

OPEN SOCIETY IN

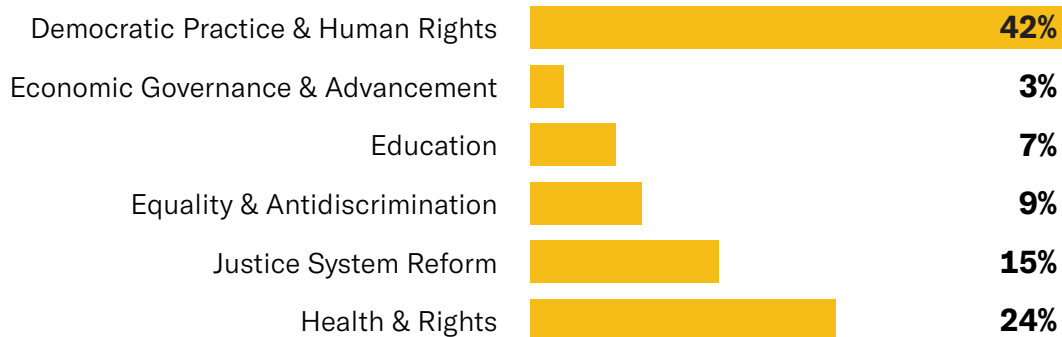
# UKRAINE

The International Renaissance Foundation, a part of the Open Society Foundations, was established in Kyiv in April 1990. At the time, Ukraine was still part of the rapidly collapsing Soviet Union, placing the new foundation at the forefront of the effort by George Soros, the founder and chair of the Open Society Foundations, to use his fortune to assist the former Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe.

After Ukraine became fully independent in 1991, the new foundation gradually expanded its support for Ukraine's often-painful transition to democracy and a market economy. The Open Society Foundations' immediate focus in Ukraine and other former Communist states was modernization and reform of moribund national institutions, and support for emerging civil society groups.

By 1994, the International Renaissance Foundation was the biggest international donor in the country, with an annual budget of roughly \$12 million for projects that ranged from retraining tens of thousands of decommissioned soldiers, to the creation of a contemporary arts center in Kyiv. In the early 2000s, the foundation oriented itself around European integration, while mobilizing resources to help those affected by conflict after Russia's invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Over its lifetime, the foundation has supported more than 18,000 projects, benefiting millions of people.

## UKRAINE: 2019 GRANT BUDGET BY SECTOR



Total Budget for 2019:

**\$7.8M**

Total 2019 Open  
Society Budget for  
Eurasia Region:

**\$51.5M**

## 9 FACTS ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION

- 1** Fighting corruption by strengthening transparency and accountability has always been a priority for the International Renaissance Foundation, which has funded investigative journalism projects such as Our Money, and groups such as Transparency International Ukraine, StateWatch, Center Eidos, and the Anti-Corruption Action Center, resulting in millions of dollars returned to the state.
- 2** The foundation and its grantees were active supporters of the creation of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine in 2014, and helped lawmakers develop a new anticorruption law that required public officials to declare their assets.
- 3** In 2015, local groups supported by the foundation brought about wholesale reform of the Ministry of Health’s system for procuring HIV and tuberculosis medication, after they exposed overwhelming evidence of corruption among Ukrainian distribution firms.
- 4** The foundation and its partners have actively supported the work of the International Criminal Court in Ukraine, including the investigation of alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine—including in Crimea, the eastern Donbas region, and the shooting of unarmed protestors during the 2013–14 Maidan protests in Kyiv.
- 5** The International Renaissance Foundation has supported the development of independent media outlets in Ukraine, and backed a multi-year campaign to establish an independent public service broadcaster that led to the launch of the National Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine in 2015.
- 6** Since 2014, the foundation has been among the funders of Stop Fake, an initiative led by two university professors dedicated to exposing lies and myths about Ukraine. Stop Fake now produces its own TV and radio programming and online material in several languages.
- 7** The International Renaissance Foundation’s support for the modernization of Ukraine’s educational system in the early 1990s included commissioning educators, academics, administrators, and civil society groups to write, edit, and publish hundreds of school and university textbooks, helping to transform the way those subjects were conceived and taught.
- 8** Between 1997 and 2004, the foundation helped to produce and distribute Tartar language textbooks to schools in Crimea, supporting a revival of Tartar language courses, which had been suppressed under Soviet rule.
- 9** The International Renaissance Foundation helped Ukraine’s universities establish an independent external testing system for admissions—aimed at combating the paying of bribes for student places—that now operates across the country.