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# UKRAINIANS OF SOUTH AFRICA: SOCIETY, IDENTITY AND FUTURE

RESEARCH

2020, Cape Town

ISBN 978-0-620-96143-1

This publication is the translation of the introduction, methodology and conclusions of the full research report on Ukrainians of South African Republic: Society, Identity, Future (256 pp.) published in Ukrainian in October 2020 in Lviv and available online URL: <http://miok.lviv.ua/?p=18869>

The translation was made by Ukrainian Association of South Africa (NPO) with the support of the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa.



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## CONTENTS

<b>Preamble .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introductory statement from the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introductory statement from the Embassy of South Africa in Ukraine .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Ukrainians, Ukrainian places and the Ukrainian community in South Africa .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of Ukrainians in South Africa .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Chapter 2. Migration and integration of Ukrainians in South Africa .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Chapter 3. The identity of Ukrainians and their children in South Africa .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Chapter 4. Public activity of Ukrainians in South Africa .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Chapter 5. Ties of Ukrainians in South Africa with Ukraine .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Chapter 6. Vision of Ukrainians and their associations in South Africa .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Annex. Research questionnaire .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Research team .....</b>	<b>53</b>



## PREAMBLE

The «Ukrainians of South Africa» research, conducted by the International Institute of Education, Culture and Diaspora Relations, is unique. For the first time, the object of scientific interest is the life of our compatriots, who for various reasons have chosen South Africa as the country of their residence and work. For most Ukrainian citizens, this fact is a discovery itself, because the Ukrainian diaspora and modern migration flows from our country are mainly associated with the American, European, and less often with the Australian continents.

However, Africa is slowly becoming a space that Ukrainians choose to live in, to pursue their career aspirations, and to which Ukraine is beginning to pay attention as a potential focus of its foreign policy activities.


According to experts, Africa today is a continent that demonstrates to the world community the highest rates of economic growth with an indicator of the youngest average age of its inhabitants. We are receiving clear signals for potential cooperation with African countries. This is, first of all, the creation of preconditions for strengthening these countries and their cooperation, including the introduction of a single African passport, which should remove border issues for African citizens, and the iconic African continental Free Trade Area agreement. The eventual introduction of the common ECO currency (with the future of a single AFRO currency for the whole of Africa) is being considered. The dynamics of the region and the prospects of a huge market for business have long been discovered by foreign players in Africa. Prominent indications of this interest are the opening of numerous diplomatic missions, led by China, the United States, France, India, Russia and a number of other countries that are actively integrating into the economic, political and cultural spheres of Africa.

Ukraine is only taking the first steps in this direction. Therefore, it is very important to study all the conditions and opportunities, including finding potential agents of influence to realize their interest. One of such players is undoubtedly the diaspora, which can perform various tasks in the implementation of the policy of cooperation between the country of origin and the country of residence, depending on its internal strength and capabilities.

It is well known that for countries with large diasporas, which are characterized by extremely diverse resources (from knowledge, skills and ideas to finances, trade relations and political influence on governments), it is important to involve them in the development of both the recipient and donor countries. Hence, the necessary condition on the agenda is the support of the communities of compatriots living abroad.

Therefore, in order to develop recommendations (for public authorities in Ukraine, the community in South Africa, and individual activists), it was important for us to find out the characteristics of the following:



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- human and social capital of Ukrainians in South Africa, which we understand as their knowledge, skills, opportunities, aspirations, as well as building a network of connections; socio-economic contribution to the country where they live and work and to the country of their origin; their ties with Ukraine through relationships with family, friends, colleagues and the community;
  - cultural capital, that is the contribution of Ukrainians to the ethnic diversity of South Africa, as well as the adoption of new values that become part of their identity, preservation of their identity or its transformation under the influence of new conditions and circumstances as factors of spreading Ukraine's cultural heritage and the true knowledge about it;
  - economic capital that are the investments of members of the diaspora in entrepreneurial activity (money transfers and savings and willingness to cooperate with economic structures in Ukraine).

The research of Ukrainians in South Africa is an important step in the process of assessing their socio-economic status and willingness to help strengthen their country of origin and country of residence. This is also necessary for the development of communication of Ukrainians in South Africa with Ukrainian diasporas in the world, the formation of their own subjectivity (to become an independent participant in cooperation with various structures: governments, international organizations, private and academic sectors and the civil society), formulating of trajectories for the near and future prospects as well as the vision of their future and the future of the Ukrainian community as a whole.

Knowledge about the community of Ukrainians in South Africa, understanding its capabilities and needs, integration processes and at the same time factors of identity preservation are crucial for the development of cooperation strategies between Ukraine and this community. This will promote effective cooperation in promoting Ukrainian interest on the African continent.

The International Institute of Education, Culture and Diaspora Relations is grateful to Dzvinka Kachur, President of the Ukrainian Association of South Africa, for the initiative to carry out this large-scale research and to provide effective assistance in its implementation. We also thank all the participants who agreed to give an interview and dedicated their time to the common cause.

***Iryna Kliuchkovska,***  
*Director of the International Institute of  
Education, Culture and Diaspora Relations*



## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FROM THE EMBASSY OF UKRAINE IN SOUTH AFRICA

*«They change their sky but not their soul who cross the ocean.»* The great poet of antiquity Horace wrote these words before the Common Era, but they have not lost their importance and accuracy today. The modern globalized world allows us to quickly travel distances and deliver letters instantly. Being far from home nowadays, it is easy to look into the eyes of those who stayed there, turning on the screen of a mobile phone. Nevertheless looking at a different sky, starting from another ground, you realize that it will take great effort in order to take off, start and go forward.

Such efforts are being made by the Ukrainian community in South Africa in order to preserve the Ukrainian identity and unite the Ukrainian community in the most remote corners of the boundless spaces of this picturesque country.

The edition that the readers are now holding in their hands is a testament to our efforts to write our own story and the history of Ukraine far south on the African continent. It includes many interesting and surprisingly diverse facts of the presence of Ukrainian names, titles and figures on African soil, from the legendary Hetman Ivan Mazepa to the modern Ukrainian school, where you can easily learn how to dance our wonderful hopak in online lessons!

At the beginning of reading, it may seem to you that these episodes are not connected by anything other than the actual ethnic component. They are scattered in time and space, covering the period of the Boer War and the beginning of protests for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the conviction of the aggressor state. However, all of them are able to unite Ukrainians far from home, under foreign skies, setting a precedent for the creation of our own history and at the same time designing the future for several generations to come.

Enjoy your reading, acquaintance with African Ukrainians and their interesting diverse roots!

May these stories inspire you to discover new horizons while remaining loyal to your homeland.

***Liubov Abravitova,***  
*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine  
to the Republic of South Africa*



## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FROM THE EMBASSY OF SOUTH AFRICA IN UKRAINE

I was very excited to learn about the research on the Ukrainian community in South Africa. Understanding the community's challenges, opportunities and vision for the future will make it easier to interact and integrate and to ensure that we build stronger bilateral relations between South Africa and Ukraine. In that regard, Ukrainians living in South Africa and South Africans living in Ukraine are important partners in building better people-to-people relations between South Africa and Ukraine.

I started my responsibilities as the South African Ambassador in Ukraine from 1 June 2019. During this period I have participated and interacted with the Ukrainian community in South Africa on a number of occasions. The most recent being in the 4th Ukrainian Festival in South Africa in November 2020 organised and hosted by the Ukrainian Association of South Africa in cooperation with MIOK (the Research Institute of the Ukrainian Diaspora). I have been impressed by the general enthusiasm of Ukrainians living in South Africa for my country and how actively they remain connected with their own country. The exchange of culture between our two countries enriches our communities and contributes to an already rich cultural diversity of the Rainbow Nation. These positive contributions by Ukrainians (whether they have been in the country for a long time or only arrived recently) in South Africa are noted with appreciation and respect.

When reading the summary of some of the findings of the research project, I was struck by the close alignment between the opportunities and the challenges in South Africa. It is true that South Africa continues to feel the burden of the legacies of colonialism and Apartheid and that these challenges are not just felt by the Ukrainian community, but also by South Africans. Together, we need to make our own personal big or small contributions to address the scourges of the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty.

It is hoped that the South African Embassy in Ukraine and our close partner, the Ukraine Embassy in South Africa together with the South African community in Ukraine and the Ukraine community in South Africa would be able to utilise our combined knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm to not just build stronger people-to-people relations between our two countries, but to also start developing new ideas to strengthen trade and investment. Our countries are not that far apart and we need to take advantage of economic and commercial opportunities between South Africa and Ukraine and its respective regions. I am also hoping that with the expertise inherent in both our countries, we could promote interaction, strengthen relations and develop economic benefits in priority sectors in education, health, rural development (both countries have land reform realities), as well as issues related to the 4th Industrial Revolution and the Blue Economy.

Finally, I would like to again thank the Ukrainian community for their positive contributions to South Africa and to keep on actively supporting and promoting South Africa's philosophy of Ubuntu!

**Andre Johannes Groenewald**, *Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador  
of the Republic of South Africa to Ukraine*



# UKRAINIANS, UKRAINIAN PLACES AND THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

What is the Ukrainian community in South Africa like? There are not many clear answers to this question yet. The study presented in this report is just the first attempt to understand this phenomenon and generalize the idea of the history and current presence of the modern Ukrainians who live in this distant country due to various migration factors.

This article is just an essay and does not provide a complete portrait. It is an attempt to describe Ukrainians who lived in South Africa, places related to Ukraine and formation of the Ukrainian community during the period of 2014-2020. It is also a call for researchers to join the study of Ukrainian history in South Africa and to rethink the role of Ukrainians in countries that have not traditionally been territories of Ukrainian migration. Such study could be that very factor which will help the modern Ukrainian community to acquire a historical dimension.

## **HISTORICAL FIGURES AND MIGRATION BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

One of the first attempts to describe the Ukrainian diaspora on the African continent was a publication in the fourth volume of the Encyclopaedia of the Ukrainian Diaspora, published by Taras Shevchenko Scientific Society, edited by Vasyl Markus. Here we read that «Africa did not become the centre of permanent Ukrainian settlements, because in its essence neither economic nor political Ukrainian emigration showed any special interest in it. However, due to various reasons and life circumstances, the sporadic Ukrainian presence affected this continent as well» [1].

There is little data about Ukrainians in South Africa, and there are parts of history that still need further study. After all, the turbulent history of Ukraine in the 18th and 20th centuries, when borders were constantly changing, often made Ukrainians Austrian, Polish or Russian nationals. Therefore, the next section, which, although based on scientific research and stories of Ukrainians in South Africa, is not exhaustive. It provides brief information about famous Ukrainians in South Africa.

## UKRAINIANS DURING THE ANGLO-BOER WARS

The first European settlers appeared on the territory of modern South Africa near the Cape of Good Hope as early as in 1652, where the Dutch East India Company, led by Jan van Riebeeck, began operations. For the next 154 years, this territory was a colony of the Netherlands. Mixing with the local population and traditions, the Dutch and the Huguenots, who came from France, formed the new Boer ethnicity and developed the Afrikaans language.

As a result of the Napoleonic Wars, Great Britain occupied the Cape Colony in 1806. Under British pressure, a large number of Boers migrated deep into the continent, creating two republics independent of British rule: the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State. In 1818–1820, due to the economic hardship in the country, and hence rising unemployment, Britain organized the resettlement of four thousand people to South Africa. They were nicknamed «settlers of the 1820s» (1820th Settlers). It was at this time that the first Ukrainian geographical name appeared on the map of South Africa. It was associated with the name of Hetman Ivan Mazepa (1639–1709).

## MAZEPPA BAY

Mazeppa Bay is situated on the sparsely populated Wild Coast, which is a section of the southern South African coast of the Indian Ocean. The bay is known as a place for



**Mazeppa Bay**


shark fishing, one of the stops of the ecological cycling route and for its eponymous hotel. It is a bay of incredible beauty and silence. If you ask the average South African about the origin of the name «Mazeppa Bay», most will say that it probably commemorates one of the Zulu chiefs, because the Wild Coast (historic Bantustan) was the territory exclusively allocated during apartheid for the residence of the population of African descent.

However, both points are mistaken. Mazeppa Bay is inhabited by the ethnic Xhosa people, while «Mazeppa» originates from the name of the Ukrainian hetman.

We owe the study of the name of the Mazeppa Bay and the presence of the image of the Ukrainian Hetman in the works of South African poets to the professor and poet Tony Voss from Durban [2]. He has devoted five scientific articles to the subject, and admits that Mazepa has been of interest to him all his life. It is through Professor Voss' research that we have comprehensive information about the connection between the Hetman and this geographical point [3].

In fact, the image of Ivan Mazepa gained popularity among European artists during romanticism. Voltaire wrote about him in 1731, then in 1819 George Byron dedicated his poem to Mazepa, and in 1828 Victor Hugo wrote his work about this outstanding Ukrainian.





Mazepa was punished for having an affair with the wife of one of the nobles during his service to Polish King John II Casimir, was tied naked to a wild horse and released into the steppe, which does not seem a reason to be proud of the Hetman. However, in this plot the artists identified a desire for freedom of the Ukrainian people and Mazepa himself as demonstrated by the bright life he lived. Also, in the story of this episode, writers drew attention to the image of an artist, which, incidentally, was central to European romanticism. Somewhat later, Mazepa's theme was rethought by South African poets, including Roy Campbell, the author of the poem «Mazepa» (1930). A detailed study of the motifs associated with Mazepa in South African literature can be read in the works of Professor Voss.


The popularity of the works about the Ukrainian Hetman in Europe led to the fashion for naming ships after Mazepa. For sailors this name symbolized speed and freedom. A 140-ton schooner, named after Mazepa, was launched somewhere in America in the 1830s. The schooner was used for transatlantic transportation, and after the cessation of the slave trade and the change of trade routes, most of the time it travelled near the warm coasts of South Africa, Mauritius and Mozambique. This ship was often used for transportation between Natal and Port Elizabeth. It stopped in the bay, which was later granted the status of a trading port. As a result, the name spread and became fixed on the maps as Mazeppa Bay.

The Mazepa schooner is associated with the famous story of the First Anglo-Boer War. In May 1842, Boers captured British settlers. When the schooner approached the shores of Natal, the ship was also taken captive. The men were taken prisoners, and the women and children of the settlers were placed on board. However, some men managed to hide on the schooner, sailed to the shore by boat and sent a signal for help. The Mazepa schooner itself left the anchor the next windy night and drifted into the open ocean, rescuing women and children [4]. These heroic events prompted the residents of Durban to name a street near South Beach in honor of Mazepa.

## **YURI BUDYAK**

One of the first Ukrainians whose life was connected with South Africa is **Yuri Budyak** (1878 – September 28, 1942). Yuri was born in the Poltava region, and his real name is Pokos / Pukus [5]. Like other inhabitants of modern Ukraine and Russia [6], inspired by the struggle against the colonialists, Yuri volunteered in the Anglo-Boer War (October 11, 1899 – May 31, 1902) and therefore came to South Africa. According to a contemporary, during the war Yuri saved Churchill from death, in gratitude for which Churchill sent Yuri Budyak to study at Oxford [7]. However, Yuri, who did not speak English, decided not to continue his studies and left Britain for Ukraine a few weeks later. Regrettably, Yuri's destiny in Ukraine as a poet and children's writer ended tragically. He was sent to a concentration camp during a wave of repression. The imprisonment undermined Yuri's health and he died during the German occupation of Kyiv in 1943 [8].





It is not known today how many Ukrainians took part in the Anglo-Boer War and whether they remained in South Africa. Both parties to the conflict need to be studied, because Ukrainian soldiers could serve with both British and Boers' forces.

The opportunity for such research is growing due to the ongoing process of digitization of archives and documents. The Genealogical Society of South Africa is creating a database for documenting burials, as well as digitizing archives, which will allow continued detailed research of Ukrainians in South Africa [9]. In addition, the archives of the population census of 1911 have been preserved, which can as well be an important source of information.

## MIGRATION OF UKRAINIAN JEWS

The first organized migration from Ukraine to South Africa that can be considered is the migration of **Ukrainian Jews** during the period of changes in the rules of residence in the zones of permanent Jewish settlements. These changes were initiated by the Russian tsars Alexander III (1881–1896) and Nicholas II (1896–1917).


Between 1880 and 1911, the number of Jews in South Africa increased from 4,000 to 49,926 [10], 24,839 of whom, according to the 1911 census, were born in Russia [6]. Some researchers estimate some 15,000 [11] Ukrainian Jews emigrated to South Africa in the 1880s. Most of the Jewish migrants of that period came from Lithuania, which generated the name «Lithuanian Jews» to all the migrants of that time, even if they arrived from other territories. Therefore, modern South African families often do not know that the cities they come from were actually located in Ukraine. The process of this migration as well as the characteristics of adaptation of Ukrainian Jews both need to be studied in more detail.

## MIGRATION AFTER WORLD WAR II

The First and Second World Wars often left no choice for talented Ukrainians, and they were forced to migrate abroad. Xenia Belmas (January 23, 1890, Chernihiv region – February 2, 1981, Durban) was an incredibly bright Ukrainian who lived in South Africa for a long time and founded her own singing school. Researcher and scientist Boris Balinsky (September 10, 1905, Kyiv – September 1, 1997, Johannesburg) from Kyiv and Graf Ivan Leon Szeptycki (1905–1980) are other two well-known Ukrainians who migrated to South Africa during the Second World War.

## XENIA BELMAS

We know a lot about Xenia Belmas and her biography thanks to the Russian-South African researcher and professor Irina Filatova. Xenia Belmas herself dictated her biography to Irina [12]. Xenia was born in the Chernihiv region. Her mother was Ukrainian and her father was a Ukrainian of French descent. From an early age, Xenia sang and performed with the local choir, later studied at the Kyiv Conservatory, and from the age of sixteen sang solo in operas in Odessa and Kyiv, travelled and performed with orchestras. At the age of 20,



Xenia happily married a wealthy landowner, Arkady Bobrovnikov, who fully supported her desire to grow as a singer. Studying in Moscow and contracting with the Kharkiv and Odessa Opera Theaters indicate that her career developed extremely successfully. However, during the First World War, her husband was wounded, and the singer left the stage to take care of Arkady in the Chernihiv region. He died after the October Revolution and their family estate was confiscated.

In 1921, due to poverty and uncertainty, Xenia fled to Poland, where she continued to sing. For the second time she got married, to the pianist and conductor from Kyiv Alexander Kitschin.

The couple made their records in Germany, so even today we can listen to Xenia's voice. According to some sources, Xenia received a contract for more than 80 records in Berlin [13]. To master the Italian repertoire, she went to Milan, and then moved to Paris with only a pair of underwear and shoes. With her singing, Xenia conquered Jacques Rouché, director of the Grand Opera House of Paris, and with tremendous success performed as a soloist in the opera «Aida» in January 1926. Xenia sang at La Scala and many other European operas, and toured brilliantly in Australia. On all stages, critics highlighted the high technicality, strength and special timbre of her voice. However, the singer did not have financial stability, and she constantly had to solve administrative problems with documents and visas.

On July 25, 1934, Xenia flew to Cape Town and after a series of successful concerts remained in South Africa. Today it is not known for sure why the singer decided to settle in South Africa and not return to Europe. Probably before the start of World War II, her second husband did not feel safe [14]. If this is true, Xenia paid a high price. A few years later, her husband left her in search of happiness with a richer woman, who broke up with him soon and Alexander died in poverty.

Having settled in Durban, Xenia Belmas founded her own school of opera singing. Her students became famous singers and performed on the opera stages of various South African cities. The students mentioned that Madame always dressed incredibly beautifully, and her apartment was extremely elegant. She made expensive gifts, liked to invite many guests and treated everyone to Ukrainian dishes [12]. The singer died in 1981 and had bequeathed her ashes to be buried in Chernihiv. We probably wouldn't know this much about Xenia if not for professor Iryna Filatova, who met Xenia's students and the keeper of her ashes in the 2000s. Thanks to the efforts of Irina Filatova and the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa, Oleksandr Tsvetkov in particular, the singer's ashes were eventually brought to Ukraine. However, she was buried not in Chernihiv, but at the Baykovo cemetery in Kyiv.

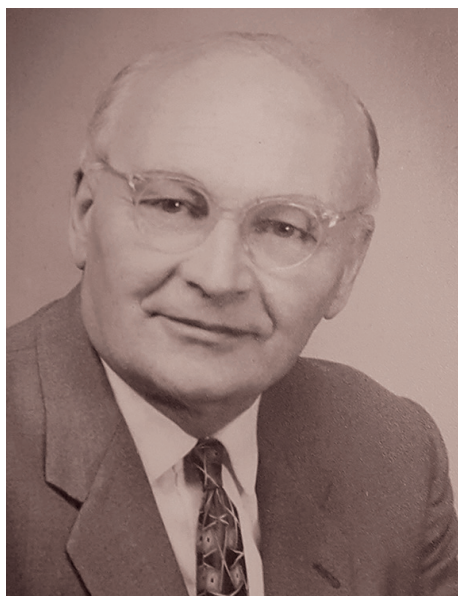
## **OLGA KOCHUBEY**

Olga Kochubey Van Rijswijk, a relative of the Cossack Kochubey family, married to Belgian Willem Van Rijswijk, lived in Somerset West in South Africa from 1949 to 1981. After the death of Olga's father, Petro Kochubey, at the hands of the Bolsheviks in 1917, the family moved to Belgium [15]. Olga Kochubey accepted Africa and raised her children as South

Africans, but they all retained the Orthodox faith, and Olga became one of the founders of the Orthodox community in South Africa [16].

## **BORIS BALINSKY**

Boris Balinsky (1905, Kyiv – 1997, Johannesburg), an outstanding embryologist from Kyiv and a famous scientist in South Africa, was an incredibly bright personality and world known researcher. We know about him thanks to his autobiography [17], which is preserved in the library of the University of Illinois.




**Boris Balinsky**

Boris Balinsky was born in Kyiv. His father, Ivan Balinsky, was a historian and jurist who taught at Galen College and was interested in English literature and management system. At home, the family spoke Ukrainian, Russian and English. Boris's mother Elizaveta Radzymovska was a biology teacher. His aunt Valentyna Radzymovska was also one of the innovators in the field of biology. Boris entered the University of Kiev, where he worked under the direction of Professor Ivan Schmalhausen. Already in the 1920s he published the first scientific works on the embryonic development of amphibians and ascidians. At the age of 28 he became a doctor of science. Then followed a happy marriage and the birth of a son, scientific achievements and appointment as Deputy Director for Research at the Institute of Biology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. However, on October 22, 1937,

Balinsky's wife, Kateryna Singaevska, was arrested by the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) and sentenced to 10 years in prison camps. In two years, Boris Balinsky managed to release his wife on appeal and she could return to work at the Institute of Biology. But the beginning of World War II again changed the life of the scientist. His wife, who resisted the idea of emigrating, died in March 1943, and Balinsky with his mother and son Ivan moved to Germany. Here, in 1947, he got married to Elizabeth Stengel, who was German. After a short period of work at the University of Edinburgh, Balinsky went to South Africa, as he had long dreamed of visiting the African continent. The University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg became his second home. From 1955, Boris headed the Department of Zoology and became one of the founders of electron microscopy of biological objects in South Africa and started the Electron Microscopy Society of Southern Africa.

In 1960, Balinsky published his book «An Introduction to Embryology», which became a bestseller. Balinsky began to work on it in Kyiv. The book also contains unpublished research done by Balinsky's wife Kateryna. It was republished 5 times in English and translated into other languages.



Prior to his retirement, Boris Balinsky devoted himself to science. In addition, he was fond of art, loved opera from an early age, painted beautifully and played the piano. After Ukraine gained independence and opened its borders, Balinsky visited Kyiv twice and presented his collection of butterflies to the Taras Shevchenko University. Boris Balinsky died on September 1, 1997 and was buried at West Park Cemetery. Boris Balinsky's son, Ivan, followed in his father's footsteps, and after graduating from the University of Johannesburg, worked as head of the Department of Zoology at the University of Iowa, but unfortunately died of cancer in 1983. Helen, the daughter from the second marriage, was born in 1949. She still lives in Johannesburg and works as a doctor.

Due to the fact that South Africa and the Soviet Union did not maintain official diplomatic relations, South Africa was a country where a relatively peaceful life was possible for those who became enemies of the USSR or could not accept its policies. We have only brief information about Ukrainians of this period. In particular, it is known that Fr. Igor Shevtsiv from Australia flew to Johannesburg several times to take confessions of Ukrainians (most probably, soldiers).

### **IVAN LEON SZEPTYCKI**

It is unknown if Fr. Shevtsiv visited Graf Ivan Leon Szeptycki (named Jan Sylwester, according to other sources (1905–1980), who came here from Siberia in the late 1940s with the Polish army. In an article about the Szeptycki family, Ivan Matkovsky says that Soviet Secret Services arrested Jan Sylwester on September 22, 1939. He was imprisoned in Lviv and then sent to Kyiv and Kharkiv. Graf was sentenced to five years of hard labour at the Far East concentration camp. However, soon General Vladislav Anders's Army volunteers were granted amnesty, Leon was released and went through a long path of military glory [18]. We see confirmation of this in the documents of the Polish Home Army, where Szeptycki's own explanations are preserved. He was released on September 26, 1941, after which he arrived in Omsk, and then in Buzuluk. According to the Encyclopedia of the Ukrainian Diaspora, Graf Ivan Leon Szeptycki, nephew of Metropolitan Bishop Andrzej Szeptycki and son of his brother Lev, died in Pretoria in 1980. [1] The data from the Polish Sejm provides the exact date and place of death – June 3, 1980, Pretoria [19]. Szeptycki's ashes were buried in Poland.

The data of the British Genealogical Society provides another interesting research topic. Pawel, the son of Ivan Leon Szeptycki and Zofia Wielopolska (1935), married Teresa Raciborska in 1961 in Pretoria (Transvaal). However, the newlyweds did not stay long in Pretoria because their three children, Katarzyna (1962), Leon (1964), and Paul (1965), were born in Kansas, USA [20].

Unfortunately, there is no information about the fighters of the Galicia Division or the Ukrainians who moved from Siberia through Persia (now Iran) together with the Polish army. It is known that about 115,000 people came from Siberia, among whom there probably were Ukrainians.



## BORYS WITJAS

Ukrainians could not relocate immediately after the Second World War. They could emigrate later, as, for example, Borys Witjas. His story is told in the Encyclopedia of the Ukrainian Diaspora [36]. Borys was born on April 2, 1928 (according to other sources, 1930) in the Kharkiv region in the family of a prominent figure of the European women's movement Zinaida Witjas Tamozhynska. The family moved west in 1943 with the help of a priest from the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Even without knowing Greek, Latin, French or Flemish, Borys was able to obtain a high school diploma in two years and successfully entered the Faculty of Political Studies at the Catholic University of Louvain. The young man himself (like his parents) wanted to be accepted at the medical faculty, but he was able to receive the Ukrainian scholarship only to study political science. After his second year of study, he was able to transfer to the medical faculty and graduated in 1958. Borys Witjas was an active member of PLAST (Senior Plast scout organization «Hirski Orly»), as well as a member of Krayova Uprava SUM, where he educated Ukrainian youth. He took an active part in the life of the Ukrainian Students' Association in 1947-1957 as a member of the board in 1952-1953 and 1954-1955) [21]. From 1960, Borys Witjas had a clinic in Marrakech (Morocco), and in the 1990s he moved to Cape Town (South Africa). After Ukraine gained independence, he continued to support Ukrainians and the Ukrainian cause. In particular, he participated in the restoration of the Symon Petliura Library in Kharkiv [22].

## BOHDAN STASHYNSKY

Notorious Bohdan Stashynsky, the murderer of Stepan Bandera, is believed to have lived in South Africa. His story was explored by Serhii Plokhii in his book «The Man with the Poison Gun: A Cold War Spy Story», which tells a story about the NKVD operation to assassinate Lev Rebet and Stepan Bandera, carried out by Stashynsky. According to an interview with South African Police Chief General Mike Geldenhuys published in The Rand Daily Mail on March 6, 1984, Bohdan Stashynsky had lived in South Africa since 1968. He changed his name, remarried and stayed in this country until his death [23]. Neither Stashynsky's new name nor his date of death and burial site are known.

## UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA AFTER THE RESTORATION OF UKRAINE'S INDEPENDENCE

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 deepened the economic crisis and hyperinflation in Ukraine. At the same time, from the end of 1989 to 1994, South Africa underwent a transition from apartheid to independence. In particular, 1990 was the first year that the country's population of European descent declined significantly due to migration to the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

South Africa, with its largest economy on the continent and certain privileges for the white population, was one of the potentially attractive countries for migration. Family migration

is a distinct feature of those immigrating to South Africa in the 1990s. These were mostly people with higher education – teachers, engineers, technicians and those who planned to start their own business.

In 1995, in order to bring back home South Africans who had long lived and studied outside of the country due to apartheid policies, the rule to recognize medical degrees from other countries was introduced. In particular, this referred to degrees obtained in the Soviet Union, because many South Africans of African descent had studied at universities in the USSR during apartheid. Accordingly, doctors from Eastern Europe were also able to take advantage of this policy and find relatively well-paid employment in South African hospitals. Through this program families of medics moved to various provinces of South Africa and many stayed there permanently.

Diplomatic relations between Ukraine and South Africa were established on March 16, 1992, which made it possible to unite a small circle of Ukrainians living in Pretoria at official receptions or events celebrating public holidays. In particular, in 2010, with the assistance of the Embassy of Ukraine, the Coordinating Council of Ukrainians was established, headed by Oleksandr Nekrashevych. The main objective of the Council was to involve Ukrainians into the events of the Embassy and inform them about other important occasions.

According to South African migration statistics, we see that 40 people moved from Ukraine to South Africa in 2003: 30 women and 10 men, of whom only five were economically active in the Specialist category [24].

## UKRAINIAN MUSEUM IN RIVERSDALE



**Museum name plate**

In addition to migration, non-migratory ties are being established between Ukraine and South Africa, as for almost 70 years there haven't been any diplomatic relations between South Africa and the republics of the Soviet Union.

One of the stories of the relationships between Ukraine and South Africa began in 2004, when the mayor of Riversdale from the Western Cape Chris Tout met the mayor of Voznesensk (Mykolaiv region)

Yuri Gerzhov at the conference. After the acquaintance the parties signed an agreement of cooperation between the two cities, and annual exchange programs between Ukraine and South Africa began. Through this initiative more than 200 South Africans have visited Ukraine and vice versa. Lyudmyla Momotenko, Inna Slavych and Tetyana Tereshchenko were involved in the program on the Ukrainian side, and Chris Tout ran it from South Africa.



**Inside the Museum**



The first Ukrainian Museum in Riversdale was opened in 2010 by the joint efforts of Ukrainians and South Africans and with the support of the Ambassador of Ukraine. A small room exhibits Ukrainian embroidery, information about the history of Ukraine, as well as the unique mural of the Swallow's Nest in the Crimea, drawn by the unfortunately deceased local artist Compiono Simon after he had visited Ukraine. A similar South African museum has also been established in Voznesensk.

In 2015 next to the Museum children from Ukraine and South Africa created a mural that combines the landscapes of the two countries.

### UKRAINIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILIES

As a result of the open borders of the post-Soviet space, the number of Ukrainian-South African families was increasing compared to the period before 1994, when these were isolated cases. The creation of such families is one of the important factors of migration.

Ukrainian migration became part of the overall migration from the post-Soviet space in the 1990s. However, the number of Ukrainians in South Africa remains small, and the formation of separate independent Ukrainian communities is unknown.

### FORMATION OF THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY AFTER 2014

The events in Ukraine in late 2013 and early 2014 led to the separation of the Ukrainian community from the cohort of people from the post-Soviet space. Communities first formed in Cape Town, Pretoria, and Johannesburg.



**Ukrainian protest in South Africa**

On February 9, 2014, the first page «Ukrainians in Cape Town» was created on Facebook, which later became the page of the Ukrainian Organization in South Africa. On March 8, 2014, the first Ukrainian political event took place in South Africa. 17 people (only two of them Ukrainians) organized a protest near the Consulate of Ukraine in South Africa in Cape Town. Presidential elections in May 2014 became another occasion for the active Ukrainians from the country's different

provinces to meet. On June 20, 2014, the group of the Ukrainian community in South Africa was created on Facebook. On July 4, 2014, Natalia Zakryachenko, supported by ten Ukrainians from Gauteng, protested against the Russian aggression in Ukraine in front of the Russian Embassy in South Africa. Ukrainians actively started to support the military by purchasing helmets and thermal imaging devices and fundraising for other needs of the army. At this time, Ukrainians in Johannesburg and Cape Town are starting to meet regularly at Antonina Darienko's Bistro 44 in Wellington and visiting the families of Lyubov Shara and Oles Berezhny and Kachur-Haw in Cape Town. In January 2015, during the celebration of

Christmas with the family of Vlada and Francois du Toit, Iryna Kryvosh organized the first nativity scene. Lyubov Shara, Olena Dolotova, Kateryna Ryabchiy and Natalia Zakryachenko, among others, played a special role in uniting the Ukrainian community of that period in Gauteng (Pretoria and Johannesburg), as well Dzvinka Kachur, Iryna Kryvosh, and Olesya Loubser contributed significantly towards bringing closer together the Ukrainians of Cape Town.

Two ATO veterans visited Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria through community efforts in January-February 2017.



**Ukrainians at 2014 elections in Pretoria**

## UKRAINIAN DIASPORA IN SOUTH AFRICA

In July 2015, the first registration of the Ukrainian non-profit company Ukrainian Diaspora in South Africa NPC 2015/268702/08 took place. The organization was headed by three directors: Natalia Zakryachenko (Pretoria), Kateryna Ryabchiy (Johannesburg) and Dzvinka Kachur (Cape Town). The members identified charity as the objective of the company.

The founders picked the easiest way to register and chose the category of a non-profit company. Such registration provides an opportunity to open a bank account and start operating immediately. However, it did not allow other Ukrainians and South Africans to become members or get involved.

In 2015-2016, the Ukrainian Diaspora of South Africa participated in the Global Ukraine meetings, and provided humanitarian assistance to the front line.

## PLAST AND THE CHEETAHS CLUB

In early June 2015, in Johannesburg, thanks to the efforts of Oles Berezhny, the member of Plast (National Scout Organization of Ukraine), the first Plast club Cheetahs was formed. Its members were the children of the families of Lyuba Shara and Oles Berezhny as well as Larysa Talpash and Roman Zhyla, who worked and lived in South Africa.



**Cheetahs' conversation (hutirka)**

Maxim Berezhny was accepted to the club, and the youth consisted of female youth members Vera Berezhna and Teodosia Zhyla and the male youth member Leonid (son of Olena Dolotova).

The group actively carried out educational activities and organized trips. Members of the club also participated in Plast camps in the United States and Ukraine. In 2017, South African Plast members took part in the Anniversary Interregional Plast Meeting (UMPZ) on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Spring Festival in Mittenwald in the Bavarian



Alps (Germany). Plast South Africa further maintained very close relationships with other interregional Plast organizations, especially in those European countries where Plast clubs were very small or were just beginning to emerge. In particular, South African Plast participated in the first regional camps in Belgium and Austria.

Plast scarves are purple (the color of the scout movement in South Africa), and along the edge of the scarves there are wide strips with cheetah spots, which is associated with the name of the club. The patron of the South African Plast is Yuri Budyak-Pokos, whose story has already been told above.



**Cheetahs with awards**

### UKRAINIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL IN CAPE TOWN



**Ukrainian School in Cape Town**

On March 12, 2016, another important event took place. The first Ukrainian Sunday school, headed by Iryna Kryvosh, opened in Cape Town through the efforts of parents. Until 2018, classes were held every two weeks at home at the teacher's or parents' place. The school was attended by 11 children from three to twelve years old.

### FIRST UKRAINIAN FESTIVAL AND UKRAINIAN DAYS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Another important stage in the development of the Ukrainian community in South Africa were the Ukrainian Days in South Africa. The idea of holding a Ukrainian festival and Ukrainian days arose spontaneously at the celebration of the anniversary of the Declaration of State Sovereignty Of Ukraine in July 2016, hosted by Antonina Darienko at her Bistro 44. During the meeting it was still unclear who would perform at such a festival, where to get the necessary funding from and if there is an interested audience.

Finally, Vitaliy Haiduk and his family provided financial support for the Ukrainian Days. After discussing the budget for the Ukrainian Days in South Africa, Mr. Vitaliy agreed to sponsor the event on the condition that «there should be a Ukrainian community in South Africa». Quoin Rock Winery has become a place of constant support for events of the Ukrainian community and the venue



**Ukrainian festival in Cape Town in 2017**

of the third Ukrainian festival. In addition, with the financial support of the Shilin family, the group of migrants Dyvyna performed at the first Ukrainian festival, also becoming a permanent partner of the Ukrainian association.



**Children reading Ukrainian books**

As part of the Ukrainian Days, which lasted from February 28 to May 6, 2017, the Ukrainian community in South Africa hosted screenings of five Ukrainian films at the Labia Cinema in Cape Town, organized exhibitions of Ukrainian books at four libraries in the Western Cape, held lectures about Ukraine and Ukrainian literature and staged the First Ukrainian festival.

A collection of 87 books was created for the exhibition of Ukrainian and English editions on Ukrainian topics. These are books about the history of Ukraine,

photo albums and Ukrainian art and children's literature, donated by the family of Pavlo and Iryna Kachur, as well as books with reproductions of paintings by the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum of Arts and the Andrzej Szeptycki National Museum, donated by Oleksiy Danilov. Exhibitions took place in four libraries: Sea Point Library, Central Library, Table View Library and Somerset West Library. The family team of Zoia, Volodymyr and Sebastian Dei transported the books between the libraries.

The presentations of Ukraine included the «How I grew up: from communism to democracy» lecture by Dr. Oksana Rozumna and Dr. Hanna Yanovska (February 28, Sea Point Library), dedicated to the problems of Ukrainian literature and culture in the post-Soviet space (attended by 54 people); the lecture by Dr. Hanna Yanovska on gender issues in Ukrainian literature including a Skype call with the famous Ukrainian writer Oksana Zabuzhko (March 8, Central Library – sold out, attended by 86 people); the «The price of Ukraine and the European choice. Difficult relations with Russia. Causes and Origins of Conflict» lecture by Counsellor at the Embassy of Ukraine Liubov Abravtova and military attache Andriy Kuzora at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

The largest event presenting Ukrainian culture was the First Ukrainian Festival, which took place on March 11, 2017. During the festival, more than 1,000 South Africans learned about the history of Ukraine, the possibilities of economic cooperation between the 2 countries, enjoyed Ukrainian music and poetry, got to know how to dance hopak, decorate Easter eggs, make lialky-motanky (hand-made dolls), write letters of the Ukrainian alphabet and much more. The members of



**Nadia Pryimak**



the musical group of migrants from the city of Donetsk Dyvyna also performed at the festival. The highlight of the festival were the performances of Ukrainian bandura players Nadia Pryimak and Svitlana Neill, who live in South Africa.

Organizing this many events required a lot of effort. During the period of preparations, the community was filled with incredible energy. Ukrainians from different parts of the Western Cape came together and made all the events of the Ukrainian days possible. On the night before the festival, the Ukrainian housewives who agreed to prepare Ukrainian dishes for the festival, decorators and artists carried on to communicate until 5 am.

The coordinators of the Ukrainian Days were Olesya Matvias, Iryna Kryvosh, Tetiana Hurn, Dmytro and Tetyana Shilin, Nadia Pryimak, Anna Matsey and Dzvinka Kachur. The team of organizers also included Antonina Darienko, Zoia and Volodymyr Dei, Anna Ovrahova, Olena Smith-Polovchenko, Anna Zhukovina, Nadia Kyvenko, Olexandra Kanstens, Suzi Humen Davey, Vlada Du Toit, Lyudmyla de Koning, Galina Yila, Nina and Victor Rukavitsy. Special thanks go to Ukrainian doctors Alexander Taran and Natalia Novikova who were on duty at the festival.

Organizing the Ukrainian festival revealed shortcomings in the registration of the Ukrainian Diaspora in South Africa as a charity. Organization control over decision-making and choice of activities by only three directors, which prevented a large number of Ukrainians from participation, difficulties of communication caused by long distances between the places of residence, different understanding of the activities of the organization as well as that such a large-scale event went beyond charitable assistance, all were significant complications and prompted the creation of the organization of Ukrainians with open membership, which became the Ukrainian Association of South Africa.

## UKRAINIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA



**Registration of public organization**

On May 6, 2017, before the screening of the cartoon «Lys Mykyta», an inaugural meeting was held, at which the voluntary Ukrainian Association of South Africa was established. In June it was officially registered as the non-profit organization Ukrainian Association of South Africa, NPO 189-705. The founders of the organization were the eighteen people: Dzvenyslava Kachur, Tetiana Hurn, Nadia Pryimak, Iryna Kryvosh, Antonina Darienko, Nadiya Kyvenko, Tetyana and Dmytro Shilin,

Olesya Matvias, Inna Panchuk, Svitlana Lebedyn, Suzi Davey, Zoia and Volodymyr Dei, Anna Zhukovina, Natalia Klymenko, Natalia Novikova and Olena Polovchenko.

The Constitution of the Association, prepared by Olesya Matvias, provides for open membership of Ukrainians (persons of Ukrainian origin) and South Africans. The main objectives of the organization are:

- To unite, develop and promote the interests of Ukrainians of all generations and all backgrounds in South Africa, to be a valid representative of Ukrainian community in South Africa;
- To develop network of South Africans as well as other nationalities who are interested in Ukrainian culture, language or other aspects of its social, economic, academic or political life;
- To promote Ukrainian culture, language and other information about Ukraine in South Africa;
- To promote cultural, social, academic and economic cooperation between South-Africa and Ukraine;
- To support and promote the territorial integrity, national identity, pride, security, humanitarian projects and economic prosperity of Ukraine;
- To cooperate with governments, nations, organizations, and individuals, to accomplish the above goals in the spirit of peace, freedom, equality and justice.

The Executive Committee of UAZA in 2017:

President: Dzvinka Kachur

Secretary: Nadia Pryimak

Vice-President: Olesya Matvias (Loubser)

Treasurer: Anna Ovrahova

Deputy Treasurer: Tatiana Shilina

Public Relations: Tetiana Hurn

In addition, were established the subcommittees of:

- 1) Ukrainian school, language and educational projects (curated by Zoia Dei and Iryna Kryvosh);
- 2) Popularization of Ukrainian culture (curated by Svitlana Sheremet and Antonina Darienko);
- 3) Development of the organization (curated by Inna Panchuk);
- 4) Economic cooperation (curated by Olesya Matvias and Volodymyr Dei);
- 5) Information (curated by Suzi Davey and Elena Polovchenko-Smith);
- 6) Humanitarian projects (curated by Zoia Dei and Tetiana Hurn).

In 2019, at the General Meeting there were changes in the structure of the organization, as a result of which the composition of the Executive Committee expanded and its functions were supplemented.

The Executive Committee of UAZA in 2019-2021:

President: Dzvinka Kachur

Secretary: Kateryna Alyoshina

Vice President for Economic Affairs: Olesya Matvias

Vice President for Project Activities: Tetiana Hurn

Vice President of Educational and Humanitarian Projects: Zoia Dei

Treasurer: Tatiana Shilina

Project Manager: Anna Ovrahova



Public Relations: Ruslana Malichenko and Olga Kononenko (since 2020)  
Fundraising (position added in 2020): Marina Theron  
Cultural projects (position added in 2020): Svitlana Sheremet.



**Nativity scene in Cape Town**

Since its foundation UAZA has become a home to Ukrainians in South Africa. The organization is composed of 87 members. Ukrainians have the opportunity to celebrate Christmas, Easter and other Ukrainian holidays together and their children can study the Ukrainian language and traditions at Sunday Schools in Pretoria and Cape Town. And should Ukrainians have administrative difficulties with documents, UAZA acts to defend their interests as an official representative.

Thanks to the efforts of Natalia Galak and Vita Valkina, a branch of Ukrainians in Durban joined the organization. Funding is being sought through the efforts of Marina Theron, while Olga Kononenko is seeking effective ways of informing.



**Ukrainian School in Pretoria**

At the Ukrainian School of South Africa, which operates as a youth club of UAZA, Olesya Matvias, Olga Kononenko and Angela Sevenstert are involved in teaching Ukrainian, dancing is taught by Kateryna Alyoshyna (head of the school) and Marina Theron, the singing teacher is Olga Tsyganok-Jacobs, the art is taught by Tetiana Hurn, while the science teacher is Kateryna Koshkidko. Zoia Dei is the Head of the Parents' Council.

Today despite all the efforts, there still is no Ukrainian Orthodox or Greek Catholic church in South Africa. In 2019 through the diligence of UAZA and with the support of the Embassy of Ukraine, the delegation of the Pastoral-Migration Department of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church headed by Bishop Yosyf Milyan, visited the country. During the visit, the parties discussed the possibility of providing pastoral care for Ukrainians in South Africa. For now, the pastoral support of the Ukrainian community is provided by the Roman Catholic Church (represented by Father Bohdan, Rector of St. Fatima's Church in Cape Town and Fr. Bohdan from St. John Fisher's Church in Pretoria), as well as Fr. Sergius from the Greek Orthodox Church of the Nativity of Virgin Mary in Gauteng.



**Holodomor Remembrance Day**

A particularly close topic for UAZA is honouring the memory of those who died during Holodomor (The Great Famine). Every year the Embassy of Ukraine together with UAZA holds memorial events in the centres of the Holocaust and genocide. Ukrainians also submitted a petition calling for recognition of the Holodomor to the South African deputies in October 2018.

The organization continues to support veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In 2019, the VIVA magazine and «1+1» channel's project Peremozhchi (The Victors) visited South Africa by invitation of UAZA and with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. In the same year the largest theatre in Cape Town, Artscape, which is visited daily by more than two hundred people, as well as the Embassy of Ukraine, presented for three weeks an exhibition about Ukrainian veterans. The exhibition displayed the stories of veterans, who had lost limbs but did not lose the will to live. In 2020, UAZA also supported the project of training veterans named after Bohdan Radchenko organized by the Razom for Ukraine team, the Kyiv Mohyla Foundation and the veteran movement of Maria Berlinska.



**Willem Faber, Eugene Czolij, Dzvinka Kachur and Darren Bergman at Parliament of South Africa**

UAZA not only unites Ukrainians, but also establishes contacts between Ukrainian and South African organizations. Such contacts can either continue to operate independently or to be maintained through diplomatic ties. In particular, during the visit of the President of the Ukrainian World Congress, Eugene Czolij, UAZA established contacts with parliamentarians, which were actively used by the Embassy of Ukraine later.

In 2017, UAZA initiated cooperation with one of the largest poetry events, Poetry Africa Festival, and in 2017-2018 Ukraine was represented by Oksana Kutsenko, Anna Yanovska, Taras Malkovych and Myroslav Layuk. Since 2019, communication with the festival has been handed over to the cultural attaché of the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa. Since its registration, UAZA has been holding the Ukrainian Festival annually.

UAZA collaborates with the International Public Art Festival, in which Ukrainian artists Ana Kuni (Cape Town, 2017) and Tetiana Hurn (Lamberts Bay, 2018) participated and created the Petrykivka painting style mural. And in 2019, under the International Public Art Festival, Tetiana Hurn and Oleksandr Nikituk (Vinnytsia, Ukraine) created one of the largest murals in Cape Town – a 150-meter-high Ukrainian Chersonese Lighthouse. The mural serves to remind of the warm light that always awaits all the residents of Crimea in Ukraine.



Through the activities of UAZA, South Africans have the opportunity to learn Ukrainian (adult language courses run from February 2020), study Petrykivka painting (Tetiana Hurn conducts master classes in various cities of the Western Cape), learn about Ukraine from the books in the Ukrainian Library in Cape Town, decorate pysanky (Easter eggs) and watch programs on local television.

In 2018, the organization became an associate member of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) and actively shares experiences with the communities of Eastern, South and Southeast Asia, Oceania and Africa (coordinated by the Vice President of UWC Nataliya Poshyvaylo-Towler).

A separate area of work of UAZA is to promote economic ties. Through the efforts of the association, one of the members of UAZA was appointed as a representative of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry after participating in the first Diaspora Business Forum, which took place in May 2017. In addition, seminars are held at the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce.



**UAZA Executive Committee representatives (left to right) Maryna Theron, Dzvinka Kachur, Tatiana Hurn, Zoia Dei, Tetiana Shilina, Svitlana Sheremet, Kateryna Alioshyna, Olesia Matvias-Loubser**

More information about the Ukrainian Association of South Africa can be found at:

<http://www.uaza.co.za>

and

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/UkrainianAssociationofSouthAfrica.UAZA>



# UKRAINIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

NPO 189 -705 UAZA



# УКРАЇНСЬКА АСОЦІАЦІЯ У ПІВДЕННІЙ АФРИЦІ

## WE ARE

A collaborative association that unites Ukrainians and supporters of Ukraine in South Africa to promote Ukraine, its culture, language and interests – as an independent democratic country

Асоціація громади, яка об'єднує українців та прихильників України з метою популяризації України, її культури, мови та інтересів, як незалежної демократичної країни

## МИ - ЦЕ

## Promoting Ukrainian Culture

Популяризуємо українську культуру

### UKRAINIAN DAYS IN CAPE TOWN

Українські Дні в Кейптауні

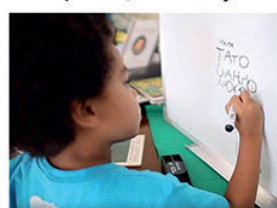


## Ukrainian School

Українська школа

### SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR KIDS 3-11 YEARS, CAPE TOWN

Недільна школа для дітей 3-11 років, Кейптаун



## Supporting economic cooperation between SA and Ukraine

Підтримуємо економічну співпрацю між Україною та ПАР

## Building academic and cultural links

Розбудовуємо академічні та культурні зв'язки

### UKRAINIAN LIBRARY, CAPE TOWN

Українська бібліотека у Кейптауні



## Bringing together people interested in Ukraine

Об'єднуємо всіх, хто цікавиться Україною

### FIRST UKRAINIAN FESTIVAL

Перший Український Фестиваль



### PARTICIPANTS OF THE FIRST BUSINESS FORUM OF UKRAINIAN DIASPORA

Учасники Першого бізнес-форуму української діаспори



## Contributing to strong independent prosperous Ukraine

Сприяємо розвитку сильної, незалежної, благополучної України

### «CRIMEA IS UKRAINE», PROTEST

«Крим - це Україна», Протест



If you are Ukrainian or interested in Ukraine

## JOIN US!!!

ПРИЄДНУЙСЯ!!!

More about organization and membership

Більше про організацію, та членство:

[www.uaza.co.za](http://www.uaza.co.za)

email: [info@uaza.co.za](mailto:info@uaza.co.za)



#Ukrainians Of South Africa Українська Асоціація в ПАР



## CONCLUSIONS

The Ukrainian community in South Africa is quite young, but it is actively involved in promoting Ukrainian culture and protecting national interests. There are practically no Ukrainian institutions (churches, centres, clubs, etc.) in South Africa, and there is no established example of «living in the diaspora» and educating a new generation. This is a disadvantage and an advantage at the same time. It is because the absence of previous organized waves of migration allows us to experiment with new ways of organizing the community and rethink the role of Ukrainians abroad.

As South Africa has no other institutions working in the field of Ukrainian-South African relations, the Ukrainian Association in South Africa combines the functions of a traditional organization that unites Ukrainians and preserves traditions. It also plays the role of a mediator in establishing links between professional organizations. In more developed communities they are usually performed by different organizations.

The rapid development of the Ukrainian community is promoted by the support of the state, particularly by the legislation that has allowed the community to conduct its activities efficiently in terms of co-financing. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the staff of the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa constantly support UAZA's initiatives.

**Dzvinka Kachur**

*President of the Ukrainian Association of South Africa*





## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the «Ukrainians of South Africa: society, identity, future» Research is to find out the characteristics of Ukrainian migrants, their children and associations of Ukrainians, get to know the specifics of their integration into society of the chosen country, their identity and its transformation in order to identify cooperation potential between Ukraine and Ukrainians in South Africa. In order to find out what Ukrainians are like in South Africa today, how to ensure full integration and avoid assimilation, identify ways to improve interaction between Ukrainians living in South Africa and in Ukraine, and discover promising areas for the Ukrainian public sector, business and public authorities, we focused on the following main content blocks:

- description of a typical portrait of a Ukrainian man and a Ukrainian woman in South Africa (Chapter 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of Ukrainians in South Africa)
- causes and specifics of migration, as well as the process and consequences of integration of Ukrainian migrants in South Africa (Chapter 2. Migration and integration of Ukrainians in South Africa)
- the identity of Ukrainian migrants and their children in South Africa, including national, linguistic, cultural, and religious identities (Chapter 3. The identity of Ukrainians and their children in South Africa)
- the process of community formation of Ukrainians (Chapter 4. Public activity of Ukrainians in South Africa)
- ways and channels of communication of Ukrainians in South Africa with Ukraine (Chapter 5. Ties of Ukrainians in South Africa with Ukraine)
- vision of the personal future of the respondents and their children, as well as perspectives for the development of the Ukrainian community in South Africa (Chapter 6. Vision of the future of Ukrainians and their associations in South Africa).





## METHODOLOGY

For this research we used a qualitative methodology, that is in-depth semi-structured interviews with Ukrainians in South Africa. It specifically obtains detailed advanced information about:

- motives for migration of Ukrainians;
- their expectations of the new country of residence;
- characteristics of adaptation and economic, political and cultural integration;
- interaction with local residents, their compatriots or other migrants;
- existing and potential links with the country of origin;
- further life strategies.

The interviews reflect the subjective experience of respondents, i.e. their views, assessments, values and expectations, which we tried to systematize, classify and explain. This means, first of all, the position of only one ethnic group in such a complex process as migration to another country. We purposefully highlight the diversity of reflections specifically inherent to Ukrainians in South Africa, understanding the limits of interpretation of such information.

In order to obtain a wide range of experiences and views of Ukrainians in South Africa, during the selection of respondents we focused on the representation of the following:

- both males and females;
- all age categories of Ukrainian migrants (18-35, 36-55; 56 and older);
- residents of regions with compact Ukrainian communities (Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg), as well as Durban, where the Ukrainian community is at its formative state.

We used the snowball method to search for respondents. Between February and March 2020, 24 interviews were conducted with Ukrainians in South Africa, that is 6 respondents (three men and three women of junior, middle and senior age categories) from each city.

Interviews were conducted via Skype and other VoIP programs. The questionnaire consisted of thematic units and contained more than 80 questions. The shortest interview lasted 35 minutes and the longest one took 4.5 hours. After the interviews, we asked the respondents to sign informed consents, which guarantee the use of the interview materials exclusively for research purposes.

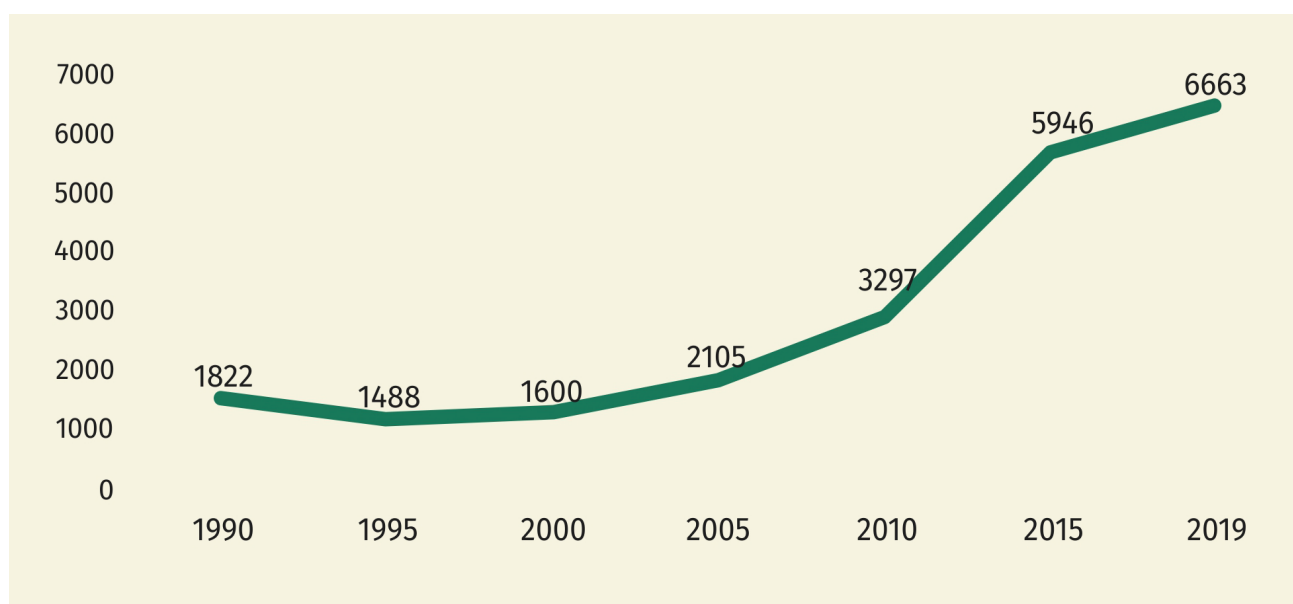
## Chapter 1.

# SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF UKRAINIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

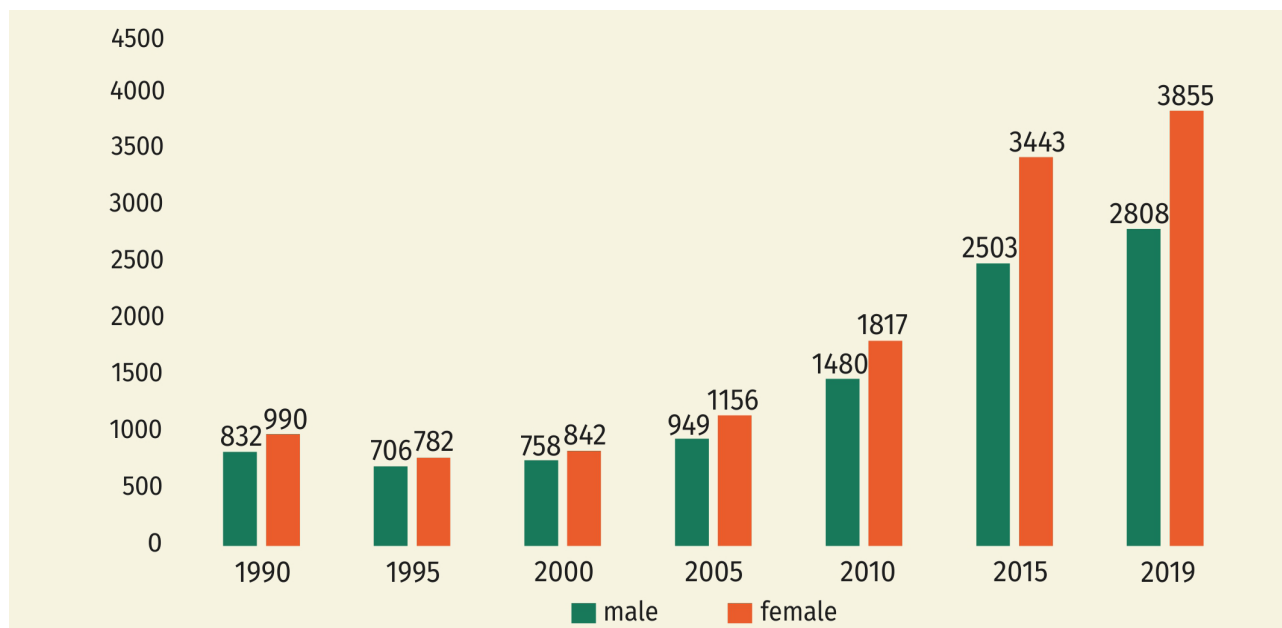
The study allows us to conclude that the respondents' perceptions of typical Ukrainian migrants in South Africa correlate primarily with gender and marital status. According to these characteristics, there is one pronounced type of personality among Ukrainian migrants – the image of a woman who married a white South African (this is the image predominantly described in the answers to the questionnaire). A comparison with the statistics does show a predominance of women among Ukrainian migrants in South Africa, but not as significant as the respondents stressed out.

Ukrainian diaspora of multiple generations accounts for 20 million in the world. The organised migration was occurring since the beginning of the century and especially around the first and second world wars. However South Africa has never been a destination for Ukrainian migrants [Graph 1, Graph 2].

Graph 1 . **Changes in the Number of Migrants from Ukraine to RSA** [25].



Graph 2. **The Number of Ukrainian Migrants in RSA by Gender** [25].




Some respondents explain that Ukrainian women do marry descendants of Europeans in Africa. But from responses to other questions, we learned that marriages with their compatriots or members of other nationalities and races are also common. Initial acquaintances with South African citizens take place via the Internet, through other people's referrals, agencies that provide services for marriages with foreigners, or in connection with the specific kind of work, mostly related to the international sphere. The latter type of migration usually determines the nature of women's future employment, which is complicated by the South African government's labour market policy towards foreigners. The respondents note that employment, entrepreneurial activity, and self-employment, as well as unemployment (housewife status) are common among Ukrainian women.

Ukrainian men score rather differently. Unlike the Ukrainian women, monoethnic marriages are more common among them. Most Ukrainian men come to South Africa for work. However some of them primarily came to marry in South Africa. Common occupations of Ukrainian men are employment and entrepreneurship.

These factors generally reflect the determination of the class affiliation of Ukrainians – despite the difficulties with employment and high unemployment, Ukrainians in South Africa belong to the middle and even above the middle classes. We also found that Ukrainian migrants mostly have higher education, though South Africa is not a destination country for Ukrainian migrants to study at higher education institutions.

The most common age categories among Ukrainians in South Africa are young and middle-aged people. They believe that their compatriots migrate from all parts of Ukraine to South Africa. Therefore, the native language can be Ukrainian, Russian or both.

Although respondents named Orthodoxy as the most widespread religion among their compatriots in South Africa, they often do not associate themselves with any denomination of Christianity or religion at all, which may be due to the absence of Ukrainian churches in South Africa, due to popularity of interethnic marriages and South Africa's cultural diversity.



## Chapter 2.

# MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

To characterize the migration and integration of Ukrainians in South Africa, we drew attention to the motivation and circumstances of the respondents' relocation, as well as to integration as a **bilateral** process.


Respondents talk about various reasons for moving to South Africa, the most typical of which are **work and marriage**. For the most part, respondents note that they did not consider in advance South Africa as a country for potential resettlement. When choosing the country of destination, they were mostly guided by the following **preliminary ideas** about South Africa: diverse nature and warm climate, prevalence of English and image of an interesting, unusual, multicultural country.

The respondents believed that in South Africa today, unlike in Ukraine, **there are more opportunities** to improve their financial situation and professional development, and that the conditions for conducting business are more favourable. Respondents also believe that South Africa is characterized by a decrease in competition in the labour market of highly qualified professionals due to their outflow abroad (brain drain). However, the respondents usually rate Ukraine as a country with better economic prospects than South Africa.

When moving to South Africa, one of the most important bureaucratic issues that migrants face is obtaining visas. In general, the respondents do not consider the procedure of receiving the first visa too complicated. Some migrants start to have problems when the need arises to obtain a permit to continue their stay in South Africa. In addition, respondents notice the trend towards the increasing **complexity of bureaucratic procedures** around immigration in recent years.

Immediately after moving, the process begins of inclusion of Ukrainian migrants in the new society. The main problems at the beginning of stay in South Africa listed by the respondents are safety and free movement, the language barrier, cultural differences, difficulties in establishing social contacts, as well as finding a job and housing in a new country. Eventually, migrants solve some of these problems, but a few issues remain relevant for a long time.





The respondents usually expect their adaptation to take no more than **one to two years**. At the same time, there were those who needed **seven to ten years** for full integration, as well as those who believe that they **will never be able to integrate** into this society. The latter explain this by the fact that it is quite difficult for them to get used to another culture, a different way of life, and peculiarities of communication with the local population. But despite the various complications and differences from everything Ukrainians have experienced in Europe, most respondents believe that they have successfully integrated into South African society.


While reviewing the subjective attitude of respondents to their stay in South Africa, we observed that some of them considered their migration as **temporary**. Besides, the emigrants usually **retain their Ukrainian citizenship** and do not see the need to acquire South African citizenship. Some are even considering relocating to Ukraine or to another country. Such characteristics may limit the motivation and purposeful actions of Ukrainians towards their integration into South African society.

The respondents who have been living in South Africa for a long time all acknowledged that nature, cultural diversity, tolerance, friendliness and openness of the local population, an efficient economy and legislation, a high level of infrastructure, quality products and quality local cuisine as well as convenient time zone (1 hour difference) to maintain contact with relatives and friends in Ukraine, are all recognized as the advantages of the country.

Respondents least like the **level of personal safety**, limited movement, as well as unemployment, significant class stratification, and poverty in South Africa. All these problems lead to a radical change in everyday behaviour to ensure safety. However, at a later stage the respondents begin to perceive this as a **normal situation** they can deal with.

As the respondents do not usually hold South African citizenship, institutional restrictions are a natural characteristic of their stay in the country. But in addition to the expected restrictions on migrants in any country, respondents also mention policies of **affirmative action** designed to smooth the consequences of the country's history of colonialism and apartheid, which featured systematic discrimination against people of non-European descent. Some migrants are dissatisfied with such restrictions, but eventually in assessing them, they generally treat such policies with understanding.

Such attributes of the country in particular affect the **economic integration of the respondents**. Our study found that as Ukrainians in South Africa are practically not employed in the public sector of the economy and mostly work in private companies, like information technology, medicine, finance and banking, education, services and industry. However, largely, they are still trying to start and grow their **own business** or work as **freelancers**. This reflects the problems faced by Ukrainian migrants when looking for work as employees, and the specifics of the pension system in South Africa. The favourable conditions for small and medium-sized businesses in the country also makes this sector creates more attractive employment opportunities.



Among the main factors that affect the employment of Ukrainians in South Africa respondents highlighted the following conditions: corruption in the system of government and the problems of economic development, problems related to the migration situation, specifics of methods of combating the consequences of apartheid, steps in the field of state employment policy (B-BBEE) in particular as well as problems related to pension and social security conditions. In addition, there is a correlation between the experience of adverse conditions and age, qualification, gender and language skills of Ukrainian migrants.

Given the difficult history of South Africa, **interethnic relations** are complex and occupy a prominent place in the stories of the interviewed Ukrainian migrants. The respondents note that this country is accustomed to cultural diversity, openness, and tolerance. However, the consequences of the apartheid past generates serious reasons for conflicts on racial and interethnic grounds. In such cases, well-integrated Ukrainians may be perceived by a part of the local black population as biased and as descendants of the colonizers. At the same time, their foreign origin can allow Ukrainians to prevent conflicts.

Along with ethnic and racial differences, **class and property status** are a significant factor influencing social relations. In such conditions, some respondents consider the fragmentation of the society as an obstacle to their own integration: by integrating into a certain local community, migrants may feel alien in other communities or society as a whole.

In general, the respondents consider the characteristics **of their social environment** favourable for their successful migration due to assistance in the process from employers, acquaintances or family members already living in South Africa. The **personalities of the migrants** play a similar role with respect to work, entrepreneurial and social activity, ability to learn new languages, openness to other cultures and willingness to act in accordance with the new rules of coexistence.

The survey thus traced a variety of migration trajectories among Ukrainians in South Africa and different characteristics of integration into society, which are significantly different from those in Ukraine. South Africa thus appears to be a very peculiar destination country for Ukrainian migrants with its safety problems and a post-colonial burden that the policies of affirmative action are supposed to address.

At the same time, respondents talk about a diverse, tolerant society, open to migrants, and to the characteristics to which they can get used to and effectively integrate into, depending on the specific activities of Ukrainians in South Africa.



## Chapter 3.


# THE IDENTITY OF UKRAINIANS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA

The results of the study showed that Ukrainians in South Africa have several types of **national identities**. The most common among the respondents is Ukrainian (even despite the Russian origin of some of them). However, there are some distinctive characteristics among those who identify themselves as Ukrainians. In particular, we singled out the following groups of respondents: those who have never changed their identity under any circumstances, those whose Ukrainian identity has strengthened since moving to South Africa and those whose national identity was affected by the events in Ukraine (Russian-Ukrainian war). In some cases, the respondents also had a transformed identity from Ukrainian to Ukrainian-South African, and the children of migrants adopted a South African identity.

Among the identity markers that influenced the respondents' awareness of belonging to a national community, respondents singled out their place of birth and growth in childhood, their own and parental origin, culture and traditions, citizenship, mother tongue, length of residence in a particular country, upbringing and current place of residence. Additional factors of influence were the events of 2013-2014 and the Russian-Ukrainian war, the frequency of visits to Ukraine and communication with relatives living there, as well as (for children) the age at which they moved to South Africa. The main reasons for the transformation of Ukrainian national identity into a Ukrainian-South African identity are: period of migration of respondents to South Africa (often in the late 1980s – early 1990s); a fairly long period of stay in this country and favourable living conditions (financial stability, comfort).

However, despite the clear expression of a national identity, some respondents adhere to a cosmopolitan worldview, which to some extent simplifies their interethnic relations in South Africa.

As respondents migrated to South Africa from different regions of Ukraine, and some of them have Russian roots, the **native language** of many is not only Ukrainian but also Russian. At the same time, for some respondents who have lived in South Africa for a long time or migrated there as teenagers, English has become their mother tongue, which in some cases has supplanted both Ukrainian and Russian. Children of Ukrainian migrants



show this preference, due to the predominance of English in ethnically mixed families, the less complex grammatical structure of English compared to Ukrainian and its greater prevalence in the different environments where these children reside. Although many of the respondents' children know two, three or more foreign languages, there are cases when parents do not want to overburden their children with too many languages and encourage them to learn English only. Some of the respondents' children only speak Ukrainian or Russian at a poor level.


The choice of language of communication of respondents often depends on the specific environment where respondents are urged to find common ground. Accordingly, they communicate in Ukrainian and / or Russian in monoethnic families, with relatives, friends and colleagues living in Ukraine or other members of the Ukrainian community in South Africa. At the same time, in ethnically mixed families the respondents mostly speak English with South African friends or migrants from other countries, colleagues and other South Africans. In some cases, Afrikaans and Zulu are spoken.

The main reasons that motivate respondents to use the Ukrainian language in South Africa are positive emotions that arise when communicating in their native language, desire to convey their native culture to South African society, teaching children the Ukrainian language, strengthening national identity after moving to another country, as well as political beliefs. Regarding the latter motive, it should be noted that some Russian-speaking respondents began to switch over to the Ukrainian language in everyday communication as a result of Russian aggression against Ukraine and the presence of the public organization of Ukrainians in South Africa as well as the presence of the Embassy of Ukraine in Pretoria. Both communicate in Ukrainian. However, the respondents know of cases of conflicts over the language issue, which arise from the involvement of Ukrainians in Russian and Russian-Ukrainian mixed groups on social networks and the use of Russian in everyday life.

At the same time, the knowledge of the Ukrainian language among the children of the respondents is influenced by their age, country of birth or age of children at the time of migration to South Africa, communication of parents in Ukrainian at home, encouragement to learn Ukrainian through movies and books as well as traveling to Ukraine and communication with relatives. Until 2016 there was no specialized Ukrainian learning centre in South Africa. Some respondents encouraged children to attend Russian schools. However, after the establishment of schools of Ukrainian studies, the children of some respondents have already started attending them or plan to do so soon. However, the lack of such schools in many cities, the age of children and their reluctance, and the workload of extracurricular activities of migrants' children make it impossible for them to attend schools of Ukrainian studies in the Republic of South Africa.

The respondents choose English because of language ethics, convenience and popularity of this language among the people of South Africa as well as for the reason that it is one of the official languages of South Africa and is most common in the provinces where the respondents reside. There is a small number of respondents who speak Afrikaans, but





at a very poor level. One of the reasons for using Afrikaans is that their children study Afrikaans at school.

As for other official languages of the Republic of South Africa, some respondents occasionally noted they could speak Zulu, and no one mentioned the other 7 indigenous local languages. Poor level of proficiency in other official languages (other than English) sometimes causes misunderstandings that the respondents face when communicating with the local population.

In matters of **cultural identity**, as evidenced by this study, respondents mostly follow Ukrainian customs and traditions, particularly Christian. They also cook traditional dishes, celebrate public holidays, wear national costumes, perform Ukrainian songs and embroider.

Among the main motives for following the traditions mentioned by the respondents are personal religious beliefs, nostalgic feelings, style and way of life, sense of Ukrainian identity, having children, ties with the Ukrainian community, their upbringing and family ties. On the other hand, non-observance of traditions by some respondents relate to assimilation, change of living environment, lack of time, lack of sense of community, religion, and upbringing.

The results of the study showed that a blurred **religious identity** prevailed among the respondents. According to the religious beliefs of the respondents, they can be divided into five groups: Christians with a confessional affiliation, Christians without confessional affiliation, those who believe in a higher power, those who profess other religions, and atheists. One of the factors eroding the religious identity of Ukrainians in South Africa is the frequent mixed marriages with South Africans, who are usually Protestants.

The respondents do not often attend religious churches (only a few times a year), since there are no Ukrainian churches in South Africa. However, when they do attend, they normally visit Orthodox (Russian, Greek), Catholic or Protestant churches.

The events in Ukraine in 2013-2014 forced some respondents to rethink their priorities and they refuse to visit Russian churches in favour of Greek and others. Although some respondents were satisfied with their worship in English, quite a few mentioned they would also like to pray in their mother tongue in the church and better understand the essence of the liturgy.

Despite the first attempts to build bridges between the Ukrainian community in South Africa and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), some Orthodox respondents also wish Ukrainian Orthodox churches to be established in South Africa.

So, summarizing all the above, we would like to note that the identification is a complex process that is influenced by many different factors and motives. Ukrainian migrants in South Africa often undergo a deep transformation of their identities. National identity proved to be the most resistant to this process, but we noticed some minor trends towards change in particular among migrants' children. Linguistic and cultural identities are more prone to transformations than national ones. However, the most blurred was the religious identity of migrants, due to the multicultural and religiously diverse environment of South Africa and the absence of Ukrainian churches.



## Chapter 4.

# **PUBLIC ACTIVITY OF UKRAINIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The survey shows that the presence of a leader who unites the Ukrainians in South Africa plays an important role in the formation of a socially active community. The main components of successful public activity should be the involvement of all newcomers in the organization, a shared vision of a common vector of development, compliance with public demands, and of course, systematic work.

As the respondents usually did not purposefully search for information on Ukrainian civic initiatives in South Africa, communication with other migrants, information from the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa and thematic groups in messengers and social networks were important in raising awareness of such activities.

The respondents also expressed what are the most important priorities of the Ukrainian community in South Africa, some of which are already in the focus of public initiatives of Ukrainians. These are: the preservation of national identity and the spread of Ukrainian culture in South Africa; uniting Ukrainians in South Africa and providing them with assistance; establishing cooperation between Ukraine and South Africa and providing humanitarian assistance to Ukrainians in Ukraine.

Despite the young age of the Ukrainian Association in South Africa, which is in Cape Town, respondents appreciate its rapid take-off and its activities. They found the work of the organization very productive.

However, the long distances between the cities of compact residence of Ukrainians in South Africa create obstacles for those who wish to join the activities of the community. There is a need to expand already registered organizations of Ukrainians in South Africa to other cities or create new associations.

The study showed that among the main motives for Ukrainian migrants to participate in public initiatives prevail the desire to communicate with compatriots, the need to maintain Ukrainian identity abroad, the wish to acquaint local people with Ukrainian culture, the desire to help Ukrainians, and the opportunity for self-realization and fun.

Among the reasons that hold back Ukrainians from participating in the public organizations are internal factors like introversion, lack of desire or vision of meaning in community service and external factors like family responsibilities, lack of free time and absence of peers of the respondents in the public organizations.



## Chapter 5.

# TIES OF UKRAINIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH UKRAINE

Despite the geographical distance between Ukraine and South Africa, Ukrainian migrants in South Africa are trying to maintain and develop ties between the two countries. An important role in this process is played not only by public organizations of Ukrainians, but also by Ukrainian diplomatic missions in South Africa, which, according to the respondents, are the main centres of the Ukrainian ethnic community.

**The implementation of cultural ties with Ukraine** is mainly provided by the Ukrainian Association in South Africa and the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of South Africa.


Unwillingness or lack of time, as well as the long distance to the city of events are the main reasons why Ukrainians do not participate in cultural events in South Africa. However, it should be noted that even among those not physically participating in the events, there are persons who provide financial and other material assistance to organize such events.

Among the events in which Ukrainian migrants in South Africa are most interested in participating, we can list Ukrainian festivals and concerts, celebrations of public holidays (for example, Independence Day of Ukraine and Constitution Day) and the commemoration of historical events (such as Holodomor Victims Remembrance Day), international sporting events or competitions with the participation of Ukrainian athletes, as well as humanitarian projects.

The respondents showed less interest in participating in the celebration of religious holidays, due to the peculiarities of their religious beliefs.

Regarding attending screenings of Ukrainian films, we emphasize that the least interested are those who prefer to read books, dislike Ukrainian cinema, are indifferent to Ukrainian films or those who find Ukrainian films emotionally complex and depressing.

Exhibitions of Ukrainian artists and literary events are the least popular. Instead, participation in competitions, flash mobs and Ukrainian culture amateur groups, although not very attractive to the adult respondents themselves, are believed to be very useful initiatives for Ukrainian children in South Africa.



**Ukrainian migrants interact with the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa** not only to participate in cultural, artistic and educational events or to attend Ukrainian Saturday school for migrants' children, but also to receive consular services and participate in elections of public authorities in Ukraine.

In addition to the above functions, the respondents expect the diplomatic mission of Ukraine to perform other tasks, like supporting Ukrainians in various situations, providing legal assistance to Ukrainian migrants, and promoting entrepreneurial initiatives of Ukrainians. Responses to their experience of interaction with the Embassy vary, depending on the quality of services received, the time of application and the human factor.

Ukrainians in South Africa show a low level of electoral activity, due to both objective circumstances (insufficient number of polling stations and the impossibility of exercising this right in cities other than Pretoria) and subjective circumstances (scepticism about their own influence on the number of votes and disbelief in Ukrainian politicians).

The main motives for participating in the election process are: a sense of civic duty to Ukraine, the presence of Ukrainian national identity, faith in a better future, support for Ukraine and Ukrainians, and the opportunity to communicate with other Ukrainians.

**With respect to social ties** of Ukrainian migrants in South Africa with Ukraine, respondents feel a significant need for constant communication with Ukrainians living in Ukraine. The latest technologies and electronic resources help them to accomplish this. In addition, the respondents regularly visit Ukraine not only to settle administrative issues (paperwork, visa issues, etc.), but also (primarily) to communicate with family and friends, acquaint children with family and their homeland as well as to maintain their ties with Ukraine. They have a psychological need to visit Ukraine. There are those who are not able to do it regularly due to family circumstances in South Africa, their health condition, specifics of employment or doing business, or fear of conscription to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.


Visits of Ukrainians to South Africa are rare, primarily due to the high cost of tickets, long and exhausting flights, the presence of visa barriers and lack of information or stereotypes about South Africa in Ukraine.

The interest in events in Ukraine plays a significant role in maintaining social ties, especially in the political and economic spheres, caused by feelings of belonging to Ukraine, sharing empathy with relatives living in Ukraine, and sometimes the desire to return home in the future. Consequently, they are sometimes more interested in events in Ukraine than in South African news.

Those who do not follow the events in Ukraine have a specific attitude to the news in general, or are prevented from doing so by overwork and lack of time, or do not feel connected to Ukraine and do not see their future there.

We also found that most news is provided by a wide range of Internet resources (social networks, news-gathering services, Ukrainian and international news sites and TV networks, Ukrainian TV channels and radio), as well as news shared with relatives living in Ukraine.





Although there are several reasons for choosing certain resources, the respondents attach the greatest importance to trust. Most of them say that they trust the British and American media, and try to evaluate information fairly critically and analytically. With respect to Ukrainian television, they review and analyse the information and relate it to who owns a particular TV channel.

Regarding choice of channels, we can distinguish two main trends: (1) Ukrainians often watch Russian TV channels because they are part of the standard cable TV package; (2) As many Ukrainian migrants in South Africa live in ethnically mixed marriages, the ethnicity of their family members and their environment plays an important role in the choice of media sources.

It should be noted that the opinion of the respondents about disinformation in South Africa about the events in Ukraine and its impact on the population was also not unanimous. Some believed that the source of the disinformation could not be traced, others thought that disinformation is actively promoted by the Russian side, using various means to do so.


Some expressed the opinion that disinformation is spread by both Russian and Ukrainian media. At the same time respondents noted that informational influence can also be provided through cultural diplomacy, and that today this is more successfully implemented in Ukraine than in Russia.

**The economic ties between Ukraine and South Africa** today mainly concentrate on the interest of Ukrainian migrants in joint business in South Africa and on the regulation of trade cooperation between the two countries. The financial flows, including money transfers from South Africa to Ukraine, are insignificant. The small volume of transfers is among the other caused by the excessive price for financial services, which leads to an increase in informal transfers of funds. Many don't have the need to transfer money to Ukraine or lack the financial opportunities to share funds with relatives in Ukraine.

The chance of growth of financial flows from South Africa to Ukraine is therefore low.

There is a stronger interest in doing joint business in South Africa. Some of the migrants are already doing it, others are planning to start. Among the existing business initiatives developed by Ukrainians in South Africa, we can list translation services, hairdressing, cosmetology, and medical services. However, the most common are catering services, which are related to the preparation of meals at home for further sale, as well as opening of restaurants and other catering establishments, including those of Ukrainian traditional cuisine.

However, at the time of the survey, Ukrainian migrants were not very active in using the services of Ukrainian entrepreneurs in South Africa, primarily due to low market supply and lack of information about their availability. At the same time, the respondents often expressed a desire to support such business initiatives, seeing them as a way to help compatriots. They also explained this by the fact that when receiving various services, it is more convenient for them to communicate with a person in their native language. However, there were those who did not show such interest, believing that Ukrainians in South Africa are not qualified enough to ensure the proper quality of service.




Establishing and expanding trade between Ukraine and South Africa is one of the most mentioned business initiatives in interviews with the respondents who say that it should involve representatives of the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa as well as public organizations in this area.

Among the Ukrainian goods already available to consumers in the South African market, we found only food products, like wheat, flour, cereals, legumes, dairy products, alcoholic and light alcoholic drinks, some livestock products, and sweets.

Summarizing the answers of the respondents, we can outline the main problems of consumers of Ukrainian products in South Africa:

There is a lack of Ukrainian stores that sell only Ukrainian products, lack of information about the availability of Ukrainian goods in large supermarkets, irregular deliveries of goods, as well as deterioration of the quality of a certain type of product. respondents point at obstacles to the export of Ukrainian goods to South Africa. There is a low demand for these products among the local population, caused by conservative consumer behaviour, uncompetitive quality of Ukrainian goods in the South African market, issues of obtaining a license and additional financial costs for international trade, which increases the cost of production.

Ukrainian migrants in South Africa try to maintain and develop ties with Ukraine in almost all areas. To the greatest extent, they maintain social ties, as well as show interest in establishing business, economic cooperation and trade between Ukraine and South Africa. Despite the low level of electoral activity, Ukrainians in South Africa are interested in primarily political and economic events that are taking place in Ukraine. It is important for them to develop cultural ties with Ukraine and to take part in cultural, educational, or sporting events or to support them financially.



## Chapter 6.

# VISION OF UKRAINIANS AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Despite the complexity of the question about the **vision of one's personal future** and the psychological reluctance of respondents to answer these questions, we could still extract and systematize their visions.

In the short term, respondents primarily associate their personal future with the Republic of South Africa. For many, nothing will change in their lives soon. At the same time, some respondents have clearer plans than others to adapt and integrate into the new society, develop their own business projects, join social activities, or improve their financial situation.

In the long run, respondents plan to change their place of residence and move to another country (Canada, Australia, the USA, or European countries) or return to Ukraine. This is primarily due to their children's plans to migrate to other countries or Ukraine and due to dissatisfaction with the political situation in South Africa, high crime rates and the country's economic downturn.

The study showed that the age of the respondents' **children** is a significant factor influencing their vision of the **future**. In particular they state that preschoolers will remain in South Africa in the foreseeable future, and only in the long run may study in Ukraine; children who have not yet reached the age of maturity will continue their education in schools in South Africa, and then their future will depend on the choice of higher education institution in South Africa or in another country; 18 to 20-year-olds will remain in South Africa with their parents until they become independent; the future of children aged 25+ is difficult to predict for respondents, as it does not fully depend on their own volition.

The data on **reverse migration to Ukraine** allows a division of the respondents into three groups: those who are interested and plan to return to Ukraine, those who do not exclude such a prospect in the distant future and those who do not wish to return at all. This decision about the future of respondents was influenced by the level of integration into South African society, marital status and national identity of the respondents, as well as living conditions (economic development, legislation, political situation) and employment opportunities in Ukraine.





**The vision of the future of the Ukrainian community** turned out to be strongly interconnected with the vision of personal perspectives. As many of the respondents plan to migrate to other countries, they do not think about the future of the Ukrainian community in South Africa. The answers we received in this research project did not give us a clear understanding of the respondents' vision of the development of the Ukrainian community in South Africa. They often repeated that it was «difficult to imagine» and «time will tell».

Some respondents believe that the future of the Ukrainian community in South Africa depends mainly on the individual plans of migrants, raising children in mixed families, the activity of Ukrainians today, the socio-economic situation and migration policy of South Africa.

Those respondents who are directly involved in the activities of the Ukrainian Association in South Africa were usually optimistic about the future of the Ukrainian community. According to them, in the future we should expect the development of public activity of Ukrainians and cultural diplomacy in South Africa, the unification of Ukrainians from different cities of South Africa, the establishment of economic ties and the development of tourism between the countries.

On the opposite side and more distinct is the respondents' pessimistic vision of the future of the Ukrainian community, related to the decrease in the number of Ukrainian migrants in South Africa and their social activity. Some respondents believe that in the future there will be stagnation, full or partial assimilation of Ukrainians, their relocation to other countries and a decrease in the number of new migrants from Ukraine.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**In view of the above and taking into account the suggestions of the respondents, we recommend:**

**To contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine** requesting to consider the following:

- possibility of visa facilitation between Ukraine and South Africa;
- conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Ukraine and South Africa;
- application for the establishment of temporary polling stations located in Ukrainian cultural centres organized by the Ukrainian community, particularly in Cape Town;
- initiating the possibility of introducing remote registration for participation in elections for government officials of Ukraine abroad;
- opening of a consulate in Cape Town;

**To contact the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa** requesting the following:


- to help Ukrainian migrants to establish contacts to promote Ukrainian entrepreneurial initiatives in South Africa;
- to support public initiatives of Ukrainians in South Africa;
- advise and widely inform Ukrainian migrants in South Africa on visa issues, rights and responsibilities of immigrants in South Africa, etc.;
- to provide information support and favourable conditions for trade between Ukraine and South Africa;

**To contact the Pastoral and Migration Department** requesting:

- to consider negotiating with local authorities the opening of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Churches in order to meet the religious needs of Ukrainian migrants;

**To address Ukrainian Association of South Africa, as well as informal initiative groups and individual activists in South Africa**, to draw their attention to the most relevant inquiries from interviewed Ukrainians in South Africa, such as:

- introduction in South Africa of certain promotional events of the Association for wider acquaintance with its activities, presentation of its specific achievements, as well as diversification and improvement of ways to promote the activities of the Association, which would contribute to a deeper understanding of its importance;
- continuation of the Association's initiatives towards the functioning of the Ukrainian Saturday school in South Africa, organization of economic forums for economic cooperation between Ukraine and South Africa, as well as events of culture and art, taking into account the requests of the community;
- creation or involvement of new organizations in the activities of the Ukrainian Association in South Africa in various cities of the Republic of South Africa and



their active cooperation with the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa and the Ukrainian Association of South Africa;

- running language courses for Ukrainian migrants in order to increase their level of proficiency in the most common languages in South Africa, apart from English;
- providing information support for Ukrainian migrants regarding the availability of Ukrainian goods or services provided by Ukrainians in South Africa;
- providing legal advice on visa requirements and rights of migrants in South Africa;
- opening of amateur clubs, schools of Ukrainian studies and kindergartens, as well as expanding the network of Ukrainian patriotic youth organizations (such as Plast) to promote the Ukrainian language and culture among Ukrainian children and especially children from mixed marriages, as well as to preserve their Ukrainian identity;
- holding events in several official languages of South Africa will help to attract the local population and expand the audience for cultural diplomacy and will be an even greater promotion of Ukrainian culture in South Africa.



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## ANNEX. RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

### Unit 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

1. Please tell us about yourself. (How old are you? Where were you born? Where have you lived?)
2. Do you have a family (parents, spouse, children)? (If not, go to question 6).
3. If so, do you live here (in South Africa) with your family or did your relatives remain in Ukraine?
4. If married, who are you married to? Is your spouse Ukrainian or a representative of a different nationality?
5. If you have children, how old are they and where were they born / raised?

### Unit 2. Identity

We will now go on to the unit of questions about your identity.

6. Who do you consider yourself by nationality?
  - Why do you consider yourself a representative of this nationality?
7. How would you perceive your children / grandchildren identifying themselves to be of different nationality than yours?
8. What is your native language?
9. In what language do you communicate with family / friends / at school / at work?
  - Why do you choose these languages for communication?
10. If you have children / grandchildren who were born in South Africa or have lived since childhood in South Africa:
  - Do your children / grandchildren speak Ukrainian and how often?
  - What language do you speak with your children / grandchildren?
  - Have you taught / encouraged your children / grandchildren to communicate in Ukrainian (for example, through Ukrainian fairy tales, books, videos, etc.)?
  - How did they react to it?
  - Do your children / grandchildren attend Saturday or Sunday schools of Ukrainian studies?
  - Would you like them to attend such schools?
  - Would you like your children / grandchildren to study in Ukraine? Why?
11. Do you follow Ukrainian traditions? (DO NOT READ ALOUD: wearing embroidered shirts (vyshyvanka), performing rituals, cooking Ukrainian dishes)
  - Which ones?
  - Why? (What is your motivation to follow these traditions?)
12. As for religion, are you a believer?
  - If so: What religion do you profess? What denomination do you belong to?
13. Do you visit religious temples in South Africa (church, mosque, synagogue)?
  - How often?
  - In what language is worship held there?
  - Does it seem important to you for the worship services to be performed in your native language?



### Unit 3. Reasons for migration, mechanisms of integration and adaptation of Ukrainians in South Africa

We will now continue with the unit of questions about your migration to South Africa.

14. What were the main reasons for your migration to South Africa?
15. Why did you choose South Africa and not any other country?
16. Have you ever been to South Africa for tourism?
17. Why did you choose this city or region? (Have you lived in any other cities of South Africa)
18. Did you have friends / acquaintances / relatives who were living in South Africa when you decided to move?
  - If so, did they help you to get settled in a new place?
19. Was it easy for you to get a visa to South Africa?
  - If not: why? What are the main obstacles?
20. What is your citizenship?
21. If you have South African citizenship, how did you get it? Did difficulties arise in the process of acquiring it?
  - If you do not have South African citizenship, have you planned to get it and why?
  - Have you had difficulties related to any document for your stay in South Africa? If so, why?
22. Remember the time you moved to South Africa. (How old were you? What year was it?)
23. Did you have any difficulties right after your move? If so, which ones?  
(DO NOT READ ALOUD: language barriers, domestic, financial, psychological, visa problems, etc.)
24. Do you consider yourself well integrated into the new society?
  - If so, how long did it take you to adapt to the new country (culture, language, customs, etc.) and why?
  - If not, why?
25. Are you satisfied with this country in general?
26. What do you like most about South Africa and what do you like the least?
27. Do you feel safe in this country?
  - If not: Why?
28. What kind of education do you have?
29. Where did you study?
  - Have you studied in South Africa?
  - If so: what kind of education did you receive?
  - For what purpose?
30. Did you work in Ukraine before leaving? If so, in what field did you work?
31. Please describe in more detail what you currently do in South Africa.  
(If the respondent is unemployed, go to question 36)
32. Have you had any other work experience in South Africa since you moved. If so, tell us in more detail.

33. How did you look for a job?
34. Have you encountered any difficulties with employment? If so, with what exactly?
35. Do you think you can better realize yourself at work here than in Ukraine?
- Let's talk about interethnic relations in South Africa.
36. How would you describe your relationship with representatives of different groups of the indigenous population of South Africa?
37. Have you experienced discrimination against yourself by local residents of South Africa?
- If so, tell us about it in more detail. What is it about? How often did it happen?
  - If not, has this happened to your acquaintances and friends? What is it about?
- How often did it happen?
38. Do you feel the weight of any restrictions related to the legislation of South Africa?
39. Are there more South Africans or those who moved to South Africa from other countries among your friends?
40. How would you describe your relationship with migrants from other countries?
41. Do you communicate (or have communicated before) with Russians of South Africa? Can you describe your relationships with them?

#### **Unit 4. Features of the Ukrainian community in South Africa**

Until now we have been speaking about your experience. And now we would like to move on to the unit of questions about the characteristics of the Ukrainian community in your city.


42. Please, describe a typical Ukrainian in your city in a nutshell.
43. What gender are most Ukrainians in your city? Are men and women in equal numbers?
44. What age category are most Ukrainians in your city?
45. From which region of Ukraine do Ukrainians move to your city most often?
46. What language do Ukrainians usually speak in your city?
47. What religion do Ukrainians profess in your city? To what denomination do they usually belong?
48. Who do Ukrainians usually marry in your city? Are their spouses Ukrainians or other nationals?
49. According to your observations, do Ukrainians preserve their native language, Ukrainian culture and identity in mixed marriages?
50. Do you know what kind of education most Ukrainians have in your city?
- Have they studied in South Africa?
51. What kind of work do Ukrainians mostly do in your city?
52. How would you describe the financial situation of Ukrainians in your city?
53. To what social class would you designate them (low income, lower middle, middle, higher middle, upper) in comparison to others?
54. In general, in your opinion, are there any differences between Ukrainians who live in Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria? (for example, in their sphere of employment, communication language, financial situation, etc.)
- If so, what are the differences?

55. What do you imagine the future of Ukrainians in your city like? And in South Africa in general?
56. Are you aware of anything about public activity and public organizations of Ukrainians in your city and in South Africa in general? If so, what exactly do you know? (If the answer is “No”, go to question 59.2)
57. How did you find out about such public organizations / public activities?
58. In your opinion, is the public activity of Ukrainians in South Africa and particularly in your city sufficient? (Public activism is the participation of individuals in socially important areas of activity)
- If not, why?
  - Are there differences between different cities?
59. Are you a member of such an organization?
- If so, what is your motivation for participating in it?
  - If not, would you like to join it and why?
60. In your opinion, what should Ukrainian public organizations in South Africa do?

## **Unit 5. Ties of Ukrainians and their associations in South Africa with Ukraine**

Now let's move on to the unit about your ties with Ukraine and Ukrainians.

61. I will read a list of different practices / activities. Please indicate in
- which of them you would be more interested in, as well as those you would express your disinterest for? Why?
  - celebration of Ukrainian public holidays (Independence Day, Constitution Day);
  - commemoration of historical events (for example, Holodomor Victims Remembrance Day);
  - celebration of religious holidays together with the Ukrainian community in South Africa (Christmas, Easter);
  - visiting Ukrainian movies / watching movies in Ukrainian;
  - visiting Ukrainian exhibitions;
  - attending Ukrainian literary events;
  - attending sporting events with the participation of Ukrainians (for example, football);
  - participation in competitions, flash mobs, etc.;
  - attending Ukrainian culture clubs (e.g., singing, choir, dances, etc.);
  - participation in humanitarian projects (for example, projects related to rehabilitation of combatants of ATO / OOS);
  - visiting Ukrainian cuisine catering establishments;
  - participation in joint business initiatives with Ukrainians in South Africa (any business);
  - anything else you might be interested in which hasn't been listed in the above questions.
  - We are moving to the next unit.
62. Do you use any services provided by Ukrainians from South Africa or Ukraine? (for example, medical, legal, financial services)? Why?
- If not, would you like to use any of such services?
63. Do you buy Ukrainian goods in South Africa (for example, food, clothing, household items, etc.), if there are any?

- 
64. Do you transfer funds to Ukraine (for example, to relatives or for charity)?
65. Do you vote in the Ukrainian elections in South Africa or in Ukraine and why? (DO NOT READ ALOUD: not registered, do not wish to do so, there are hassles)
- If not, then if the hassles were removed, would you vote in the election?
66. Are you interested in events / news in Ukraine and why?
67. Do you get updates about the news in Ukraine from the Internet (news websites, communities on Facebook, YouTube)?
- Which specific resources are they?
  - Why do you choose these resources?
68. Which mass media, broadcasting news about Ukraine, do you trust most? And which do you trust the least?
69. Is there any media that you have lost or gained trust in recent years?
70. Are you aware what media Ukrainians prefer to watch in South Africa? And in your city?
71. Is there an impact of Russian disinformation about Ukraine in South Africa?
72. Have you ever applied for any services at the Ukrainian Consulate and the Embassy of Ukraine in South Africa?
- Under what circumstances?
  - How would you rate the experience of your interaction with the Consulate / Embassy?
73. Do you communicate with Ukrainians living in Ukraine?
74. How often and for what purpose do you visit Ukraine?
75. Do your friends or relatives living in Ukraine visit you?
- If so, is it easy for your relatives or friends to visit you in South Africa?
  - If not, why?
76. Would you like to move or return to Ukraine? Why?
77. How do you imagine your future (and the future of your children) in South Africa?
78. Would you advise Ukrainians to migrate to South Africa? Why?

### **End of interview**

79. Would you like to add something to our interview?
80. Do you have any comments or suggestions for the interview?



## RESEARCH TEAM

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International Institute of Education, Culture and Diaspora Relations of Lviv Polytechnic National University (IIEC) was founded in 1992.

International Institute of Education, Culture and Diaspora Relations of Lviv Polytechnic National University works to build and strengthen cooperation between Ukraine and its diaspora in the field of education and culture as well as to disseminate knowledge about Ukraine and Ukrainians around the world. It researches migration processes and creates an innovative intellectual product for the study and promotion of the Ukrainian language around the world.

Among others IIEC partners with the Ukrainian World Congress, the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, numerous Ukrainian communities abroad, ministries and governmental agencies, the church, educational and scientific institutions and the media.

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**ISBN 978-0-620-96143-1**



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