Urgent Funding Needs and Challenges of Local Organizations Working on Gender Equality

Two years into the Ukraine Invasion

UN WOMEN

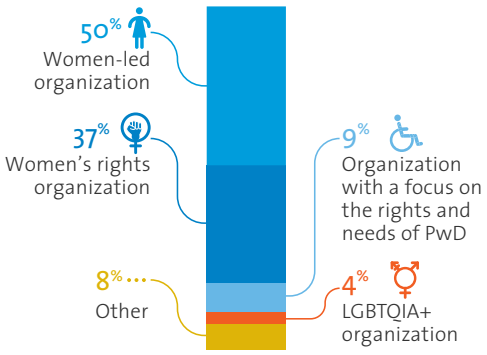
Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

On February 24 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which forced almost 6.5 million people from Ukraine to become refugees outside of Ukraine and nearly 3.7 million have been internally displaced.[1] The overwhelming majority of refugees from Ukraine and those internally displaced are women and children. From the early days of the invasion, women-led organizations (WLOs), women's rights (WROs), and LGBTQIA+ organizations based in and outside of Ukraine have played a central role in the response. At the same time, these organizations continue to face a variety of challenges, particularly in relation to funding and access to resources.

This factsheet presents the results of a survey conducted by UN Women, on behalf on the Ukraine Situation Regional Gender Taskforce to follow up on the precise nature of the funding challenges of WLOs, WROs, and LGBTQIA+ organizations two years into the full-scale invasion. The survey was conducted digitally in early February 2024, and received 78 responses from organizations in seven countries, namely Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

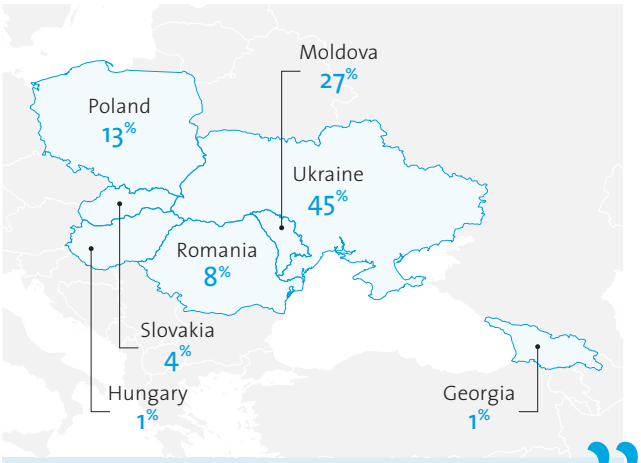
Overall, the findings indicate that while many organizations have seen a continuation or increase in their programming for refugees from Ukraine between 2022 and 2023 in the context of the Ukraine Humanitarian and Refugee Response in 2023, in 2024 the funding gap has increased dramatically. Most organizations continue to rely on short- and mid-term project-based funding. Moreover, barriers to funding access include lack of funding opportunities, inflexible funding, complex application procedures, language barriers, and mismatches between donor priorities and organizations' needs.

Type of organizations surveyed



> *It is necessary to use experience existing in the region [on] how to deal with protracted displacement to make the assistance more effective and relevant.*
>
> Representative of a women-led organization working in Georgia

Represented countries



> *We at the local level know our needs and the community we live in much better than those outside it. We are waiting for cooperation, [and] grants for women, which are so needed.*
>
> Representative of a WLO working in Moldova, translated from Romanian

1 UNHCR (2024). Ukraine Refugee Situation. Accessed 10 February 2024 via: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine. IOM (2024, January). Internally displaced persons. Accessed 10 February 2024 via: https://migrationdataportal.org/ukraine/crisis-movements#:~:text=As%20of%2025%20September%202023,as%20of%2025%20September%202023.&text=%5B1%5D%20IDMC%2C%202021.

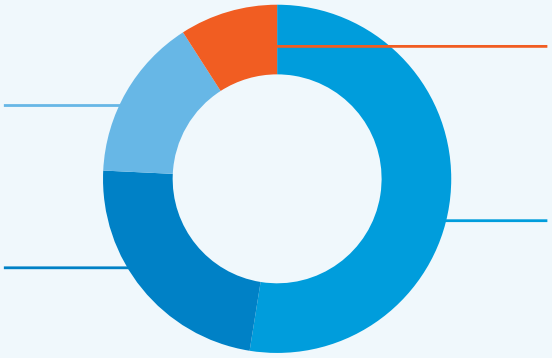
Primary areas of work of organizations surveyed

- 26% Gender justice and women's rights
- 19% Socio-economic empowerment
- 12% Refugee integration
- 10% Rights and needs of persons with disabilities
- 10% Mental health and psychosocial support
- 9% Protection, including gender based violence
- 4% LGBTQIA+ needs and rights
- 3% Employment and labour access
- 1% WASH
- 1% Sexual and reproductive health
- 1% Roma needs and rights
- 1% Education
- 1% Young
- 1% Other

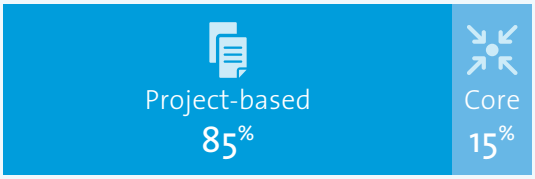
Variation in funding sources

Funding sources

Organizations reported relying on a combination of funding sources

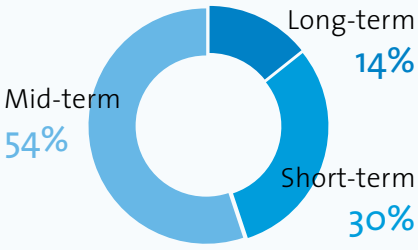


Percentage of funding sources



Funding duration

30% of organizations rely on funding lasting up to 6 months



Refugee program changes

45% of organizations reported an increase in refugee programming from 2022 to 2023.

- Increase 45%
- No change 20%
- Decrease 33%
- Termination of all programming for Ukrainian refugees 4%

Challenges to accessing funding identified by survey respondents

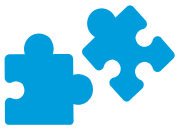
Based on the information provided by 52 of the organizations surveyed the reported gap in the funding required for 2024 would reach at least 15 Million USD.[2]

The lack of flexibility in funding in terms of adapting programming to respond to the evolving needs of refugees was the main challenge identified by organizations to accessing funding, followed by five other salient challenges.

> *Recently, it is difficult to find funding to support the organization's target groups and provide them with assistance according to their needs. Sometimes, one gets the impression that international organizations do not have all the information when formulating [project] goals.*
>
> Representative of a WLO working in Ukraine, translated from Ukrainian

Top 6 Challenges

Lack of funding for the activities or issue areas on which the organization is working.



Mismatch between donor priorities and organizational goals.

Lack of funding opportunities.

Complicated application procedures.

Lack of flexibility in funding in terms of adapting programming to respond to the evolving needs of refugees.

Short application deadlines.

2 This amount should be consider only as indicative as the amount reported by some organizations could not be included either due to a misunderstanding of the question or because they did not indicate a currency.