

FROM DISTRUST TO SOLIDARITY:

HOW CAN WE INFORM PEOPLE
ABOUT CORONAVIRUS?

RECOMMENDATIONS

PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM LAB



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE

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RECOMMENDATIONS

From distrust to solidarity: how can we inform people about coronavirus is a pilot project by the Public Interest Journalism Lab, a joint interdisciplinary project by Ukrainian and British journalists and sociologists, with contributions from the Arena programme at the London School of Economics, the Lviv Media Forum and the Kharkiv Institute of Social Research, which aims to develop editorial and information strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lab's main tasks are creating high quality content to promote a constructive discussion around complex social topics, and testing this content on audiences, before developing editorial strategies based on the sociological research.

The aims of the study are to better understand Ukrainian citizens' attitudes towards the COVID-19 pandemic, to study the way society consolidates itself in the fight against it, to analyse the influence videos of a particular theme have on the audience, as well as to decipher the audience's concerns, by looking at which types of content they trust and whether this content relieves their anxiety. The team created 5 original videos based on the "constructive journalism" approach, and analysed audience reactions to them.

The videos were shared on the public broadcaster's platforms. In addition, in-depth interviews allowed sociologists to determine levels of anxiety towards the pandemic, general attitudes towards media narratives, and participants' susceptibility to conspiracy theories.

Watch the videos
(available in Ukrainian only):

■ **DESIGNERS SEW CLOTHES FOR DOCTORS**

■ **FREE STAYS AT HOTELS FOR DOCTORS**

■ **THE ELDERLY AND QUARANTINE: HOW VOLUNTEERS ARE HELPING**

■ **10,000 PIECES OF PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR DOCTORS**

■ **MOTOHELP RESCUE BIKERS VOLUNTEER TO HELP AMBULANCES**

See full sociological study **«Attitudes of the population to the coronavirus pandemic and the search for consolidating factors»** (available in Ukrainian only)

Shot from the video about designers making masks for medical staff



The research methodology was developed in collaboration with experts from the Arena programme at the London School of Economics together with sociologists at the Kharkiv Institute of Social Research. The latter collected and analysed primary data. Throughout late April and early May 2020, 30 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted, both remotely and face-to-face. The use of interviews made it possible to obtain more detailed data on perceptions of COVID-19 coverage in the media, to study the existing attitudes, motives, expectations and patterns of human behaviour during an epidemic, and to test interview participants' responses to the media content created by the project. Participants were chosen according to region (6 from each of the north, south, east and west of Ukraine, as well as from Kyiv and the Kyiv region), with an equal representation of men and women, and of different age groups, divided into young (up to 35 years old), middle-aged (36-59 years old) or elderly (60+ years). The chosen method and results collected allowed for an in-depth analysis of the various individual responses. However, due to the small sample size of this study, caution should be exercised when drawing generalisations and conclusions on the different age and regional groups in Ukraine.

The research hypothesis was based on the assumption that stories about mutual assistance and solidarity, that commonly arise when people live through an unprecedented crisis, can evoke positive emotions, and re-establish a sense of control over a situation and the desire to act proactively instead of being overcome by anxiety, confusion and hopelessness.

Analysis of reactions to the videos supports this hypothesis.

Based on the results of the study, we propose a range of conclusions and recommendations not only for the media, but for any other organisation and institution whose work concerns discussions around the COVID-19 pandemic. While some of the conclusions may appear to be obvious standards of good-quality journalism, it is nonetheless worth noting that they are confirmed by the participants' responses.

“
These people are inspiring. They show that things can be done and should be done. There are positive emotions. I think that this should be shown on television as it can set an example. It remains in one's mind and can be developed. It gives one hope that we still have people like this, that not everything is lost, and that anything can be good and will be good.

(Research participant)

The audience has clear requests concerning the presentation of information and the range of themes. In our opinion the following observations are most important:

- There is a need to separate useful information in the media from “information noise”, as the latter can raise anxiety
- Trust is felt towards material based on principles of neutrality, and focussed on the stories of real people
- There is a need for balance in stories about interaction between the government and volunteers or civil society.

Participants distinguish between useful information and “information noise”. Even in mid-April there was a noticeable fatigue among participants from hearing reports about the coronavirus. The excessive amount of information makes people panic and deliberately stop following the news. On the other hand, there is a request for a concrete action plan with any information that can allow people to plan for the future, including operational information such as plans for the leadership of the country and regions, and the end dates of quarantine measures. There is a high demand for additional information about the number of tests, testing procedures and their availability, and clear and reliable information about the use of face masks and other protective measures.

1

DOSAGE OF INFORMATION

The media should carefully control the amount of information: not overloading the coverage with unnecessary references to coronavirus, but reporting on other socially important things, especially stories relating to doctors’ working conditions. It is worth looking for new approaches to media format: long ‘marathon’ news programming and streaming should be replaced by shorter programmes aired once or a few times a day, online broadcasts with summaries of articles, etc.

2

COVERAGE OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF DOCTORS DURING THE PANDEMIC

As in other countries, it is doctors, not politicians, who are most trusted during the pandemic. There is definitely a distrust of official statistics (“the authorities downplay/exaggerate the threat”), particularly with regard to hospital provisions. At the same time, stories about specific institutions, staff in real hospital wards with patients, and interviews with doctors and nurses, provide the opportunity to witness the extent to which the situation is under control and the reality of the dangers.



Shot from the video about volunteers helping the elderly

“

3

TRUST IN FAMOUS PEOPLE AND THE METICULOUS ATTENTION TO DETAIL

People trust famous figures more than they trust politicians with regard to information about the pandemic (with the exception of politicians who are scientists/medics). Trust in people in the videos is highly dependent on whether they are following safety measures. Trust in a person who is recommending something, but is incorrectly wearing their mask, is undermined.

I was alarmed when a girl who was promoting a product didn't have her mask on properly. Well, you know, this is so obvious. Why have it on then? Even if they're being interviewed, even if it was taken off for the video, you're breathing onto the product.

(Research participant)



Volunteers from MotoHelp taking
A&E doctors to work.
Shot from the video

4

A BALANCE OF VOLUNTEERS/ AUTHORITIES

Examples of solidarity, or stories that show ordinary people coming together for various initiatives throughout the pandemic, evoke a positive response. Volunteer work is inspiring, with many participants being prepared to join in, but people lack information about what can be done on the ground locally.

It is also important to find a balance in coverage of volunteer initiatives. Overemphasis on the contribution of volunteers in the fight against the epidemic is perceived by some respondents as being caused by the state's helplessness, which can frighten people. Volunteer work is situational, as it can disappear, but the state is permanently committed. A more effective editorial approach could be information on the cooperation of volunteers and the state, and, where possible, information showing how volunteers contribute to the state, rather than replacing it. If this kind of information about volunteers is available, it should be supported with statistics.

“

Well, we can say that this was an optimistic montage, but... the state has to pay, and make government orders. Why doesn't the state pay them, why should volunteers do this work for free?

(Research participant)

It is important to note that some of the respondents are suspicious of the volunteer stories, so it would be worthwhile clearly explaining the background of volunteer initiatives and volunteers' motives. In order for the volunteer initiatives to be trusted, high attention to detail is needed.

“

Delivery guys, where do you work? Where do you get the money for fuel? Where did you get your car from? It all looks great, but where does it come from, how are the costs covered and so on – I have so many questions.

(Research participant)

Shot from video about
motorcyclist volunteers taking
doctors to work

5

NEED FOR WELL-EXPLAINED RATIONALE BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS, NOT PATERNALISM



One of the key features of public distrust towards the government during a pandemic is communication issues. A key complaint is that the government has lacked clarity and transparency in its assessment of the current situation as well as a detailed and comprehensible plan for the post-pandemic period. It is also important to note that respondents' complaints about the lack of communication often referenced inconsistencies and insufficient information.

Communication problems increase fears for one's own health and for future socio-economic conditions, which at this stage converts into political distrust and critical attitudes towards the government.

In our opinion, the reason for criticism of the authorities is that participants lack understanding of the nature of most problems faced by the authorities, particularly those relating to medicine. For example, participants expressed outrage at the number of medics who have contracted coronavirus, thinking that the reason for this was insufficient or inadequate government action. At the same time, this has been seen in many other countries, which have also been experiencing the pandemic, particularly Italy, Spain and the USA.

The media should therefore be advised to contextualise reports about the state of the healthcare system, to explain the logic and development of medical reforms, and to provide relevant information about healthcare systems in other countries.

It is important to note that citizens' demands are not always expressed as requests for additional financial resources or direct assistance, and often there is a lack of understanding in the logic of government action. Balance is important to people: they are ready to endure measures and take action provided they understand clearly why they are needed and what the decision-making criteria are. It is therefore important to avoid making generalisations about the desire to rely on the state for everything, with impossible expectations of the government. Although this trend exists, sociologists at the London School of Economics, responding to the research in Ukraine, noted that criticism of the government and demands for better healthcare and more testing are characteristic of citizens in many other countries.

I think they are chaotic. I cannot see a clear-cut plan and, well, it's confusing. That is, I don't see a clear-cut plan and its enforcement. I see a range of decisions, which contradict one another. Lots of decisions are made too late, lots are made too early. Basically, I cannot see any clarity.

(Research participant)

6

A CONCRETE PLAN OF ACTION, CRISIS RESILIENCE AND EXAMPLES OF EXIT PLANS

There is a huge demand for clear, concrete information about the future, and the re-establishment of control over the situation. In general, Ukrainians are used to enduring crises, so although they are frightened by economic difficulties, what is more frightening is not having a concrete path to overcome this.

The COVID-19 pandemic is regarded as a crisis in the same way as other events such as the Chernobyl disaster, the 1990s, and the 2008 economic crash. People are both frightened and reassured by the fact that this is not only a Ukrainian phenomenon. Recommendations for journalists include reporting on examples of resilience, responsibility and survival in other crises, as well as to highlight examples from countries that share similar economic and financial characteristics to Ukraine. There is normally a focus on EU countries, where tens of billions of euros of aid can be collected, which can lead to inflated expectations towards the amount of support that may be received or a sense of hopelessness due to the lack of resources.

In general, Ukrainians see their country as having limited resources. In order not to give the false impression that money alone is salvation, it is important that the media and communicative platforms do not publish stories only about how wealthy countries are allocating funds in the fight against COVID-19, and their levels of testing, ventilators or economic support schemes, but also on efficient ways to allocate limited resources.

7

NEUTRAL AND SIMPLE PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION AS A WAY OF SECURING TRUST

All five videos were based on the following principles: the videos tell the stories of ordinary people and talk about relatable topics; their tone is neutral, without opinionated statements. In particular, the journalists do not give their own opinions or lecture. They instead show examples. The content is not 'feel good' and does not create a particular sentiment towards the people in the video or journalists themselves, and it is not purely positive. It reveals the problem and its solution. This method of communicating information might seem obvious, yet the study demonstrated the effectiveness of such an approach with specific examples, and the response to all five videos revealed a distinctly high level of trust among the audience.

8

TRUST IN TELEVISION REPORTING AND EASE OF USE

Television is considered as an official source of information, unlike the internet. Although many said that they "do not watch TV", these participants still tended to repeat TV narratives and mentioned TV channels. These recommendations concerning the content of videos can also be considered for TV broadcasts.

9

ONLINE LITERACY FOR THE OLDER GENERATION

All respondents from the older age group consume information about the coronavirus on the internet and are less critical of online information, including video blogs and messenger apps. Media platforms that are also used by older audiences should be advised to make more online content (and content that can be easily distributed via messenger apps). Furthermore, articles can be written with the purpose of helping older generations understand which sources of information about the pandemic can be trusted. Additionally, older people specifically identify articles in which the actions of the younger generations are discussed. Due to the older generation being particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus pandemic, this knowledge can become a source of optimism for this age group.

The video is about our young people, who have appeared in our time. They were born and have grown up to be patriots of our country. They don't need foreign countries, as it were, and they don't need the Turkish coast. They need their native home. With this kind of youth, everything will be fine.

(Research participant)

Kyiv resident who was helped by volunteers during the quarantine period. Shot from the video



10

“CONVENIENCE” AND BREVITY

We also advise the media to consider the “convenience” of the way their content is consumed, as sources of information consulted are often those that are the most readily available or technologically advanced (for example, a notification that pops up on a smartphone screen).



When I’m looking at the weather, the column on the right tells me what’s going on in the world. This is what I see on weather forecast websites. When you open it, you see the weather for the next 3 days, or a week, or a month, and to the right messages pop up showing what’s going on in the world, how many in America, how many Italy, how many here.

(Research participant)

11

LANGUAGE

For some of the participants a specific component of “convenience” is also the language of the material. It makes no difference whether you are Russian or Ukrainian, but there is a high demand for the Russian language. People search for information in Russian, not realising that this might lead them to manipulative information. Therefore, there is a need for reliable Ukrainian sources in Russian about COVID-19.

12

ORIGINAL FORMATS AND INFORMATION AS A WAY OF ENGAGING PEOPLE

Due to people becoming weary from hearing about coronavirus for so long and reading similar information about it, one obvious recommendation to remedy this is to present content in different forms, particularly in a popular science style. When it lacks originality, useful information can stop being perceived as useful. Different approaches to content could increase interest and trust, such as information about new technologies: how to print masks with a 3D printer, how plastic can be made from sugarcane and may thus be environmentally friendly (often this is perceived as synonymous with good quality). Interest in technologies such as these is increasing, and combining stories about technology and useful information could help to increase trust in journalists, and strengthen the perception that they are knowledgeable.

13

NEED FOR LOCAL COVERAGE

The level of trust in local authorities is noticeably higher in some regions, with participants regularly mentioning local websites and media. The pandemic has shown that national media cannot replace all aspects of the local media, and that regional media, which can be behind on technical capabilities and availability of resources, have the opportunity to use the crisis period to their advantage. They can show useful local information, which can help better understand the situation in the community, and how to operate in their unique local context.

Shot from the video about Ukrainian designer Ivan Frolov, whose company started making overalls for medical staff



14

DEMAND FOR EXPERT ANALYSIS IN POPULAR FORMATS

In addition to doctors and famous people, there is a high demand among the audience for experts to explain, analyse and predict the situation in a professional and detailed yet clear manner. If the media makes rash decisions when selecting speakers/experts, these may become media personalities in the eyes of the audience (or bloggers/pseudo-experts who represent someone's political agenda, or spread fake news/conspiracy theories). Responses often mentioned not only Dr Komarkovsky's name, but also bloggers with no medical background. Therefore, the media should use this type of platform (expert blogs), whilst still guaranteeing an editorial level of expertise.

15

LINKING PERSONAL FINANCES WITH MACROECONOMICS

We recommend national media to report on the link between macroeconomics and personal finances in an accessible way, rather than this being confined to economics-focused media. Sociologists from the London School of Economics responding to the research from the Ukrainian project remarked how in contrast to Western countries, Ukrainians do not talk about the crisis in the context of the 'state economy' (discussion that is present in the UK, for example), but focus more on specific financial needs and problems.

The research also identified a number of areas that could be transformed into their own media projects, particularly:

- **A series of stories about doctors and medical workers:** it is important for the public to respect them and be aware of their work during the pandemic (doctors, after the army and the church, can become yet another group that is trusted and respected), as well as bringing medical reforms to light.
- **A series of stories from different regions demonstrating how small businesses can cope successfully with the economic crisis** (when the crisis has become an opportunity for change and a chance at success)
- **A series of stories from regions most affected by the pandemic** (e.g. Bukhovyna, Prykarpattia, Ternopil region, Rivne region)

ADDITIONAL CONCLUSIONS

In addition to testing the hypotheses, the study outlines social sentiments triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic in Ukraine. Given the limited range and number of participants, we should be cautious about over-interpreting the results. Nonetheless, this sociological study captures current sentiments in society and enables us to speak about the dominance of some patterns in society in assessing the government's actions (political reactions); efficiency of communications (the degree of synergy in communications); the quality of media representation of the pandemic in Ukraine; and the presence of conspiracy theories.

Therefore, we would like to highlight the following conclusions that the media and communicators reporting on COVID-19 in Ukraine should take into consideration:

1

TRUST AS SOCIAL CAPITAL IN SOCIETY

Both reactions to the tested videos and responses to in-depth semi-structured interviews reflected systemic mistrust in the government's actions. While recognising that some of the government's actions are appropriate and tailored to help the population (*including the timely introduction of quarantine, financial assistance to pensioners, subsidies for businesses*), the respondents are sceptical about the government's capacity to control the current situation or to effectively lead the country out of the possible upcoming economic crisis. This ambivalence is based on people's personal negative experience with government actions in past crises and their assessment of the healthcare system during the pandemic.

This ambivalence is also manifested in the combination of mistrust and high expectations of the government to solve most of the problems mentioned by those surveyed (*healthcare problems, social safety net for the vulnerable, support for small businesses, preservation of jobs etc.*).

Shot from video about
Ukrainian designers making
overalls for doctors



The combination of mistrust and high expectations of the government to solve most of the problems mentioned by those surveyed.

This paradoxical mix of distrust in the government and high expectations of it may, on the one hand, signal a paternalistic mindset. On the other hand, this is not necessarily indicative of an inclination towards populism, but rather a need to understand the reasoning behind the government's actions. The demand for assistance is not necessarily about support for the respondents themselves. Instead, it is **THE DEMAND FOR FAIRNESS** — for an explanation of why the assistance perceived as limited is provided to some categories of citizens and not to others.

At the same time, one category of respondents, which was prone to conspiracy theories (knowing of or believing in at least three of the proposed conspiracies) did not expect anything of the government and relied solely on themselves.

We would like to note once again the part of the study where the assessment of actions by volunteers or business in support of doctors triggered partly negative emotions among one fifth of the respondents — this was because they thought these problems should be solved by the government.

At the same time, respondents do not analyse Ukraine's situation in comparison to other countries. When they criticise the government for its lack of protective gear for medics, the respondents do not take into account the scale of the emergency, in which countries wealthier than Ukraine failed to stock up with enough medical means, in the last minute rush to import supplies from China.

We would also like to draw attention to the fact that in a crisis it is mutual trust between all actors — the government, volunteers and society overall — that constitutes the critical social capital that helps overcome the unprecedented challenges. It is therefore extremely important that the media work to unite society, helping it to overcome atomisation and to seek common ground for joint action.



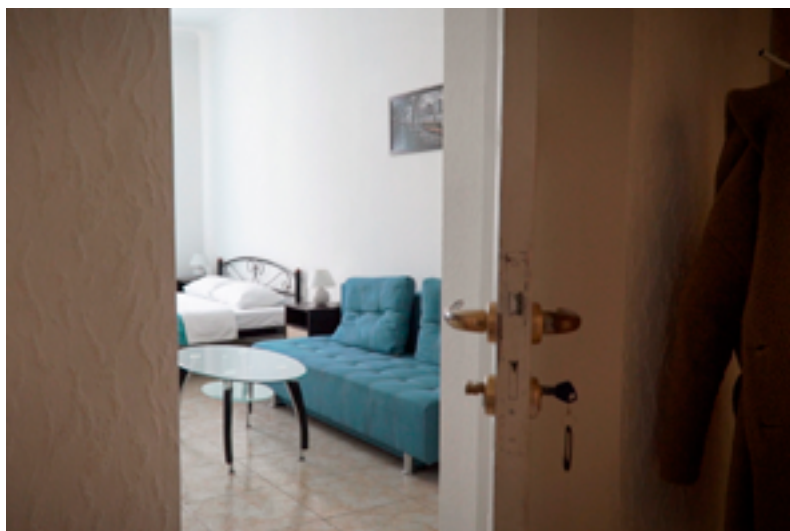
A Ukrainian doctor who lives in the hotel which provides free accommodation in Kyiv for the medical workers during COVID-10 pandemics. Shot from the video

2

LOW ANXIETY AND RESILIENCE AGAINST CRISES

The study suggests a low degree of anxiety about the pandemic and its possible economic consequences. However, this lack of panic is mostly due to the population's experience of adjusting to the many crisis situations experienced in the recent past. Resilience is a typical feature for respondents. Most were pragmatic about the restriction of their freedoms, responded to the need to change their behaviour, listen to the advice of the authorities and adhere to restrictions. It is important for the media to maintain balance in this context: not increase anxiety to a critical degree, but at the same time continuing to inform the public about the risks so as not to provoke carelessness and disregard for safety rules, especially during the easing of the quarantine.

Shot from video about the Kyiv hotel offering free rooms to medical staff who usually have to travel from the outskirts.



3

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONSPIRATORIAL THINKING

We did not analyse the response to content that shares conspiracy theories, as we focused on constructive recommendations and examined materials that should work towards a positive result. However we added a question in the survey on the link between the conspiratorial thinking, anxiety and solidarity. Both Ukrainian and British sociologists point out that among our respondents, people prone to conspiracy theories have different characteristics. The first group is afraid of the world in general, but their primary concern is the safety of the community. Another, more isolated, category does not trust either the government or other citizens. The latter are less afraid because they no longer believe that success for the country can be possible. Even though our sample is small, we observe that the first category is mostly comprised of women, and the second of men.

The lack of clear and comprehensible analysis of the situation leads to suspicions, which people “legitimise” via conspiracy theories, which have increased during the pandemic. The statements most supported by our respondents were “the government is not telling us the whole truth”, “the virus was grown in a laboratory as a weapon”, and “the goal of the virus is the re-distribution of the world’s assets”. Every respondent in the 60+ age group agreed with at least one of the six conspiracy statements.

Some of the respondents who are used to relying on themselves may be inspired by conspiracy theories, including by the statement that “the pandemic is fake and exaggerated”. Therefore, the conspiratorial thinking is not always linked to the leaning towards negativity. Sometimes, it results from the pursuit of positivity.

In the context of the study, we can observe that conspiratorial thinking is based on: traditional social distrust of the government and its actions; the government’s mistakes in communications and management; the lack of comparable experiences, and therefore the inability to predict when it will end; and media manipulation, including on social media and in Russian or pro-Russian sources.

The analysis of responses shows that traditional mass media – primarily TV channels – social media and YouTube are the most common source of conspiracy theories. The reason for trust in this content, in our view, lies in several factors: the absence of basic media literacy skills, high quality of conspiracy content that creates an illusion of authenticity and accuracy, and language accessibility (mostly Russian).

The goal of this study was not to find out what formats are the best for deconstructing and debunking conspiracy theories. At the same time, our results show that although conspiracy theories do not dominate among respondents, the scale and diversity of conspiracy messaging on COVID-19 should not be underestimated, as it is a very easy way to devalue high-quality expertise-based work of the media. It is worth mentioning again that this information is often picked up from traditional media, not marginal resources. Overall, we warn that distrust in the government and communication problems can lead to an increase in conspiratorial thinking and in the vulnerability of society to manipulation.



I’m inspired by the posts of those who are against [...] wearing those masks; it’s unclear where they should be worn — at the store, as I believe, or at a hospital — yes, but just walking the street in a mask or wearing one in your car — I think it’s stupid. Posts of these people on Instagram, Facebook inspire me personally, I like sharing them or commenting on them.

(Research participant)

Here is what matters for me — [...] first of all, it can be very interesting when Donald Trump says something. That’s important to me, too. I follow what Bill Gates says because he is normally (in my opinion) a mouthpiece for certain forces which, in my view, may have arranged this whole situation.

(Research participant)

4

ATTITUDE TO THE OTHER

The study offers important findings on the attitude towards the Other in the context of the pandemic. When participants were asked about their attitudes towards people of different nationalities, people were most comfortable about having close contact with Ukrainians and Russians (*although opinions varied on the residents of Russia: 9 respondents out of 30 would not like to see them in Ukraine in any capacity, while 11 out of 30 would be willing to see them as relatives – in our view, the key factors in this choice are personal connections and a long personal history*). At the same time, some distance is emerging with regard to representatives of other countries and regions. It is important to note that the study was done at the point when COVID-19 numbers in Russia were below those of Western European countries.

Still, we assume that the potential for stigmatising the Other in a context of threat to personal safety can be high, including as a result of the considerable quantity of conspiracy theories and manipulated content. Keeping in mind the resonance of the developments in Novi Sanzhary, where Ukrainian citizens were returned from China, we call for an extremely cautious approach to formulations when it comes to “otherness” to prevent biased attitudes towards other groups, including foreigners, migrant workers, doctors, COVID-19 patients.

Doctor from an intensive care unit where COVID-19 patients in Kyiv are being treated



UTURE RESEARCH

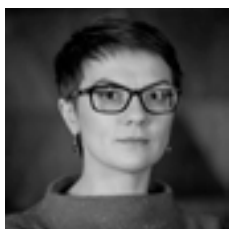
It would be useful to conduct additional research after the last stage of the lockdown, including in the following areas:

- on the relationship between the government, volunteers and wider society, in particular for overcoming mistrust;
- a separate in-depth “conspiracy study”, including among the most conspiracy-prone age and social groups;
- on the attitude towards and understanding of healthcare reform, the relationship between the state/government and medics, and the role of the state in the healthcare sector with restricted financial resources at hand.



PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM LAB –

founded by Ukrainian journalists Nataliya Gumenyuk and Angelina Kariakina, the Public Interest Journalism Lab is an interdisciplinary coalition of partners, including the Arena Programme at the London School of Economics, Kharkiv Institute of Social Research, and Lviv Media Forum.



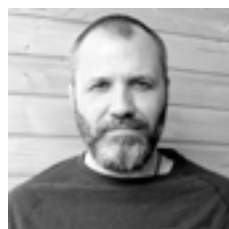
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The Lab seeks to popularise best practices for public interest journalism in the digital age.

THE LAB'S MAIN TASKS are creating high quality content to promote a constructive discussion around complex social topics, and testing this content on audiences, before developing editorial strategies based on the sociological research.

The Kharkiv Institute of Social Research is an independent, non-profit organisation. Since 1999 their research has mainly focused on access to justice in Ukraine, police transparency, public safety in regions which are located near to zones of military conflict in Ukraine; discriminatory practices and the reformation of social services at the community level.

The Lviv Media Forum (NGO) is the biggest media conference in Central and Eastern Europe, an ecosystem of people, organisations and projects. It develops comprehensive media solutions and popularises the best worldwide media practices in Ukraine.

The Arena Programme, based at the London School of Economics, researches the causes of disinformation, polarisation and hate speech and creates counter responses. specialises in best practices for creating media content in the public interest, and in cutting-edge sociological research that investigates how to overcome the challenges of polarisation and disinformation.

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