

TWO YEARS AT THE FOREFRONT

Exploring the needs and experiences of women-led, women's rights, and LGBTQIA+ led organizations two years into the Ukraine humanitarian response.



OXFAM

SUMMARY

Two years on from the escalation of the war in Ukraine, **Oxfam spoke with a number of people leading work for local and national women-led organizations (WLOs), women's rights organizations (WROs), LGBTQIA+ led organizations, and other local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) addressing the needs of women, girls and gender minorities in Poland and Ukraine.** We wanted to understand how the humanitarian crisis has impacted them, personally and as organizations, and their needs and priorities for the future.

This paper outlines some of the key themes in this current phase of the crisis that emerged from these conversations.¹ It seeks to outline the ways in which the international community, including United Nations (UN) agencies, international NGOs, donors, and other humanitarian actors can better support these organizations – both in the humanitarian response and into the future.

At the beginning of the humanitarian crisis following the escalation of the war in Ukraine, local WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations were some of the first on the ground responding to their communities' needs, both within Ukraine and in neighboring countries, and two years on, **they are still at the forefront of providing assistance.** The ways of working, expertise and knowledge of these organizations is key to an effective, gender-sensitive response, as they are able to represent the needs of women and girls, as well as other marginalized communities; they are trusted actors within their communities; and they respond quickly and flexibly as needs evolve.

Representatives we spoke to from these organizations highlighted **key challenges in continuing to sustain their vital role in responding to humanitarian needs**, including deepening burnout, a lack of core funding, and the diversion of resources to meeting the bureaucratic requirements of humanitarian funding.

There is also a need for **greater investment in the voice and agency of these organizations as decision-makers** in the Ukrainian humanitarian response. While humanitarian actors are making progress in including WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations in coordination spaces, we still fall short of meaningful and systemic inclusion, with these organizations identifying continuing barriers to their involvement in decision-making spaces. This lack of meaningful inclusion contributes **continued gaps in the understanding of women's needs** in the context of a humanitarian response where gendered needs and interests are still deprioritized.

In our conversations, it also became clear that WLOs, WROs, LGBTQIA+ led organizations **need to be flexibly supported to carry out activities across all stages of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine**, looking to enhance their sustainability within and beyond the immediate response. So far, these organizations have been largely absent from reconstruction and recovery conversations, despite a desire to be involved. They also require more flexible, long-term funding in order to be able to continue not only to respond to the immediate needs of their communities, but also to pursue their core missions of advancing the rights of women, LGBTQIA+ people, and/or other marginalized communities.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide adequate support for WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations to sustain their vital role responding to humanitarian needs in Ukraine and Poland.

- Provide core funding to WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations that supports the sustainability of the organization and their work.
- Collect disaggregated data on the amount of funding flowing specifically to WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations in the Ukraine response.
- Identify ways to reduce burnout and support the psychosocial needs of WRO, WLO and LGBTQIA+ organizations' staff and volunteers.
- Reduce the bureaucratic and administrative burden of seeking and obtaining funding for WROs, WLOs, and LGBTQIA+ led organizations.

2. Invest in WLOs, WROs, and LGBTQIA+ led organizations' voice and agency as decision-makers in the Ukrainian response.

- Prioritize the voice of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations in decision-making, respecting these organizations' expertise as both first responders to the humanitarian crisis and long-standing representatives for the rights of their communities.
- Continue to invite WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations to the table, but also invest in their systemic and meaningful inclusion in decision-making in all aspects of the humanitarian response.
- Effectively consult WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations so that the needs of women of diverse and intersecting identities, as well as gender minorities and other marginalized groups, are not missed.

3. Recognize and support the role that WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations play beyond addressing immediate humanitarian needs.

- Ensure WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations are heard in recovery and reconstruction discussions and beyond.
- Provide flexible, long-term funding that supports the holistic and sustainable work of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations across all stages of the response.
- Coordinate with international actors within and beyond the humanitarian system to ensure that investment in and engagement with WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations by international actors is coherent and centers their ways of working.



Introduction

Two years on from the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the humanitarian system is still mired in non-feminist approaches that fail to fully and meaningfully reflect and meet the needs of women, girls and gender minorities.

In the past two years, the international humanitarian system has scaled up, building the familiar architecture of cluster systems, funding mechanisms, decision-making systems and rules of engagement – and again **replicating existing colonial and patriarchal power structures** rather than meaningfully or systematically including local organizations, particularly women-led and minority-led organizations, in the design of the system. In this way, the humanitarian response in the region mirrors the global arrangement of power, rather than challenging the hierarchies that dictate who sits at the table, who makes decisions, and what is on the agenda. This system perpetuates instrumental approaches, which threaten women's empowerment and wellbeing if left unchallenged.

At the same time, in Ukraine martial law has eroded existing structures that mainstreamed women's participation and **women and gender minorities continue to feel particular impacts of war and displacement** – including increased domestic responsibilities, greater unemployment, and an urgent need for services preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV).²

Local humanitarian leadership, and within this, **women's leadership – especially the kind that seeks to transform power and reform unjust structures – is a potent antidote**, enabling the increased agency of traditionally oppressed groups and their genuine influence over the priorities and resources of the humanitarian response.

Oxfam holds commitments to shift power towards local humanitarian leadership and has committed to feminist principles that aim to make Oxfam a feminist ally. As part of these commitments, **we have tried to work with and empower women-led organizations (WLOs), women's rights organizations (WROs) and LGBTQIA+ led organizations, as well as other local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) addressing the needs of women, girls and gender minorities in Ukraine and Poland.**

These organizations provide vital assistance to people affected by the war, and – particularly given the lack of a systemic and effective gender-sensitive response by the broader humanitarian system – do crucial work ensuring the needs and interests of women and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) are recognized and met. They are also key actors working with other marginalized groups that risk being left behind by the humanitarian response, including ethnic minorities.³

Listening to the voices of these organizations, and understanding the challenges they face and the ways the international community can better support and empower them, is a crucial step towards ensuring the needs of women and people of diverse SOGIESC are met in this humanitarian crisis.

Two years on from the beginning of the response, we spoke with a number of representatives from WLOs, WROs, LGBTQIA+ led organizations, and women leaders within local NGOs, seeking to understand how the humanitarian crisis has impacted them and their needs for the future. **This paper seeks to outline the ways in which the international community, including UN agencies, international NGOs, donors, and other humanitarian actors can better support these organizations** based on the key issues raised in these discussions.

THE STORY OF WLOs, WROs AND LGBTQIA+ LED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UKRAINE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE – TWO YEARS AT THE FOREFRONT

At the beginning of the humanitarian crisis following the escalation of the war in Ukraine, local **WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations were some of the first on the ground responding to their communities' needs, both within Ukraine and in neighboring countries.** Many of these organizations rapidly shifted their activities into humanitarian assistance from their work supporting women's leadership, rights and livelihoods, while others, who were already providing relevant services like shelters or psychosocial support, quickly scaled up to reach more people or new areas. Still others were newly created in response to the huge rise in needs, as women-led grassroots organizations sprang up within communities.

"I never thought I would work with humanitarian aid, but of course it started to be for me and my organization one of our main directions. ... I started using my existing skills – for instance on project management and fundraising." Bielova Anzhelika, President and Founder of NGO "Voice of Romni" (Ukraine)

“ It was quite challenging to shift to humanitarian activities, but we feel like we overcame this challenge quite quickly – and mostly because we work with a feminist approach. The person is always in the center of our activities – not some process, but a person first. Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine ”

"We were already involved in the humanitarian response; we had been assisting IDPs since 2014. So the thing that changed for us is that the scale of the crisis – our response increased." Olena Tanasiichuk, Program Director, ELEOS-Ukraine

"We've been providing support to the LGBTQIA+ community here in Poland for the last 26 years – including psychological support, legal assistance, and shelters. So when the war started and we changed to a humanitarian response, we were basically doing what we did before, just in new languages." Miłosz Przepiórkowski, Lambda Warszawa (Poland)

Two years on, while international humanitarian actors have now also had time to move into the response, **WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations are still at the forefront of providing assistance.** Many have in this time expanded their operations significantly and gained confidence operating in the humanitarian system. At the same time, these organizations have been trying to preserve and, increasingly, return to their core mandate supporting the rights and participation of women and LGBTQIA+ people.⁴

"Before the war we had a small team – maybe 20 people. Now we have a big team – around 100 personnel in the organization. And we have a lot of volunteers, a lot of new people. For women's organizations this has been a challenge for their capacity-building. We saw a lot of organizations now have big projects, have spread to new regions." Oksana Moskalenko, Director, Women's Consortium of Ukraine

"After the invasion, there were big changes – to our personal lives and our organization. Before 2022, we worked only in three or four regions, now we work in eight. Before we had around 50 staff, now we have more than 400 people. It was not easy – and it is still difficult now. We need to keep all these staff, and we need to train new staff, and study to be managers for these numbers of people." Maryna Kurochkina, President, The Tenth of April (Ukraine)

“Before we had 6 staff and now there are 40 of us. And in their work staff are attending trainings, learning new skills which will be helpful later in further jobs.” Feminoteka (Poland)

It is important to recognize the diversity of organizations supporting a gender-sensitive response, including local NGOs that are not women-led, but which provide vital services for women and girls. There is also a corresponding diversity of experiences amongst these organizations. For instance, smaller, newer and community-based organizations mentioned to us that they faced additional challenges getting funding compared to larger or national-level WLOs and WROs, while LGBTQIA+ led organizations told us about challenges they faced in doing their work due to discrimination and lack of visibility.

I see that there are not so many opportunities for small organizations, or medium organizations who work with a very specific target audience, like us. We don't see so many opportunities for us. Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine

“So many doors are shut for us because we're too young. Mentally, my organization is 40, because I have these years of experience – but officially our organization is only two years old. This is an outdated view of how humanitarian assistance works. You need to trust local organizations – and not just big ones with international funding.” Nastya Podorozhnyia, Founder, Martynka (Poland)

“We didn't receive any help from the Polish government. Even the Polish Red Cross didn't want to put up our posters, because they had a rainbow on it. ... There is a whole diversity we aren't aware of – we need to open our eyes and be open to it. I see many projects that are not tailored to people's needs – we need to listen to members of the LGBTQIA+ community and make the people of our community visible – because at the moment, we are not.” Miłosz Przepiórkowski, Lambda Warszawa (Poland)

WHY ARE THESE ORGANIZATIONS SO IMPORTANT TO AN EFFECTIVE, GENDER-SENSITIVE RESPONSE?

The important role of local WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations goes beyond their position as first responders – their ways of working, expertise and knowledge are key to an effective, gender-sensitive response:

- **They are able to represent the needs of women and girls and work towards a gender-sensitive humanitarian response.** War and crisis are traditionally dominated by masculine interests. The international response continues to be rooted in non-feminist approaches, and many decision-making spaces – in international organizations and government – are still dominated by men. In this context, WLOs and WROs act as important vehicles for raising gendered issues, ensuring everyone's needs are addressed by humanitarian action.
- **They are important responders to the needs of groups that are traditionally marginalized or face specific vulnerabilities,** including women and girls, but also men and non-binary people experiencing their own gendered challenges. Some groups facing specific challenges that were highlighted by organizations we spoke to include Roma,⁵ LGBTQIA+ people,⁶ and the elderly.⁷

- **They are trusted actors within their communities, with unique experience and access to those in need.** Working directly with people, these organizations have strong understandings of the local context and needs of women, girls, and the most vulnerable in their communities. The trust they have cultivated by being an integrated part of communities, and/or having worked with them for a long time allows them to adopt more appropriate ways of working and to communicate effectively with affected communities.
- **They respond quickly and flexibly as needs evolve.** Many organizations highlighted to us how local and community-led organizations were able to start responding to humanitarian needs long before larger organizations – and they have continued to adapt rapidly as needs have changed over the past two years.

“When you work directly with people in an organization in a human-centered way, you build these networks of support – you learn how not only to listen, but also to hear people. When you do things this way, all the external changes and challenges become not as crucial as they might otherwise be.” Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine

“I understand the trauma people are going through because of their gender or sexual identity. In our shelter flats, we don’t divide people into male and female, we listen to what they identify as. In a big shelter with 1,000 people you couldn’t do this like we do – you can’t ask anyone individually what they identify as. The way we do it allows us to be much more personal.” Miłosz Przepiórkowski, Lambda Warszawa (Poland)

“I think something very important about the Towards Dialogue Foundation is it is Roma people helping Roma people. People from your community, people who understand you, people with the same cultural background helping you – this is important.” Cecylia Jakubczak, Head of Communications, Towards Dialogue (Poland)

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When it is necessary to react quickly, local NGOs can do this – we are on the ground, not in the offices. Oksana Horbunova, Project Manager, NGO Resource Centre (Ukraine)

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“I think the response of the LGBTQIA+ community was amazing. In the beginning we didn’t have funds for shelters, so we put up Instagram posts asking for people from the community to help and there was a huge response. One of the first groups the community housed was a group of 120 female students from Kenya who needed short-term shelter – we were able to find accommodation for all of them in six hours.” Miłosz Przepiórkowski, Lambda Warszawa (Poland)

“These women’s organizations know the needs that are out there. On 24th February the full-scale invasion started, and one organization we work with, Women’s Perspectives in Lviv, had already put in place a shelter for women and children by the 26th. They could do it so quickly, because they knew what was needed.” Jara Henar Pi, Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor Ukraine Response, Alianza-ActionAid Spain



Providing adequate support
for WLOs, WROs and
LGBTQIA+ led organizations
to sustain their vital role
responding to humanitarian
needs in Ukraine and Poland

‘THIS IS NOT ENDING’ – THE CHALLENGE OF DEEPENING BURNOUT

WROs and WLOs began reporting burnout as a serious issue even before the end of the first year of the humanitarian response,⁸ and this problem is growing more acute as the war continues. In early 2023, in one survey of WROs and WLOs, **75% of organizations identified resources to prevent team member burnout as a primary need.**⁹ In October 2023, this was identified as ‘the most critical need’ of many WLOs and WROs.¹⁰ Similarly, representatives of organizations we spoke to continue to raise the issues of burnout, psychological exhaustion, and lack of rest.

“Really women leaders in Ukraine try to be strong. Everyone thinks that every woman leader should be strong. There is no weak side. But it’s not like that. There should be also some attention for supporting these women leaders – not only in general women, who should of course be supported – but women leaders. It can be very difficult for women leaders to share their issues or psychological needs.” Nataliia Kostiv, Project Manager of Oxfam’s project in Kyiv and Chernihiv region, Rokada

“Of course, there are all these difficult stories we hear when meet women, we talk to them. Each story is unique and it goes through our hearts. It is very complicated to live through all these stories.” Olena Tanasiichuk, Programme Director, ELEOS-Ukraine

“Women need support, including psychological counselling. We are working with difficult cases.” Oksana Horbunova, Project Manager, NGO Resource Centre (Ukraine)

There are several compounding factors that were identified as contributing to burnout in these organizations:

The workload remains high. Participants in Key Informant Interviews (KIs) we held in both Ukraine and Poland told us that the level of need has not decreased – indeed, the cases they are addressing have only become more complex. At the same time, they are dealing with the additional workload required to find funding, navigate humanitarian coordination systems, and meet compliance requirements placed on them by humanitarian donors.¹¹

“Unfortunately, we still have the same amount of need – maybe the needs change a bit, maybe they modify, but in general the situation hasn’t changed.” Maryna Kurochkina, President, The Tenth of April (Ukraine)

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The war is ongoing. The humanitarian crisis, the humanitarian problems, actually become deeper. Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine

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“So many Ukrainian organizations shut down already, and I am not surprised. There was so much more interest in 2022. Now there is still the same demand – if anything our cases are actually only getting more complex. There is no decrease in demand but there is a decrease in support.” Nastya Podorozhnyia, Founder, Martynka (Poland)

“People tell me, ‘you don’t have more refugees coming, you probably don’t have much work’ – but actually we have more work. People are still here; they still need housing and all kinds of support.” Miłosz Przepiórkowski, Lambda Warszawa (Poland)

Staff and volunteers lack the time and resources for rest and self-care. Limited human resources to cover the high workload, as well as internalized pressure to continue to help people who are suffering, mean that many WLO and WRO staff are increasingly exhausted but find little or no time to rest. Those working in Ukraine also face the double burden of working to address the needs of others while feeling the direct impacts of the war themselves, trying to continue their work despite constant threat of air raids, as well as limited sleep caused by regular air raid sirens during the night.

“ I understand I need to rest, but it’s difficult to have time to rest. You understand your country is in a war, you can’t give yourself rest. Even when we have annual leave we are still working. And a lot of people are waiting for us to do more. When you live with this pressure almost two years, it is very difficult to continue to provide people with power, to engage them. Nataliia Kostiv, Project Manager of Oxfam’s project in Kyiv and Chernihiv region, Rokada ”

“We are not able to work like before. Our working day will be interrupted by the air raid signal. But still most of us stay and continue to work. And the air raids operate in the middle of the night – people have to rest, but our rest can be interrupted at any moment and then the next day you feel so exhausted. When you stay without sleeping during the night, it is especially difficult to work. This burnout has consequences, it is a vital element. The war is already in its second year, and so many people are exhausted. And this is not ending.” Oksana Horbunova, Project Manager, NGO Resource Centre (Ukraine)

“Work is what gives us rest, I think. It gives our mind rest and distraction from the steady feeling of war, and gives us the sense that we are doing the work that our people need.” Vira Porovska, Women’s Consortium of Ukraine

“We learned how to take care of ourselves. Immediately I provided access to therapy to everyone in our team, as well as for me. But since we are small organization and lacking funding, we never have enough.” Nastya Podorozhnya, Founder, Martynka (Poland)

Staff and volunteers continue to face economic insecurity due to volunteerism and cultural expectations around care work. Women are often over-represented as volunteers – as opposed to paid staff – in local organizations, and undertake a higher share of unpaid or underpaid work.¹² In this way, women often become instruments to deliver goods and achieve specific or sectoral objectives. It has been advised since the beginning of the response that programs be designed in a way that does not rely on unpaid or under-paid labor of women and girls.¹³ However, WLOs, WROs and LGBTQI+ led organizations are still reporting that they are operating without sufficient sustainable funding for their staff to feel secure, contributing to burnout and increased turnover.

“Everyone talks about localization and supporting WROs, but this isn’t something we saw in reality when we started to work with Ukraine. ... The organizations depended on volunteers, given women’s traditional role as caretakers, which is often reflected in their work in humanitarian efforts. This was advantageous for donors who prefer to allocate funds towards activities rather than salaries.” Jo Darouiche, Regional Manager, VOICE Ukraine Crisis Response (Ukraine)

“We have to worry about whether we’re going to have salaries in half a year. People providing care shouldn’t have to be scared for their own future, or meeting their basic needs. ...We aren’t expected to earn a decent amount of money, we aren’t expected to take rest.” Nastya Podorozhnya, Founder, Martynka (Poland)

“These organizations don’t have the money to sustain their activities. They are mostly run by women who, for gender-cultural reasons, it is easier for them to accept this precarious situation. Women that run organizations that expanded from grassroots into bigger organizations, they gave up their jobs – often high paying jobs like therapists – because they needed to commit fully to the organization for it to be successful. But that’s not sustainable.” Anna Chromik, GBV Specialist, VOICE Poland

Women in Ukraine are shouldering an increasing workload in their personal lives in addition to their roles in the humanitarian response. High levels of conscription of Ukrainian men has led to women in Ukraine increasingly taking on more household tasks traditionally considered to be dominated by men, including home maintenance, gardening and collecting firewood, while many are also shouldering the burden of earning money for the household.¹⁴ At the same time, reductions in access to essential civilian infrastructure and services, including school closures, have created additional caring responsibilities.¹⁵ There is limited information about the likely impacts of gender roles and women’s multiple care burden, including the challenges this will create in the future within and beyond the humanitarian response, which is an area where further research is necessary.

THE NEED FOR CORE FUNDING

Commitments around quality funding made in the Grand Bargain have been a core issue in localizing humanitarian responses across the globe,¹⁶ and the failure to adequately provide overheads and core funding to local actors is again reflected in Ukraine. WROs, WLOs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations in the Ukraine response have persistently identified a greater need for quality funding in order to be sustainable.¹⁷ And after two years of humanitarian involvement, the problem is only more pressing.

Many organizations spoke to us about the challenges of project-based funding and lack of funding for staff costs and overheads. **Without funding for core costs for WLOs, WROs, and LGBTQIA+ led organizations not only is the effectiveness of the humanitarian response reduced, but the medium- and long-term sustainability of these organizations is undermined,**¹⁸ contributing to over-reliance on volunteerism and burnout of overstretched staff, while also limiting their ability to invest in their organizational capacities for the future.¹⁹

“I tell everyone this – if a big organization asked me ‘if I gave you \$150,000, what would you do with it first?’ I would say: core funding. They will say that we had highlighted the need for psychosocial support, or some similar thing – but without a team I can’t even start looking for psychological support. We need to invest in people. Once we have a team of people, then we can actually even start looking for funding. We had core funding before, for 2023, but now it is gone. Now we only have project funding.” Miłosz Przepiórkowski, Lambda Warszawa (Poland)

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I think that donors need to think that organizations need staff – not just money for clothes, food and medicines. Of course these are important, but we need people who will actually go to the refugee center to deliver them. Cecylia Jakubczak, Head of Communications, Towards Dialogue (Poland)

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“We see the same challenges again and again – access to flexible funding, and respect for the role of WLOs/WR0s. They need to be able to adapt, things are always changing. They need to have a structure and enough staff and teams. They need to be able to hire people to work on the administrative dimension of their projects. They need budget to hire people to work on advocacy. We’ve talked about this a lot with our partner organizations.” Jara Henar Pi, Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor Ukraine Response, Alianza-ActionAid Spain

“International organizations should give indirect costs to our partners, sometimes their staff are not covered – we identified a lot of women who are volunteers. WLOs have a lot of the workload of the response, but they are not a focus – they are not who receive the funds. So it’s complicated talking about localization, if we don’t prioritize WLOs and give them overheads.” María José Gómez, Program Director, HIAS Ukraine

“They are trying to do everything – implement their activities, seek funding opportunities, and take care of themselves and their families. This strain often leads to high turnover rates, which is a big challenge. And it is hard to build capacity of team members with limited salaries – when those team members try to find other positions with higher salaries, the organization has to start again.” Jo Darouiche, Regional Manager, VOICE Ukraine Crisis Response.

On the other hand, **organizations we spoke to who had been able to secure core funding emphasized how this had enabled them to build the sustainability of their organizations**, including supporting their capacity to seek out further funding. The ability to use flexible and core funding to invest in training of staff was identified as a particularly important point for organizations representing traditionally marginalized groups, who may not have had equal access to education opportunities.

“We have had to advocate for this funding, but we have managed to succeed in having core support in almost all of our humanitarian funding. And it has allowed us to advocate for, seek, and work for other funding, including non-humanitarian funding. Sometimes we have had to fight, we had to prove what we were asking for was necessary, but we did get it at least.” Feminoteka (Poland)

“We would like to have more people from the Roma community working at our organization, but because of systemic discrimination, we have to put more resources into their training. We don’t want to hire people only because of what they know, but hire people to give them some skills. My dream one day is not to work here, but to see a girl from the Roma community in my place. But we have to remember it takes more time, and also money. We have to invest in the communities which don’t have equal opportunities.” Cecylia Jakubczak, Head of Communications, Towards Dialogue (Poland)

OVERBURDENED BY BUREAUCRACY – THE NEED FOR FLEXIBLE, HARMONIZED REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDING AND REPORTING

KII participants repeatedly mentioned the burden that long, complex, and duplicative bureaucratic processes imposed by donors and intermediaries are putting on their staff, limiting the resources they can devote to their actual activities. This again reflects the importance of the localization agenda and an equal and respectful approach to partnerships.

“The processes, the procedures, they’re as rigid as they’ve ever been. So on one hand you want women’s organizations to be flexible ... but on the other hand you’re coming in with these really heavy procedures, like what you would give to massive corporations. That’s not flexible. They are rigid, they are cumbersome, and for every single organization they are different. ... We understand that there are requirements that come with the money, but we’re having to go through all this work, setting up procedures and protocols, that we may not even use afterwards. It’s a terrible investment of time and funding. This takes the energy we could channel directly into working with people, ... Some organizations are really listening to women’s organizations and trying to meet us halfway, but others are absolutely telling us ‘no, you have to come to us’. It requires effort on both sides, let’s try to meet in the middle.” Feminoteka (Poland)

“The process [for getting a large grant from an INGO] is crazy, at one point we had been going through the process of interviews and checks for one of these grants for three months. I had a nine-hour interview with them. They had questions on lots of things – even about procurement systems, but we don’t even procure anything. Nastya Podorozhnya, Founder, Martynka (Poland)

“I would expect some more trust from many donors. Being the oldest LGBTQIA+ organization in Poland, and being an LGBTQIA+ organization with the last government we had in Poland, you have permanent financial controls. So, when you look in our documents, you see everything is exactly how it should be. I would expect some more trust, some more flexibility.” Miłosz Przepiórkowski, Lambda Warszawa (Poland)

“We need time for preparing, for applying for funding, but we do it. It is a big part of our work. We have strong expertise in this sphere, but not enough people who can do it. And we feel some frustration, it is a difficult process.” Maryna Kurochkina, President, The Tenth of April (Ukraine)

This echoes similar concerns that have been expressed by WLOs and WROs consistently since the beginning of the response.²⁰ WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations are often smaller or community-based NGOs, with limited capacity for managing extensive bureaucratic requirements. Even larger, national-level WLOs and WROs in Ukraine and Poland, which had more robust financial management systems, mostly had little experience with the humanitarian system prior to 2022 and have had to invest significantly in new systems and staff to comply with humanitarian donor requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Provide core funding to WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations that supports the sustainability of the organization and their work**, including providing for appropriate staff and overhead costs. Core funding should facilitate organizations to: effectively deliver humanitarian assistance without an over-reliance on unpaid or under-paid labor; provide decent living standards for staff, including sufficient opportunity for rest and recovery; and invest in the future capacities of their organizations.
- **Collect disaggregated data on the amount of funding flowing specifically to WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations in the Ukraine response**, to address the current lack of disaggregated data on funding flowing to WROs and WLOs specifically, including from the UN Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF).
- **Identify ways to reduce burnout and support the psychosocial needs of WRO, WLO and LGBTQIA+ led organizations' staff and volunteers**, including through providing sufficient resourcing, access to psychological counselling, and support for these organizations' own efforts to provide peer-support and self-care activities for their staff.
- **Reduce the bureaucratic and administrative burden of seeking and obtaining funding for WROs, WLOs, and LGBTQIA+ led organizations**. This will require donors and intermediaries to be flexible with requirements, to begin a dialogue with these organizations to work together towards systems suited to all parties' needs, and to work to harmonize requirements with other donors and intermediaries to the greatest extent possible.



Investing in WLOS,
WROS, and LGBTQIA+ led
organizations' voice and
agency as decision-makers
in the Ukrainian response

INCLUSION IN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION SPACES – A MIXED RECORD

The humanitarian system has been slow to include the voice of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations in humanitarian coordination spaces,²¹ but **as coordination mechanisms have taken shape, there have been some steps forward.**

Studies in 2023 noted increased participation of WLOs and WROs in national and international fora, including UN and INGO-led sector-specific clusters.²² The creation of regional and local coordination groups has also made opportunities to participate more accessible to smaller organizations,²³ and in Ukraine, the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GIHA) was noted by some organizations we spoke to as a positive platform for exchange between INGOs and UN agencies and local and grassroots NGOs. It is also positive that GIHA has adopted a tripartite system of co-chairing, in which one co-chair must be a national organization. In KIIs, several people expressed their appreciation for access they had to spaces like the cluster system, and said they felt there were genuine efforts to include them in coordination mechanisms by international actors.

“We created recommendations about how to address the needs of Roma community in times of war and we presented to the UN country team. ... I feel that I can be open, that the UN structures are really interested in our needs, they want to work with us and help us. They really want to work with us and help us.” Bielova Anzhelika, President and Founder of NGO “Voice of Romni” (Ukraine)

“I would say that the cluster system is really proved out to be efficient. We as an organization can express our views and opinions during cluster meetings.” Olena Tanasiichuk, Program Director, ELEOS-Ukraine

“The clusters work well, they are good because they have representatives from all organizations – local, national, international, government. Like any system, it has its weaknesses – sometimes we don’t get an immediate response on our issues, sometimes there are duplications of work. But I don’t know how we can efficiently improve this system – it’s a very big organism, the scale of the country and activities is huge so this of course is reflected in the coordination mechanism. But we work with them on a daily basis, and in general it is good we have such systems.” Olga Tkachenko, Project Manager, The Tenth of April (Ukraine)

“I think that it’s important to share experiences, but you can’t just approach things the same way you would somewhere else, you have to think about the cultural context. And I think that nowadays organizations that come here, for example from the UK, from the US, they know it. I have this feeling as an activist that they hear what we are saying, that they invite us to participate in creating some of the campaigns.” Cecylia Jakubczak, Head of Communications, Towards Dialogue (Poland)

“

I do see our expertise being valued in the international system. We are often invited to panel discussions, for instance by INGOs or UN Women. We are also publishing a toolkit for international organizations on how to work with LGBTQIA+ refugees.

Miłosz Przepiórkowski, Lambda Warszawa (Poland)

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However, there is still a long way to go. KII participants told us that success in interactions with international actors often depended on the particular UN or INGO staff member they were speaking to – suggesting **we are yet to succeed in including these organizations' voices on a systemic level**. This reflects findings in the last year that more meaningful leadership and participation of women and women's organizations is needed,²⁴ and the majority of WROs, WLOs, grassroots and national organizations still ask for a greater presence in the decision-making spaces of the humanitarian response.²⁵

“It is hard to answer in a general manner whether the international community listens to our expertise – it depends on the personality of the person you are dealing with. Sometimes we meet very brave people in the UN, who are very helpful. But sometimes, with other people, it is just a wall. Oksana Horbunova, Project Manager, NGO Resource Centre (Ukraine)

“If staff at international organizations are new, they don't understand the context of Ukraine, then it's very difficult to negotiate with them. Staff that are in Ukraine more than six months, they understand the context, and with them it is easier. And while international organizations usually respect our expertise on the local context, it takes a lot of time, a lot of back and forth, for them to incorporate it into their processes.” Nataliia Kostiv, Project Manager of Oxfam's project in Kyiv and Chernihiv region, Rokada

“We exchange our knowledge [with international organizations] and support each other – but at the same time, we want our knowledge and experience to be a priority. We believe we know better, because we are here and we know the context better. Representatives and staff from international organizations, they change – sometimes their contracts are very short, and they come to Ukraine for maybe three to six months. It's difficult for them to understand like we do because for them it is a new context, new circumstances, new laws.” Maryna Kurochkina, President, The Tenth of April (Ukraine)

Similarly, **these organizations reported mixed experiences being heard in the design of humanitarian projects**. While some donors have taken steps to involve local partners in project design – a notable step forward for the sector – others remained rigid and non-consultative. Significantly, organizations which had been involved in more collaborative program design with donors emphasized how it had allowed for approaches that more effectively addressed long-term needs.

“With some organizations, our cooperation was that they had their own plan already, and they set us to do things. But with some other organizations, I consider we are lucky, and we always have a say in the decision-making process.” Olena Tanasiichuk, Program Director, ELEOS-Ukraine

“It depends on the donor organization. Some have these very strict requirements for projects which they cannot change, while sometimes there is flexibility. This does limit our resources – but if our terms don't match, this isn't something we can change. We will find some other donor.” Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine

“I'm really happy with it, because I've been working in NGOs for ten years, and ten years ago it was really 'we will tell you what you should do, and we have ideas about what you should change and how you should do things.' But now most of the organizations are really listening to us.” Cecylia Jakubczak, Head of Communications, Towards Dialogue (Poland)

“Actually because of this largely very flexible space we were given as to how we wanted to design projects, at least at the start of the crisis, we were able to think about what the longer-term needs are. If you want a women-led response, then ask women’s organizations what they think they need to do, because they know better. And that doesn’t often happen – we’re often treated as sub-grantees, or service contractors. But I do think that at least at the start there was some of this space and this flexibility where women’s organizations were really listened to.” *Feminoteka (Poland)*

WOMEN’S NEEDS AND INTERESTS ARE STILL BEING MISSED

WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations’ work and longstanding experience within their communities give them vital knowledge about humanitarian needs, often before they are apparent to larger organizations. However, **continued gaps in the understanding of women’s needs** in the Ukrainian humanitarian response were highlighted to us in several KILs, making it clear that there continues to be a lack of effective consultation with these organizations.

“Often the big donor in another country can’t understand the issues on the ground. I discuss these issues that are being missed with a lot of donors. Bielova Anzhelika, President and Founder of NGO “Voice of Romni” (Ukraine)

“The war has been traditionally led according to men’s needs and war spending needs – what about SRSH, contraceptives, how many children women want to have and when, what about sexual exploitation, sexual violence? Imagine what it could be like if WLOs and WROs could be in charge and reflect a gender-sensitive response instead, including further women, girls, and boys’ needs.” *María José Gómez, Program Director, HIAS Ukraine*

“There are a lot of women working on the frontline, in volunteer groups, as first responders – but they’re not being included in decision-making, they’re going under the humanitarian radar.” *CARE International*

“WLOs have been put into almost a very feminized role: women should do the work of caring for others, without having a say in how they do that.” *Anna Chromik, GBV Specialist, VOICE Poland*

An organization in Poland told us that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) had recently reported that they had not seen the rise in human trafficking that they had expected – an assertion which did not reflect the WLO’s experience assisting trafficking survivors on the ground. ‘We’ve seen the rise in cases,’ they told us. ‘But this isn’t always visible – women don’t even always conceptualize that they have been a survivor of trafficking.’²⁶ Similarly, an organization in Ukraine told us that a UN participatory assessment had identified several regions as having a low level of danger for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and sufficient GBV services, directly leading to a decrease in the funding that organization received for GBV activities in those regions. But, they said, they had not been consulted and did not agree with the UN’s assessment of those areas as low risk: ‘It was a big surprise when we saw this report that there was low GBV risk in these areas,’ they said. ‘Now this money has been cut and we’re trying to find the funding for these activities.’

Several KIL participants also **called for consultation with WLOs, WROs and organizations that work with vulnerable groups to be more robust**, particularly on sensitive issues like GBV.

“You need to diversify the sources of information which you are receiving. Sometimes you have to call or to write to ten or twenty people to receive the full picture, so you need to involve as many local organizations as you can – including Roma organizations, and non-Roma organizations who work with the Roma community.”
Bielova Anzhelika, President and Founder of NGO “Voice of Romni” (Ukraine)

“Research should be deeper and not so fast. You need to ask not only the women themselves, but also the staff from organizations that work on these issues. We try to cover a lot of people, but we also need to consider how we ask them and how to have a deeper understanding of their answers.” Nataliia Kostiv, Project Manager of Oxfam’s project in Kyiv and Chernihiv region, Rokada

These gaps exist in the context of a humanitarian response where gendered needs and interests are deprioritized; resources for women and girls’ protection and healthcare needs are lacking,²⁷ and prevention and response to GBV remains one of the least funded parts of the humanitarian response.²⁸ Organizations operating in both Poland and Ukraine told us that their governments do not see issues like GBV or Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) as a priority, while at the same time, in Ukraine women’s role in political affairs at a governmental level has been limited by the increased centralization of power and role of the military.²⁹ There also continues to be a lack of understanding of the intersectional dimension of gendered needs, including the way issues affect different groups differently – or are replicated across these groups – and how the humanitarian architecture can better enable intersectional analyses.

“Women’s issues aren’t seen as a priority, GBV isn’t seen as a priority – they’re like ‘we have a war going on, don’t you know?’” CARE International

“We had a lot of problems being heard. The government was convinced there was no such thing as violence against women in Poland – at all. It doesn’t exist, they said.” Feminoteka, (Poland)

MORE THAN AN INVITE TO THE TABLE – CONTINUING BARRIERS TO INCLUSION IN HUMANITARIAN DECISION-MAKING SPACES

Barriers for effective inclusion of the voices of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations in the decision-making spaces of the international humanitarian response continue to be emphasized by these organizations.³⁰ Barriers highlighted in the conversations we had included:

- **Lack of time, funding, training and human resources** to engage with complex and lengthy humanitarian coordination mechanisms, particularly with teams already overstretched. This is exacerbated by the sheer volume of coordination and decision-making spaces which are relevant to their work, as well as, in some contexts, lack of translation and overuse of jargon. Several KII participants noted that existing experience in the humanitarian system, or dedicated guidance and introductions from INGOs, was necessary for them to effectively engage with in these coordination mechanisms.

“We participate in clusters, in UN meetings, in other different meetings. We get lots of invitations and information about advocacy opportunities, but we don’t have enough human resources to be doing advocacy. Our team are involved in the humanitarian response and realization program – we haven’t got a lot of time from advocacy work.” Oksana Moskalenko, Director, Women’s Consortium of Ukraine

“Organizations are trying to duplicate, triplicate themselves to match their work to all different existing clusters.” Jara Henar Pi, Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor Ukraine Response, Alianza-ActionAid Spain

“I don’t feel like Roma organizations and women’s organizations have the proper skills and funding to improve their voices, to help them to become louder. I work on advocacy, but it is important to help to grow other local organizations.” Bielova Anzhelika, President and Founder of NGO “Voice of Romni” (Ukraine).

- **Unequal power dynamics.** WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations still struggle to receive recognition in decision-making spaces commensurate with their leading role in the response,³¹ reflecting broader issues that local organizations continue to have in the humanitarian system having their voices heard - despite commitments by international actors to greater localization. These power dynamics are an even greater issue for women and people of diverse SOGIESC who face intersectional challenges of oppression, including for instance Roma women, older women, LGBTQIA+ women, or racialized communities. Several organizations called for their voice to have greater priority in decision-making. They also asked for access to spaces where they could engage in collaborative planning and decision-making for future projects, feeling that meetings they were invited to as part of the cluster system tended to only focus on reporting on existing work. This suggests that the design of the spaces to which these organizations are currently invited still replicates an extractive and transactional approach to including local voices, rather than allowing for meaningful access to decision-making.

“ We would like that when we decide crucial issues, important issues for the Ukrainian community, that the skill and knowledge of the local communities be put as a priority. Maryna Kurochkina, President, The Tenth of April (Ukraine) ”

“It is very relevant not only to talk to WLOs and WROs, but that their voices are considered as key - not just as testimonies but as the intellect and expertise behind those stories as well. We keep seeing this as a demand - ‘don’t only invite us to the international conferences, give us a real role.’” Jara Henar Pi, Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor Ukraine Response, Alianza-ActionAid Spain

- **Cultural expectations and backlash against women leaders.** Several women we spoke to mentioned the challenges they faced when speaking out publicly about women’s issues, including backlash and intimidation. This was particularly the case for women from traditionally marginalized communities, like Roma women and LGBTQIA+ women. Some sources also report that while more women are engaged in community organizations overall, men are more likely to be in leadership positions.³²

“Just like many cultures, Roma culture is also patriarchal. So this kind of leadership was really hard for me. At the beginning of the war when I started to work with humanitarian aid, some people would threaten me. One man said, ‘you can’t work here, we won’t allow you.’ But at the same time, the Roma community supported me, realizing the importance and scale of my work, and today our organization has four regional offices and works in seven regions of Ukraine with the Roma community.” Bielova Anzhelika, President and Founder of NGO “Voice of Romni” (Ukraine)

“Unfortunately for our state, LGBTQIA+ people remain an invisible group – we are not considered a vulnerable group, legally. So, yes, we feel we are heard by international organizations, but not by the government. And we feel that this is a role for INGOs that come to the country within the humanitarian response, that they can help us to establish this dialogue.” Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine

“I feel that when I was young, I was ashamed of being a good public speaker – it was not a good quality in a child, in a girl. But now I see how valuable it is – if I wasn’t, my organization wouldn’t have funding.” Nastya Podorozhnyia, Founder, Martynka (Poland)

“This isn’t specific to Ukraine – but we are talking about a patriarchal system, so women’s voices are not recognized as equal.” Jara Henar Pi, Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor Ukraine Response, Alianza-ActionAid Spain

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prioritize the voice of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations in operational and strategic decision-making spaces, respecting these organizations’ expertise as both first responders to the humanitarian crisis and long-standing representatives for the rights of their communities. This includes:

- Ensuring these organizations are heard in humanitarian discussion spaces at all levels and are involved in all stages of decision-making processes which are consultative and transparent.
- Work to redesign processes to put the voices of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations at the center, rather than replicating existing power imbalances through extractive or tokenistic approaches.

2. Continue to invite WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations to the table, but also invest in their systemic and meaningful inclusion in decision-making in all aspects of the humanitarian response. This requires the international community, amongst other actions, to:

- Provide resources for organizations to build their advocacy capacity, including through adequate funding, training, and technical support.
- Create opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning amongst WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations.
- Make humanitarian decision-making spaces more accessible on a practical level by providing translation, limiting jargon, and minimizing the volume of meetings needed within and across sectors.
- Provide technical and logistical support for representatives from WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations to participate in meetings at national, regional and international levels.

3. Effectively consult WLO, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations, recognizing the diversity amongst these organizations, **so that the needs of women of diverse and intersecting identities, as well as gender minorities and other marginalized groups, are not missed**. More effective consultation is particularly important regarding gendered issues which are sensitive within communities and have been deprioritized in the humanitarian response, including GBV.



Recognizing and
supporting the role of
WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+
led organizations beyond
addressing immediate
humanitarian needs

A NOTABLE ABSENCE – THE NEED TO INCLUDE WLOs, WROs AND LGBTQIA+ LED ORGANISATIONS IN RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY SPACES

While the voices of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations have slowly been more included in humanitarian spaces, they are still **notably absent from discussions about the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine.**

The recovery process in Ukraine is an important moment to involve groups who have traditionally less voice in policy processes, including women and girls, in deciding the future of the country. It presents the possibility for investment not only in infrastructure but also in social structures, laws and services that could respond to the needs of women, girls and marginalized groups. However, to take advantage of this opportunity, **WLOs, WROs, LGBTQIA+ led organizations and civil society more broadly needs to be at the table in all recovery discussions.**



After the war ends, we'll need to renovate not only our buildings and roads, but also our democracy and institutions and human rights defenses. Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine



The need for an inclusive recovery process has been repeatedly acknowledged by the Ukrainian government and international community,³³ but this inclusion is yet to materialize. References to women and gender equality are missing from recovery and reconstruction frameworks,³⁴ and both women's organizations and discussions on women's rights issues were notably absent from the Ukraine Recovery conferences in Lugano and Berlin in 2022, and in London in 2023.³⁵

Organizations we spoke to expressed their desire to be more involved in discussions on recovery and future planning, echoing existing calls by Ukrainian WROs and WLOs to support civil society engagement and incorporate a gender responsive approach into the recovery process.³⁶

"We have been focused on the humanitarian response; we haven't had time for advocacy. But after the war we will work on the development program, including on advocacy. International organizations should think about development and the Ukrainian development program, including gender rights." Oksana Moskalenko, Director, Women's Consortium of Ukraine

"Of course it would be great if our experience, and the experience of other NGOs in the field, would be taken into account for future actions. We did some strategic planning in our office, and our staff had so many ideas about the rebuilding and renewal of Ukraine – it would be great to be able to communicate these ideas to someone." Olena Tanasiichuk, Programme Director, ELEOS-Ukraine

"Something we feel lacking is strategic planning on a global level. We are now planning maybe for a year – but even if the war ends in year, the response will keep going afterwards. It's not planned by actors here and now, there is not strategizing for the long term. The horizon of planning became closer after the war started – we used to plan for three to five years, now we plan for one year and we hope." Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine

BEYOND THE NEXUS – SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS ALL STAGES OF THE RESPONSE

“The international community will leave after some time, I think – and this is understandable, it is a normal situation – but we would like that they bring more expertise to have capacities within organizations that will stay here, that they help these organizations to be stronger, to be active actors in our society, not only to be in the humanitarian sphere. Maryna Kurochkina, President, The Tenth of April (Ukraine)

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Local WROs, WLOs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations were not only the first responders to the humanitarian crisis – many were there already, working for the rights of their communities, and they will remain long into the future. For many of these organizations, the divide between humanitarian, human rights, and development needs is artificial. In this sense, they can be said to naturally work across the humanitarian-development-peace ‘nexus’.³⁷

The Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus (or simply ‘nexus’) is a recognition of the interconnectedness across fields that have been traditionally separated in the international system; specifically, the humanitarian (lifesaving activities which aim to meet basic needs), development (efforts to alleviate poverty), and peace-building (including activities which support social cohesion and advance human rights) fields. A nexus approach recognizes that this separation is artificial: all of these approaches are needed at the same time and in coordination in order to effectively address people’s needs and rights before, during and after crises.

With this in mind, the current context presents rights-based organizations with **opportunities to advance the rights of women and gender minority in the region**. The expansion in size, scope, and funding and training opportunities for WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations that has come with the humanitarian response could contribute to strengthening their institutional capacity in the long term.³⁸ Political shifts in Ukraine, like the government’s ratification of the Istanbul Convention in November 2022, also provide increased opportunities for advocacy. However, **these opportunities will not be realized unless WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations are supported sustainably** to maintain their advocacy, empowerment, and rights-oriented activities.

“Out of this horrendous crisis, we have seen some opportunities we haven’t had before. We set up a rape crisis center – Poland’s first – supporting both Ukrainian refugees and Polish women. This was with support of a couple of humanitarian organizations as well as non-humanitarian supporters. I don’t think we would have imagined we’d be able to do that before. It was something we wanted to do for a long time, but the resources just weren’t there.” Feminoteka (Poland)

“In these two years, Ukraine has made significant steps for women’s empowerment, so we are definitely moving in a good direction. But we need to work to implement this – we need additional support, additional time.” Oksana Horbunova, Project Manager, NGO Resource Centre (Ukraine)

“We understand that becoming closer to the EU in itself won’t change the lives of LGBTQI people in Ukraine immediately – we have to work on it.” Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine

On the other hand, many organizations have expanded significantly into new areas and types of work to respond to urgent humanitarian needs, and **if not sufficiently resourced, this rapid expansion risks diverting capacity from their primary caseload**, particularly as humanitarian support begins to disappear.³⁹ And there are other risks to these organizations’ ability to carry out their core work: space for addressing women’s issues and LGBTQIA+ rights is diminishing in Ukraine as the country has shifted its attention to a war footing,⁴⁰ and cases of GBV are rising at the same time as services addressing GBV are becoming more limited.⁴¹

In this context, **a lack of flexible, long-term funding is making it difficult for these organizations to work in a way which is holistic and sustainable**, and which would allow them to both take advantage of new opportunities and navigate these risks.

“Quite a lot of women’s rights organizations continue to work at the forefront of delivering primary aid, mainly protection. But many organizations have also shifted to recovery – they weren’t humanitarian organizations beforehand, they worked on things like development and women’s economic justice. They see for instance that they need more funding for livelihood activities – people have lost their jobs, and they can’t live on humanitarian aid.” CARE International

The activities of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations do not always fit neatly within the traditional boundaries of humanitarian funding, and so a lack of flexible approaches to funding is currently limiting both the long-term effectiveness of their work and their ability to contribute to the advancement of women’s rights more broadly.⁴² At the beginning of the crisis, HIAS and Voice flagged the need for donors to appreciate this point to effectively fund WROs and WLOs:

‘Donors who fund movements (rather than emergency response) need to understand that organizations’ emergency response activities are inextricably connected to their movement-building work. Conversely, donors who fund emergency response and not women’s rights work need to understand that to divorce funding from this reality will have major shortcomings in the outcomes of the response.’⁴³

Moreover, many WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations are receiving short-term funding grants, lacking access to longer-term funding opportunities. This focus on quick impact programming prevents them from realizing their intentions of planning effective responses in the longer term.⁴⁴

“ If we think about all the possible problems [Ukraine is facing], we need some information about our future resources. All of our support depends on foreign partners, and we don’t know how to react to these huge problems because we don’t know how many resources we will have. Oksana Moskalenko, Director, Women’s Consortium of Ukraine ”

“Our partners struggle a lot – it is difficult to plan when you have funding only for three or four months. Some of the WLOs we met believed that the war would end quickly, maybe because of funding cycles that lasted only three months. This optimism encouraged them to intensify their efforts, but they didn’t consider the sustainability of their work. Then they faced challenges getting funding given the short funding cycles.”

Jo Darouiche, Regional Manager, VOICE Ukraine Crisis Response

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Ensure WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations are heard in recovery and reconstruction discussions** at local, national and international levels, and encourage their involvement in Ukrainian government processes regarding the future of service provision to their communities
- 2. Provide flexible, long-term funding that supports the work of WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations across all stages of the response – and beyond** – recognizing their role as organizations that work across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and allowing them to allocate funds in a way that invests in their future effectiveness.
- 3. Coordinate with other international organizations across the nexus** to ensure that investment in and engagement with WLOs, WROs and LGBTQIA+ led organizations by international actors is coherent and centers their ways of working, rather than divisions between humanitarian, development, peace-building and other actors at an international level.

- 1 Oxfam conducted interviews for this paper in December 2023–January 2024 with 16 representatives from ten local/national organizations in Poland and Ukraine, as well as ten representatives from six INGOs operational in the humanitarian response in one or both countries (24 women, two men). A description of the local and national organizations we interviewed can be found at the end of this paper.
- 2 See CARE International, UN Women, (January 2024) *Closing the Gender Gap*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/closing-gender-gap-humanitarian-action-ukraine>.
- 3 Throughout this paper we refer to the needs of women and/or people of diverse SOGIESC, as we spoke to organizations who have a focus on the needs of women or the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as women leaders within the humanitarian response. However, we recognize that these organizations are important actors addressing gendered impacts across all groups in their communities, including men, and working to meet the needs of people of all genders from marginalized groups..
- 4 In July 2023, 96% of WLO and WRO respondents surveyed stated they wish to continue work on women’s leadership, women’s rights, and women’s participation in the political and social life of the country. From the same pool of respondents, most have been continuing these activities: 73% of respondents are still active in awareness raising and the educational sphere, and 69% are still working on combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and providing assistance to survivors. NGO Resource Centre and Vital Voices Global Partnership (July 2023), *Capacities and needs of women’s rights and women-led organizations in Ukraine: transformations during wartime*. https://www.vitalvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Report_Capacities-and-Needs-of-Women-Led-Organizations_English-Version.pdf.
- 5 For more information on discrimination and differential impacts of the war faced by Roma across the region, see Oxfam (September 2023) *Further into the Margins: A regional report on Roma communities displaced by the Ukraine crisis*, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/further-margins-regional-report>.
- 6 See, for e.g., IDMC (November 2023) *Gender Dynamics in Internal Displacement*, [https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/gender-dynamics: 'As well as catalyzing women’s agency, survey data shows that \[women’s organizations\] also mobilize men and LGBTQI+ residents overall, expanding their impact and highlighting their potential for diversity and inclusion. Among all LGBTQI+ respondents, women’s organizations were the most frequently reported channel for providing support to fellow residents.'](https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/gender-dynamics: 'As well as catalyzing women’s agency, survey data shows that [women’s organizations] also mobilize men and LGBTQI+ residents overall, expanding their impact and highlighting their potential for diversity and inclusion. Among all LGBTQI+ respondents, women’s organizations were the most frequently reported channel for providing support to fellow residents.')
- 7 For more on challenges faced by older people, particularly older women, see HelpAge (February 2023) *‘I’ve lost the life I knew’: Older people’s experiences of the Ukraine war and their inclusion in the humanitarian response*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ive-lost-life-i-knew-older-peoples-experiences-ukraine-war-and-their-inclusion-humanitarian-response>.
- 8 Reported in, e.g. VOICE (October 2022), *Policy brief: Equipping Frontline Responders in Poland to Meet the Protection Needs of Women and Girls* [unpublished].
- 9 NGO Resource Centre, Vital Voices Global Partnership (July 2023) *Capacities and needs of women’s rights and women-led organizations in Ukraine: transformations during wartime*, https://www.vitalvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Report_Capacities-and-Needs-of-Women-Led-Organizations_English-Version.pdf.
- 10 CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>.
- 11 CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>.
- 12 In Poland, for instance, it was reported that before the escalation of the war, 75% of people working and volunteering with local organizations were women, women were more likely to work overtime for free, and women were undertaking 2.5 times more unpaid care work than men. VOICE (January 2023) *Policy brief: Funding needs for Polish women’s rights and women-led organizations responding to the war in Ukraine*, [unpublished].
- 13 HAIS, VOICE (May 2022) *Waiting for the Sky to Close: The Unprecedented Crisis Facing Women and Girls Fleeing Ukraine*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-assessment-report-waiting-sky-close-unprecedented-crisis-facing-women-and-girls-fleeing-ukraine>.
- 14 CARE International, UN Women, (January 2024) *Closing the Gender Gap*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/closing-gender-gap-humanitarian-action-ukraine>.
- 15 UN Women (September 2023) *A Gender Responsive Recovery for Ukraine: Introduction*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/policy-brief-gender-responsive-recovery-ukraine-introduction>. ActionAid (February 2023), *Standing Up For Our Rights: Feminist Insights from the Ukraine response*, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2023/standing-our-rights-feminist-insights-ukraine-response>.

- 16 See, for e.g. IASC (November 2022) *Research Report: Overhead Cost allocation in the humanitarian sector*, <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2022-11/IASC%20Research%20report%20Overhead%20Cost%20Allocation%20in%20the%20Humanitarian%20Sector.pdf>.
- 17 One year into the response, an ActionAid survey of WLOs and WROs found 100% of respondents needed more flexible and equitable forms of funding and partnership – ActionAid (February 2023), *Standing Up For Our Rights: Feminist Insights from the Ukraine response*, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2023/standing-our-rights-feminist-insights-ukraine-response>. More recently, in a joint statement, CARE, ActionAid, IRC, Oxfam, Divchata, and PLAN noted that ‘*despite their vital role in providing humanitarian aid, there has also been a persistent lack of quality funding to support WLOs and WROs*’ (June 2023) *Ukraine Recovery Conference: Gender Equality and Women’s Leadership and Participation in the Recovery Process Must be Prioritized*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-recovery-conference-gender-equality-and-womens-leadership-and-participation-recovery-process-must-be-prioritized>.
- 18 See, e.g., NGO Resource Centre, Vital Voices Global Partnership (July 2023) *Capacities and needs of women’s rights and women-led organizations in Ukraine: transformations during wartime*, https://www.vitalvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Report_Capacities-and-Needs-of-Women-Led-Organizations_English-Version.pdf: ‘*Even though financial resources for most organizations increased, they also explain: “Now we receive a lot of offers (for funding), but this is help specifically for funds that we are not allowed to spend on the organization’s resources, and it is difficult.”*’
- 19 See, e.g., CARE International (February 2023) *One year after the escalation of the war in Ukraine: Making International Funding Work for Women’s Organizations*, <https://www.care-international.org/resources/one-year-escalation-ukraine-war-making-international-funding-work-womens-organizations>: ‘*If we cannot stabilize and consolidate our operation, the organization will undoubtedly do the humanitarian work, but there will be no sustainable women’s organizations to take the work forward at the end.*’ – Emma Association, WRO, Hungary.’
- 20 See, e.g. NGO Resource Centre, Vital Voices Global Partnership (July 2023) *Capacities and needs of women’s rights and women-led organizations in Ukraine: transformations during wartime*, https://www.vitalvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Report_Capacities-and-Needs-of-Women-Led-Organizations_English-Version.pdf: ‘*In general, many Ukrainian organizations raised issues around “long, complex and often duplicated international due diligence processes and ask for a coherent verification process adapted to the Ukrainian legal framework that also considers the need for rapid response.”*’

CARE International (February 2023) *One year after the escalation of the war in Ukraine: Making International Funding Work for Women’s Organizations*, <https://www.care-international.org/resources/one-year-escalation-ukraine-war-making-international-funding-work-womens-organizations>: ‘*Smaller organizations whose capacities have been depleted due to the conflict and which juggle multiple small grants find application processes and reporting requirements complex, time-consuming, and difficult to comply with.*’

HAIS, VOICE (May 2022) *Waiting for the Sky to Close: The Unprecedented Crisis Facing Women and Girls Fleeing Ukraine*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-assessment-report-waiting-sky-close-unprecedented-crisis-facing-women-and-girls-fleeing-ukraine>: ‘*Many NGOs complain about time-consuming proposal and application processes, as well as the administrative burden of donor reporting, which often diverts valuable staff time just for this function.*’
- 21 See, e.g.: CARE International (August 2022) *Six months on in Ukraine: Local and national women’s organizations are leading the response to the conflict but are side-lined by humanitarian actors*, <https://www.care-international.org/resources/six-months-ukraine-local-and-national-womens-organizations-are-leading-response-conflict>.
- 22 ActionAid (February 2023), *Standing Up For Our Rights: Feminist Insights from the Ukraine response*, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2023/standing-our-rights-feminist-insights-ukraine-response>.
- 23 CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>.
- 24 See, e.g. USAID, Seed, UNDP (September 2023) ‘*Ukraine Gender Snapshot: findings from the rescore 2023*’, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-gender-snapshot-findings-rescore-2023-september-2023>. CARE International, UN Women, (January 2024) *Closing the Gender Gap*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/closing-gender-gap-humanitarian-action-ukraine>.
- 25 In a survey by ActionAid, 80% of respondents asked for a greater presence of grassroots and national organizations in national and international decision-making spaces of the humanitarian response: ActionAid (February 2023), *Standing Up For Our Rights: Feminist Insights from the Ukraine response*, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2023/standing-our-rights-feminist-insights-ukraine-response>.
- 26 IOM (November 2023) *Human trafficking in times of conflict: the case of Ukraine*, <https://rovienna.iom.int/news/human-trafficking-times-conflict-case-ukraine>. The article does acknowledge that trafficking cases may be going undetected or unreported. However, it does not clarify how the organization came to the conclusion that there had not been a spike in cases, and whether consultations had included not only affected individuals but also WLOs and WROs.

- 27 For instance, one year into the response, the funding gap for the needs of women and girls is larger than other sectors, despite disproportionate needs. ActionAid (February 2023), *Standing Up For Our Rights: Feminist Insights from the Ukraine response*, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2023/standing-our-rights-feminist-insights-ukraine-response>, which highlights that.
- 28 In 2023, GBV was the third-worst funded cluster (33%), ahead of child protection (27%) and camp coordination and management (7%), in the context of a 68% funded humanitarian response plan, as per OCHA (January 2024) *Ukraine: Humanitarian Response and Funding Snapshot, January - December 2023*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-humanitarian-response-and-funding-snapshot-january-december-2023#:~:text=Overall%2C%20the%20humanitarian%20community%20provided,household%20items%2C%20including%20winter%20supplies%2C>. It is also worth considering whether the response needs regarding GBV are being accurately assessed, given that according to UNOCHA's Financial Tracking Services, from a total of US\$3.25 billion for the humanitarian response in Ukraine only 4% was spent on GBV.
- 29 CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>.
- 30 See UN Women (September 2023) *A Gender Responsive Recovery for Ukraine: Introduction*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/policy-brief-gender-responsive-recovery-ukraine-introduction>.
- 31 CARE International, UN Women, (January 2024) *Closing the Gender Gap*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/closing-gender-gap-humanitarian-action-ukraine>: 'WLOs/WROs reported feeling like passive recipients of funds or participants in capacity development efforts, and not receiving recognition that prior to the full-scale invasion, they were one of the primary actors in responding to the needs of women and girls'.

CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>: 'Influencing decision-making at various levels is restricted as WLOs/WROs have less power within the international system, despite most UN agencies and INGOs committing to WLO/WRO participation and locally-led humanitarian response.'

NGO Resource Centre, Vital Voices Global Partnership (July 2023) *Capacities and needs of women's rights and women-led organizations in Ukraine: transformations during wartime*, https://www.vitalvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Report_Capacities-and-Needs-of-Women-Led-Organizations_English-Version.pdf: 'While some partners feel involved, lack of transparency about decisions made means that women's organizations are unclear as to whether their experiences and recommendations are being listened to.'
- 32 CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>.
- 33 In the "Lugano Declaration", adopted at the first Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano in 2022, there is a guiding principle on 'gender equality' which states that "the recovery process has to be inclusive and ensure gender equality and respect for human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights. Recovery needs to benefit all, and no part of society should be left behind. Disparities need to be reduced". The importance of women's inclusion in recovery has also been explicitly acknowledged by the Ukrainian Gender Equality Commissioner – see for instance UN Ukraine (June 2023): *Ukrainian Gender Equality Commissioner declares women's economic inclusion and empowerment a national priority for country's peacebuilding and recovery*, <https://ukraine.un.org/en/237705-ukrainian-gender-equality-commissioner-declares-women%E2%80%99s-economic-inclusion-and-empowerment>.
- 34 Including the European Commission's Rebuild Ukraine Plan and Ukraine's National Recovery Plan (See CARE International (February 2023) *One year after the escalation of the war in Ukraine: Making International Funding Work for Women's Organizations*, <https://www.care-international.org/resources/one-year-escalation-ukraine-war-making-international-funding-work-womens-organizations>). The GoU-EY-UN-World Bank Rapid Needs Assessment 2, released in March 2023, which informed the Government of Ukraine's five priority areas for recovery, also did not adequately mainstream gender equality and did not elaborate on how the specific needs of women and girls would be addressed in the 5 priority areas (See UN Women (September 2023) *A Gender Responsive Recovery for Ukraine: Introduction*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/policy-brief-gender-responsive-recovery-ukraine-introduction>).
- 35 See ActionAid (February 2023), *Standing Up For Our Rights: Feminist Insights from the Ukraine response*, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2023/standing-our-rights-feminist-insights-ukraine-response>. Joint statement, CARE, ActionAid, IRC, Oxfam, Divchata, Plan WROs' (June 2023) *Ukraine Recovery Conference: Gender Equality and Women's Leadership and Participation in the Recovery Process Must be Prioritized*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-recovery-conference-gender-equality-and-womens-leadership-and-participation-recovery-process-must-be-prioritized>.
- 36 See, e.g. *Open Letter of Ukrainian CSOs to the European Parliament and European Commission representatives*, (5 April 2023) <https://ua.boell.org/en/2023/04/05/open-letter-ukrainian-csos-ep-and-ec-representatives>.
- 37 For more information see: Oxfam (June 2019) *The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: What does it mean for multi-mandated organizations?*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-what-does-it-mean-multi-mandated-organizations>.

- 38 NGO Resource Centre, Vital Voices Global Partnership (July 2023) *Capacities and needs of women's rights and women-led organizations in Ukraine: transformations during wartime*, <https://www.vitalvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Report-Capacities-and-Needs-of-Women-Led-Organizations-English-Version.pdf>: '63% of respondents have the opinion that the institutional capacity of their organizations was strengthened. 47% believe the ability of their organization to influence the situation in the region has strengthened, and another 16% believe that they are in the process of growth.'
- 39 This has been a concern since the beginning of the crisis, with HIAS and VOICE reporting 'Some WROs are concerned about their capacity to continue to support their primary caseload — women and vulnerable populations from their own country— while so much emphasis is now going toward IDPs. HIAS, Voice (May 2022) *Waiting for the Sky to Close: The Unprecedented Crisis Facing Women and Girls Fleeing Ukraine*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-assessment-report-waiting-sky-close-unprecedented-crisis-facing-women-and-girls-fleeing-ukraine>.
- 40 CARE Ukraine, Rapid Gender Analysis on Power and Participation in Odessa and Kharkivska Oblasts, February 2023 [unpublished]: 'In Kharkiv, respondents noted that since the escalation of war, opportunities for public activism to continue to raise the visibility of LGBTQI rights has diminished drastically and respondents expressed fear that the recognition and acceptance of LGBTQI rights has declined and fear it will continue to do so. Respondents noted that when they raise the issue of LGBTQI+ rights in public, the response they get is that "now is not the time" for worrying about such things.'
- 41 See: CARE International, UN Women, (January 2024) *Closing the Gender Gap*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/closing-gender-gap-humanitarian-action-ukraine>: 'Services for GBV survivors are not provided in full, with some of the previous shelters for domestic violence survivors being repurposed to receive displaced women and children'.

CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>: 'Gender-based violence (GBV) was known to be widespread in Ukraine before the escalation of the war and, given the rising security risks and compounding stressors, the risks for GBV have been increasing as the full-scale invasion continues.'
- 42 For instance, one year into the crisis, 65% of WLOs, WROs and youth organizations surveyed by ActionAid stressed that donors did not fund their organization's core mission and activities, instead only providing grants for immediate humanitarian action. Some also felt that donors focused too heavily on value for money, at the expense of a human-rights approach. ActionAid (February 2023), *Standing Up For Our Rights: Feminist Insights from the Ukraine response*, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2023/standing-our-rights-feminist-insights-ukraine-response>. More recently, WLOs/WROs surveyed by CARE again identified lack of financial resources as a barrier to advancing women's economic and political empowerment during the response. CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>.
- 43 HIAS, Voice (May 2022) *Waiting for the Sky to Close: The Unprecedented Crisis Facing Women and Girls Fleeing Ukraine*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-assessment-report-waiting-sky-close-unprecedented-crisis-facing-women-and-girls-fleeing-ukraine>.
- 44 This was also found to be an issue by CARE in late 2023, who noted that 'local WLOs/WROs are most effective in the longer term, which makes financial support for long-term organizational and operational development more critical. ... However, this financial support is lacking due to donors' focus on quick impact programming.' CARE International (October 2023) *Rapid Gender Analysis*, <https://careevaluations.org/evaluation/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-october-2023>.

UKRAINE

ELEOS-Ukraine

The mission of ELEOS-UKRAINE is to serve society, helping those who need support. Their main areas of support include providing food, clothes, and protection to people in need, creating decent living conditions for everyone; contributing to the spiritual growth of people; promoting access to education, work, quality medical care, food, housing, and other necessities.

Gay Alliance Ukraine (GAU)

The main purpose of Gay Alliance Ukraine is to increase the level of tolerance in Ukrainian society, to promote the full realization of human rights for the LGBTQIA+ community in Ukraine and beyond, and to promote the establishment of equality of all people and respect for people's freedom.

NGO Resource Centre

NGO Resource Centre is a Ukrainian NGO that provides humanitarian assistance, supports and work to empower national civil society in Ukraine, and works to combat sexual abuse and violence. In addition to her work with NGO Resource Centre, Oksana Horbunova is a leading human rights advocate who has dedicated much of her life to combating the trafficking of women and children.

Rokada

Rokada is an organization that has been involved in supporting refugees and asylum seekers and since February 2022 has extended their support to displaced people and other population affected by the conflict. They provide inclusive social and other protection services, community engagement activities, basic needs, and shelter.

The Tenth of April

The mission of The Tenth of April is to ensure access to rights for everyone in need and make laws and international obligations work. It has been providing free legal aid to refugees and asylum seekers, in partnership with the UNHCR, as well as psychosocial support and cash grants to people whose safety is at risk.

Voice of Romni

The Association of Roma Women Voice of Romni is a nongovernmental organization based in Zaporizhzhya.

Since the outbreak of the full-scale Russian invasion, it has relocated to Uzhhorod, but still maintains a large regional presence in Zaporizhzhya. The name of the organization reflects the very purpose of its activity: "Romni" means "a Roma woman", so the organization works with women of Roma origin.

Women's Consortium Ukraine (WCU)

The WCU brings together 45 women's public organizations and has 15 branches in Ukraine. The organization conducts advocacy, training and educational initiatives aimed at strengthening the principles of equal opportunities for women and men in the political, economic and social life of Ukraine, as well as promoting children's rights and their well-being.

POLAND

Feminoteka

Feminoteka is a feminist and gender-based violence response organization. They run a helpline for women experiencing violence, offer free legal, psychological, and therapeutic support and campaign to change the law and society.

Lambda Warszawa

Lambda Warszawa has been active in supporting and creating a positive image of the LGBTQIA+ community in Poland since 1997. They are working on providing LGBTQIA+ Ukrainian refugees with safe working space and opportunities through an integrated protection program.

Martynka

Founded when the war escalated by a young Ukrainian woman based in Poland, Martynka is a movement of Ukrainian women providing support to other Ukrainian women. It provides psychological help to war refugees, tackles gender-based violence, prevents human trafficking and helps with access to reproductive rights in Poland.

Towards Dialogue

Towards Dialogue is a Roma led organization working on integration and awareness raising related to Roma issues. They assist Roma and other marginalized and vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion and create educational programs about minorities.

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email advocacy@oxfaminternational.org

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Photos

Front cover: Nadiya Pavlenko, 75, assesses the damage caused by shelling and bombardments in Novoselivka village, Chernihiv oblast, north of Ukraine. Photo: Kieran Doherty/Oxfam

Page 4: Ludimyla collecting water from Oxfam Water Point in Mykolaiv. Photo: J.B. Russell/Panos Pictures

Page 9: Tetiana Kutas (right), a project manager at The Tenth of April, helps Tamara (left), who is living in a shelter for displaced persons in Mykolaiv oblast, with her papers. Photo: Kieran Doherty/Oxfam.

Page 16: Informative labor orientation meeting held by former Oxfam partner Centrul de Drept al Avocatilor (CDA - Law Center of Advocates) in Moldova in July 2023. Photo: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam

Page 23: Greenhouses supported by the Rural Women's Business Network (RWBK) in Odessa. Photo: Kieran Doherty/Oxfam



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