teens clearly see the problems that surround them and want to be actively involved in solving them. Although most respondents feel happy in their cities, primarily because of their close ones and the sense of home, they feel the need for significant changes that would improve their lives and make cities safer, cleaner, and more comfortable for all residents.

Full version of the survey:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Dg9DEc0BHLakITYVHdVRXIP_qfRYKDx5AqVHaj4hUGI/edit