

# Continued commitment

## Relief, recovery and resilience efforts in Ukraine and neighboring countries

Thank you for your continued commitment to Ukraine. We've mobilized USD 62.6 million for the Ukraine Relief Fund to date. We've committed USD 57.1 million to help our partners deliver essential relief, recovery and resilience services.



A teacher and a Ukrainian student engage in a tech-enabled tutoring session, part of our partner "Teach For Ukraine's" effort to restore learning disrupted by war.

### The need for continued support – addressing critical challenges

As the conflict in Ukraine enters its fourth year, the humanitarian crisis remains severe, requiring a strategic and adaptive response. The UN reports that in 2024<sup>1</sup>, there was a significant increase in attacks on educational and healthcare facilities, severely disrupting essential services. These attacks have significantly disrupted the ability of communities to access vital resources, worsening the already challenging situation and highlighting the importance of continued support.

A major issue is the **severe shortage of qualified personnel** due to the ongoing war. Local organizations struggle with staff burnout and retention, hindering their ability to provide consistent support.

Another pressing issue is the **abrupt U.S. funding freeze** in early 2025, severely impacting Ukraine's

nonprofit sector. Many organizations reliant on USAID-backed support faced operational crises. Critical services have been suspended, disrupting aid for thousands and weakening local NGOs. Nonprofits urgently need support with fundraising, strategic planning, partnership building, and digital communications. The sector requires immediate relief and long-term capacity building to ensure sustainability in a shifting global funding environment.

### Where we've focused our efforts and what we've learnt

We've committed USD 57.1 million to support 25 partners that help address a variety of needs, including humanitarian aid, education continuity, psychosocial support, and social protection. These programs are designed to provide comprehensive support to those affected by the conflict, ensuring that their immediate and long-term needs are met.

The Ukraine Relief Fund experience highlighted several key lessons. First, investing in locally rooted organizations is essential—these civil society organizations (CSOs) are best positioned to respond quickly and effectively, thanks to their deep community ties and contextual knowledge. Second, outcomes-based funding models, such as those used through platforms like OutcomesX, improve transparency, flexibility, and impact by rewarding results rather than activities. Third, flexible funding mechanisms allowed the fund to adapt swiftly as needs evolved, ensuring relevance and efficiency.

Together, these lessons underscore the importance of trust-based, adaptable, and locally driven approaches in crisis response and recovery. They also point toward a sustainable model where philanthropic capital can unlock long-term systems change by empowering those closest to the challenges.

### Our strategic response going forward

Given the ongoing challenges due to the protracted conflict, the UBS Optimus Foundation continues its

<sup>1</sup> Source: United Nations Human Rights: Fact Sheet – Three years since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine: Key facts and findings about the impact on human rights 24 February 2022 to February 2025 [\(link\)](#)

strategic approach of **building local capacity and resilience** by empowering local communities and organizations. We will do this predominantly in partnership **with intermediaries**, that support local civil society organizations with both funding and targeted capacity building. These partners not only strengthen operational capacity and accountability but also foster collaboration through cohort-based models. By bringing CSOs into peer learning networks, intermediaries enable knowledge sharing, reduce duplication, and build a more resilient civil society ecosystem.

We are also **deepening commitment to core themes** critical to long-term recovery: mental health and psychosocial support, education continuity, early childhood development and resilient communities. This addresses immediate and systemic needs, helping children and their families heal, learn and thrive despite ongoing challenges.

### Updates from our programs

Offering an annual progress update, the following pages provide a review of the fifteen programs active last year, outlining their activities and highlighting key achievements made possible through your support. These insights offer a clearer view of how funds are being used and what the partners have achieved. We encourage you to explore these updates to better understand the initiatives underway and thank you for your continued commitment to this important cause. Interested in understanding the significance of maintaining funding beyond the initial crisis phase? Explore our comprehensive guide: [We need to help: Thoughtful philanthropy in response to humanitarian crises](#)

### Ensuring continuous education

**Street Child** is partnering with the Moldovan government to ensure access to essential early education for refugee learners from Ukraine while expanding access to equitable, quality early education for learners from Moldova and Ukraine. Street Child is working with an established network of local organizations through the Alliance for NGOs, in collaboration with the National Institute for Early Intervention and Step by Step Moldova.

Your support has helped Street Child's efforts, which include

- The project provided policy reform support leading to the approval and passing of

regulations for public crèches and positive developments in the normative framework for alternative childcare services

- The renovation and furnishing of five public crèches catering to approx. 80 children and the successful training of 74 early educators employed in public childcare centers and of 25 early education entrepreneurs

**Teach For Ukraine** (TFU) is a partner in the global Teach For All network. Based in Kyiv, the organization delivers catch-up learning and psychosocial support through a technologically enhanced tutoring program spanning 6 to 8 weeks. This initiative is designed to benefit Ukrainian students in grades 5 through 10 who have experienced disruptions to their education due to the impact of the war. By leveraging technology, Teach For Ukraine strives to address the critical problem of learning losses and provide essential psychosocial aid to students affected by the turmoil. The Ukrainian government has demonstrated interest in adapting and incorporating these successful elements of Teach For Ukraine's model into the national education system.

Your support has helped Teach For Ukraine's efforts, which include:

- 2273 Ukrainian students benefited from focused tutoring sessions. These sessions were conducted by experienced tutors who had received additional training on using internet platforms as well as special training on trauma-informed care. TFU provided ongoing support through weekly supervision sessions to ensure tutors were well-equipped to manage their classes and address any challenges.
- Published a guide for school teachers across Ukraine

**War Child Holland** supports children who live with the effects of armed conflict, specializing in child protection, education and psychosocial support. War Child Holland's Can't Wait to Learn offline, self-paced learning application helps to guide grades 1-4 children through government-approved curricula in math and reading. In collaboration with partner organizations, War Child Holland continues to adapt their program to the context of the Ukrainian crisis, based on the national Ukrainian curriculum, for use both within and outside Ukraine.

Your support has helped War Child Holland’s efforts, which include:

- **Can’t Wait to Learn** has been tailored to the Ukrainian crisis, offering gamified math and reading content aligned with the national curriculum. Over 40,000 of the most vulnerable children in Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova have gained access to basic education through this online program.



Children using War Child Holland’s “Can’t wait to learn” App

**Sesame Workshop**, a new addition to the organizations supported by your engagement, developed innovative programs that address children affected by crises. Leveraging proven experience in Ukraine and worldwide, Sesame Workshop will collaborate with key strategic partners to develop and implement a critical need-based, scalable, holistic media enhanced initiative that equips future educators with critical skills to better serve and nurture the needs of young children during a time of ongoing crisis. Sesame Workshop aims to train 120 aspiring educators, thus reaching 2400 children having increased access to safe, responsive, and playful preschool settings while being supported to cope with the effects of the ongoing conflict.

**Complexity Science Hub**, also a new addition, is a research center with a dedicated project “*Opportunity in Crisis*”. They aim to empower Ukrainian refugees to contribute to rebuilding Ukraine’s economy by identifying their skills, connecting them with job opportunities, and fostering partnerships with governments, organizations, and businesses to support long-term economic integration and recovery.

The project has completed key analyses of displaced Ukrainians in Austria and Germany, revealing high education levels but widespread underemployment due to language barriers and skill mismatches. It finalized studies on Ukraine’s global value chains and foreign investment trends, highlighting integration challenges and opportunities. The team conducted ~20 stakeholder interviews, including with refugee organizations, government bodies, and companies. They launched a company survey and began designing pilot interventions, such as an internship program and a startup accelerator in Kyiv.

**Perkins School for the Blind** supports young children with disabilities displaced by the war in Ukraine. It focuses on training education leaders to help families access early childhood education services and programs. The project builds on previous work by UNICEF and EASPD, and involves training 20 Ukrainian refugee Family Consultants in Poland to provide early developmental support to children and families.

With your support, they were able to realize the following:

- 20 Family Consultants have been equipped with advanced skills in Routines Based Early Intervention, enhancing their capacity to support children with disabilities
- Ahead of schedule, 58 families and 62 children are already receiving support from the trained Family Consultants

### Supporting civilians with security and economic support

**CIVIC** has made meaningful progress in its efforts to protect civilians in conflict-affected communities in Ukraine. CIVIC collaborates with civilians to bring their protection concerns directly to those in power, with a specific focus on high-risk areas and newly liberated regions.

Your support has helped CIVIC’s efforts, which include:

- Conducted 134 trainings on mine safety, first aid, psychological support, emergency response, gender-based-violence prevention, air raid alert actions, and media literacy.
- Trained 2492 community members, including internally displaced persons, the elderly, people with disabilities, local officials, and children.
- Supported 78 infrastructure improvements, such as equipping bomb shelters, installing

air raid alert systems, creating safety classes, distributing safety leaflets, setting up emergency info corners, and developing evacuation plans.



Young women in a classroom supported by Global Fund for Children's educational and humanitarian programs.

**Depaul Ukraine** was long established in Ukraine prior to the war, addressing the issue of homelessness. Depaul is currently working in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Odesa and Ivano-Frankivsk with a holistic approach that provides a combination of housing support, cash assistance and psychosocial support.

Your support has helped Depaul's efforts, which include:

- Provided dynamic psychosocial and educational support to 428 children and teenagers from May to September 2024
- Distributed 299 education kits in Odesa and Mykolaiv, tailored to different age groups to prepare children for the school year

**World Jewish Relief** has implemented the Building Stronger Families (BSF) program in Western Ukraine (Lviv and Uzhhorod) as well as in Khmelnytskyi, Sumy and Kharkiv oblasts, or regions. The BSF program supports disadvantaged families with complex needs to build lives of self-reliance and dignity, providing their children with the stability and support they need.

Your support has helped World Jewish Relief's efforts, which include:

- Engaged with families across western, central, northern, and eastern Ukraine providing comprehensive support services,

including psychological consultations, legal assistance, and employment support, to enhance the well-being and self-reliance of families

- Expanded the Building Stronger Families (BSF) program to new locations,

**Integrity Action** builds on the work of Crown Agents focusing on the Children's Resilience Fund and the procurement of perinatal equipment. It aims to support children in Ukraine by partnering with 16 local organizations to provide educational, psychological, and medical assistance. The project includes capacity strengthening for partner organizations, stakeholder mapping, and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) analysis.

Last year, as one example, they conducted a symposium and training on reconstructive surgery for facial and eye injuries for children. 75 surgeons and 100 nurses from across Ukraine increased their skills and knowledge on modern techniques for orbital reconstruction, facial fracture repair, and the use of various types of ocular prosthetics.

### Protecting vulnerable children

**Hope and Homes for Children (HHC)** develops services and policies to protect children and their families, prioritizing family-based care over orphanages and promoting family reunification. HHC is providing support to families at risk of separation through cash transfers, essential supplies, learning spaces, psychosocial support, and help in finding housing.

Your support has helped HHC's efforts, which include:

- Provided emergency support and family strengthening services to the most vulnerable families affected by the war, contributing to their stability. HHC has supported over 3,000 families in the Kyiv region
- Supported the transition of children out of 3 target institutions into family care and developed services to support children with disabilities and their families to prevent institutionalization. HHC has successfully transitioned 150 children into family care and developed multidisciplinary services for 200 children with disabilities

**Lumos** is working on both humanitarian aid and longer-term development programming to prevent

family separation and protect children. The goal is to contribute to the implementation of holistic care reform in Ukraine that promotes the best interests of children and protects their rights to grow up in families. Lumos has shown itself to be a powerful actor by setting up and leading the Ukraine International Advocacy Taskforce to develop and promote advocacy initiatives and sensitize policymakers, professionals, and the general public to prioritize the child protection agenda in recovery policy, programs, and plans.

Recently with your support

- Lumos has undertaken winterization efforts, providing humanitarian kits including food, hygiene supplies, and school materials to 2,000 vulnerable children.
- Lumos has delivered humanitarian assistance to 3,000 children and 2,000 families, significantly impacting their well-being.



Teach For Ukraine participants gather outdoors, united by a mission to restore learning for war-affected students.

**Amna** provides trauma-sensitive and identity-informed psychosocial healing support to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma. They offer group therapy, individual counseling, and community workshops, focusing on culturally relevant practices. Amna also trains local organizations to enhance their capacity to support trauma-affected individuals, fostering long-term healing and resilience.

With your support, they were able to realize amongst other:

- Trained and supported more than 40 therapeutic practitioners through Amna's support and training spaces

- Engaged 1,584 members of the refugee community, including children, youth, caregivers, and adults, through trauma and identity-informed mental health and psychosocial services

### **Strengthening the capabilities of local NGOs**

The **Global Fund for Children (GFC)** provides funding and capacity building support to Ukrainian NGOs working with vulnerable children to provide humanitarian assistance, including safe shelter, medicine, evacuation, psychosocial assistance and educational access. GFC supports 30 local organizations primarily in Ukraine but also grassroots organizations in Croatia, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania and Serbia.

Your support has helped GFC's efforts, which include:

- Provided ongoing technical, programmatic, and advisory support to 30 partners through a combination of virtual check-ins and in-person engagements. These interactions served as key touchpoints to align on strategic priorities, troubleshoot challenges, and explore opportunities for collaboration.
- Additionally, convened partners in Kyiv for both virtual and face-to-face sessions, creating space to surface shared goals, strengthen coordination, and foster resilience in a rapidly evolving context.

**Lightful** offers digital products and services that simplify and amplify the work of grassroots NGOs. Lightful created Building Resilience in Digital Growth and Engagement (BRIDGE), a capacity-building program that builds confidence in three key areas – strategy, storytelling, and digital confidence – so that grassroots NGOs gain the knowledge, understanding, and experience to reach more people and raise more funds.

Your support has helped Lightful's efforts, resulting in:

- 58 organizations being engaged in the program.
- Additionally, 71% of organizations attended at least one webinar, and confidence has increased across all key areas, with a 57% increase in fundraising through digital channels.

## Completed humanitarian projects

In the initial phase of our response, the Ukraine Relief Fund focused mainly on urgent humanitarian needs – medical teams, emergency shelter, food and hygiene kit distribution and psychological first aid. While there still is a need to address immediate community needs, we have shifted our focus toward strengthening Ukrainian civil society organizations. These local actors are best placed to lead long-term recovery in areas like education, mental health and community resilience alongside providing still needed immediate relief. This marks a strategic evolution from emergency relief to a more locally driven response and resilience, while maintaining a dynamic needs-based approach.

Below you will find an overview of the programs that have been completed and what they have achieved.

### Overview of completed programs

**Americares:** Delivered 300+ tons of medical supplies, trained 1,110+ clinicians, supported 17,000+ crisis interventions, funded 50+ generators, and implemented 20+ safeguarding projects across Ukraine and neighboring countries.

**Crown Agents:** Funded 11 civil society organizations, supported 5,600+ children and caregivers, delivered 3,000+ therapy sessions, trained 740+ professionals, and improved child resilience through education, mental health, and safeguarding programs across Ukraine.

**International Rescue Committee:** Reached 2.54M people with crucial information and empowerment support, reached >190,000 people with winterization products, and empowered more than 25,000 children through safe spaces and psychosocial support.

**Kinderspital Zürich:** Supported more than 800 Ukrainian children with emergency healthcare and family support including translation services.

**OutcomesX:** 24 local organization delivered 93% of contracted outcomes, improving children's mental health and education. OutcomesX held regular peer-led learning webinars and facilitated networking, and 50% of organizations improved their data quality through this capacity building.

**ProjectHOPE:** Provided essential medical health services to 31,497 patients, including 3,983 children; distributed 21,777 essential pharmaceutical items across 14 mobile medical units.

**Unicef:** Supported 42,992 vulnerable individuals, enhanced local social services in three Polish cities, and improved access to housing, disability support, and emergency aid.

**World Health Organization:** Delivered 231 tons of medical supplies, 94 ambulances, 30 generators; trained 175 healthcare workers; supported 10,000+ online learners; expanded mental health, trauma, and GBV care across Ukraine.

**Ukraine Trust Chain and We Help Ukrainians (funded via Founders Pledge):** Reached more than 1 million people in Ukraine, including 56,034 evacuation and delivered medicine, repair and winterize homes, run shelters and more.



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