

WE'RE STILL HERE

Local leaders
shaping
Ukraine's future



OXFAM

A LETTER FROM UKRAINE: THE WEIGHT WOMEN LEADERS CARRY

Svitlana Tarabanova, Safeguarding Coordinator at Women's Consortium Ukraine (WCU), shares a personal reflection on how the war has reshaped her life and work, and why long-term, feminist support for Ukraine's women leaders is more urgent than ever.

Like it was yesterday, I remember leaving the WCU office in Kyiv on February 23, 2022, at 19:21. The air felt heavy. I had seen the warnings about a possible

full-scale invasion, but I didn't want to believe them. Early the next morning, my daughter and I heard the first explosions in the capital.



Svitlana Tarabanova. Photo courtesy of Svitlana.

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A LETTER FROM SVITLANA TARABANOVA

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I didn't feel safe and hesitated about whether we should leave. It wasn't the first time I felt in danger in my own home. In 2014, Luhansk — the city in eastern Ukraine where I lived at the time — was declared an area of "anti-terrorist operation." I happened to be on a business trip and never returned.

In 2022, I also feared that if Kyiv's defense was broken, activists like me would be targeted. My daughter, then 21, wanted to join the local defense. As a Ukrainian, I understood, but as a mother, I was terrified.

Eventually, I convinced her to leave the country, our home. During the second week of the full-scale invasion, we ended up in Milan. That's where I finally felt safe enough to start working again.

Like my personal life, the work at WCU changed completely. First, we had to rewrite our project on preventing violence against children. With so many men at war, women took on full responsibility for their homes and families. So, we widened our focus to offer psychological support for both women and children, using resilience-based approaches.

During the early months of full-scale invasion, we met children who had hidden in basements, witnessed deaths, and women who had fled violence or lost homes. In response, we shifted to meet urgent needs — trauma from displacement and the search for safety. We began rebuilding schools damaged during the occupation and added emergency aid and legal assistance for displaced women, children, and veterans.

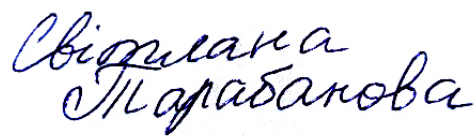
Now I'm back in Ukraine, working as a safeguarding coordinator. I oversee internal policies and sometimes manage psychological support.

Fortunately, I had work to return to — WCU adapted. But many smaller organizations focused on women's rights weren't as lucky. Due to funding cuts, some had to shut down programs midstream — and not just after USAID withdrew.

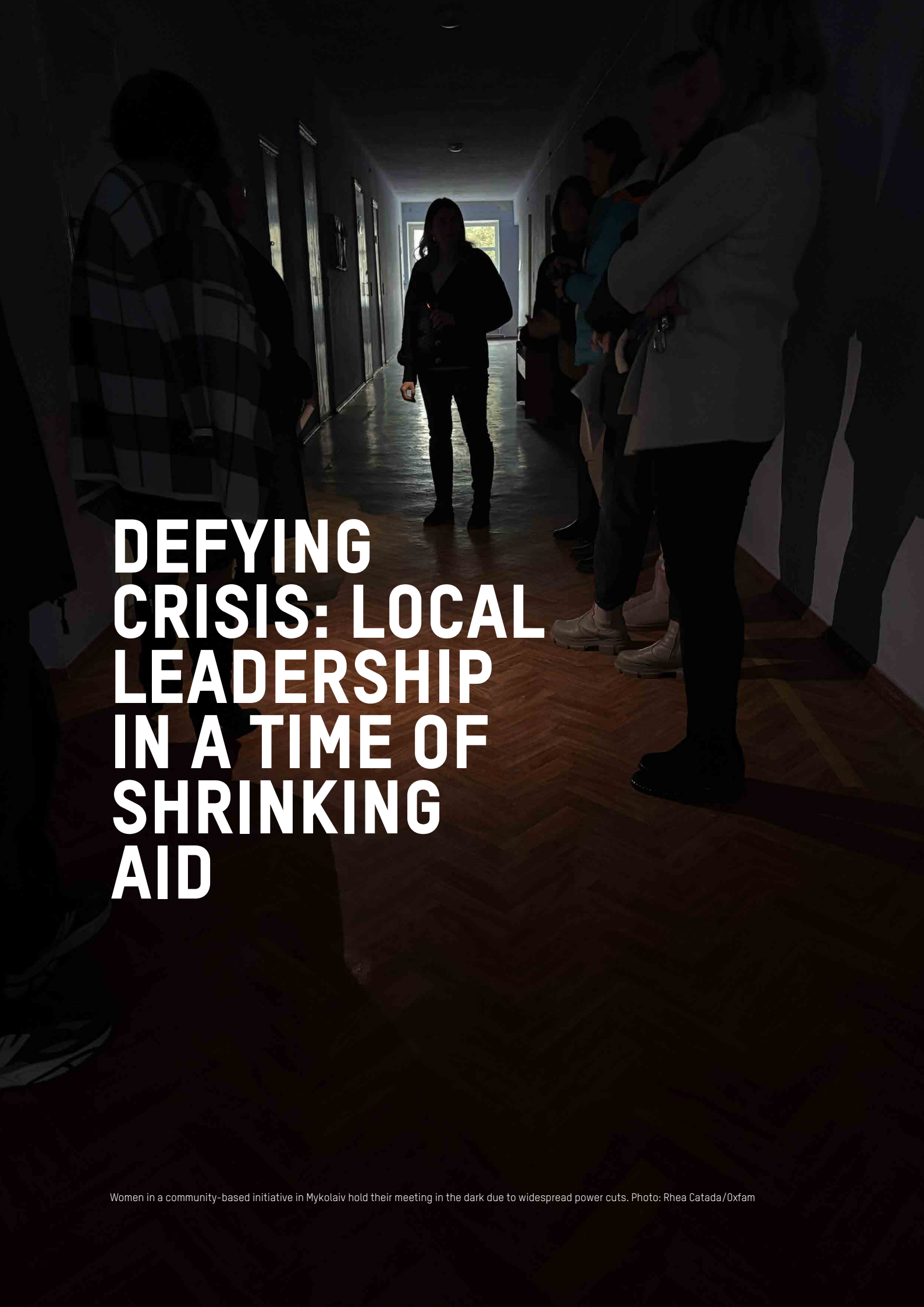
To reach more people, donors are shifting priorities to different groups and regions. However, that often means pulling support away from women just beginning to recover. Short-term aid fades fast. You can't rebuild a community or help a trauma survivor heal in a year.

That's why we're now focused on securing consistent, long-term help. We're showing women community leaders how to access funding independently — so they don't have to rely on male-dominated government systems that often overlook their needs.

We're only at the beginning of truly addressing what women are facing on the ground. Many still feel unsafe, isolated, and left to carry the emotional and practical weight of war alone. Yet despite it all, Ukrainian women continue to care, lead, fight, and rebuild. WCU will stand by them for as long as we can — and we hope the international community will help us make this work sustainable and lasting.



Svitlana Tarabanova
Safeguarding Coordinator, Women's Consortium
Ukraine (WCU)

A photograph of a long, narrow hallway in a community center. The hallway is mostly dark, with light coming from a single source at the far end, creating a strong silhouette effect. Several women are standing in a line along the right side of the hallway, facing away from the camera towards the light. The floor is made of dark wood with a herringbone pattern. The walls are light-colored, and there are doors on the left side. The overall mood is somber and quiet.

DEFYING CRISIS: LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF SHRINKING AID

Women in a community-based initiative in Mykolaiv hold their meeting in the dark due to widespread power cuts. Photo: Rhea Catada/Oxfam

DEFYING CRISIS: LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF SHRINKING AID

Since the full-scale invasion in 2022, local civil society in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries has been carrying the weight of the humanitarian response.

Many were not traditional humanitarian actors, but stepped up to support their communities. Working closely with 43 partners over the past three years, Oxfam has witnessed the leadership of local actors who have supported more than two million people. Mostly women-led, these groups have been providing life-saving aid like shelter, access to clean water, psychosocial support, and winter clothing, blankets and firewood when temperatures drop. They also led efforts to protect rights through legal aid and violence prevention services.

But the crisis is far from over. Civilian infrastructure, including power grids, remain a target, plunging communities into cold and darkness during winter. Displacement continues, gender-based violence is on the rise. Survivors and affected populations rely heavily on local actors, who are themselves struggling with critical funding gaps. Humanitarian needs may be sustaining, but resources are not.

In January, the Trump administration enacted sweeping cuts on foreign aid, triggering a dangerous ripple effect across continents, shutting down services and cutting off life-saving aid when humanitarian operations are already stretched thin. While the U.S. aid cuts were devastating, they do not sit in a vacuum. In the past year, the UK, Swiss and Dutch governments have followed suit, slashing their foreign aid budgets.

The funding cuts also came during a global rollback on human rights and gender equality. According to a report last March by Democracy Now¹, women’s rights, LGBTQIA+ protections, and democratic freedoms are under attack around the world.

This includes reproductive rights rollbacks, anti-LGBTQIA+ laws, and crackdowns on civil society and women’s rights defenders.

Many of the organisations countering these threats rely heavily on aid funding. In Ukraine, as the country endures repeated missile attacks, there is also a surge in gender-based violence. UNFPA links this to the rising stress, economic insecurities, trauma, mass displacement and widespread blackouts due to attacks on energy infrastructure, all of which are driving up the cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence². An estimated 2.4 million people in Ukraine, mostly women and girls, are experiencing, or are at risk of, gender-based violence and are in need of support services.³

Yet, despite the increasing need of these services, women’s rights organisations and community-based initiatives are now at risk of shutting down services or even closing their doors. Because of the U.S. funding cuts, over 60% of organizations addressing gender-based violence in Ukraine have been forced to reduce or suspend services due to the funding cuts, leaving vulnerable women without necessary support, according to a report⁴ by the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group in Ukraine (GIHA).

“We are a non-profit organization that survives solely on donor funding. We are now in a dire situation,” said a leader from one of the women’s rights organisations (WRO) interviewed for the GIHA report. “Many of our beneficiaries — women who have survived violence, HIV-positive women, former prisoners, sex workers — urgently need adaptation support and social services, but due to funding cuts, we can only offer phone consultations.”

The devastating impacts of the funding cut, intensified by rising attacks on women’s rights and LGBTQIA+ protections, as well as the shrinking space

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Women from a Community Based Initiative (CBI) gather in a library in Polihon, Mykolaiv, working on handicrafts in the dark because of power cuts.
Photo by Rhea Catada/Oxfam

for civil society and women’s rights organisations⁵, demand for an urgent shift from both donors and the wider international humanitarian sector.

**WHY THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE MUST
SHIFT POWER**

Unless donors reverse course, there is a risk of losing all the gains already made over the past years on gender justice and local humanitarian leadership.

The global humanitarian community is not without fault. The roll-back in funding began even before

the funding cuts. Had international aid agencies followed through on their 2016 Grand Bargain commitment to direct 25% of humanitarian funding and provided quality funding to local and national actors, they could have better cushioned local organisations from the crisis.

In Ukraine, where there was an opportunity to deliver on localisation commitments, only around 3%⁶ of direct humanitarian funding went to local and national NGOs in 2023, even as they are more at risk when delivering aid, and even though they know how to better serve their communities.

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For local organisations in Ukraine that do receive funding, it is simply not enough to ensure long-term sustainability. “When we receive funding, it is usually project-based or short-term, and it doesn’t allow us any room to plan for the future,” said one of the WRO partners under the Women’s Humanitarian Leadership Fund (WHLF), an initiative in collaboration with Oxfam and ActionAid, funded by Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).

Since many local women’s rights organizations face similar barriers, the WHLF provides flexible funding to help partners strengthen their operations, staffing, and systems. This support enables them to continue serving their communities, even as future funding prospects remain uncertain.

The WHLF is just part of Oxfam’s wider strategy in Ukraine: to shift the power to local actors, support their meaningful participation in decision-making spaces, give them the tools and resources so that they can plan for their sustainability, and avoid competing with them in the shrinking donor funding pool.

After two years of presence in the country, Oxfam’s Ukraine team initiated a reflection process, but it was more than the routine planning. It became a reflection of Oxfam’s role in the wider context of the Ukraine response. Thus, the team put together a strategy that is centered on feminist principles, prioritising local humanitarian leadership, and committing to a responsible phase-out by 2026, leaving behind a stronger civil society that is ready to respond when crisis strikes.

That’s where the WHLF comes in. Launched in February, the WHLF builds on Oxfam’s flexible funding experience, and responds to the chronic underfunding of local women’s rights organisations. It provides flexible support they need, not just to deliver services, but to grow, lead, and shape the humanitarian response in ways that are locally rooted and sustainable.

The Institutional Strengthening Fund (ISF) is another key component of Oxfam’s strategy in Ukraine. It is designed to support seven strategic local partners with their organisational resilience so that they can take the lead in helping their communities. As part of Oxfam’s responsible phase-out by 2026, the fund is intended to strengthen partners’ long-term ambitions and sustainability, even beyond Oxfam’s presence in Ukraine. They can use this to fund staffing, capacity strengthening, develop their fundraising approaches, systems improvements, and other innovations that can strengthen their operations.

In this report, we share the approaches we’ve put into practice in localisation and feminist leadership, along with key lessons from the past three years of the Ukraine response. We highlight the tangible impact of local actors on the communities they serve. In a way, it will also show what is at stake if donors and INGOs do not act on their commitments to shift power and resources to local humanitarian actors.

A photograph of four women in an office setting. Two women on the right are wearing blue hoodies with a logo. They are looking at a large wall on the right side of the frame, which is covered with many small white cards, each containing handwritten text in various colors. The other two women are on the left, looking towards the wall. The background shows office shelves with framed certificates and documents.

FROM PROMISES TO PRACTICE: LOCALISATION IN THE FACE OF SHRINKING AID

PR specialist Tetiana Melnyk and Archivist Inna Sokolova, from Oxfam's Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund (WHLF) partner Spring of Hope, show Oxfam's Gender Coordinator Camille Pajor and Gender Officer Svitlana Zinchenko the messages of hope from supporters displayed on the wall of their office in Vinnytsia. Photo by Rhea Catada/Oxfam

FROM PROMISES TO PRACTICE: LOCALISATION IN THE FACE OF SHRINKING AID

Amidst the ongoing humanitarian needs and the shrinking donor funding, localisation has become a necessity and not just a promise left on paper.

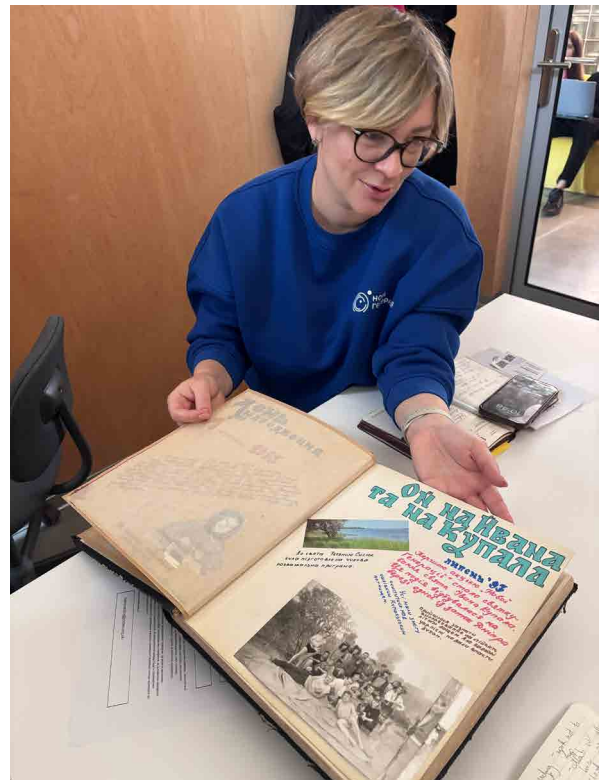
That is why in July 2024, Oxfam’s Ukraine response moved to its new strategy. A strategy that aims to invest in the capacity of local organisations and to help foster a humanitarian environment that shifts power and funding to Ukrainians so they can help shape how they respond to crises now and in the future.

While that strategy includes Oxfam phasing out from the country in 2026, a key component of this – so as not to disrupt humanitarian activities – is the Institutional Strengthening Fund (ISF).

The ISF is designed to invest in the long-term sustainability of local partners, not just in project delivery, but in building the systems, staffing, and skills they need to lead. It aims to support partners in addressing challenges they face as an organization, in advancing their strategic goals, and building resilience for the future.

To bring this vision to life, Oxfam worked closely with local partners to shape the direction of the fund. Seven strategic partners were selected through a consultative process: Women’s Consortium of Ukraine, Rokada, Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv, Voice of Romni (VoR), The Tenth of April (TTA), Shchedryk, and Gay Alliance of Ukraine (GAU). Then in January, Oxfam’s team travelled across Ukraine to meet each organization for in-depth discussions to better understand their priorities, challenges, and ambitions. These conversations laid the foundation for the partners’ action plans, which they shared in February 2025.

Through their action plans, partners outlined how they aim to strengthen their foundations and take more ownership of their future. There are organisations like Rokada and Shchedryk who are working to sharpen their vision by revisiting and updating their organisational strategies. There are others who are investing in their capacity to influence change: WCU plans to hire a dedicated advocacy expert while GAU will develop gender and other operational policies to guide their staff, that they may apply feminist values



New Generation Kherson Executive Director Oksana Hliebushkina shows the vast history of their organisation. They are one of Oxfam’s WHLF partners. Photo by Rhea Catada/Oxfam

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in their work. Partners are also updating their infrastructure, from upgrading content management systems to strengthening finance management, communications, and safeguarding.

Beyond these organisational systems and other building blocks, two common priorities emerged across most of the action plans. With donor funding becoming increasingly scarce, partners are prioritising upgrading and developing sustainable fundraising strategies. They want to future-proof their operations by mapping donors, improving their skills in proposal writing, and diversifying their sources of support. The second common priority among partners is the urgent need to protect their teams. As Ukrainians themselves, they are not just humanitarian responders but they are also living

through the emotional and physical toll of the war. Partners like WCU, TTA, GAU, and VoR are prioritising psychosocial support and access to mental health care to prevent staff burnout, to remain strong in the face of the continued crisis.

With the action plans laid out, it became clear that Oxfam’s support would have to go beyond just funding, to provide technical support, along with practical tools and learning resources that draw on Oxfam’s institutional experience.

This is what a responsible phase-out can look like: shifting resources, space, and power to local actors who are ready to lead. To make this approach sustainable, it will require broader support from across the humanitarian sector and continued investment in locally driven solutions.

Funding a feminist future

For localisation to be meaningful, it must also be feminist. That is why majority of Oxfam’s strategic partners are women-led organisations and why there is also a need for targeted support for women’s rights organisations (WROs), who are not only providing humanitarian assistance to their communities, but are leading the way on progress towards gender equality in Ukraine.

The WHLF is an initiative that responds to the challenges faced by WROs in Ukraine. It is aimed at addressing the chronic underfunding of local WROs by providing flexible funding that allows them to invest on their own priorities. It sits alongside the Oxfam GB Women’s Rights Fund and builds on what was learned from supporting WROs through flexible funding. WHLF is about helping WROs to not just meet urgent needs, but also to build their strength for the future.

Earlier this year, Oxfam finalised a series of visits to potential partners to hold discussions and go through a light touch due diligence process. Following these visits and consultation, a group of partners have now been selected. Finally in February, Oxfam in collaboration with ActionAid, officially launched the WHLF.

Initiatives like WHLF are critical now more than ever. The recent aid cuts, aggravated by the global rollback on women’s and LGBTQIA + rights, have left many local organisations in a precarious situation just as the needs are growing. In Ukraine, the demand for gender-based violence services continues to rise, yet the resources to meet these needs are shrinking. WHLF is one way to push back, by supporting WROs and other women-led organisations so that they are equipped to not only respond to the immediate needs of their communities but also strengthen their organisations so that they can lead in the long-term recovery.



PARTNERS DRIVING CHANGE

Dzvenyslava* at a vocational training session run by Oxfam's partner Shchedryk in Mykolaiv city. Photo: Katya Moskalyuk/DEC

*Not her real name

WOMEN’S CONSORTIUM OF UKRAINE

Women’s Consortium of Ukraine (WCU) is an NGO dedicated to promoting gender equality and protecting the rights of women and children in Ukraine. Founded in 2001, WCU unites 35 women-led organizations from all over the country. The organization works on creating lasting change while also responding to immediate humanitarian needs. Their main areas of focus include:



GENDER EQUALITY

WCU works to bring international gender equality standards to Ukraine and advocates for policies that help empower women. They also focus on supporting women economically by offering training programs, mentoring, and resources for female entrepreneurs. Through events and workshops, WCU helps raise awareness about the challenges women face in the workplace.



RESPONSE TO THE CONFLICT

When the full-scale invasion began in Ukraine, WCU quickly expanded its work to support families and internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by the conflict. They provide multipurpose cash assistance to help families cover basic needs and distribute humanitarian kits that address specific vulnerabilities. Since the start of the conflict, WCU has also run two hotlines: one for psychological support and another for peer-to-peer support for teenagers and youth.



CHILD PROTECTION

As a national leader in this field, WCU is dedicated to preventing violence against children and ensuring they have access to safe spaces and quality services. Their work includes training programs for educators, social workers, and psychologists, as well as developing child-friendly rehabilitation models. WCU is also actively involved in restoring schools to help children continue their education, even in challenging times.

Olha Lykhatska turned her 14-year crafting hobby into a business redesigning old furniture, with support from Oxfam and Women’s Consortium of Ukraine. Photo by Olha Petrova/Oxfam



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WCU actively engages communities in finding and solving local issues. They organize public discussions, support grassroots projects, and help create local advocacy networks. As part of their commitment to involving the community, WCU also supports projects initiated by children.



WCU’S PARTNERSHIP WITH OXFAM

With support from Oxfam, WCU is helping communities in Kyiv and Chernihiv regions recover from the impacts of war focusing on women’s leadership, economic resilience, and inclusive development.

The project supports displaced people, returnees, and locals with one-time cash assistance to help cover essential needs. At the same time, WCU is working closely with communities to identify challenges and encourage practical cooperation with local authorities.

Women are at the heart of this initiative. Through public activism workshops, community projects, and training opportunities, they’re gaining the confidence and tools to take part in decision-making and advocate for change. Many are also receiving entrepreneurial training, mentorship, and small business grants to strengthen their economic independence.

In rural areas, WCU is hosting dialogues and public hearings to ensure women’s voices are heard in local planning and governance. Soft skills training boosts employment opportunities, while roundtable discussions address barriers to inclusion and push for fairer economic policies.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

After focusing heavily on humanitarian efforts following the 2022 invasion, WCU is now returning to a core part of its mission: human rights and advocacy. The organization is collaborating with women leaders, NGOs, and other partners to define strategic goals and shift from a reactive response to more proactive, forward-looking planning in this area.

A key ambition for WCU is to see more women participating in Ukrainian politics and taking on leadership roles in their communities, particularly in rural areas. With the post-conflict period likely to bring new and complex challenges, WCU is committed to ensuring that women’s voices are not only heard but are central in shaping Ukraine’s future.

In terms of institutional strengthening, WCU is also focused on becoming more strategic about fundraising. The organization is actively seeking a dedicated staff member to lead these efforts. Looking ahead, WCU is determined to expand its donor base and establish sustainable funding streams that will support its long-term mission of empowering women and advancing human rights in Ukraine.



ROKADA

Charitable Foundation ROKADA has operated in Ukraine since 2003. Originally a provider of legal and social assistance to refugees and asylum seekers, ROKADA has grown into a nationwide network that delivers comprehensive services to internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, persons with disabilities, children, veterans and other vulnerable groups. The Foundation works in 17 regions of Ukraine, responds to community needs and combines humanitarian relief with long-term programs. A closer look at their services includes:



LEGAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

ROKADA helps people with legal matters, getting or restoring important documents, and applying for pensions. They assist in seeking compensation for destroyed homes and filing claims for mine-related injuries.

In addition to practical support, ROKADA cares for the mental well-being of those affected by the conflict. They offer case management, mental health support, and work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.



CHILD PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY

In 2024, ROKADA launched over 20 advocacy campaigns, focusing on issues like improving the recognition process for people affected by the war, advocating for children's rights, and pushing for reforms in employment compensation for IDPs. The organization works closely with the government to make sure that barriers are addressed at both local and national levels.



RESPONSE TO THE CONFLICT

Just months after the conflict escalated in 2022, ROKADA rapidly expanded its team and operations across Ukraine. Since March 2022, the organization has been supporting not only internally displaced persons but also people fleeing occupation and returnees from abroad. ROKADA coordinates temporary shelters, repairs damaged homes and shelters, delivers relief kits immediately after shelling, meets evacuation trains, and organizes first-line assistance.

*Anna Kolodochka, a psychologist, and Alisa Lakmahnova, a social worker, both working for Oxfam's partner Rokada.
Photo by Anna Romandash/Oxfam*



BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

ROKADA trains and advises partner NGOs and local municipalities, helping them upskill social workers and adopt effective planning and monitoring tools. At the community level, the organization supports professional skill development, entrepreneurship, and access to employment empowering people to achieve long-term self-reliance.



ROKADA'S PARTNERSHIP WITH OXFAM

ROKADA has been a trusted partner of Oxfam in Ukraine since 2022. With Oxfam's support, the organization has reached 10,000 people in the Northern and Western regions through tailored protection activities. These included case management, psychosocial support from trained psychologists, legal assistance, and emergency cash for those experiencing violence or rights violations.

ROKADA also provided direct humanitarian help, such as distributing hygiene items and supporting collective shelters. And during the colder months, the organization delivered winterization support to keep people warm and safe in Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Sumy regions.

Oxfam supports ROKADA's organizational development by investing in staff training on Sphere and Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), introducing digital case management tools, and updating internal protection policies, including those related to Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) and beneficiary feedback mechanisms.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Since 2022, ROKADA has grown from a small team of 20 to over 450 staff members. The full-scale invasion drastically increased the needs of vulnerable communities, and ROKADA responded very quickly. However, the changing realities require a new approach. The organization is hoping to develop new housing solutions: from emergency repairs to sustainable models of temporary and social housing and also expand the network of legal and psychosocial services in communities.

ROKADA envisions a Ukraine where assistance is the norm and every person, regardless of circumstance, enjoys equal access to rights, opportunities and a dignified life. To achieve this vision, the organization focuses on strengthening internal governance, digital services and the staff well-being. ROKADA is also planning to apply analytics and innovation to increase their program efficiency and impact.



CHARITABLE FOUNDATION PEACEFUL HEAVEN OF KHARKIV

Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv (PHK) is a charitable foundation established in May 2022 in response to the conflict in Ukraine. Since then, PHK has grown into a team of 347 employees and 223 volunteers, delivering life-saving humanitarian aid and implementing impactful projects across Kharkiv, as well as in frontline and border oblasts of Ukraine. Their main areas of operation are:



HUMANITARIAN HUBS AND FOOD SECURITY

PHK manages 15 humanitarian hubs across Kharkiv and surrounding regions, providing legal, medical, and psychological consultations, as well as creative and educational activities for children, women's spaces, and warm shelters during the winter months. PHK also operates five social kitchens in the frontline cities, serving food to 2,000 people daily.



EVACUATION, HOUSING AND WASH

Between 2022 and 2024, PHK successfully evacuated over 2,000 individuals from the areas heavily affected by conflict, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and families with children. PHK focuses on rebuilding safe living conditions for these vulnerable groups. For now, the organization has repaired over 1,500 homes and 42 water sources, installed water towers and 75 heating systems in community centers.



DEMINING AND MINE SAFETY AWARENESS

PHK conducts mine-awareness programs in collaboration with international partners to educate communities about the dangers of unexploded ordnance. In 2023, the organization reached over 12,000 individuals with mine safety education. With a team of 10 deminers and 2 paramedics, PHK carries out humanitarian demining in Kharkiv oblast.



ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND CASH ASSISTANCE

PHK offers vocational training and requalification programs for men and women aged 45+, helping them secure employment. Thanks to PHK and its partners, 850 individuals — including 300 women in vulnerable situations — have found jobs. Another key PHK program provides financial assistance to conflict-affected families. In 2023, it distributed cash assistance to over 5,000 households, helping them cover the costs of food, medical care, and shelter.



PHK'S PARTNERSHIP WITH OXFAM

PHK has been a key local partner in Oxfam's humanitarian response in eastern Ukraine since 2023, supporting vulnerable communities in Kharkiv, Sumy, and surrounding regions.

With support from Oxfam, PHK has established five humanitarian hubs across Kharkiv oblast. These hubs provide warm, safe spaces where people can charge phones, have a hot drink, and access essential services and information.

In Izium, a city that endured occupation and heavy damage, PHK has opened a community center for women and families. The center offers mental health and wellness support, skill-building activities, and a children's playroom with internet access.

Over two years of partnership, PHK has distributed food and hygiene kits, provided multi-purpose cash assistance to help families meet basic needs, repaired water sources and sanitation facilities, ran public health awareness sessions and psychosocial support at all hubs, regularly adapting services based on community feedback.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Over the next three years, PHK will focus on supporting livelihoods, with ongoing pilot projects currently underway in Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts. PHK is actively assisting the agriculture sector and vulnerable individuals operating small businesses by providing both in-kind and cash assistance. The organization aims to empower communities with the resources they need for self-sufficiency, marking a step toward economic recovery for Ukraine.

Although PHK initially planned to phase out emergency programming, continued conflict, particularly in frontline regions, has made it necessary to maintain these efforts. As a result, the organization is working to balance multiple priorities but remains responsive in a complex operational environment.



Artwork created in art therapy workshops run by Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv, who partner with Oxfam in Ukraine.
Photo by Maria Libertad/Oxfam



VOICE OF ROMNI

Voice of Romni (VoR) is civil society organization in Ukraine committed to advancing the rights, safety, and well-being of Roma communities –particularly women and children. It’s one of few Roma feminist organizations in Ukraine which works at the intersection of humanitarian response, social justice, and advocacy on systemic barriers facing Roma communities. VoR supports Roma-led initiatives, and brings attention to issues of discrimination, displacement, and gender-based violence. VoR addresses these challenges through:



COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

VoR conducts comprehensive research to better understand the needs of Roma communities in Ukraine. One of its studies, “*Identity, Gender Aspects, and Traditions*,” examines how cultural norms and systemic barriers contribute to gender-based violence (GBV) against Roma women. Based on the scale, nature, and root causes of GBV, the organization then implements awareness-raising campaigns and provides legal and psychological support. VoR’s research also highlights the challenges Roma communities face during the war in Ukraine and offers actionable recommendations for the government, civil society organizations, and international partners to respond effectively.



ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ROMA ORGANIZATIONS

The organization actively promotes Roma rights at national and international levels. VoR participates in global forums, such as UN Forum on Minority Issues and Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma Civil Society, contributes to public discourse, provides training, mentorship, and organizational development support to grassroots Roma groups.



HUMANITARIAN HELP

Since the start of the full-scale war, the organization has distributed food packages to over 13,000 individuals, hygiene kits to more than 4,200 individuals, and financial assistance to over 23,000 people. They also support Roma communities by providing firewood, power banks, water filters, and warm blankets.

*A salon business was among the recipients of a business grant through the support of Voice of Romni and Oxfam.
 Photo courtesy of Voice of Romni*



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Thanks to VoR’s help, over 500 women acquired new skills towards financial independence. The organization offers retraining and upskilling courses in business, marketing and entrepreneurship, tailored livelihood programs, small business support, and vocational training.



EDUCATION

VoR unites young people and provides them with opportunities for learning, developing their leadership skills, networking, and initiating their own projects. The organization has established an educational space offering psychological support, IT programming, history, math, English classes, speech therapy, and Roma dance classes for children.



VOR’S PARTNERSHIP WITH OXFAM

Since March 2023 VoR is working with Oxfam to support Roma communities facing tough living conditions in the Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zakarpattia regions. Their efforts focus on some of the most vulnerable households, helping families meet basic needs and stay safe, particularly through the harsh winter months.

This support includes distributing warm clothing, hygiene supplies, and firewood, focussing on children and those most at risk. VoR also helps families access healthcare — providing transportation, medical consultations, and health information.

For those living in unsafe or damaged housing, VoR has been providing materials and assistance to make at least one room livable and warm during winter, prioritizing undocumented people and those close to conflict zones.

Beyond direct support, VoR is playing an active role in national conversations about Roma inclusion. They’re also investing in their team — building skills, strengthening planning, and offering training on topics like hygiene care for people with specific needs.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As the next step in its mission, VoR is planning to establish itself as a Resource Centre for local Roma NGOs. A key component of VoR’s strategy is to empower these organizations with essential resources, skills, and training through a Train-the-Trainer approach. This will create a new type of leadership within the Roma movement in Ukraine and encourage greater collaboration.

Being the first organization in Ukraine to address gender-based violence (GBV) in Roma communities, VoR is committed to advancing its work on GBV protection and prevention. The organization’s ambition is to empower Roma women by helping them break barriers and achieve leadership roles.

To turn these plans into action, VoR is actively seeking more like-minded donors, training its team in English and fundraising, investing in staff hires focused on systems strengthening, and looking to open a new office in Kyiv to expand its reach and impact.



GAY ALLIANCE UKRAINE

Gay Alliance Ukraine (GAU) is one of the leading Ukrainian non-governmental organizations working to protect the rights of LGBTQIA+ people. Since 2009, GAU has been offering direct support services, advocating for legal reforms, and fighting stigma through education and awareness. GAU’s key activities include:



HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

GAU provides vital support to LGBTQIA+ people affected by conflict and displacement — including food, hygiene kits, medication, shelter, and help accessing social services. They deliver mental health care through group therapy, psychological first aid, long-term counseling, and a national helpline to ensure no one faces the crisis alone.



LEGAL AID AND RIGHTS PROTECTION

GAU offers free legal advice and representation to LGBTQIA+ individuals facing discrimination, hate crimes, or legal challenges. They keep track of human rights violations and advocate for stronger anti-discrimination laws and more inclusive policies across the country.



COMMUNITY BUILDING AND VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

GAU runs community centers in Odesa, Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Mykolaiv and Kryvyi Rih, creating safe spaces for connection, peer support, and leadership growth. They support grassroots activism by training local leaders, engaging volunteers in community development, and building strong community networks.



AWARENESS-RAISING AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

GAU leads national awareness campaigns to combat stigma, reduce hate speech, and promote positive representation of LGBTQIA+ people. Activities include cultural events, educational workshops, and targeted training for media professionals, healthcare workers, international NGOs working in Ukraine, and government representatives. GAU initiated Odesa Pride and Kryvbas Pride and remains committed to the idea of the Pride movement. However, during the war, it approaches street demonstrations with great caution, carefully assessing the risks for the community.



GAU’S PARTNERSHIP WITH OXFAM

With support from Oxfam, GAU is working to improve the well-being of the LGBTQIA+ community in Ukraine, particularly those affected by the war. Their efforts focus on helping individuals develop positive coping strategies, offering counseling, mediation, and conflict resolution, and connecting them with financial, legal, and medical resources. GAU organizes gatherings for LGBTQIA+ IDPs in Odesa and Kyiv, creating safe, inclusive spaces for mutual support, social connection, and community integration for those displaced from high-risk areas.

As part of their cooperation with Oxfam, GAU trains staff and volunteers in targeted psychosocial support and psychological first aid. They also offer training for other NGOs and produce evidence-based reports on protection risks, which are shared across networks and used in awareness-raising sessions. By documenting the challenges and barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ people, GAU advocates for policy changes and greater inclusion.



GAU’S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

One of GAU’s main priorities is reconnecting with the younger LGBTQIA+ community. As the organization has grown, GAU now aims to engage with the new generation of LGBTQIA+ individuals and allies. To do this, GAU plans to reach out to universities across Ukraine, assessing their internal ethical codes to ensure they reflect inclusive values. GAU will identify areas for improvement and offer training to make LGBTQIA+ inclusivity a core component of each university’s policy.

On a national level, GAU is advocating for legal and social change, pushing to officially recognize LGBTQIA+ people as a vulnerable social group in Ukraine. Without this protected status, LGBTQIA+ individuals are currently excluded from essential social services and protections.

Overall, GAU remains committed to LGBTQIA+ rights, actively informing the community about key issues like the lack of protective legislation for LGBTQIA+ community in Ukraine, and expanding its national network to offer support in areas where they don’t have a physical presence.



*Distribution of aid kits at Gay Alliance Ukraine’s center in Mykolaiv.
Photo courtesy of GAU*



THE TENTH OF APRIL

The Tenth of April (TTA) is an NGO based in Odesa, dedicated to protecting human rights and providing critical support to Ukraine's most vulnerable populations, including refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, and stateless individuals. Established by a team of human rights activists and lawyers specializing in refugee rights, TTA now has a team of over 1000 dedicated staff and operates across 10 regions of Ukraine, helping people with:



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

TTA promotes community mobilization and provides financial grants for local initiatives providing protection for affected communities. In 2024, 38 communities received grant support for their projects. It also works closely with government and civil society organizations, offering training and resources to improve protection and services for vulnerable groups. Striving to build a platform for post-war recovery, TTA annually organizes the "Black Sea Steppe" ethno-festival in Odesa, which each year brings together an increasing number of communities from across Ukraine. Additionally, TTA develops the RIKa network of conversational and integration clubs, currently operating in 32 locations across seven regions.



LEGAL AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

TTA provides free legal aid, including counseling on asylum procedures, assistance with challenging migration decisions, and legal representation for refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and stateless individuals. In 2024 alone, TTA's legal support reached more than 18,000 people.



PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

Since the war began, TTA has provided essential items like food, distributed cash assistance, and offered emergency housing. They've also delivered mental health support, including psychological first aid and counseling, to help people cope with the crisis. In 2024, TTA supported 25,000 individuals in rebuilding their emotional well-being.

The Tenth of April staff member assists a recently evacuated woman from Kherson region after the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station. Photo by Yuliia Marchenko/The Tenth of April.



SHELTER AND INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION

TTA actively supports the restoration of essential infrastructure. In 2024, the organization distributed emergency shelter kits and helped rehabilitate damaged homes. It also restored critical water supply facilities in conflict-affected Mykolaiv and Kherson, improving access to safe drinking water for over 280,000 residents.



TTA'S PARTNERSHIP WITH OXFAM

In partnership with Oxfam, TTA is working closely with communities affected by the conflict in southern Ukraine. They're focusing on supporting people who've been displaced or are living near frontline areas helping them stay safe, feel supported, and rebuild their lives.

TTA provides transportation assistance, like public transport tickets, so people can move to safer places. They also distribute essential supply kits and share up-to-date information on safe evacuation routes at key transit points. To help with the emotional strain of conflict, TTA offers psychosocial support including short-term and ongoing counseling. They provide cash support and legal assistance, helping conflict-affected people understand their rights and meet urgent needs like home repairs or daily essentials.

To make sure their efforts really reflect what communities need, TTA regularly checks in through protection monitoring and community consultations. This feedback helps shape their programs and push for better access to services.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

TTA is setting its sights on becoming a leading center for civil society organization (CSO) development in the region. One of the key steps in this journey is the creation of a network of CSOs in Southern Ukraine. Through this initiative, TTA plans to actively engage NGO members and support them via subgranting, networking opportunities, and targeted training programs. To facilitate communication and collaboration, TTA has launched an online information platform "[Community House](#)", which is actively used by CSO members to stay connected, share resources, and access useful materials, and is planning to promote its wider use.

With its existing partners, TTA aims to improve local coordination by creating documentation templates, conducting better needs assessments through new surveys and interviews, and providing information about available grant opportunities.

Looking ahead, TTA aspires to expand its reach and evolve into a nationwide organization. This includes building connections with the governmental bodies in Kyiv and securing multi-year funding to support and sustain its long-term vision.



SHCHEDRYK

Shchedryk is an NGO that delivers humanitarian aid and recovery support to people affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Since the full-scale invasion in March 2022, the organization has played an important role in crisis response in the frontline regions of Mykolaiv and Kherson. In 2024, it became an official partner of the Ukrainian Humanitarian Fund (UHF). Supported by 300 volunteers, Shchedryk is offering help across multiple areas:



LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION

Shchedryk supports the recovery and self-reliance of conflict-affected communities through livelihood and protection initiatives. In Mykolaiv Oblast, the organization encourages self-employment by providing microgrants and training to 620 households to help them rebuild their livelihoods. Shchedryk also offers psychosocial support, legal aid, and protection referrals through its network of social workers and hotline services.



CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Shchedryk organizes training sessions that help people affected by conflict connect with others, rebuild their confidence, and adjust to new situations. In 2023, they launched vocational programs that helped 50 individuals gain new skills in areas like tailoring, baking, and web design. These programs gave them the tools they needed to find better job opportunities and support their families.



RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION

Shchedryk has been running winterization projects, helping with cash assistance for home insulation, livestock feed, and barn repairs. After the Kakhovka dam was destroyed, the organization quickly responded by delivering aid to flood-affected areas, using boats and all-terrain "sherps" to reach communities cut off by the rising water.



FOOD SECURITY

In partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), Shchedryk distributed over 11,240 tons of food in 2023, including more than 10 million loaves of bread and nearly 8 million canned goods. In general, the organization managed to reach 24 communities in Mykolaiv and 10 in Kherson.



SHEDRYK'S PARTNERSHIP WITH OXFAM

Through its partnership with Oxfam, Shchedryk is supporting communities affected by the war as they work to rebuild their lives. Shchedryk is helping them reconnect with protection resources, understand their rights, and explore new livelihood opportunities.

As part of its long-term recovery efforts, Shchedryk provides vocational training and small business grants to strengthen economic resilience. Programs for trolleybus and bus drivers, as well as welders, are equipping participants with practical, in-demand skills. Many have already completed their training and are now employed or preparing for certification, with new groups continuing to enroll.

A key development is the opening of a new Help Center in the Korabelnyi district of Mykolaiv — an underserved area with limited access to humanitarian support. The center will provide a range of free services, including a social laundry, psychosocial support, skills training, and a help desk offering legal and welfare advice. It will also serve as a safe, inclusive space for community members and offer a spacious shelter during air raids.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Shchedryk is making major strides to strengthen its internal operations and expand its reach. The team has already undergone the international audit by CROWE and is now updating policies, implementing new software to better organize finances and projects, and providing staff training in fundraising, PCA, and mental health.

With additional fundraising specialists onboard, Shchedryk is actively seeking funding and support to develop a new fundraising strategy. These grants will help the organization expand into new areas such as WASH, shelter, sustainability, and establish a presence in other war-affected cities like Kherson.

Shchedryk also aims to increase its international profile and is actively seeking new partners for collaboration. With Oxfam's support, the organization is able to dream bigger and hopes to attract more donors with shared values.



Oleksandra (not her real name) during Shchedryk's vocational training session in tailoring, in Mykolaiv city. Photo by Katya Moskalyuk/DEC



A photograph showing three women in a vocational training class. One woman on the left, wearing a striped shirt and a green apron, is practicing manicuring on the hand of a woman on the right who is wearing a green jacket. A third woman, wearing glasses and a black apron, is observing and assisting. They are seated at a wooden table with various manicure supplies like bottles and tools. A desk lamp is positioned over the work area. The background shows a window with blinds and some papers on the wall.

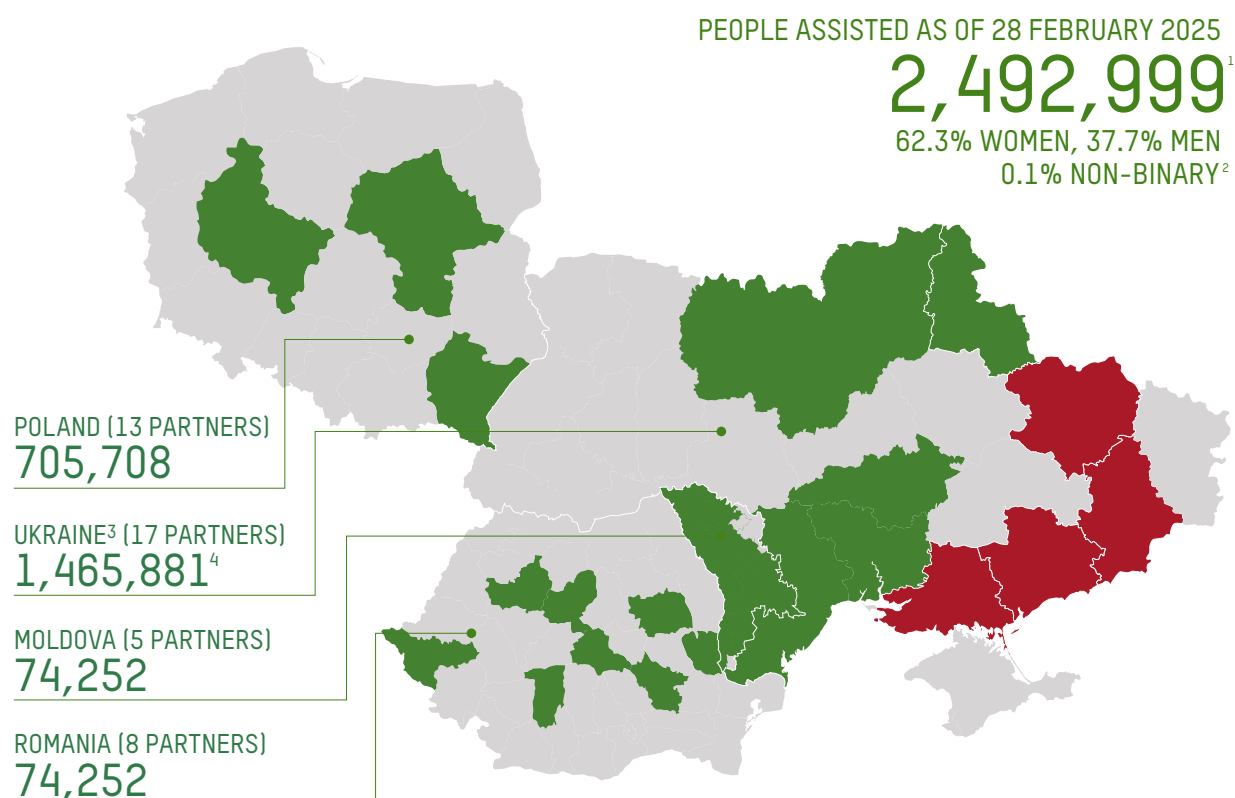
OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Students practice professional manicuring techniques during a vocational training class supported by Oxfam's partner Shchedryk, in Mykolaiv city.
Photo: Katya Moskalyuk/DEC

A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE LED BY LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

"Oxfam understands partnerships as mutually empowering relationships, which are aware of power imbalances and focused on mutual growth, organizational development, institutional strengthening and above all, on achieving impact. We believe that programs implemented in partnership increase the collective knowledge, skills, reach and experience applied to an issue or challenge."

Oxfam's Partnership Principles



Notes

¹ Estimated cumulative number of people reached in Oxfam Ukraine Response. Marginal double-counts of people reached might not be removed due to operational constraints. While every effort has been made to ensure that all statistical information is verified, figures represent an estimate. Triangulation of information and sources is performed on a continuous basis. Therefore, amendments to figures may occur, including retroactively.

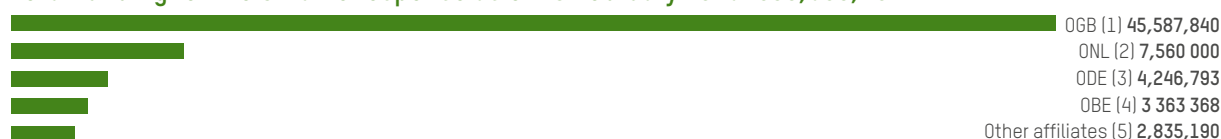
² 0.1% people identified as non-binary in primary data collected by 9 of our partners. This equates to 2556 people.

³ The Oblasts (regions) highlighted in red include front line areas with some of the most acute humanitarian needs. Oxfam works in areas of this oblast that are under control of the Ukrainian government.

⁴ Figures for Ukraine also include number of people reached through partnerships with Bank Lviv, NRC, ACF, HEK and PIN.

FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE

Total funding for the Ukraine response as of 28 February 2025: €63,593,191

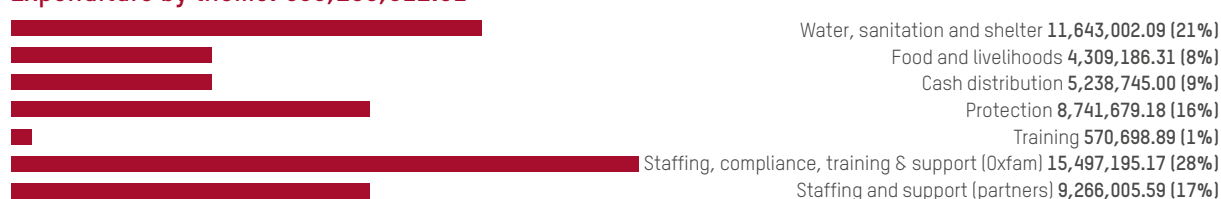


Total expenditure by country as of 28 February 2025: €55,266,512.31

Oxfam: €26,408,601.34 (48%); Partners: €28,857,910.97 (52%)



Expenditure by theme: €55,266,512.31



Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) Sharing

Oxfam Ukraine is committed to sharing Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) with our local partners, aligning with Oxfam's global policies and commitments to localisation, the Grand Bargain and the Charter for Change. ICR is funding that covers essential operating costs like rent and utilities not tied to specific projects.

From April 2024 onwards, all new partnership agreements included a provision for ICR sharing, a crucial step in supporting the financial sustainability of Oxfam's partners in Ukraine. Oxfam is sharing ICR with our partners at 7% of contract budgets, from the ICR we receive from donors. By doing this, we ensure that partners have access to flexible, unrestricted funding, which is essential for covering overhead and administrative costs, ensuring they have greater stability and sustainability.

According to the Humanitarian Localisation Baseline for Ukraine conducted in 2023, 37% of national organisations in Ukraine reported receiving no overhead costs not linked to projects. The lack of sufficient funding for overheads prevents these organizations from strengthening their organisations and weakens their long-term sustainability. Oxfam's ICR sharing helps address these gaps, empowering our local partners to take on leadership roles and strengthen their resilience. This approach is a vital component of Oxfam Ukraine's ongoing response strategy, ensuring that local actors are equipped to lead in the humanitarian response.

(1) Oxfam Great Britain's contribution includes funds received through the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) (€42m), and Ukraine Response Appeal Funds (€3m) and new funds from the Disasters Emergency committee (DEC) through their Collective Initiatives for the Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund in collaboration with Action Aid (€475k).

(2) 100% of Oxfam Novib's contribution come from funds received through the consortium appeal fund Giro 555. The total contribution to Oxfam from Giro 555 is €12,000,000. Contributions to the following organisations were made for their work in Ukraine at the start of the conflict: Action Contre la Faim, HEKS/EPER, Norwegian Refugee Council, People in Need. €7,560,000 was dedicated to work by the Oxfam Ukraine response across Ukraine, Poland, Moldova and Romania.

(3) Oxfam Germany's contribution includes funds received through the consortium appeal fund BEH (Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft).

(4) 100% of Oxfam Belgium's contribution come from funds received through the consortium appeal fund 12-12.

(5) Other affiliate contributions came from Oxfam Australia, Oxfam Quebec, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Intermon, Oxfam Denmark, Oxfam France, Oxfam New Zealand, and Oxfam America.



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Front cover: Illustration by Oksana Drachkovská, depicting the work of Oxfam's partner Voice of Romni

Notes

¹ www.equalitynow.org/news_and_insights/the-global-rollback-on-human-rights-why-legal-equality-still-matters/

² www.ukraine.unfpa.org/en/publications/voices-ukraine-pilot

³ www.reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-april-2025-enuk

⁴ www.reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/impact-united-states-funding-suspension-ukrainian-womens-organizations

⁵ www.equalitynow.org/news/news-and-insights/the-global-rollback-on-human-rights-why-legal-equality-still-matters/

⁶ www.oxfam.se/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Ukraine_Accountability_2.5_years.pdf



OXFAM

An illustration depicting a community scene in Ukraine. On the left, a woman in a blue coat and red plaid skirt stands next to a young boy in a blue hoodie who is holding a blue puffer jacket. In the center, a woman in a green puffer jacket stands with her arms crossed. To her right, a woman in a purple puffer jacket is being embraced by a woman in a green puffer jacket who is kneeling on the ground. On the far right, a man in a purple jacket is holding a large black puffer jacket. The background shows a simple house with a brown roof and bare trees, suggesting a rural or suburban setting.

WE'RE STILL HERE

Local leaders shaping Ukraine's future

© Oxfam International January 2025

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⁴ www.reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/impact-united-states-funding-suspension-ukrainian-womens-organizations

⁵ www.equalitynow.org/news/news-and-insights/the-global-rollback-on-human-rights-why-legal-equality-still-matters/

⁶ www.oxfam.se/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Ukraine_Accountability_2.5_years.pdf



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