

# AS PARTNERS EVOLVE, WE EVOLVE WITH THEM

Oxfam's 3.5-year  
journey in Ukraine



OXFAM

# 'AS PARTNERS EVOLVE, WE EVOLVE WITH THEM'

## Oxfam's 3.5-year journey in Ukraine

A mutual evolution with partners that began with conversations, sometimes difficult ones. This is how Jaroslawa Szewczuk, Oxfam's Partnership Coordinator, describes Oxfam's transition in Ukraine. At the onset of the full-scale invasion, the work focused on responding to the crisis and supporting affected communities alongside partners, at break-neck speed. Now, more than three years later, it has been about shifting approaches and stepping back, asking the partners what their organisations need to continue their vital work with communities or who they want to become. But the 'becoming' in this shift is not that of the partners alone, it is of Oxfam as well.

"We enter partnerships as one version of ourselves and through the interaction, we change under each other's influence. That influence is never one-sided," she reflects in her essay *Everything began with a conversation: What flexible funding taught us about true partnership* on page 6. "We affect each other, we open each other's eyes to different things, we challenge one another and push one another beyond our comfort zones. And when we eventually look back at who we were when we started, we often, if not always, barely recognize ourselves."

While the institutional strengthening of local organizations had already been conceptualized two years into the crisis, as this has been a time-bound response from the start, it became a moment of transformation for Oxfam as well when it was time to turn the concept into reality. It required us to

rethink how we learned and supported growth, not just in our partners but also within our team.

When the Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund (WHLF)<sup>1</sup> and the Institutional Strengthening Initiative (ISI)<sup>2</sup> were rolled out in 2025, it was initially a challenge within Oxfam's Ukraine team. It meant shifting gears and unlearning structures that we were used to, listening more than we directed, measuring progress by trust instead of templates, and acknowledging our own limitations. While this meant stepping outside our comfort zones, it has also created space for partners to map out their organisations' individual journeys.

For the WHLF partners, the six Ukrainian women's rights organisations (WROs) were able to strengthen their institutions and raise their profile and influence. Because of the flexibility of the funding, several partners focused on internal systems and strategic planning, which had become critical following this year's aid cuts. Nova Heneratsiia, Women's Center, and Spring of Hope each either developed or fine-tuned their strategies, supported their staff members' well-being, or strengthened governance and communications structures. Others, like Romani Zbora, used the fund to support their core operations, expand fundraising, and their monitoring and evaluation capacity. Newer groups such as ICAN established their first offices and teams, while Democracy Development Center deepened its advocacy reach, integrating gender into climate-justice work and influencing national policy. You can read more about their progress on page 7.

1 Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund (WHLF) is an initiative by Oxfam Ukraine Response and ActionAid in Ukraine that responds to the challenges faced by women's rights organizations (WROs) in Ukraine. It addresses the chronic underfunding of local WROs by providing flexible funding that allows them to invest in their own priorities. Read more on page 15.

2. Institutional Strengthening Initiative (ISI) is designed by Oxfam to invest in the long-term sustainability of local partners — not only in project delivery, but in building the systems, staffing, and skills they need to lead. It supports partners in addressing organizational challenges, advancing strategic goals, and building long-term resilience. Read more in [Ukraine's 3-year Accountability Briefing](#).

Meanwhile, working with the seven strategic partners under the ISI has been more than just providing funding. It also involved walking alongside them, providing technical support when needed, using Oxfam's network, expertise, and other technical resources to help achieve their aims. In early 2025, each partner put together their ISI action plans, and by August, they have already set these plans into motion. Each partner took a slightly different route: some revisited strategies that were originally designed in the early days of full-scale invasion, while others formed new teams in fundraising, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation to strengthen their long-term capacity. Across the ISI portfolio – which includes The Tenth of April, Shchedryk, Voice of Romni, ROKADA, Women's Consortium of Ukraine, Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv, and Gay Alliance of Ukraine—partners invested in staff well-being after years on the humanitarian front, upgraded policies.

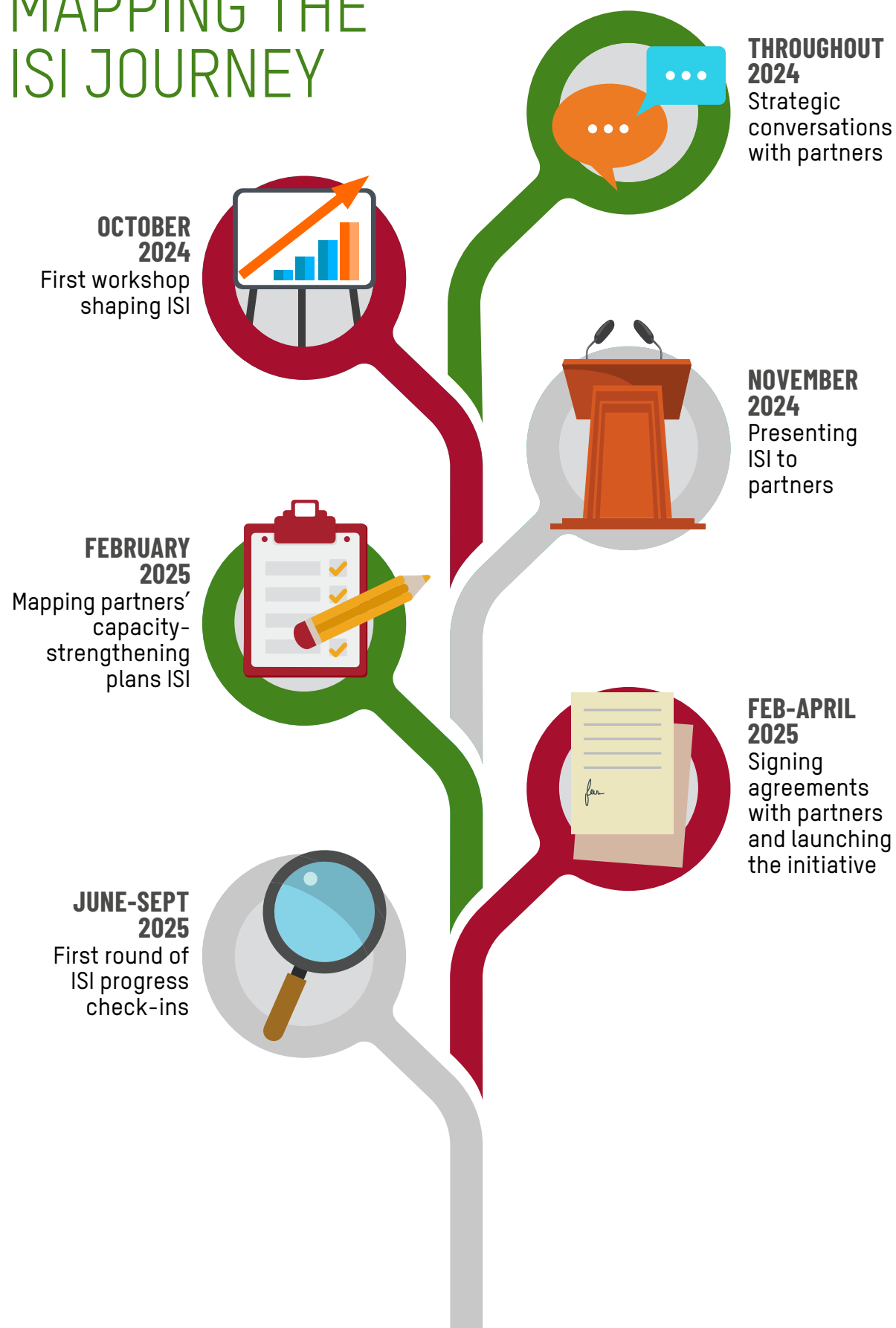
"After six months of implementation, progress is visible, not only in activities completed but in partners' confidence, ambition, and boldness," said Szewczuk. "They speak with stronger voices, envisioning their futures clearly. They have their maps – maps that can evolve. Flexibility means being able to adjust plans as realities change. We are companions on this journey. As partners evolve, we evolve with them."

The months ahead will focus on consolidating these gains, helping partners put their new systems, strategies, and leadership structures into action. As Oxfam gradually steps back, the work continues in stronger hands: local organisations that are better connected, better equipped, and more confident in leading humanitarian and recovery efforts in their own contexts.



Voice of Romni, led by president Anzhelika Bielova, meets with Oxfam staff to discuss their plans for the Institutional Strengthening Initiative (ISI). Photo by Voice of Romni

## MAPPING THE ISI JOURNEY





A photograph of two women in a workshop setting. One woman, with long blonde hair, is leaning forward, looking at a notebook. The other woman, with short blonde hair and glasses, is sitting in a chair, holding a small object. In the background, there are whiteboards with handwritten text in Ukrainian. The text on the whiteboards includes "safe space", "Послуга АЛГОРИТМ", "НОВА ПОСЛУГА", and a list of bullet points. The overall atmosphere is collaborative and professional.

# WHAT FLEXIBLE FUNDING TAUGHT US ABOUT TRUE PARTNERSHIP

ICAN Head Yulia Lisova and Nova Heneratsiia Executive Director Oksana Hliebushkina discuss ideas during the workshop for the Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund (WHLF). Both women's rights organisations are Oxfam's WHLF partners. Photo by Dominika Ozynska/Oxfam

## EVERYTHING BEGAN WITH A CONVERSATION: WHAT FLEXIBLE FUNDING TAUGHT US ABOUT TRUE PARTNERSHIP

By Jaroslawa Szewczuk, LHL and Partnership Coordinator, Oxfam Ukraine Response

Jaroslawa Szewczuk joined Oxfam's Ukraine Response after having worked in the Poland team as Partnership Coordinator, just as the Institutional Strengthening Initiative (ISI) was beginning to take shape as a real program. She took part in the very first workshop in October 2024 — the official start of the ISI as we know it today: Oxfam sharing flexible

funding and knowledge to strengthen Ukrainian organizations from within, for the long run. As the person whose main role has been to support partners on their ISI journey, Jaroslawa shares how the program came to be, how it has been changing Oxfam's own team, and how it continues to reshape the way we understand partnership itself.



Oxfam LHL & Partnership Coordinator in Ukraine Jaroslawa Szewczuk (right) presents a certificate of gratitude to Anika Charitable Foundation Director Anna Kulieva in Chernihiv. Photo by Rhea Catada/Oxfam



“ I stepped into my role at a very interesting moment, a time when we were working with our partners to plan the final phase of their projects. They already had a clear timeline ahead: only seven months left for project implementation. At the same time, we were also shaping something that had been in the making for quite a while, a program meant to prepare our partners for the moment we would eventually part ways.

At the beginning of 2024, Oxfam's Ukraine response approved a new strategy that included fully handing over power to its partners and a responsible exit from Ukraine. The Institutional Strengthening Initiative (ISI) was our way of bringing this strategy to life. We wanted to do everything in our power to ensure that our partners would continue on stronger than they had been when we first started working together. We wanted every part of this program to reflect their independence, individual needs, and unique identity.

Everything began with conversations. Throughout 2024, we held strategic discussions with our partners. We asked: Who do you want to become? How do you see your organization growing in programming, communication, and advocacy? What role do you want to play in your communities? These weren't questions we expected to be answered right away. They were meant to hang in the air and quietly do their work, guiding our partners as they shaped their own paths for their future. What mattered most was learning to embrace the questions, not fear them, even when they pushed both them and us off our usual, comfortable tracks of thinking.

Gradually, through these conversations and questions, our partners began to build their own understanding of how this initiative and funding dedicated to their organizational development and strengthening could best serve them — and how we, as Oxfam, could support them in that. We brought all these reflections together into a single document, which eventually became the prototype for the ISI Action Plans. It was like a snapshot of where the partners were and who they wanted to become.

After that, it was time to ask ourselves what institutional strengthening truly meant to Oxfam's Ukraine Response team and how far we could go in terms of mindset and flexibility. By the end of the year, we had begun to fully shape the program, building on all those earlier conversations. In small groups, we brainstormed what the program could look like in practice. You could even see the chemistry among people: some were cautious and conservative, others were open and free.

We came to an agreement that the Institutional Strengthening Initiative would be much more than just a funding pool. ISI became an investment of time, experience, and knowledge from across Oxfam's teams, all tailored to the individual needs of each partner and designed to accompany them along their chosen paths of institutional resilience. Teams shared their experience in creating safer, more accountable organizations, managing and retaining staff, advocacy at national and international levels, fundraising, and developing communication strategies.

A common theme among most partner organizations was the need to revisit their strategies. Many of them had emerged at the start of the full-scale invasion in Ukraine in 2022 and no longer matched the realities of today. Our partners felt strongly that to move forward, they needed a map, one they wanted to chart collectively, involving their teams. But they all emphasized the same thing: they needed an external facilitator, someone who could help them look at themselves from the outside, and once again, someone who would ask the right questions. Strategic planning processes within this initiative were launched by The Tenth of April, Shchedryk, ROKADA, Womens' Consortium of Ukraine and Gay Alliance Ukraine.

Another shared tendency in how partners prioritized their activities was the creation or strengthening of key internal teams, such as fundraising (Shchedryk, Womens' Consortium of Ukraine, ROKADA, Gay Alliance Ukraine), advocacy teams (ROKADA, Voice of Romni, Gay Alliance Ukraine), monitoring and evaluation, finance, and human resources (Voice of Romni). Partners invested in

staff training (Gay Alliance Ukraine, Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv, Shchedryk, Voice of Romni), and also in their well-being and team reintegration after three years of exhausting frontline humanitarian work. Some organizations focused on systemic changes and operational improvements (Shchedryk, Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv, The Tenth of April).

Undeniably, both the process of designing the program within Oxfam and the process of bringing partners into it were, for both sides, a step outside our comfort zones. It turned out that flexibility (that kind of funding everyone dreams of and imagines as a cure for all problems and barriers) doesn't come naturally when it becomes real.



Partnership Coordinator in Ukraine Jaroslawa Szewczuk checks out the laundry room of a new community centre supporting displaced people in Mykolaiv. In just a few months, Oxfam partner Shchedryk turned an abandoned building into a well-equipped building supporting IDPs.  
Photo by Vitaliia Kushmyruk/Oxfam



Flexibility and freedom bring a different type of responsibility. New approaches to reporting and monitoring, free from imposed templates and expectations sparked in all of us, both Oxfam and partners alike, a mix of excitement and anxiety. Sometimes, anxiety translated into over-diligence, excessive detail, and the tendency to overperform trying to anticipate expectations before they were even voiced. But the excitement outpaced the anxiety; a program of this kind opened enormous opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and gaining a deeper understanding of how partners work at multiple levels — not only in delivering a specific project but also in how their organizational systems function and how team dynamics evolve.

We did everything we could to make sure that Oxfam wasn't the one setting the pace for this program. The tone belonged to those holding the humanitarian front in Ukraine, our partners, national NGOs. We saw ourselves as a mirror offering a safe space for them to speak openly about their vision for the future, to reflect on what had been done, and to draw their own maps for what's next. Thanks to flexible funding, this program allowed us to shed the constraints of traditional partnership models where donors set most of the rules, deciding what can be done, how, and when.

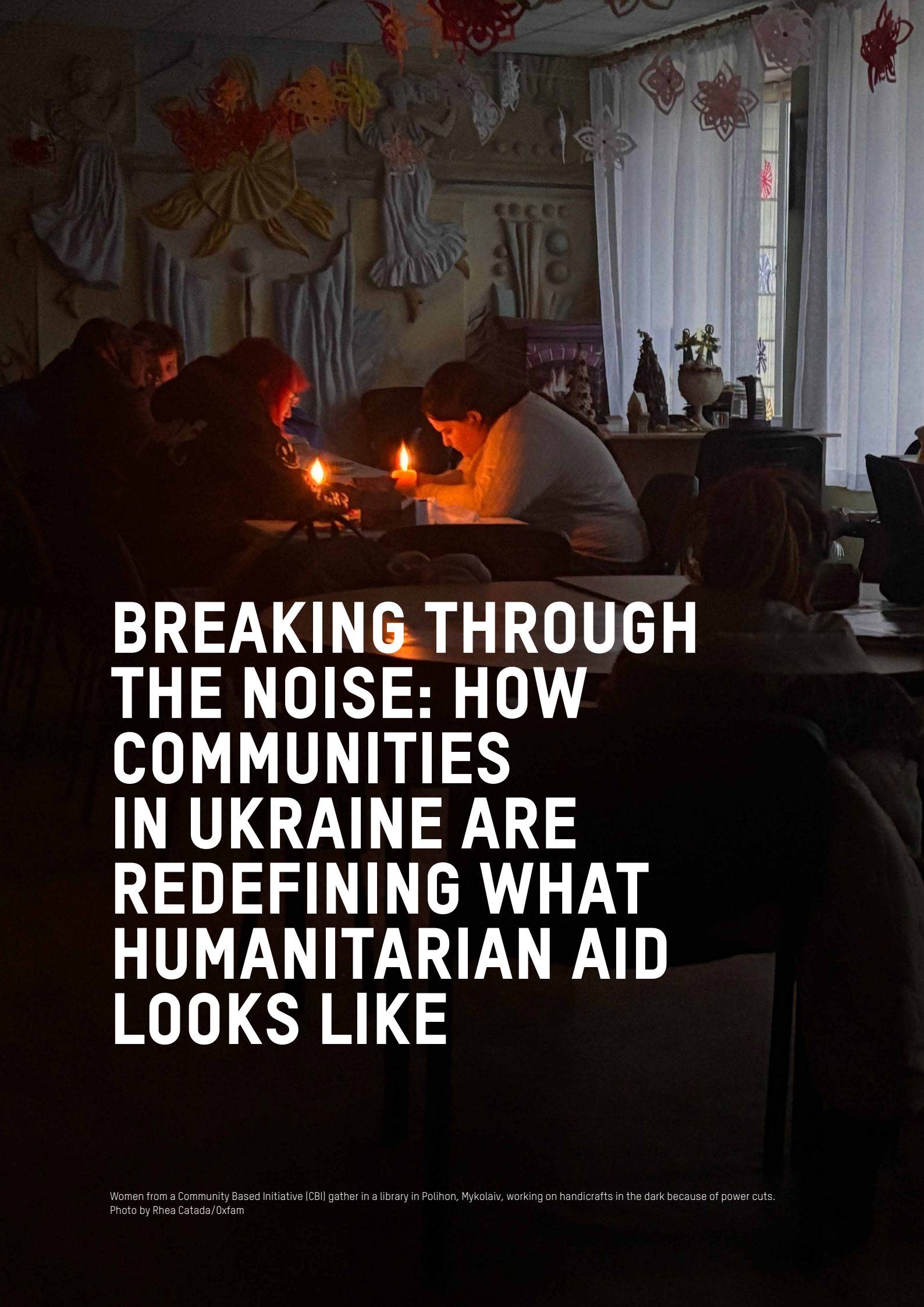
After the first six months of implementation, partners had already made significant progress. The change was visible not only in the completed activities but, more importantly, in how confidently they spoke about their future. You could see how openly they shared their bold plans and ambitious goals, like opening offices or representations

beyond Ukraine, working directly with major donors to strengthen support to their communities. This program, without a doubt, supported their process of empowerment. It helped them draw their own maps. And the most beautiful part is that these maps are allowed to change; they can spot new routes and take new turns as they go. Nothing is set in stone. Flexibility means having the space to reflect along the way and adjust plans when reality requires new scenarios.

We enter partnerships as one version of ourselves and through the interaction, we change under each other's influence. That influence is never one-sided. We affect each other, we open each other's eyes to different things, we challenge one another and push one another beyond our comfort zones. And when we eventually look back at who we were when we started, we often, if not always, barely recognize ourselves.

Through all these very natural, organic processes of relationship-building, we as Oxfam's humanitarian mission in Ukraine have grown and are still growing alongside our partners. Step by step, we're walking together through our development as Oxfam in Ukraine and theirs as local NGOs.

For me, this is a successful partnership, one where you feel safe enough to show your vulnerability, your imperfection, where you can be your most authentic self. It begins with a good conversation, which over time evolves into an ongoing, honest, and constructive dialogue. I believe we've managed to create this kind of environment. ”



# **BREAKING THROUGH THE NOISE: HOW COMMUNITIES IN UKRAINE ARE REDEFINING WHAT HUMANITARIAN AID LOOKS LIKE**

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

## BREAKING THROUGH THE NOISE: HOW COMMUNITIES IN UKRAINE ARE REDEFINING WHAT HUMANITARIAN AID LOOKS LIKE

Outside, in the streets of Ukraine's northeastern city of Sumy, the rumble and hum of munitions and drones have become part of the soundscape. This has become the grim undertone of people's daily life.

Beneath it, in the basement of Veselka kindergarten, that same undertone is muffled by thick walls and the soft voices of people from the Lipovodolynska community. Before, they came here mainly to wait out the shelling. Now, the once dimly-lit, windowless shelter has come alive as a warm multi-purpose interactive space supporting displaced families. It has furniture, play areas, ventilation systems, lighting, and internet access. It has also become a place for learning and planning, where community members ask each other how they can better protect one another in a time of war.

Since the escalation of the war in 2022, humanitarian organisations have been supporting the people across the country, including the people of Lipovodolynska. Representatives from these organisations would visit the community, count how many of them needed support and ask what kind of support they needed. Then, the organisations would process the data collected from them to determine the kind of aid they will deliver to the communities. In reality, this meant collecting numbers and needs while distributing support, but leaving little room for communities to interpret the information themselves or shape how it should inform future decisions.

This is the common practice for aid organisations across the globe. They measure humanitarian support through what is commonly called in the sector as **MEAL**, short for Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning. It's the system

that measures whether aid is working and helping communities affected by crisis. But too often, donors end up defining what "success" means. Data is gathered through tools designed by outsiders, inputted into reports, and rarely presented to communities – which could have helped them learn, adapt, or strengthen their own recovery.

That is what the Frontline Community Protection Capacity project, implemented by Oxfam's Global Humanitarian Team's Protection Team and funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), set out to change. The project works in different contexts and countries around the world, from Bangladesh to Burkina Faso, to Uganda and Ukraine. It has tested new ways communities can define what protection and progress looks like to them.

The application of feminist principles to MEAL, (feminist-MEAL) is a natural complement to community-based protection, an approach wherein communities take the lead in keeping themselves safe, like preventing harm, accessing life-saving services and information that enables them to have the confidence to engage local authorities or influence decisions that affect their lives. Feminist MEAL shifts the power of those who drive data gathering, analysis, and learning to those who are most affected by the humanitarian programme. Feminist MEAL turns traditional approaches upside down. Instead of data being extracted from communities, people generate it themselves. It treats information as power — power to see what's changing, to decide what matters, and to speak with evidence to those who hold resources. It replaces checklists with conversations and transforms "service users" into decision-makers.



## AS PARTNERS EVOLVE, WE EVOLVE WITH THEM OXFAM'S 3.5-YEAR JOURNEY IN UKRAINE

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In Ukraine, Oxfam partnered with ROKADA and The Tenth of April (TTA) to run the experiment from April 2023 to March 2025, testing the approach through small, community-run initiatives in areas such as the Lipovodolynska community.

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**'Initially, I thought it was too difficult for communities and that they couldn't do it, but the communities did a good job. They can lead it. They can do it. The community groups are very proud.'**

**A social worker from ROKADA.**

Each group in the pilot worked on simple but powerful goals that would benefit in their community those who are most impacted by the war, especially those from marginalised communities. Instead of relying on outside MEAL experts, communities learned to ask and answer

their own questions. And in a country that has been used to counting losses, these communities started counting their progress. They got to choose what they needed to measure in relation to their goals, then discuss the results later.

The idea of introducing and then teaching feminist MEAL to communities sounded simple, but it wasn't. The language of MEAL is very sector-specific, and words or concepts like "community-based indicators" or "sensemaking" sounded awkward when relayed through a Ukrainian translator and when the training is done online. On top of this, most of the people who participated in the feminist-MEAL pilot were volunteers juggling jobs, families, air-raid sirens, and power cuts. Despite these challenges, everyone was committed. And everyone understood that learning MEAL had less to do with mastering NGO jargon, but more about reclaiming the process in their own language and voice.



In July, Oxfam's partner The Tenth of April (TTA) organised the Civic Initiatives Forum in Odesa, attended by different partners and community leaders whose initiatives were supported by TTA. Photo by Yuliia Marchenko/TTA

All that effort slowly began to pay off. Communities started seeing the power in the data they are collecting, how they can use it to work towards their goals, and even how they can engage local authorities with these numbers.

In the Shyroktivska community, the Successful Ladies' Club mapped out their own "theory of change" and this helped them translate their lived experience into programme management, a language which the local government officials understood and respected. This led them to be invited to local development planning in their community.

Through the Community Protection project, the feminist-MEAL training, and their engagement with local officials, the Successful Ladies Club was able to organise a women's information and counselling centre where women can access support services for gender-based violence. They also supported displaced families rebuild their livelihoods through workshops and skills training.

Other initiatives that were shaped through the feminist-MEAL training also sprung up in other parts of the country. In Mykolaiv, the Renaissance Hub (part of the Polihon community initiative) has turned a bomb-damaged space into a bright meeting place where people exchange information, hold recovery classes, and organise cultural activities. And in Dmytrivka, Chernihiv region, residents have revived their village library into a place for reading, learning, and staying connected even during power cuts--a space shared by both local communities and internally displaced people (IDPs).

From Mykolaiv to Sumy, the communities who participated in the feminist-MEAL pilot saw that they can have the power to shape humanitarian aid, and not just be passive recipients of it. The feminist-MEAL pilot also highlighted that when community initiative groups take the lead in the information-gathering, they can reach marginalised groups which bigger NGOs may not have easy access to. Throughout the process, it was revealed that communities have the ability and commitment to learn and lead, and that providing them the right tools can give them better ways to protect each other.

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**'Working together to solve shared problems brought people closer and showed them they had the power to make change, once residents saw that they could make a difference, they became more involved and started creating new initiatives in their community.'**

A staff member from TTA

What began as a set of community exercises became something much deeper — a way for people to reclaim how their progress is defined and measured. By shifting who asks the questions and who owns the answers, feminist MEAL shows how humanitarian aid can move from delivering help to sharing power. In the end, the feminist-MEAL pilot showed how powerful community-led initiatives can be. As noted in a report analysing how the experiment went, **"When people take part in gathering information and making decisions, they build strength, trust, and hope together. These local efforts don't just solve problems, they help rebuild communities and lay the foundation for peace."**



A photograph of four women sitting in a circle in a workshop. They are all smiling and appear to be engaged in a craft activity involving string. The woman in the foreground is wearing a black top and has a large pile of string on her lap. The woman next to her is wearing a floral patterned top. The woman in the background is wearing a black top and a blue lanyard. The woman on the far right is wearing a black top and a blue lanyard. The background features a red wall with many colorful sticky notes.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WOMEN'S HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP FUND

WHLF partners from different women's rights organisations (WROs) work together in an Oxfam workshop in Kyiv. Photo by Dominika Ozyńska/Oxfam



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WOMEN'S HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP FUND

*The Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund (WHLF) is a jointly designed initiative by Oxfam and ActionAid in Ukraine that responds to the persistent gap between localization commitments and the reality of humanitarian funding. The initiative provides small, flexible grants to women's rights organizations, focusing on institutional strengthening, women's leadership, and collective learning rather than narrowly defined project outputs. Phase 1 of WHLF has now been completed, supporting 12 Ukrainian women-led organizations and demonstrating an alternative, more equitable approach to humanitarian financing. Oxfam worked directly with six of these organizations as partners.*

### **PUBLIC CENTER "NOVA HENERATSIIA"**

Founded in Kherson in 1993, the Public Center "Nova Heneratsiia" was among the first youth initiatives to emerge in independent Ukraine. In 2016, it evolved into a public organization focused on broader community development.

Throughout its history, the organization has worked to promote human rights and gender equality, strengthen the capacity of civil society actors, and encourage good governance among local authorities. When the full-scale invasion began, its Kherson office was occupied, forcing the team to relocate to Ivano-Frankivsk where they continue their mission today.

In February 2025, "Nova Heneratsiia" reached a standstill: previous projects had concluded, while new ones were still in development. Thanks to flexible funding, the team was able to stay together, continue preparing new project proposals, and conduct strategic planning. This support also helped boost the organization's visibility; they launched a new website and provided English-language training for staff, opening the door to participation in international humanitarian events.

### **WOMEN'S CENTER**

Women's Center is an Odesa-based organization that supports women in vulnerable situations, including formerly incarcerated women, women living with HIV, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The Center's work focuses on combating discrimination and stigma, providing psychological support, conducting leadership training, and creating employment opportunities. Another key priority is empowering grassroots initiatives and promoting local leadership in the Odesa and Mykolaiv oblasts, ensuring that women and other vulnerable groups have a voice in decision-making.

Thanks to flexible funding, the organization developed a three-year strategic plan and held focus groups in local communities to gather insights into the barriers preventing women from accessing information on domestic violence, gender-based violence (GBV), and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). These findings now help the team design new projects grounded in community needs.

Oxfam's support also allowed Women's Center to organize a team retreat, provide training on burnout prevention, and review its internal policies, aligning them with industry standards. These efforts strengthened the team, giving them renewed energy and inspiration for their work.

### **ROMANI ZBORA**

Romani Zbora is a women-led organization that has been advocating for Roma communities since 2002. Its work ranges from promoting women's rights within the community to strengthening the social standing of Roma families and protecting children.

The organization provides legal and psychological assistance to women affected by GBV, offers training on the issue, and delivers humanitarian aid. Over the years, it has successfully prevented

the forced eviction of Roma families in Odesa Oblast and established a shelter for displaced women. Romani Zbora also places great emphasis on cultural development, preserving and celebrating Roma music, dance, and traditions.

The organization says that flexible funding allowed them to act based on real needs rather than pre-approved frameworks. It enabled them to cover office rent, hire a communications specialist and an M&E specialist, and train staff in fundraising. To strengthen their visibility and identity, Romani Zbora also developed its own branding and uniforms. The team also obtained ISO 9001 certification, confirming the high standard of their management processes.

### **DEMOCRACY DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

Democracy Development Center (DDC) was founded in Kyiv in 2003. Its mission is to help build a democratic, just, prosperous, and peaceful Ukraine, where everyone can enjoy their human rights and fulfill their potential. Fully led by women, DDC places a strong emphasis on ensuring women's participation in decision-making at all levels, their involvement in post-conflict rebuilding, and the inclusion of their interests in legislation.

For DDC, Oxfam's support went beyond sustaining the organization. It expanded their partnerships and introduced DDC into environmental discussions for the first time as a gender-focused organization.



WHLF partners from different women's rights organisations (WROs) work together in an Oxfam workshop in Kyiv.  
Photo by Dominika Ozyńska/Oxfam

The funding also enabled the organization to hire consultants and additional staff, including a project manager and a financial officer, and to hold trainings that strengthened their capacity in climate justice.

These activities are already making a real difference: thanks to DDC's advocacy, the Ministry of Social Policy updated the national gender action plan to include environmental topics, while the Ministry of Ecology agreed to collaborate with DDC on trainings for ministry staff on gender policy and the environment. DDC is also working to establish a network of women's civil society organizations called "Women in Climate Change."

### **ICAN**

ICAN is a charitable organization founded in 2023 in Kharkiv, at the heart of one of Ukraine's most heavily shelled regions. Despite being a young organization, ICAN has already supported around 3,000 women in need, focusing on raising awareness of GBV, promoting women's rights, and providing psychological assistance.

Flexible support played an important role in ICAN's early development. It allowed the team to purchase essential office equipment and furniture, and to launch a website with a Donate button to support fundraising. With these resources, ICAN was able to hire a project manager, social media manager, financial officer, lawyer, and grant-writing specialist. The team identified a safe and functional workspace, along with a portable EcoFlow power station, allowing them to continue their work during blackouts and field visits.

Through WHLF events, ICAN built valuable connections that opened up opportunities for growth and increased visibility. One partner helped the team prepare a donor application, resulting

in their first grant. ICAN joined GBV and Child Protection Cluster meetings, presented their work at the regional level, and spoke at the international HNPW session in Geneva, sharing Ukraine's experience and highlighting the role of women's rights organizations in humanitarian response. Oxfam also strengthened ICAN's capacity through trainings and strategic planning sessions, held both online and in person.

### **SPRING OF HOPE. UKRAINE**

Spring of Hope. Ukraine (SOH.UA) is a women-led organization based in Vinnytsia that has been advocating for the rights and opportunities of women since 2006. Over the years, they have carried out more than 200 projects in youth work, civil society development, addressing human trafficking and domestic violence. In total, they reached over 20,000 people across nine oblasts of Ukraine.

After the full-scale invasion, SOH.UA expanded its activities to support internally displaced persons (IDPs) in frontline regions. This included distributing food and hygiene kits and providing psychological support.

Support from the WHLF helped the team adjust their internal processes to match their expanded activities and set clear priorities. SOH.UA created policies for their workspace, including structured schedules and the option to work from home. The organization also held a strategic session to plan for future growth, audit financial documents, and translate policies.

Thanks to this support, SOH.UA was able to hire additional staff, including an accountant and a PR specialist, and train their team on GESI and PSEA standards. The organization believes that flexible funding should become more common among donors, especially during times of crisis.



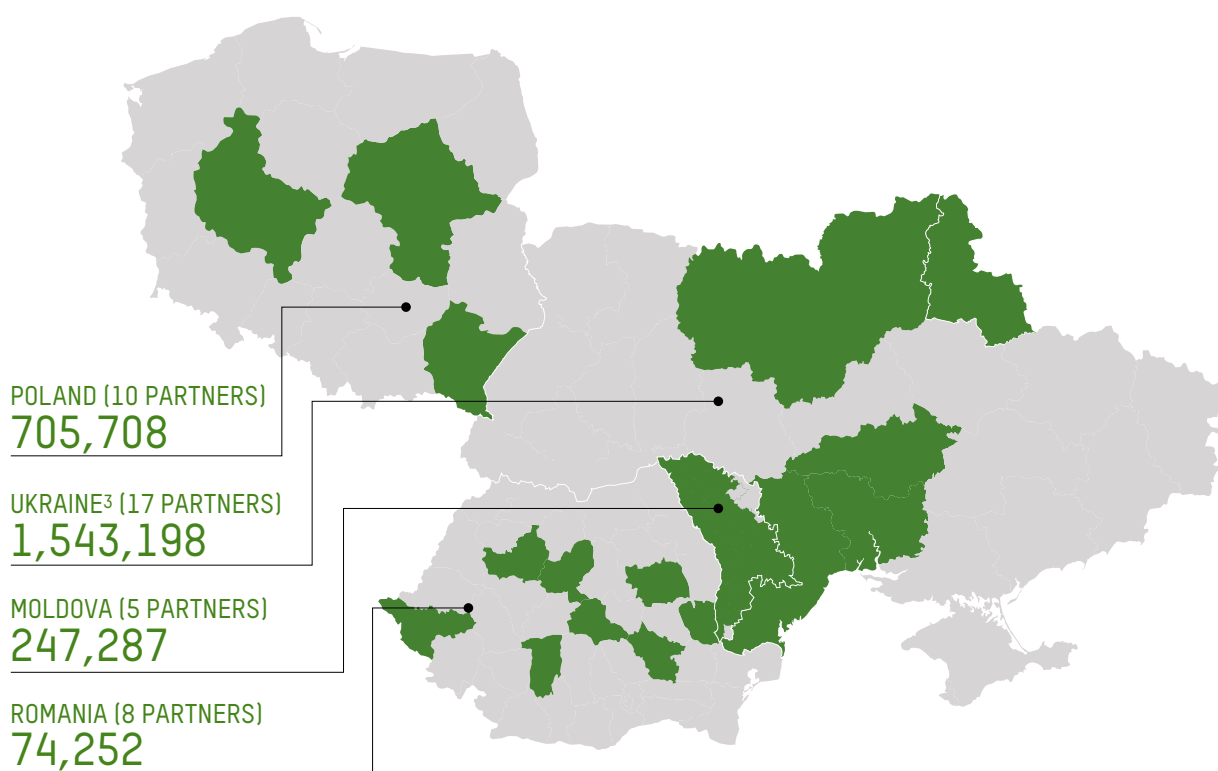
A photograph of an elderly woman with short, dark hair, wearing a grey patterned t-shirt, standing in a public bathroom. She is looking down at her hands as she washes them in a white pedestal sink. The sink has a modern chrome faucet. In the background, there are more sinks and mirrors mounted on a wall with light-colored tiles. The lighting is bright, coming from a window or overhead lights. The overall atmosphere is clean and well-maintained.

# FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE

Olena washes her hand at one of the newly-renovated bathrooms at a dormitory building turned housing for displaced people in Kharkiv. The bathroom renovations were through the support of Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv. Photo: Rhea Catada/Oxfam

## A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE LED BY LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

As of August 2025, the number of people assisted was **2,570,445<sup>1</sup>**, comprising 66% women, 34% men, 0.1% non-binary<sup>2</sup>, transgender and other genders.



### Notes

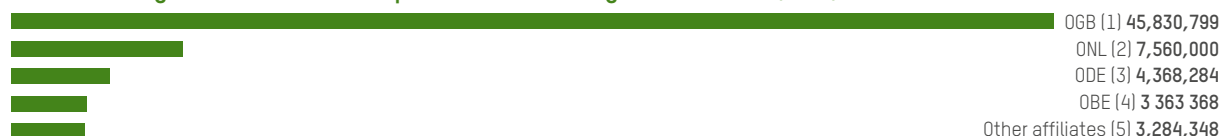
<sup>1</sup> Estimated cumulative number of people reached in Oxfam Ukraine Response. Marginal double-counts of people reached might not be removed due to operational constraints. While every effort has been made to ensure that all statistical information is verified, figures represent an estimate. Triangulation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

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

<sup>3</sup> 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 31 August 2025: €64,406,691



Total expenditure by country as of 31 August 2025: €60,406,997.59

Oxfam: €27,890,661.02 (46%); Partners: €32,516,336.57 (54%)



Expenditure by theme: €60,406,997.51



### 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 (€430K).
- (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.



