

National Workshop on Localizing Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine

8:30am-9:00am	Registration	
9:00am-9:45am	Welcome, Conference Overview, Presentation of the Joint Statement & Survey	
	Moderator	Šimon Pánek, People in Need
	Panelists	Dmytro Kondratenko, Caritas Ukraine (Via Zoom) Howard Mollet, The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development Ewa Wieliczko, ACAPS
	Speaker	Nataliia Oksha, Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (Via Zoom)
9:45am-10:30am	Perspectives on Localization by Ukrainians	
	Moderator	Oksana Ginchuk, NGO Resource Center
	Panelists	Valentyn Bordun, Kryla Nadii Valeriia Ovcharova, YES Halyna Kravets, Revival of the Nation Anna Bondarenko, Ukrainian Volunteer Service Oleksiy Palchenko, Angels of Salvation Daria Rybalchenko, National Network of Local Philanthropy Development
10:30-11:00am	Q&A	
11:00am-11:30am	Coffee break 30 minutes	
11:30am-12:15pm	Perspectives on Localization by International Representatives	
	Co-Moderator	Sasha Galkin, Right To Protection
	Co-Moderator	Hardin Lang, Refugees International
	Panelists	Marco Rotelli, United Nations Dianna Long, U.S. Agency for International Development Hanna Miedvedieva, People in Need Ukraine
12:15pm-12:45pm	Q&A	
12:45pm-2:00pm	Lunch Break	
2:00pm-3:00pm	Improving Humanitarian Coordination	
	Moderator	Mariia Trots, Helping To Leave
	Panelists	Larysa Magduik, Women's Consortium of Ukraine Daria Kasyanova, Ukrainian Child's Rights Network/SOS Children's Villages Anna Nishnianidze, Zagoriy Foundation Larysa Baida, The National Assembly For People With Disabilities Oleksandra Makovska, Protection Cluster Ukraine Catherine M. Green, World Vision
3:00pm-3:30pm	Q&A	
3:30pm-4:30pm	Localizing Humanitarian Funding & Improving Partnerships	
	Moderator	Oksana Kuintseva, Vostok-SOS
	Panelists	Fred Larsson, NGO Resource Center Anatoly Boyko, CVU Odesa Tetiana Stawnychy, Caritas Ukraine Roberto Vila-Sexto, Norwegian Refugee Council David White, United Nations Fred Robarts, The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
4:30pm-5:00pm	Q&A	
5:00pm-5:30pm	Workshop Observations	
	Panelists	Anna Duda, People In Need Sasha Galkin, Right To Protection Prior L/NNGO Panelist (TBD)

Joint Statement On Locally-Led Humanitarian Action In Ukraine

This Joint Statement outlines recommendations to Donors, United Nations (UN) Agencies, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and other relevant actors about how to strengthen support for Local and National Non-Governmental actors (L/NNGOs) engaged in humanitarian action across Ukraine. The recommendations reflect consultations at the sub-national level, including five workshops convened in Odesa, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Lviv and Chernihiv between November 2022 and January 2023 as well as consultations with both INGOs and National NGOs involved in the Ukraine NGO Advocacy Working Group and its informal sub-group on localization. The Joint Statement further represents an update to a previous [Joint Statement](#) published in June 2022 and an effort to engage more diverse national and local actors in a policy dialogue on localization in general, as well as a desire to raise awareness about specific [global commitments](#) that Donors and [international agencies](#) have made to empower locally-led humanitarian responses. In all, over 150 individuals and organizations participated in the five sub-national workshops (reports are available in [English](#) and in [Ukrainian](#)).

Since February 24, 2022, the humanitarian response to the situation in Ukraine has seen both some important innovations in support to national and local actors, but also on-going and serious challenges. From a positive perspective, a number of international agencies - both UN Agencies and INGOs - have sought to pilot new approaches to unlocking funding to more diverse local groups and networks. Some INGOs that typically would deploy focused on direct project implementation have instead centered their response on local partnerships and have piloted more proportionate and flexible approaches to due diligence. Also important, OCHA tasked senior staff to scope options for more inclusive partnership approaches and conducted extensive consultations to shape the approach. However, on other metrics, progress has been slow with [less than 1%](#) of the \$3.9 billion tracked by the UN's Financial Tracking System (FTS) in 2022 going direct to local actors. With a few exceptions, [rhetoric from donors on localization](#) is not yet consistently matched by changes in policy or funding approaches to enable more nimble and holistic support to L/NNGOs. Ukrainian organizations remain largely stuck as [sub-grantees](#) to international agencies, rather than leading or co-leading. Finding ways for more diverse L/NNGOs to understand and contribute to leadership, coordination and decision-making remains a work in progress.

Key findings and recommendations are as follows:

- 1. Donors, UN Agencies and INGOs must establish clear metrics to enable accountability for equitable partnerships and local leadership.** All planning frameworks, funding and program plans for Ukraine should outline specific objectives, time-bound milestones and metrics to promote accountability for

equitable partnerships¹ and support for local leadership. Generic references acknowledging the roles of local actors without specific, practical commitments to act in support of their empowerment should be avoided. Donors and international agencies active in Ukraine [contributed](#) to a Grand Bargain caucus that published recommendations on holding “intermediary” agencies accountable for localization in 2022, and they should now translate this into practice in Ukraine². Metrics should also reflect priorities raised by local actors as outlined in the recommendations below. In particular:

- Future iterations of the Humanitarian Response Plan should adopt explicit, measurable objectives for promoting quality partnerships and local leadership;
- The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) should expeditiously adopt an HCT Localisation Strategy as is being rolled out in other contexts to generate leadership focus and accountability;
- Donors should make accountability for equitable partnerships and enabling local leadership an explicit requirement in their funding and require their international partners to report on progress.
- International agencies should publish and report on their progress against context-specific objectives and indicators on equitable partnerships and enabling local leadership.

2. Direct, multi-year, flexible funding should be made available to local actors: Both the UN Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF) and other funding channels, including Donors, should adopt clear and ambitious targets for increasing the percentage of funds going directly to local actors and providing multi-year, flexible funding. The UHF pilot allocation to promote localization (\$20 million in a September 2022 funding envelope) was a welcome step but one that should be built on with targets to increase the share directly accessed by L/NNGOs - certainly to the almost 50% overall level that was reached in 2021 by the UHF but ideally well beyond this mark. The model of the NGO Twinning Programme in Afghanistan could also be adapted for Ukraine to support a more deliberate approach to enabling a wider range of national NGOs to shift from being sub-grantees to directly accessing funding from the UHF and other Donor funds.

3. Establish a transparent, harmonized and equitable approach for overhead cost support to L/NNGOs. In line with research and guidance issued by the IASC and deliberations amongst Donors in the Grand Bargain - and as repeatedly expressed by Ukrainian organizations - overhead costs should be unrestricted, unaudited and without time restrictions rather than being squeezed within direct project costs and timelines. International agencies should clearly communicate to their local partners what over-

¹ Equitable partnership draft proposals have been put forward by a number of actors in Ukraine. Most commonly they call for mandating fair overhead cost recovery for all sub-grantees, substantive involvement in program design as well as a number of [other provisions laid out in detail by the Grand Bargain](#).

² The aid community has developed an extensive set of [agreements](#), [platforms](#) and [best practices](#) when it comes to localizing aid –most notably the 2016 [Grand Bargain](#) which commits INGOS, UN Agencies and Donors to provide 25 percent of global humanitarian funding to local actors while centering and empowering them in the humanitarian system.

head costs their institutional back-Donors provide and a minimum allocation should be adopted that recognizes the extent to which L/NNGOs are implementing the majority of assistance on the ground and taking on significant risk. Donors and funding mechanisms should make it mandatory for their international partners to report on having done so. Both should also mandate that their implementing partners develop and implement a comprehensive duty care policy for sub-grantees. This policy may include the purchase of personal protection kits for partners' field teams, and tailored security training for partners (on contingency planning, demining and comprehensive risk management). Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for CSOs and volunteers should be part of this policy, with a sufficient level of flexible funding allocated for this purpose.

4. **Harmonize and simplify reporting procedures, due diligence and compliance processes** in order to reduce their duplication and unnecessary burden on already-stretched L/NNGOs. This should include adopting tiered, proportionate due diligence and compliance requirements depending on the size of the grant and the L/NNGO partner applying for it as well as allowing for the "passporting" of due diligence approvals, at the very least between UN Agencies and amongst INGO consortia partners. Templates and guidance documents must be made available in Ukrainian and other relevant languages.

5. **Donors and INGOs should develop new locally-led pooled funds and consortia modalities for smaller and newer humanitarian NGOs and voluntary networks to access funding.** A diverse ecosystem of funding mechanisms is needed to support diverse civil society actors. This should include support to organizations and networks led by local actors and be achieved by establishing new funding mechanisms that can be governed and accessed by L/NNGOs. To add value, particular attention should be given to supporting pooled funds or consortia that:
 - Reach LNGOs not able to directly access the UHF by virtue of their scale of work or ability to meet UN expectations;
 - Reach initiatives and partnership approaches not covered by the UHF with its focus on short-term emergency response, specifically multi-year organizational strengthening efforts, including through local-to-local capacity-sharing, anti-corruption mechanisms and enhancing L/NNGO coordination and engagement platforms.
 - Since February 24 2022, a few Donors and INGOs have already established new pooled funds (for example, the Swiss fund for women's rights organizations) and consortia focused on granting or sub-granting to diverse LNGOs. These mechanisms and consortia should establish clear and time-bound plans to ensure their leadership or co-leadership by national actors and transparently publish information about how they promote equitable partnership in their granting processes and involve LNGOs in decision-making, not just as sub-grantees.

- 6. In all cases, international and national actors must do more to support volunteers and more effectively address the risks they face, including the risk of burn-out and of physical harm.** Volunteers themselves also need to assess their own options in their local context and contribute to a dialogue with established organizations on how to best support voluntary action. But, at a minimum, donors and international agencies should agree to budget for and support voluntary action, covering the expenses and training of volunteers, recognizing the extent to which voluntary action has been the bedrock of the crisis response - reaching the most vulnerable people, including in the most hard-to-reach parts of the country - since voluntary action cannot be sustained on an unsupported basis at this scale.
- 7. In order to improve humanitarian coordination and center these mechanisms around Ukrainians, the NGO Platform and UN-Led bodies such as the HCT and the Cluster system should all set out near-term timelines for increasing Ukrainian involvement and leadership.** The HCT, specifically, should ensure that Ukrainian organizations are in the majority when it comes to non-UN organizations at the HCT table (right now only two of the 19 seats are held by NNGOs). The HCT should also look at innovative modalities to engage diverse L/NNGOs from other contexts such as the establishment of a Women Advisory Group involving local women civil society leaders able to table priority issues on the HCT agenda on a regular basis, as has effectively helped to drive attention to gender in other contexts. The HCT and Donor coordination groups should convene at least quarterly in-depth discussions on localization and invite L/NNGO representatives to join with interpretation support. Establishing realistic timelines to enable meaningful engagement are also important, for example in deliberations on the National Recovery Plan and towards the Ukraine Recovery Conference of 2023. Both should convene opportunities for L/NNGOs to share insights with them directly, rather than channeling interaction only through international intermediary agencies. The NGO Platform also has important roles to play in terms of fostering accompaniment and other forms of support to L/NNGOs in understanding and engaging with coordination processes, advancing local leadership and through inter-agency dialogue and learning to promote accountability for and better practices in INGO-L/NNGO partnerships.
- 8. Donors, INGOs and UN Agencies should proactively engage and support existing Ukrainian coordination mechanisms.** While it is important to better integrate Ukrainians into international coordination systems, all three international actors should build on UN OCHA's outreach at the sub-national level in order to contextualize and systematize engagement with local coordination efforts that already exist. Specifically, investments should be made in expanding these Ukrainian structures of humanitarian coordination, especially at the local and regional levels.
- 9. Encourage cooperation between government and civil society at national and local levels to ensure effective needs-based programming, capacity-strengthening and civil society space.** Prior to the invasion, the Ukrainian government had initiated a process of decentralization, and various processes

were underway, including national NGOs experienced in social and public services at the local level supporting local government authorities on the training of their staff. Donors and the international humanitarian community should look to help foster good government-civil society cooperation in support of solutions that will strengthen government systems at the national and local levels, rather than expand parallel, foreign-dominated systems, while also supporting independent civil society action.

- 10. International agencies should factor in local NGO feedback on their approach to alignment with national policies on taxation and labor law**, for example when it comes to NGOs hiring staff under the more flexible framework of Ukrainian “civil contracts”, or especially consultancy contracts, rather than “employment contracts.” A common approach by Donors and international agencies to supporting these efforts and problem-solving any issues arising with national and local authorities would be helpful, which could include ensuring engagement by Donors and UN agencies in fostering good cooperation at the sub-national as well as national levels.
- 11. Endorse and act on the Ethical Recruitment Guidelines which have been tabled at the HCT.** Poor practice has been observed across Ukraine when it comes to international agencies and hiring practices. The Ethical Recruitment Guidelines aim to stop the worst kinds of practices of the poaching of local organizations’ staff. Donors should systematically hold international agencies accountable for this, and funding should be conditional on adhering to the Guidelines. Agencies should have their heads of human resources and other relevant managers endorse and report on how they are implementing the Guidelines.
- 12. Donors should resource and hold agencies accountable for holistic approaches to capacity-strengthening, knowledge transfer, and delivering on demonstrable outcomes for local leadership; for example supporting local NGOs to transition from being sub-grantees to lead grantees.** A meaningful, longer-term approach to the crisis response and recovery in Ukraine is partially dependent on Donors and International Agencies establishing and resourcing direct, multi-year support for a vibrant and enduring Ukrainian civil society, not just short-term, projectized, top-down relationships with local actors. Across all our sub-national workshops on localization, local actors emphasized the importance of accompaniment (ideally in-person, rather than online), secondment of staff and sustained partnership tailored to specific organizations to enable effective capacity-strengthening, rather than ad-hoc, one-off trainings delivered to groups of organizations.
- 13. Adopt policies and funding approaches that ensure funding intended for L/NNGOs reaches a diverse set of genuinely national/local civil society actors.** In line with the Grand Bargain and IASC definitions of L/NNGOs, country offices of international agencies do not qualify as national/local and should not be treated as such in forthcoming efforts to expand funding and leadership roles to Ukrainian organizations.

14. Ensure the systematic use of local languages and demonstrably follow up on priorities raised by local actors in humanitarian coordination, especially at the local level. Use of local languages in coordination made important differences in terms of local staff being able to engage meaningfully in the east after 2018. Yet, there is no consistent use of local languages in cluster meetings and documents in the current response, limiting the ability of local actors to truly influence decisions.

Supporting local leadership of the humanitarian response in Ukraine along the above lines is not just the smart thing to do—but done well, it could help inform more effective humanitarian action globally. We invite Donors, INGOs, UN Agencies, L/NNGOs and others to engage with us and to endorse this statement, to join us in dialogue and action to put these ideas into practice and to identify other steps needed to promote equitable partnership and local leadership.

NGO Co-Organizers of the National Workshop:

Caritas Ukraine
People In Need
Helping To Leave
CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development)
NGO Resource Center
Oxfam
Vostok-SOS
Refugees International

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