

PROSPECTS FOR PUBLIC AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR  
COOPERATION IN INCREASING LEGAL LITERACY

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**Abstract.** This article analyzes the importance of cooperation between the state and non-state sectors in increasing legal literacy, as well as existing experiences and promising directions. Legal literacy determines the level of citizens' awareness of their rights and obligations and serves to ensure the rule of law in society. The article examines international experience, approaches from global scholars, and prospects for cooperation based on the existing legal framework in Uzbekistan. Recommendations, innovative approaches, and problematic aspects for increasing cooperation efficiency are also highlighted.

**Keywords:** legal literacy, public sector, non-governmental sector, civil society, NGOs (non-governmental non-profit organizations), rule of law, legal advocacy, legal advice, international experience, cooperation, legal policy.

The issue of increasing legal culture and literacy is becoming increasingly relevant in the development of countries. Along with the public sector, non-governmental organizations play an important role in this process. This is because expanding the level of legal literacy primarily helps citizens better understand their rights and obligations, which, in turn, is an important factor in ensuring the rule of law in society and reducing the number of legal disputes. In particular, cooperation between the state and non-state sectors opens up broad opportunities for joint projects, trainings, and social advocacy activities to enhance the legal knowledge of citizens.

Legal literacy has a positive impact not only on a person's private life but also on important factors such as social stability in society as a whole, active citizen participation, and the effectiveness of law enforcement. After all, in any democratic society, the ability to know and use rights raises the social consciousness of citizens and prevents offenses. The public sector, on the one hand, possesses legislative, law enforcement, and judicial powers. "On the other hand, the non-governmental sector—specifically non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), civil society institutions, international organizations, and private companies—can play an active role in this process by implementing various projects aimed at increasing legal literacy, organizing lectures, seminars, and trainings, and conducting advocacy campaigns through the media" [1; 45].

The purpose of the article is to analyze the approaches and existing experiences of world scholars regarding legal literacy and cooperation between the public and non-governmental sectors, and to show promising paths for future development. In particular, the article examines the concept of legal literacy, the importance of state policy, the opportunities of NGOs and the private sector, and the effect arising from their joint activities. The article also pays special attention to the role of international organizations, including the UN, the European Union, and other regional cooperation organizations, in increasing legal literacy. In this regard, the scientific sources and world experience covered by the authors are taken into account.

The term "legal literacy" refers to citizens' knowledge of laws, regulatory legal acts, and their rights and obligations, as well as their ability to implement them in life. World scholars



consider legal literacy as an integral part of legal consciousness. For example, J. Rawls emphasizes that the awareness of law and justice is one of the most important factors necessary for building a just society among people [2; 45]. Accordingly, in societies with a high level of legal literacy, citizens can actively protect their rights and prevent deviations from justice. R. Dvorkin says that law should not be a simple set of laws, but a system of norms that ensure justice, rights and freedoms in the process of conflict of various interests in society.[3; A person who is aware of this system of norms, when faced with offenses, can choose the right path, understand their obligations and responsibilities, and protect their interests through legal means.

State policy plays a key role in increasing legal literacy. Because the state, through the government, adopts laws and regulations, organizes their implementation, and is responsible for protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens within the framework of the law. State policy can be implemented primarily through initiatives such as legal reforms, the creation of targeted programs to increase the legal knowledge of citizens, the widespread introduction of legal disciplines in educational institutions, and the opening of legal consultation centers.

It is important for state bodies, particularly the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the prosecutor's office, and the judicial system, to provide citizens with legal information and organize legal advocacy, particularly by organizing commentaries on laws and legal advocacy programs through the mass media. The political will of the state and internal institutional cooperation in this area create the basis for the wide dissemination of legal knowledge. At the same time, it is necessary to establish clear mechanisms for the interaction of state representatives with the non-governmental sector.

Noting that the state acts as the "core" of the legal system, H. Kelsen emphasizes that state bodies must maintain constant contact with the public in the execution of laws and their implementation [4; 77]. After all, if every layer of society is not aware of legal reforms, it will be difficult to achieve the effectiveness of reforms.

The non-governmental sector is a complex of civil society institutions, non-governmental non-profit organizations, private enterprises, and other organizations engaged in private interests. By working in cooperation with the state, they can make a significant contribution to the process of increasing legal literacy in society. NGOs primarily perform functions such as social protection, legal counseling, legal assistance, and legal advocacy. Training sessions, seminars, and professional development courses funded by the private sector also contribute to increasing legal literacy. In particular, in some foreign countries, non-governmental organizations have opened direct legal assistance services, including free legal consultation centers. Such centers provide great practical assistance, especially for those in need of social protection. For example, M.K. Nussbaum emphasizes the importance of expanding the use of legal opportunities for the comprehensive development of people, and targeted programs of NGOs can serve as an important tool in this process [5; 52]. The non-governmental sector is not limited to legal literacy, but also actively participates in the preparation of legislative initiatives or proposals for legal reform. Because they work directly with mahallas, micro-firms, and various segments of society, they can see the primary problems more clearly. In international practice, it is common practice for the non-governmental sector—especially human rights organizations—to cooperate closely with parliament and government, providing feedback on improving legislation.

One of the important subjects in increasing legal literacy is international organizations. International structures such as the UN, UNESCO, the European Union, and the OSCE provide technical, financial, and methodological assistance to legal reforms in various countries. In particular, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implements special projects to increase the level of legal literacy of citizens in developing countries. They will assist in



organizing trainings, seminars, and legal advocacy events in cooperation with government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Within the European Union, a number of programs have been developed to ensure the rule of law. These programs will allow government agencies, NGOs, and private sector representatives to improve their qualifications in various fields, master best practices, and utilize technical and innovative solutions. Within the framework of the Council of Europe, resolutions, conventions, and protocols on human rights, the rule of law, and democratic governance are also being developed, and practical manuals are being provided. As a result, the state and non-state sectors will have the opportunity to work in accordance with international regulatory requirements to improve legal literacy.

The main directions for improving legal literacy in cooperation between the state and non-state sectors may include:

**Reforms in the field of education:** The quantity and quality of legal subjects must be increased at all levels, from secondary school to higher education institutions. The state develops national curricula for these subjects, and NGOs can assist in preparing textbooks or conducting seminars.

**Network of legal consultation centers:** Opening specialized legal assistance centers for categories such as those in need of social protection, labor migrants, women, children, and the elderly. The state will provide infrastructure and seed capital for these centers, and the non-governmental sector will organize work with qualified lawyers, psychologists, and social workers.

**Cooperation with the media:** Opening television programs, radio broadcasts, and special channels on social networks aimed at increasing legal literacy. The state provides reliable legislative information when preparing legal content, while NGOs conduct targeted advocacy among the population.

**Online platforms and digital technologies:** Creating legal literacy mobile applications, websites, and distance learning courses through non-governmental sector initiatives. The state can support these initiatives through modeling, licensing, and technical assistance.

**Participation in legislative reforms:** organization of public discussions by NGOs on improving draft legislation, conducting scientific and legal expertise. The state, taking these considerations into account, may introduce relevant amendments and additions to the laws.

Thus, it should be noted that the prospects for cooperation between the state and the non-state sector in increasing legal literacy are of particular importance for ensuring long-term development and social stability. This cooperation will serve to increase the legal awareness and activity of the people, improve the implementation of laws, reduce social conflicts, and effectively protect human rights. The use of international experience and scientific sources in the formation of legal policy and reforms in the future will further enrich the process and increase its efficiency.

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