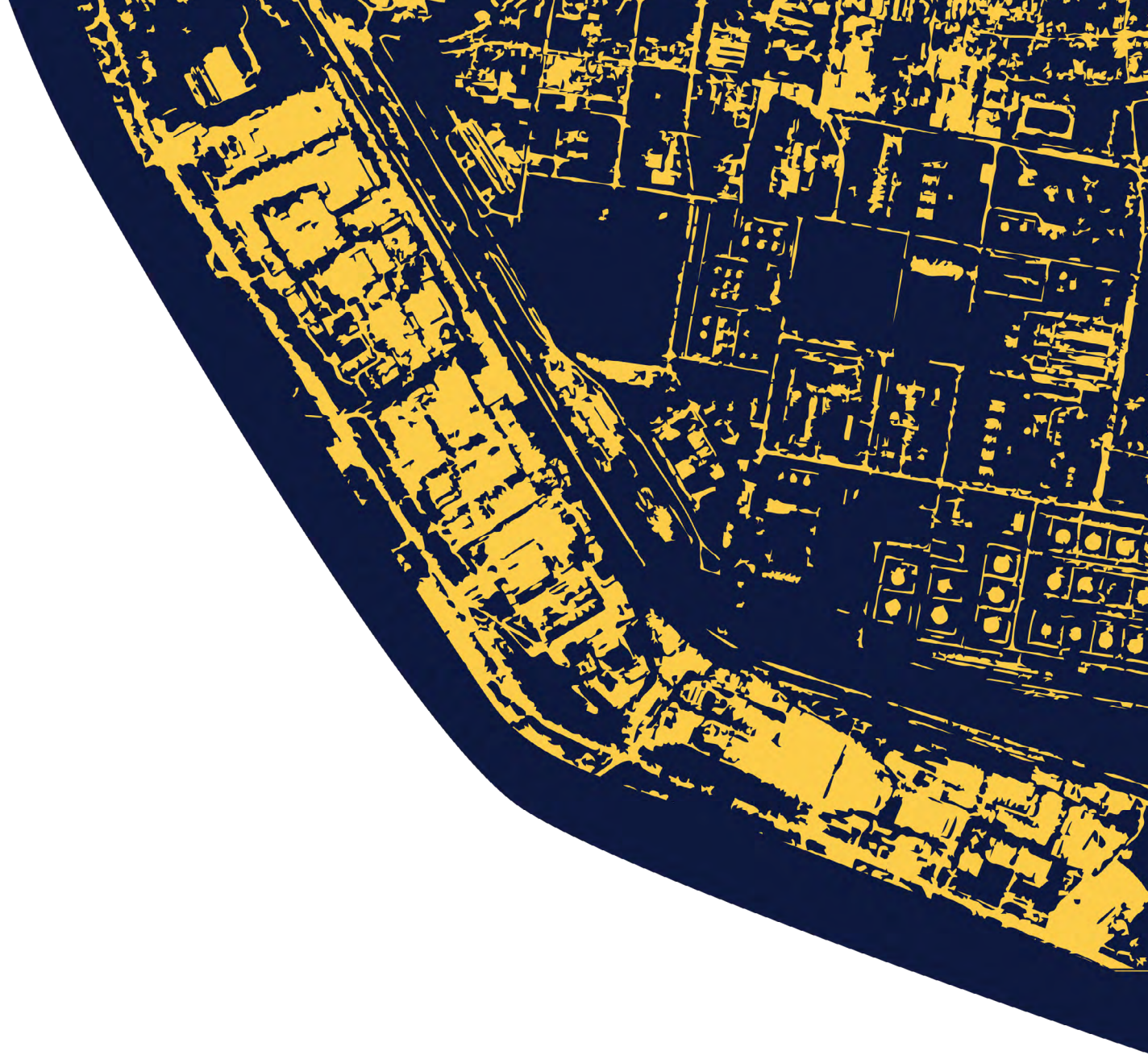




Finding Light in Darkness:

The Role of Ukraine's
Community Foundations
in a Time of War





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The title of this report was inspired by words from [a letter](#) sent to foreign supporters of the Boyarka Community Foundation in December 2022, written by the Deputy Chair of the foundation's board, Maria Kyrylenko

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Foreword

In the first few days following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, at the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) we made a series of emergency grants. Initially, our support was largely to community foundations (CFs) in neighbouring Romania that were responding to the sudden influx of refugees from Ukraine into their country. We had partnered with Romanian CFs before, during the migrant crisis of 2015 – 2016 and then during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we had witnessed the extraordinary ability of these organizations to mobilize both local networks and local money to address sudden crises, and to do so with compassion and care.

Before Russia's invasion, the GFCF's relationship with Ukrainian CFs had been limited to partnerships with a handful of organizations. This was soon to change, however. On 18 March 2022, Daria Rybalchenko, from the National Network of Local Philanthropy Development (NNLPD), and I met for the first time online. By then, just three weeks into the war, CFs were already playing a pivotal role in mobilizing and directing resources, organizing shelter and support for people fleeing from the east of Ukraine.

We soon began to be in touch with CFs directly and learnt more about the work they were doing. What was striking was that all of them were continuing to mobilize local resources, even in the face of war, driven from a profound belief in the importance of local ownership in their work.

We also began to scan the funding landscape for potential international donors who might be looking to work directly with Ukrainian organizations. Our experience of humanitarian emergencies in other parts of the world where we have community philanthropy partners had taught us two things. The first was that, as in Ukraine, trusted and rooted local actors are always the first responders, able to mobilize and direct resources swiftly, thanks to their networks and their proximity to and knowledge of their community. The second is that these same organizations tend to be quickly sidelined or overlooked in the subsequent stages of any large-scale humanitarian action, as international actors move in and crowd them out. If local actors are engaged, it tends to be in the form of "sub-contractors" who require additional "capacity", rather than as valued partners who bring other important resources and experiences to the table.

The war in Ukraine prompted an unprecedented outpouring of public support. In the UK the Disasters Emergency Committee, an umbrella group of the biggest UK charities, raised [£400 million in the first 11 months of the war](#) (approximately US \$487,360,000). As the GFCF, we were concerned whether any – and, if so, how much of – this money would reach local organizations. Despite commitments made in 2016 by donors and international NGOs to "localize" aid and ensure a greater share of direct funding to local actors, a review of aid to Ukraine [published in July 2024 by Refugees International](#) suggested that little progress had been made in that regard, with only 0.07% of the millions of dollars raised for Ukraine having gone to Ukrainian organizations.



Since February 2022, the GFCF has made grants totalling more than US \$760,000 to 15 community philanthropy organizations in Ukraine. Funders such as Choose Love, GlobalGiving, Open Society Foundations and the Robert Bosch Stiftung have been instrumental in enabling us to do this. A handful of other international actors have also recognized the unique position of CFs to be able to reach deep and far into their communities and to make small grants and offer other kinds of support to local groups, to adapt to the constant changes that war brings and, at the same time, to focus on the very notion of community as a source of creativity, strength and hope.

There are many stories that still need to be told of the role that Ukraine's civil society has been playing throughout the war, of which CFs are just one part. We commissioned this report – which Olga Bentz has written with such care and attention to detail, and which was made possible with the support of the Robert Bosch Stiftung – because it tells an important and inspiring story of hope and resilience.

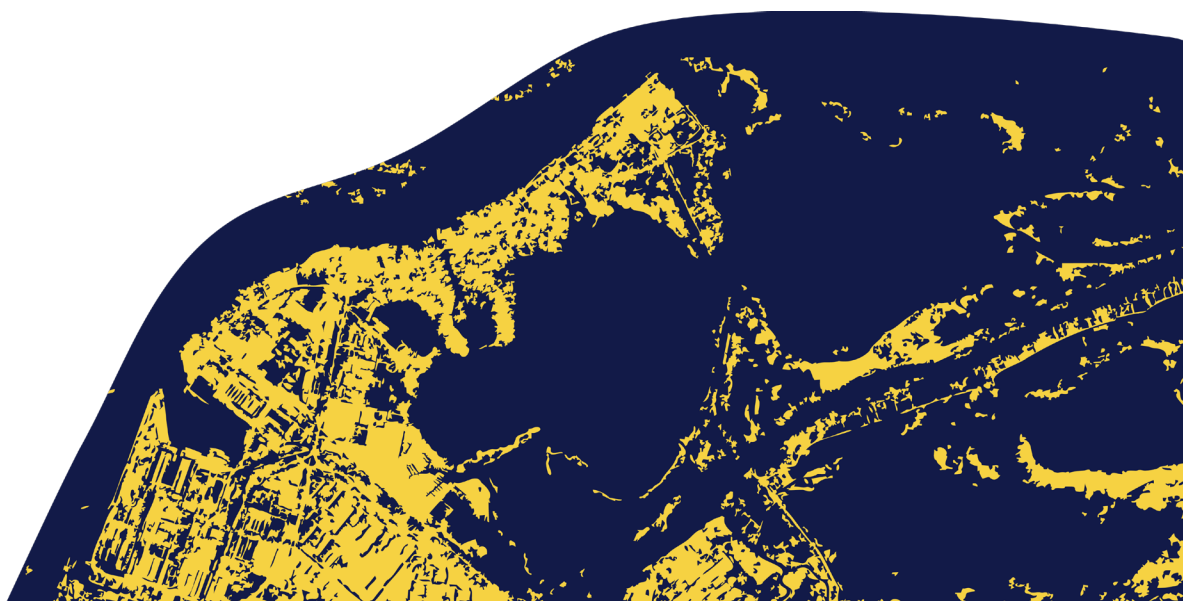
This report is important too because, without it, the complex and constantly evolving essential work that CFs have been doing in Ukraine for the past three years, which builds trust, fosters social cohesion and is delivered with respect and care, often on a shoestring budget and almost entirely beyond the gaze of the mainstream aid system, might otherwise never get told. We believe there are lessons to be learned by the larger humanitarian aid system, which too often insists on the primacy of its resources, its machinery and its world view, and which fails to recognize, respect and work with trusted and pre-existing structures on the ground.

This idea that “another way is possible” and that humanitarian and development aid must do more to put people in charge of their own development processes lies at the heart of the #ShiftThePower movement, in the actions of individuals, organizations and networks that centre people and communities as actors, decision-makers and investors in their own development processes and societies.

Jenny Hodgson
GFCF Executive Director

March 2025

Note: At the time this report was published, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in Ukraine has been ordered to suspend its projects and funding on a blanket directive issued by the US Department of State. This includes humanitarian programmes, repairs to critical infrastructure, media and anti-corruption programmes. As of February 2025, five Ukrainian CFs had had funding frozen. In the words of one CF advocate in Ukraine: “It is the responsibility of all of us to diversify our resources and come up with new funding models so that we do not ever depend on a single source of income.”



Executive Summary

This report explores the pivotal role of CFs in Ukraine. It tracks the history of CF development in Ukraine, and describes its unique model – which is based on local affiliation, independence and transparency. Drawing on data collected through the GFCF's grantmaking in Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion, the report also describes the range of CF responses to the crisis.

It illustrates how Ukrainian CFs have demonstrated remarkable resilience and impact during the ongoing war, addressing both immediate humanitarian needs and fostering long-term community development and social cohesion. Key features include:

- **A unique model for local philanthropy:** CFs in Ukraine are defined by their territorial focus, independence from political or religious affiliations, and transparency in operations. CFs mobilize local resources to address community needs and provide grants and other kinds of support to community organizations as a strategy for fostering local leadership and agency.
- **Resilience in the face of massive wartime disruption:** CFs have adapted to wartime challenges by engaging in crisis response activities, such as providing humanitarian aid, supporting displaced populations and rebuilding social cohesion. Their efforts have strengthened trust, social unity and community resilience despite ongoing adversities.
- **Strategic role in strengthening social cohesion and peacebuilding:** By empowering grassroots initiatives and fostering inclusive, pluralistic community identities, CFs contribute significantly to social cohesion and peacebuilding. Their activities address the psycho-social impacts of war, encourage local volunteerism, and promote sustainable livelihoods.

While they have demonstrated key strengths, the study also highlights the fact that CFs have also faced – and continue to face – multiple challenges. Beyond the day-to-day impacts of the war itself on communities, other challenges include diminishing local philanthropic resources, heavy reliance on key leadership, and a growing sense of exhaustion and burnout among CF personnel after three years of the war. External donor funding (particularly resources raised globally through large international appeals organized by INGOs) has largely been slow to reach CFs, if it has reached them at all, despite global commitments by funders to localize aid.

Where there have been successes in accessing external funding, CFs' experiences of international funding have been mixed. In many instances, application and reporting processes are burdensome and bureaucratic, and there is scant recognition of – or curiosity about – CFs' existing strengths, not least their connection to and credibility with community, much of which is demonstrated through evidence already collected by them.

What Role for International Funders?

CFs in Ukraine are part of a much larger global family of home-grown local and national funds and foundations that have emerged out of their local contexts. They are shaped by local needs and build on local assets. They represent an important part of the local infrastructure for civil society, combining their ability to direct resources to hyper-local groups that are addressing a wide spectrum of community needs while also building social capital and trust across and among the communities they serve.

For international donors committed to advancing locally-led development and localizing aid, Ukrainian CFs offer enormous potential. They have a clear sense of their own identity and their core purpose and, together as a strongly-bound network, they have the potential to channel resources efficiently and effectively to grassroots groups and organizations that they already know and trust. More generally, the story of their wartime response offers an important and valuable example – of a pre-existing civil society architecture which can be built upon – to the broader field of humanitarian and development aid and philanthropy. This is particularly relevant at a time when there is a growing practice among international actors of creating new types of "pooled" funds and intermediary structures which may inadvertently undermine what is already in place.

Beyond a general invitation to funders to familiarize themselves with CFs in Ukraine, both in terms of their ability to channel resources and as builders and stewards of community, the study also highlights specific asks of funders as to the types of funding and support that they consider to be most valuable. These include:

- Tailored and flexible support that recognizes and invests in the pre-existing institutional strengths of CFs, such as trust, relationships, networks, knowledge of community, etc.

- Engagement with CFs as more than “grantees” but rather as leaders in, and facilitators of, Ukraine’s future recovery and reconstruction.
- Reporting requirements that draw on existing data that is already being collected by CFs and used to inform their work.
- Investment in collaboration and an enabling eco-system among and between CFs and the broader networks that they are part of – including the NNLPD and ISAR Ednannia – as a way to build scale and capacity through distributed networks rather than single organizations.
- Support to enable international cooperation, knowledge exchange and advocacy efforts with peers and allies, including community philanthropy institutions, the broader #ShiftThePower movement and other movements and networks advocating for a more equitable and locally-driven development system.

As this report was in its final stages of review, a freeze to US funding was announced. With [US \\$39.8 billion](#) implemented mostly through complex multi-year programs, USAID was an extremely important source of funding for a wide range of humanitarian and development work in Ukraine. This loss (or at least a serious disruption of operations) highlights the importance of building local civil society resilience and its capacity to mobilize diverse kinds of resources, including local philanthropy.



Organization Names, Acronyms and Glossary of Key Terms

Organization Names

For the purposes of this report, in some cases the English version of an organization's Ukrainian name has been shortened and / or simplified for clarity and brevity.

Ukrainian	English
Благодійна організація "Фонд громади Барського району 'Барі'"	Bari Community Foundation
БО "Фонд громади Березань"	Berezan Community Foundation
Благодійна організація "Фонд Боярської громади", БО ФБГ	Boyarka Community Foundation
Фонд громади "Подільська громада"	Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada
БО Благодійний фонд громади Харкова "ТОЛОКА"	Community Foundation of Kharkiv Toloka
Благодійна організація Фонд громади міста Херсон "Захист"	Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst
Фонд громади міста Дубна «Добробут»	Community Foundation of the City of Dubno
Громадська організація "Фонд розвитку громади"	Foundation for Community Development
Відродження Грицева	Grytsiv Revival Association
ІСАР Єднання	ISAR Ednannia
Громадська організація "Фонд розвитку Каховської громади"	Kakhovka Community Development Fund
Фонд "Молода громада"	Moloda Gromada
Фундація імені князів-благодійників Острозьких	Princes-Benefactors Ostrozky Foundation
Благодійний фонд "Фонд громад 'Рідня'"	Ridnya Community Foundation
Фонд громади Вознесеньська	Voznesensk Community Foundation
Благодійна організація "Фонд громади Житомира"	Zhytomyr Community Foundation

Commonly Used Acronyms and Abbreviations

CFs – Community foundations

CSOs – Civil society organizations

GFCF – Global Fund for Community Foundations

IDPs – Internally displaced persons

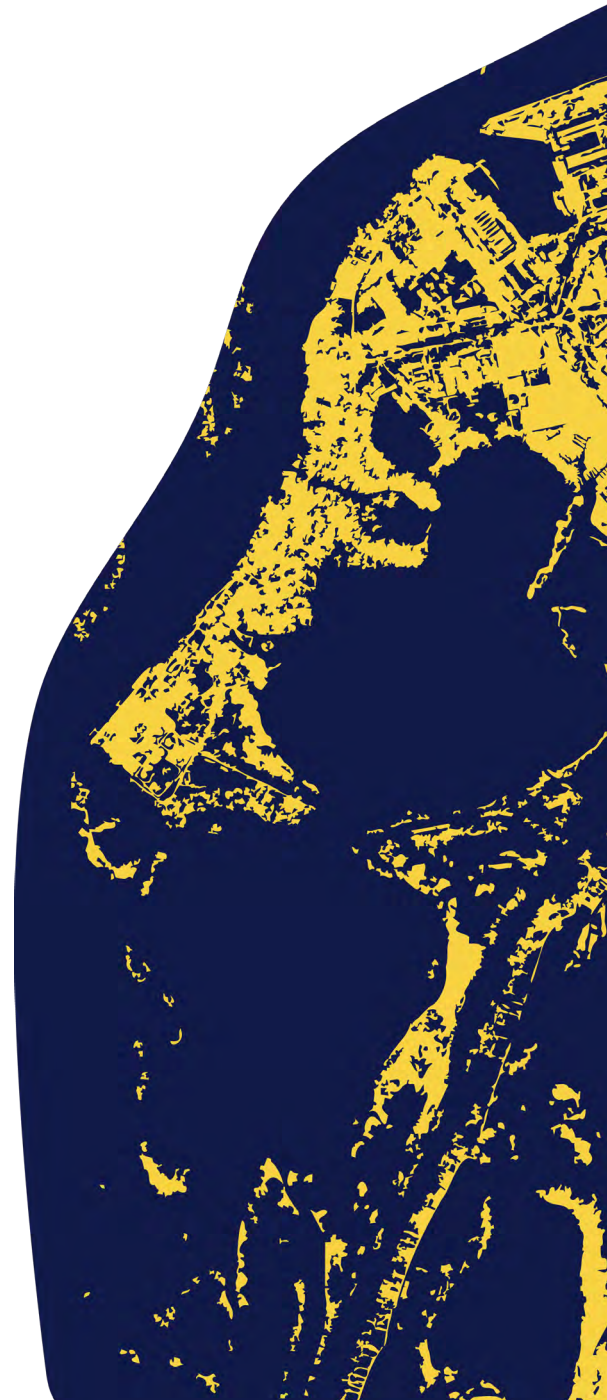
Mott Foundation – Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

NNLPD – National Network of Local Philanthropy Development

Glossary of Key Terms

Localization: Describes commitments made by international donors and humanitarian organizations which date back to 2016 where, at the World Humanitarian Summit, the “Grand Bargain” was launched. This sought to increase the flow of humanitarian and development funds to local actors from approximately 1% of the global total, to 25% by 2020. Progress has been slow, but there has been a growing conversation and a concerted shift in approaches among international funders (in some instances, in partnership with philanthropic actors), around the importance of locally-led development. [As noted by Don Steinberg, Special Advisor to USAID in July 2024](#), localization refers to: “Building a more equitable, effective, and sustainable international development and humanitarian assistance system by changing power dynamics between donors and partners, centering local voices, and working through local, community-based partnerships.” Over the course of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the NNLPD has launched several advocacy efforts in response to the commitments made. One example is An Open Letter to International Donors and NGOs Who Want to Genuinely Help Ukraine, which is included in this report as Annex 7.

#ShiftThePower: A mobilizing force and movement of people and organizations around the world – championed by the GFCF – that seeks to highlight, harness, resource, legitimize and join up new ways of “deciding and doing” that are emerging around the world. [The movement](#) advocates for empowering local actors to lead their own development, and sees such actors as a force for genuine and lasting change in how development work is done. The movement is guided by the [#ShiftThePower Manifesto for Change](#). The [#ShiftThePower Global Summit](#) was organized in Bogotá, Colombia in December 2023 and brought together 730 allies from around the world.



1. Introduction: Context and Objectives

**"Yes, I will laugh despite my tears,
I'll sing out songs amidst my misfortunes;
I'll have hope despite all odds, I will live!
Away, you sorrowful thoughts!"**

Lesya Ukrainka, Ukrainian poet, 1890

**"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's
those little bits of good put together that
overwhelm the world."**

Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1984

1.1. Why CFs Matter: A Strategic Overview

CFs in Ukraine are local philanthropic organizations that empower communities to address pressing needs and foster long-term development. As a globally recognized model, CFs uniquely embody local ownership, transparency and independence.

This report provides a detailed examination of Ukrainian CFs' contributions to social cohesion, resilience and preparation for recovery, particularly during the ongoing war. It highlights their adaptability in crises, strategic importance in peacebuilding, and role in fostering community-led development.

Objectives of this report:

1. To illustrate the distinctive operational and governance models of Ukrainian CFs.
2. To showcase the pivotal contributions of CFs during wartime in fostering resilience and social cohesion.
3. To identify challenges and opportunities for CFs' growth and sustainability.
4. To propose tailored recommendations for international partners to enhance support for CFs.

1.2. Methodology: Insights from Data and Interviews

The report draws on interviews with CF leaders and stakeholders, as well as an analysis of grants data and individual case studies in order to present a comprehensive view of CFs' impact and potential. Data sources include the following:

- An analysis of 2022 – 2025 grants data shared by the GFCF.
- An analysis of 2009 – 2023 data on CF funding sources collected by ISAR Ednannia from a cohort of thirteen CFs operating since 2009.
- Interviews with leaders of five Ukrainian CFs including the Boyarka Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Kharkiv Toloka, Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst, Grytsiv Revival Association and the Ridnya Community Foundation.
- Interviews with representatives of organizations providing financial and technical support to CFs, including the GFCF, International Renaissance Foundation, ISAR Ednannia, Mott Foundation and NNLPD.
- Desk research and analysis of open sources, including the annual reports of individual CFs.
- An analysis of reports on the role of civil society in building social cohesion in Ukraine during wartime, and on the broader role of civil society in Ukraine's war response. Specific resources referred to include the following: [Green Book of Ukrainian Charity](#); [Local Communities During the Wartime: Resilient and Capable](#); [Social Cohesion Research – Focus on Ukrainian Communities in the Context of War](#); [Social Cohesion in Ukraine – Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#); [Examining the Role of Civil Society in Ukraine During Wartime](#); [Hybrid Resilience in Insecure Times: Russia's War and Ukrainian Society](#); [Ukraine's Wartime Recovery and the Role of Civil Society](#); [Options for Supporting and Strengthening Local Humanitarian Action in Ukraine: A Scoping Exercise Report](#); and, [Passing the Buck: The Economics of Localizing Aid to Ukraine](#).
- An analysis of public statements by representatives of Ukrainian CSOs, including CFs.

2. Defining CFs: The Ukrainian Perspective

This section describes the development of Ukrainian CFs and their distinct features and history, which reflect their relatively recent emergence in the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Supported by ISAR Ednannia and the NNLPD, a cohort of CFs developed with strong local support, their growth spurred by the powerful social movements of the Orange Revolution (2004 – 2005) and Maidan Revolution (also known as the Revolution of Dignity, in 2014). Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 swelled funding and further transformed these CFs. Over the last three years, their funding bases have evolved from being primarily comprised of local sources to two-thirds of their funds coming from international sources; a situation which may threaten their long-term sustainability.

2.1. Understanding CFs: A Blueprint for Local Leadership

CFs are locally governed, non-profit entities dedicated to improving the quality of life within a defined geographic area. Their core principles include:

- **Territorial focus:** Operations are rooted in and serve specific, geographically defined, local communities.
- **Independence:** CFs operate autonomously, free from political or religious affiliations.
- **Transparency:** Annual reporting ensures accountability to donors, communities and partners.

The NNLPD defines CFs as a model of operation of a non-governmental organization that aims to improve the quality of life in the communities where it operates. CFs identify the needs of the local community, encourage charitable donations and accumulate funds from which to provide grants for initiatives to address socially important local issues.

More definitions of CFs and an overview of conceptual discussions in this field are presented in Annex 1 of this report.

2.2. A History of Growth: The Evolution of CFs in Ukraine

Prior to Russia's full-scale invasion, there were circa 25 – 30 CFs in Ukraine. Currently, the NNLPD has 15 members, while a larger number of organizations work in similar kinds of ways, without necessarily calling themselves CFs.

Most of Ukraine's CFs have been in existence for more than ten years, making them an established, growing and self-organized part of the civil society landscape in Ukraine. This is based on a sample of GFCF grant partners.

Private philanthropy was largely non-existent during the years of the Soviet Union prior to Ukraine's independence in 1991. In Ukraine, the first foundations with a community focus started to appear in the mid-1990s, though they were not CFs per se. The concept of CFs was introduced by the Mott Foundation, via ISAR Ednannia, in 1999. In the years that followed, this was accompanied by initial support projects / programmes aimed at awareness raising, capacity building, international exchanges, the development of data collection systems and methodological publications, as well as financial support. Meanwhile, the first CFs in continental Europe were established in Slovakia in 1992, in Romania in 2008, and in Hungary in 2011.

Local volunteering, activism and philanthropy gradually emerged after 1991, further fuelled and accelerated by the Orange Revolution in 2004 – 2005, and the Maidan Revolution in 2014. At the same time, Ukraine's ongoing economic development and the emergence of corporate social responsibility further contributed to the advancement of diverse forms of philanthropy. CFs in particular benefited from ongoing support from a range of international funders, including the Mott Foundation and various USAID, European Union and UK aid programmes.

Data from ISAR Ednannia helps draw a picture of the evolution of CFs in Ukraine. From 2009 – 2013, a cohort of the thirteen oldest CFs demonstrated a steady cumulative growth. Their total budgets increased from US \$232,000 to \$945,000. 2014, the year of the Maidan Revolution which triggered widespread civic activism across Ukraine, also saw a sudden spike in the total budget of CFs to US \$4.5 million. Since 2016, the same cohort of thirteen CFs has operated with a steady total budget of over US \$1 million. The 2022 full-scale invasion saw a resurgence in funding for CFs to US \$5 million in 2022 and US \$3.3 million in 2023. In total, the same thirteen CFs for whom data was collected have collectively raised and managed well over US \$23 million.

Further analysis of CFs' finances also shows how they have remained consistent in their commitment to the principle of local ownership, in particular through the fostering of local philanthropy and cultures of giving. Prior to the beginning of the full-scale invasion, on average, international funding made up 30% of CFs funding, while 64% of their income was raised locally, from people, businesses and NGOs. A further 6% came from national sources, both comprising

corporations and programmes funded from state and local budgets. Even after the full-scale invasion, local philanthropy continued to form an important source of funding for CFs. According to data collected by ISAR Ednannia, in 2022 and 2023, the proportion of international funding rose to 43%, as international donors responded to the war, opening up new programmes and lines of funding. While the proportion of contributions from local sources declined to 38%, this was partially offset by an increase in the share of Ukrainian national sources to 18%. In 2022, the first year of the full-scale invasion, local CFs cumulatively mobilized more than US \$2 million from local sources. However, in 2023 it was just a half of that amount. Compared with 2022, figures for 2023 revealed a sharp downturn in contributions from both local and national sources, with the share of international funding increasing to an unprecedented 64% in total. As the war has dragged on, CFs have become increasingly vulnerable in terms of the durability of their traditional funding bases, squeezed by the growing needs of the communities they serve, and the decreased amount of domestically available resources to address them. The role of international solidarity and funding support is therefore more important than ever, and will be discussed later in this report.

More context, background and history of CFs in Ukraine can be found in Annex 2.



3. Organizational Models and Governance: Building Resilient Structures

This section looks in detail at the characteristics of Ukrainian CFs that are members of the NNLPD, and the criteria the organization requires of its CF members in terms of the way they operate and their governance. The NNLPD defines a clear development path for members, with defined levels of achievement set out for each stage on the path, as well as a wider range of support options from the NNLPD as organizations mature.

3.1. Local Resource Mobilization: Driving Community-Led Initiatives

In addition to a set of core criteria, the NNLPD has developed a set of “acquired criteria”, which outline a series of steps by which Ukrainian CFs can operationalize core organizational values (as concluded by the author based on the criteria defined by the NNLPD). These acquired criteria include the following:

- **Local ownership and activation:** For the purpose of raising funds for programmes from local resources, including business, private donations and diaspora funds. A CF provides services to local, national and international donors / philanthropists interested in working in the area where the CF operates.
- **Evidence-based engagement and community research:** A CF initiates research on community needs and resources, and uses the data to inform programming.
- **Sharing and providing support to other NGOs and initiative groups:** A CF provides financial and capacity-strengthening support to NGOs operating in a defined geographic area, including training, mentoring and financial support (ie. grants).
- **Inclusion and good governance:** Management is carried out by a board of reputable citizens broadly representing all sectors of the community, and the CF has a clear management structure. It is recommended that a CF, in addition to the administrative team, should have a board and a supervisory board. The board and supervisory board should represent different segments of the population: representatives of local self-government, local activists, local donors, prominent people in the community, representatives of minority groups, etc.

To become a CF member of the NNLPD, organizations are required to demonstrate how they conform to these criteria.

For its part, NNLPD has developed clear metrics and a development path for its members and offers services related to organizational development, team care, financing, communications and advocacy, as well as advancement of philanthropy culture.

For example, **local ownership and activation** (acquired criteria 1) can be measured through the share of local resources in a CF’s budget, the amount of funds disbursed and its overall sustainability. For each metric, targets are defined for different levels of achievement / development. For example, taking the share of local resources in a CF’s budget, specific metrics would be achieved at 40%, 60%, and 80%. For disbursement (or distribution) of funding different levels of achievement are defined, where levels 1 and 2 include some re-granting from international and domestic donor funds, while level 3 foresees – in addition – regular grant competitions and stipends from diverse sources. In terms of sustainability, level 2 comprises having organizational policies in place which determine how a CF works with donor funds, clearly defined processes for measuring the effectiveness of programmes, and a description of the different services a CF can offer to local, national and international donors. At level 3, a CF would have in place a strategy for creating long-term, sustainable sources of income, including, but not limited to, endowments or social enterprises.

Metrics for community research (acquired criteria 2) include an annual community assessment, programming approach and evaluation. At level 1, a CF identifies community needs on the basis of an annual assessment / survey which informs its programmes. At level 2, the annual community assessment is based both on needs and resources. Level 3 implies that the CF has a mechanism for citizens who have initiatives to improve the quality of life in the community or resources that they want to donate to the public good, as well as a system of communications to highlight the problems and needs of the community to find resources and ways to solve them. “We have been running a survey in our community once every two years since 2011. We ask people what they want to change in the community, what are they ready to contribute to, and then we start fundraising accordingly. Our residents have got used to it,” explains the leader of the Grytsiv Revival Association.

Sharing and providing support to other NGOs and initiative groups (acquired criteria 3) considers different capacity development instruments for local initiative groups and NGOs deployed by a CF, from training on project

management, fundraising, etc. (level 1) through thematic grant competitions and activities to strengthen the capacity of local initiative groups (level 2), to a permanent grant competition for the development of local initiatives, public events to highlight local initiatives and / or events to unite and network local initiatives (level 3). "Grant competitions are extremely important. There is more trust, when someone, like a CF, is fundraising not for themselves, but for the others. People are generous!" explains the leader of the Ridnya Community Foundation.

Finally, **management is carried out by a board of reputable citizens broadly representing all sectors of the community** (acquired criteria 4). This looks at the governance requirements of a CF and instruments for inclusion. Those include a clear operating structure for fund management and decision-making (level 1), a clear and functioning governance structure consisting of citizens broadly representing all sectors of the community (level 2), and, in addition to the above, regular events for members of the management structure to be actively involved in the CF's programmes (level 3).

An overview of CF operating models based on acquired criteria is included as Annex 3 to this report.

3.2. Governance at Work: Inclusive and Transparent Leadership

CFs vary in size and the sophistication of their operations. An analysis of 14 GFCF partner organizations reveals the following:

- **Local ownership:** All CFs are led by residents of the local communities they represent, both in terms of supervisory boards and operational management.
- **Professionalism and sustainability:** CFs are run by relatively small teams. Almost all the GFCF partners (more than 80%) have paid staff (six persons on average). Key functions of the paid staff include accounting, project coordination and grant management, fundraising coordination and administrative assistance. In some cases, there is a person in charge of communication and of thematic leads e.g. medical, humanitarian, etc. Although no direct correlation between the number of staff and the budget of CFs has been observed, CFs with the lowest staff number report the lowest budget while the three biggest CFs budget-wise have paid staff. So, the ability to finance the core team can be seen as a prerequisite for any substantial size of operations.
- **Local activation and sharing:** CFs rely on a network of volunteers as a part of their operating model. Of the ten (out of 13) GFCF partners who have volunteers, most

have between ten and 20. Two reported less than ten, while three report 150 – 300 volunteers in their networks. There is no obvious correlation between the number of volunteers and other qualitative performance metrics. It could suggest that "strengthening community groups", "building trust in the community" and "building local philanthropy / assets", which are the most frequently self-reported effects of Ukrainian CFs' work (from a list of standard indicators used by the GFCF across all its grantmaking), are difficult to measure by simple qualitative metrics.

- **Inclusion and good governance:** Most of the GFCF partners have a board and / or a supervisory board. This information is normally listed on their websites, where CFs also publish other news, annual reports, etc. Almost all of the GFCF's partners in Ukraine have websites.



4. Impact During Wartime: Stories of Resilience

This section describes how CFs have adapted to the challenges of wartime, from supporting communities that have been displaced and those that host internally displaced persons (IDPs), work on social cohesion and community resilience, to psycho-social and emotional support for people affected, to support for developing new livelihoods. This section also covers how these activities are implemented and sustained, and how impact is measured.

4.1. Adapting in Crisis: How CFs Respond to Wartime Challenges

Interestingly, when asked “What has changed in your activities and operations since the beginning of the full-scale invasion?” the representatives of CFs typically start by accentuating what has not changed for them. First is their focus on the longer-term development of their communities. Even though they have engaged heavily in humanitarian response, most see it as a temporary extension of their scope, not a new focus area. Second, the majority have kept small grant competitions for community initiatives and social projects as one of their primary instruments. While the thematic focus of those competitions may have changed – for example to support work on the integration of IDPs – empowering local activists and volunteers is still a key driver of CFs work.

CFs responded to the full-scale invasion in different ways, depending on the needs and opportunities in their communities as well as their own situation. A summary of the GFCF grant portfolio, which served as a basis for this analysis, is included in this report as Annex 4, with a short description of each individual grant. In considering individual projects it is important to recognize not only what has been done, but also how. Positive spillover effects of the primary activities around strengthening community social cohesion, individual and collective self-empowerment, and fostering trust and hope in the face of unimaginable losses should not be underestimated. “It is wrong to stop living and do nothing” says one of the CF leaders from a community close to the frontline. “We need to teach the kids in our community to dream and plan again,” says another. Team members of Ukrainian CFs are themselves often going through enormous losses – yet they continue to act in a dignified manner, serving their communities.

The remarkable story of the Foundation for Community Development from Kramatorsk, whose home community is also close to the frontline, is just one example. The organization has supported victims of the conflict in the east

of Ukraine since 2016. In March 2022, as part of a larger exodus from the region, foundation staff relocated – now themselves as IDPs – to a town in the west of Ukraine. It quickly established itself there and focussed its work on assisting other IDPs. This included refurbishing a public assembly hall, where at one point 300 IDPs were staying. Towards the end of 2023, some of the foundation staff returned to Kramatorsk, where (as of early 2025) they are currently establishing a volunteer network to assist vulnerable people in frontline communities in the Donetsk region.

Below are some overarching themes from the war response of CFs in Ukraine.

What?

Crisis response, including humanitarian assistance, formed a significant part of the initial response of individual CFs to the war. Several CFs, including the Bari Community Foundation, Berezan Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst and Voznesensk Community Foundation repaired and refurbished accommodation for IDPs or, in the case of Zakhyst, organized volunteers to clean up flooded houses after the destruction of Kakhovka dam. Others, like the Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada helped to establish “invincibility points”, offering emergency access to electricity, hot water, etc. to the community in the face of regular blackouts. The Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst also distributed cash assistance. As the war has continued, different types of emergency situations have arisen, and CFs have responded quickly, prioritizing community needs and providing crisis response in a targeted, efficient and dignified manner.

Social cohesion, including trust-building, strengthening community groups and links between them has been another important feature of CFs’ wartime response. This has taken the form of a wide range of community-driven actions such as running grant competitions, distributing small grants to community activists, offering mentorship and advisory support to local groups, etc. The Community Foundation of the City of Dubno, for example, conducted a study of socially active people in their community, organizing a “School of Active Citizenship” for local leaders on the basics of civic engagement and project management, followed by an open call for small grants to local groups which included both funding and mentorship.

Psycho-social and psychological support has also formed part of CFs' response, either as a dedicated activity or as part of broader interventions. Examples include the Boyarka Community Foundation, Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada, Community Foundation of the City of Dubno, Foundation for Community Development and the Princes-Benefactors Ostrozky Foundation, which all organized activities, some funded by grants, to support social projects or institutions offering activities from psychological consultations to cultural events and art therapy.

CFs have also addressed challenges associated with economic **livelihoods** in a complex and sustainable manner. One example is Voznesensk Community Foundation, which designed and implemented a turn-key solution which entails training local community members and IDPs in agricultural skills, the procurement of agricultural machinery and composters, the establishment of a seed bank and the provision of individual consultations (which resulted in 21 project ideas, of which 13 received grant support from the foundation). In addition, a feasibility study for the creation of a wholesale and retail market for agricultural products with processing facilities and warehouses was developed.

How?

Small grants competitions have remained an important tool for community engagement, even in a period of wartime, with ten of the GFCF's grant partners continuing grantmaking activities. One powerful example is the Boyarka Community Foundation, which has organized 16 grant competitions since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, received more than 320 applications, and provided funding to more than 130 projects. Only three out of the 16 grant rounds have been financed with funding from the GFCF.

The principle of "do no harm" appears to be strongly embodied by Ukrainian CFs, particularly in activities targeting vulnerable groups such as IDPs. The goal in this regard is to strengthen their connection with host community residents, as opposed to alienating them. For example, when addressing IDP issues the Boyarka Community Foundation, Princes-Benefactors Ostrozky Foundation, Zhytomyr Community Foundation and others have consciously chosen to target a wider range of vulnerable groups including, for example, relatives of the deceased, injured military personnel and others particularly traumatized by the war. This approach helps avoid rising tensions and rifts in communities and changes the narrative away from IDPs being a potential burden to host communities, to one which empowers them as partners and valuable contributors. When the Foundation for Community Development organized a summer camp for kids, they made sure it was accessible for both IDP families and children from the host

community. Similarly, when the Voznesensk Community Foundation launched its community farming programme, a specific focus of the programme was to encourage IDPs and residents to develop joint agricultural projects together. Their grant report noted: "Because of the emergence of a group of like-minded persons interested in the development of agricultural production, who interact with each other, exchange information and support each other, a community was created."

Sustainability of action is another prominent aspect of CFs' work. As organizations that are rooted in their communities, they are well positioned to know both what will bring a lasting change and how to make it happen. For example, in response to a significant influx of IDPs, the Ridnya Community Foundation organized a grant competition with a focus on joint activities between IDPs and the host community. Some participants were so inspired that they set up a dedicated NGO to sustain and advance their activities. Today, it is a respected IDP-driven organization playing an important and potentially longer-term role in strengthening social cohesion within the community. In the same way, most CFs included in this research are also engaged in the mentoring and training of activists and volunteers in their communities, gradually expanding the ecosystem of able and engaged citizens.

Even in the context of war, CFs have demonstrated their ability to innovate, from the "citizen token" system pioneered by Moloda Gromada ("Young Community") from Odessa, to joint bread-baking and bread-sharing sessions for IDP and host communities, organized on a grand scale by the Princes-Benefactors Ostrozky Foundation. Meanwhile, the innovation pursued by the Ridnya Community Foundation has been to reach deep into smaller remote communities that often lie beyond the radar of most civil society actors, by fostering local leadership and participation through training, mentoring and small grants.

All of the projects supported with GFCF grants **include an element of local resource mobilization**, ensuring that there is always a blend of international and locally-mobilized funding. This would appear to be critical, not only for the community's empowerment, agency and independence, but also to maintain healthy relations between the local communities and international funding partners.

More than half of the GFCF's partners have received more than one grant, which makes it possible to observe the **evolution in response** actions as the war has continued, from humanitarian action through to psycho-social adaptation, to broader psycho-social recovery and to future-oriented livelihood support, including a growing focus on the younger generation. One example is the Boyarka Community Foundation. Their initial grant from the GFCF

focused on solidarity and strengthening links between IDPs and host community representatives, the second grant focused on psycho-social support, and the third on psycho-social support and the well-being of children and youth. In the same way, the Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada started with small grants to organize invincibility points to address the immediate hardships related to energy blackouts, while the second supported a shift towards the provision of psycho-emotional support and cultural activities. Closeness to community needs and awareness about local resources enable CFs to deliver timely and relevant interventions tailored to each individual community.

4.2 Mobilizing Communities: Pathways to Becoming Resilient

The United Nations Development Agency offers the following [definition of resilience](#): “Resilience is the ability of individuals, households, communities, cities, institutions, systems and societies to prevent, resist, absorb, adapt, respond and recover positively, efficiently and effectively when faced with a wide range of risks, while maintaining an acceptable level of functioning without compromising long-term prospects for sustainable development, peace and security, human rights and well-being for all.”

According to the research [Local Communities During the Wartime: Resilient and Capable](#): “With the beginning of the full-scale war, cooperation between local self-government and Ukrainian CSOs and charities has reached a new level [...] Share of Ukrainian CSOs in support received by local self-governance bodies accounts for 17% of the total, second only to international organizations and INGOs. It includes material, institutional, financial, communication, personnel, etc.”

According to the same research, the sources of community resilience include the following:

- Leadership team on a local level.
- Sustainability and willingness of the community residents to stay and resist.
- Proactiveness and volunteering of residents.
- Development and orientation to the future.
- Social cohesion and unity around joint goals.

- International support.

- Communication, including between the residents and local authorities.

CFs simultaneously tap into and contribute to many, if not all, of the sources of community resilience mentioned above. First, they are, by definition, locally-led (both operationally, and at the level of supervisory / advisory boards). Second, their sustainability can be illustrated by a long history of operations for most of them (see Annex 2 of this report for more details).¹ According to one CF leader: “The war is not forever. We should be ready with a million ideas for our community to implement as soon as the war is over.” Third, they empower and resource local volunteers as part of their approach, enabling individual and collective healing and trauma processing. Fourth, nearly 60% of the grants made by the GFCF to Ukrainian CFs were spent on activities beyond the immediate crisis response, enabling future orientation through work with younger people, development of social infrastructure, investing in sustainable livelihood solutions, etc.

One particularly powerful example of working with future orientation is the Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst, whose home community is just a few kilometres from the frontline and where shelling has become a part of daily life. Despite this, the CF still runs a programme dedicated to the creation of a future vision for Kherson: specifically, this takes the form of an [online forum](#), which has been informed by more than 30 surveys of the Kherson community. Fifth, an emphasis on social cohesion is consistently reflected in the mission statements of all the organizations included in the research (examples of which can be found in Annex 5 of this report). Sixth, while international support has historically formed an important part of Ukrainians CFs’ operating models, its importance has grown significantly since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. CFs are important actors in their ability to channel international support to their communities and to manage these funds in efficient, transparent and responsible ways. More information about the funding of Ukrainian CFs is presented in Annex 6 of this report.

Finally, as locally embedded hubs, CFs are well positioned to communicate with and on behalf of the communities they serve. They regularly research local needs, share this collected information with local authorities, and help to coordinate joint actions between local authorities, citizens and other local stakeholders. All those interviewed for this report described constructive cooperation with local

¹ Dates of establishment of GFCF partners included in the research are as follows: 1995 (one organization); 2000 – 2010 (four organizations); 2010 – 2015 (six organizations); and, 2016 – 2020 (three organizations).

authorities. “We complement, not substitute, what the authorities are doing. For example, we were able to mobilize humanitarian assistance for the IDPs, and they have provided free warehousing.”

4.3. Empowering Communities: Building Social Cohesion Amidst Displacement

According to the report [Social Cohesion in Ukraine – Part 1](#), social cohesion refers to the state of harmonious, mutually beneficial relations and reciprocity between actors. Vertical cohesion refers to relations between the public and the national authorities, while horizontal cohesion refers to relations within local communities and between various groups in society. Elements of horizontal social cohesion include the following:

- **Community cooperation:** Citizens perceiving that community members care for each other and cooperate to solve common problems.
- **Pluralistic Ukrainian identity:** Citizens believing that everyone living in Ukraine, irrespective of ethnic or cultural background, can be considered Ukrainian and an integral part of society.
- **Sense of belonging to the country:** Feeling attachment to, and belonging in, Ukraine.
- **Social tolerance:** Tolerance towards marginalized groups, openness to interact personally, and acceptance in the community.
- **Social proximity and lack of social threat:** Accepting as close friends and colleagues, and not feeling threatened by, citizens from different regions or with different political ideologies and visions.

CFs in Ukraine are powerful drivers of social cohesion in Ukraine. First, operating under the overarching idea / principle of “local resources for local needs” CFs’ purpose is to enable community members to work jointly to solve local problems, from humanitarian needs to recovery and development, through a “people-to-people” approach. Second, inclusion is a core value. From the start of the war, CFs were among the first to recognize the potential challenges of coexistence between people from different backgrounds, and with different experiences of the war, often speaking different languages (many IDPs are Russian speakers while host communities, particularly in western Ukraine, speak predominantly Ukrainian). Furthermore, trauma of the kind associated with war and conflict often limits the ability of people to constructively engage with “the other.” In response to these types of specific challenges, CFs

have designed and implemented a wide range of responses aimed at inspiring joint actions between the representatives of IDPs and host communities, in a deliberate effort to foster a pluralistic Ukrainian identity, and to promote social tolerance and social proximity more broadly. In addition to engaging IDPs as partners, some CFs have also recruited IDPs as members of their staff and volunteer teams.

Third, CFs have maintained, and in many cases expanded their operations, despite losses, physical insecurity and availability of options to move to safer locations abroad. In this way, they have not only demonstrated a sense of belonging to their country but have also enabled others in their communities to strengthen their own sense of belonging (for example, through resourcing and mentoring). A CF leader makes the point powerfully: “My husband has been in the army since February 2022. I have told him that I will wait for him at home. I am not going anywhere. We should be ready when the war ends, and have a million ideas and dreams.”



4.4. Defining Success: Community-Led Approaches to Measuring Impact

CFs deploy a range of approaches to measure both the impact of their operations in a broad sense – such as gauging levels of trust in the community – and at a programmatic level, through the use of beneficiary interviews, qualitative metrics, etc. They try to assess their impact not only in quantitative terms such as the value of humanitarian aid provided, but also in regard to “soft”, qualitative factors, such as relationships and the quality of interactions between people and their willingness to volunteer and engage for the common good of the community.

A particular innovation associated with Ukrainian CFs is the way in which they enable local communities to make their own decisions and to determine what success might mean for them. CFs are interested in the impact of their work on direct beneficiaries as well as the impact on the whole community. This is particularly illustrated in the responses of CFs to a question in the GFCF’s grant application form regarding how they evaluate the impact of their grants, both at the grantee level and on the community as a whole. The answers are varied and thoughtful. Below are some examples.

Boyarka Community Foundation

At the grantee level: The authors of the projects – among whom are representatives of civil society institutions, small entrepreneurs and ordinary citizens – feel that their social initiatives are supported in the community. This stimulates them to engage in socially responsible behaviour and systematic actions in this direction. An example of successfully implemented projects inspires others to shape their dreams into projects, to think in terms of project categories, to look for like-minded people and ways to attract funding. From our practice, some projects that did not receive funding during the tenders were successfully implemented, because drawing attention to them encouraged the participation of others who were ready to support the project in material and non-material ways. Four projects out of the 36 submitted were implemented in-house.

On the community as a whole: Residents are being activated at the community level, they learn to take responsibility for themselves, start writing projects, look for funding or donate money to the ideas they like. As a result, the community is developing philanthropic traditions, while more and more people are getting involved in solving local problems and problems of individual target groups and the community as a whole.

Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada

At the grantee level: We see a great effect for grantees from the competitions we announce. It is a great way to activate the target audience, because we do not just provide grants, but also support the organization from writing an application to reporting. Our foundation is often referred to as the “first grantmaker” and, after our support, the winners successfully apply for subsequent competitions, as they already understand the entire process. According to our grantees, it is not only financial support that is important, but also non-financial resources (consulting, knowledge and skills, the feeling that people think about you and want to help, etc.) that count.

On the community as a whole: Grants have an equally important effect on the community as a whole. Again, grant competitions and grants activate the community, encourage it to combine efforts and resources, respond to current challenges and priorities, provide an opportunity to address priority needs, and improve the quality of life of community members.

Voznesensk Community Foundation

At the grantee level: The efficiency of spending funds and the achieved results of the project are evaluated. Money management is carried out by the grant manager based on reports (descriptive and financial) provided by the grantee. A separate check is made of financial reports.

On the community as a whole: At the community level, we research people’s needs and see changes based on the results of grant competitions. We also collect statistical information indicating the impact of projects and conduct research, where available, including focus groups or in-depth interviews.

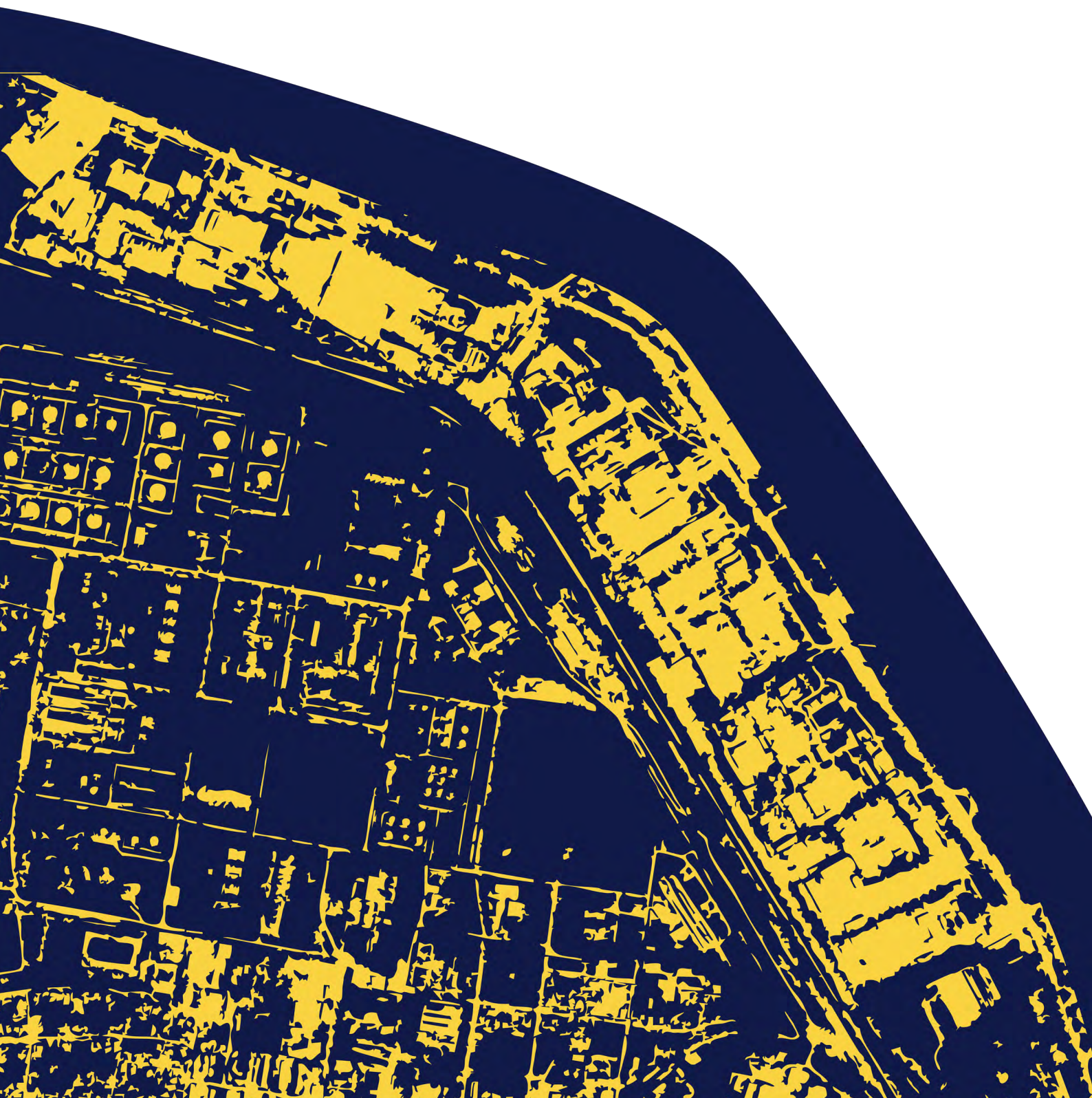
At the end of the grant period, the GFCF asks its partners to self-evaluate the intended and actual outcomes of the project activities. CFs select from a list of universal (internationally applied) indicators. The three most frequently selected outcomes selected by Ukrainian CFs are:

- Strengthening community groups.
- Building trust in the community.
- Building local philanthropy / assets.

Interestingly, these are also the most frequently selected outcomes across all GFCF community philanthropy partners worldwide for the period 2022 – 2023. The next most important outcomes include poverty reduction, building connections between CFs, capacity building of local institutions and building connections with policy makers or funders.

Other effects may include spreading skills and knowledge between CFs, changing practices of policy makers or funders, building the field of community philanthropy, gaining more resources from policy makers or funders, bridging relations between different communities, strengthening marginalized groups, advocacy and participation of local people with authorities, and raising the visibility of community philanthropy with policy makers or funders.

The GFCF's approach to partner selection is briefly described in Annex 8 of this report.



5. Challenges and Opportunities: The Path Forward

Opportunities, challenges and threats for CFs are presented in the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) table below.

Strengths	■ Unparalleled understanding of local needs, resources and priorities ■ Local agency, the model empowers community cooperation and self-determination ■ Building hope and trust within communities, even during the war, nurtured by the sense of ownership, agency and self-empowerment ■ Inclusivity of action, the CF model empowers pluralistic Ukrainian identity and social tolerance ■ Independence ■ Strong CF network and supporting structures	■ Efficient use of available resources ■ Conflict-sensitive approaches ■ Flexibility of war response and resilience-building actions ■ High engagement of people of Ukraine in volunteering and support to the army and their community ■ Strong links between CFs and authorities and / or other local institutions including schools, libraries, local parliaments, etc. ■ Systems, processes, instruments in place to assure transparency of operations
Weaknesses	■ Unique model, requiring lots of commitment from the local people – not easily scaled by simply adding more resources into the system ■ High demands on CF leadership / expectations of full-time commitment 24 / 7 ■ Dependence on a small number of key leaders within individual CFs	■ Community development is not an explicit priority for a country in war ■ Atypical model does not always fit with reporting requirements of some international partners ■ Limited / reduced philanthropic resources available at the local level, both financial and in terms of the number of people interested in volunteering activities
Opportunities	■ Meaningful growth of CF network through further strengthening the NNLPD as a network-supporting institution ■ Engagement in preparation for post-war recovery to empower democratic and people-centered development ■ Public education and awareness raising about the CFs and local philanthropy ■ Nurturing of self-care, individual resilience and well-being support to CFs and their communities ■ Tremendous social shifts in Ukrainian society and social mobility could contribute to increased number of volunteers and socially conscious people at the local level ■ Knowledge sharing with CFs from other countries, for example in terms of emergency response	■ High penetration of local philanthropy: Ukraine is one of the top ten most generous countries in the world (according to the Charities Aid Foundation's World Giving Index 2024) ■ Broad interest in CF model from Ukrainian non-profit organizations ■ Consistent advocacy for and participation in global #ShiftThePower and localization efforts aimed at increasing the flow of international funding to local CSOs ■ Core funding and institutional development support for CF teams available ■ Additional grant funding enabling upscaling of operations and social innovations ■ Peer learning and networking amongst CFs
Threats	■ Insufficiently conflict-sensitive funding discouraging the CF staff and teams to work with local philanthropists (for example, taking more secure and financially attractive jobs in INGOs) ■ Burdensome reporting requirements of some international partners which discourage trusting relations and honest learning ■ Tiredness and burnout of the key people in CFs ■ Rising tensions at the local level and public discontent might discourage social and community engagement ■ Growing dependence on international funding	■ INGOs hiring local staff away from CFs and offering greater job security and generous compensation packages ■ Economic decline in Ukraine limits corporate social responsibility capacities of businesses – an important source of funding for CFs ■ Demographic crisis in Ukraine – the longer people are away, particularly abroad, the weaker their ties are to their home communities ■ Loss of relevance for local stakeholders due to limitations sometimes set by international partners on supporting the army

6. The Role of Networks in Development – Support Organizations as Ecosystem Enablers

6.1. Layering the Foundations: Early Network-Building Efforts and ISAR Ednannia's Contribution

ISAR Ednannia has been a pioneer in fostering the CF movement in Ukraine. For two decades, more than 30 individual CFs were empowered by ISAR Ednannia, a civil society resource centre, which has provided a range of support. This has included information and training, funding and peer learning opportunities.

The flagship programme for Ukrainian CFs has been the Community Foundation School, funded by the Mott Foundation. It has four components: grants, educational, network and informational. To date, 75 CSOs have been through the school, with 97 educational events, study visits and networking events held. Through its capacity development activities, ISAR Ednannia has empowered community leaders with essential skills in fundraising, grantmaking and governance, significantly strengthening the sustainability of local philanthropic initiatives.

ISAR Ednannia has also played a key role in advocating for favourable policies and legal frameworks that recognize and support CFs as vital drivers of local development and civic engagement. The organization has consistently mobilized millions of hryvnias in grant funding, enabling CFs to implement impactful projects in education, healthcare, environmental protection and social services. By fostering a culture of philanthropy and participatory decision-making, ISAR Ednannia has helped CFs become trusted institutions that effectively address local needs and build social cohesion.

As an active member of international philanthropic networks, ISAR Ednannia has facilitated knowledge exchange and partnerships, integrating Ukrainian CFs into the global movement for local philanthropy. In recent years the NNLPD has come to play a more prominent role as a key resource and networking platform for CFs, with most of the CF support activities previously conducted by ISAR Ednannia moving to the NNLPD. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, however, ISAR Ednannia – with funding support from the Mott Foundation – resumed their engagement with CFs, offering strategic guidance and emergency support, including the provision of grants and core funding to CFs and the NNLPD.

6.2. Strengthening Connections: The NNLPD

In 2014, the NNLPD was established by Ukrainian CFs – and with support from ISAR Ednannia – as a dedicated CF membership network and support organization.

The mission of the NNLPD is to advance the development of philanthropy in Ukraine, as a strategy for fostering public participation. The network currently has 15 members, all of which are charitable organizations from across Ukraine that promote local philanthropy and volunteerism. More information about the services offered by the NNLPD can be found in Annex 9 of this report.

Since the start of the war, NNLPD has mobilized significant international funding from a range of sources, including Fondation de France, GFCF, GlobalGiving, Mott Foundation, Robert Bosch Stiftung and ShelterBox. The influx of international funding has enabled the network to establish new national-level programmes, such as the purchasing of medical equipment for hospitals across Ukraine, and to direct grant funding to its members. In 2023, the NNLPD developed two new grant programmes, one supporting women's local entrepreneurship, and the other community gardening initiatives. The NNLPD has also responded quickly to the urgent needs of its members. In June 2023, for example, following the destruction of Kakhovka Dam, the Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst mobilized an emergency flood response, which the NNLPD was able to support to the tune of over US \$185,000 with resources raised through the urgent appeal fund it created.

7. Recommendations for Funders: Enhancing Local Philanthropy Ecosystems

7.1. What Works: Key Feedback from Ukrainian CFs

A group of CF representatives were interviewed for this report. When asked, “What do you particularly appreciate from your international funding partners?” they provided a number of responses.

Funders respecting their freedom of choice

- “We value when our choice of response is respected.”
- “We know better what is needed in our community now. What has worked elsewhere will not necessarily work in our community, or it is just not a priority. Or, it is a good idea, but the time is not right for us.”
- “Ideally, you propose an idea, it gets support, you prepare a plan and then have room for your creativity within the agreed action plan.”

Having the flexibility and capacity to accommodate changes

- “We committed to holding several cultural events in our community hub. However, due to shelling, the windows were broken and we were not able to stick to our initial plan. Luckily, our funding partner not only prolonged the duration of the grant by one month, so we were able to organize the planned number of events, but they have also allocated an additional budget to us, which helped us quickly repair the community space and to continue with our cultural and psycho-social events.”
- “It is war, something can always go wrong and not as planned. But it is wrong to stop doing things just because of that.”

The role of the>NNLPD as a trusted intermediary

- “Without the>NNLPD we would never be as successful as we are. We feel we are not alone, thanks to the>NNLPD. We know we have comrades-in-arms in this network.”

- “The due diligence processes of international partners require lots of time and effort. It is so much easier if the>NNLPD does our due diligence, and it is sufficient for the international partner.”
- “The>NNLPD helped sensitize international donor partners to our way of working. Many international partners do not recognize that there are strong local organizations, who know what is best for their community, and who have been working in a transparent and inclusive manner for many years. They also helped pre-select partners for us and minimized our transaction costs.”

An appeal for simple grant application and reporting processes

- “Sometimes it feels like people who design grant processes simply want to provide more work for grant writing advisers. We work with activists from small communities, and they are asked to design a tree of objectives. There are not so many people who care, have good ideas and are ready to engage to do something. They are as valuable as gold to us and their communities. They will not be able to fill in sophisticated forms.”
- “If everything goes as planned and agreed, all transactions are confirmed by primary documents and there are clear check-in points for monitoring and reporting, we would hope this is sufficient. Time spent on describing our activities in detail is taken from our time to work with our beneficiaries.”

The critical role of core funding for sustainability of action and growth

- “We have run 16 grant competitions since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. Only with one donor partner (to whom we are very grateful), who has supported three competitions, were we allowed to pay salaries to the CF’s core team. People are committed, but there are limits on how far volunteers can be stretched considering it is the third year of the war.”

7.2. A General Profile of Ideal Funding Partners: Alignment for Greater Impact

An analysis of different CF experiences with international funding partners points to the following “ideal profile”:

- Funders that recognize the added value of CFs as more than implementing partners. Alignment of goals: Ukrainian CFs are suitable partners for funders who recognize the critical role of independent, locally-owned civil society as an essential cornerstone of democratic governance and rights claiming, or who are committed to advancing the localization agenda.
- With a focus on long-term locally-led community development that builds local ownership and fosters active citizenship and participation, Ukrainian CFs are not “humanitarian aid organizations” by choice or specialization. Instead, this is a role that they have been required – and are able – to play. Their war response work speaks to a deep knowledge of community, and an inbuilt readiness and ability to pivot to new and dramatically different circumstances. Although they are able to direct resources to grassroots groups, they are not simply intermediaries or “funding delivery mechanisms” established for external donors, but rather organizations with their own development agendas, established networks, relationships and ways of working.
- Funders that are prepared to invest in a growing global tapestry of alternative bottom-up approaches that centre equity, dignity and trust. Alignment of values: Ukrainian CFs and the NNLPD are a part of the global #ShiftThePower movement, a mobilizing force that “seeks to highlight, harness, resource, legitimize and join up these new ways of ‘deciding and doing’ that are emerging around the world under the larger umbrella of movement generosity so that it can galvanize a vision of a good society and serve as a force for genuine and lasting change.” Ukrainian CFs form part of the larger global story advanced by a growing group of increasingly vocal networks about local frontline actors, deeply connected to the communities they serve, and the critical role that they can – and must – play, both in the context of immediate need but over the longer-term too.
- Funders that are prepared to balance their own accountability and compliance requirements with existing systems that are already in place, particularly where they emphasize downward accountability to the community. Ukrainian CFs’ legitimacy and credibility – at the local and national levels – depends on strong capacities and internal systems that ensure transparency and

accountability to their communities and partners. These systems have been developed and tested collectively over time.

7.3. Tailored Support: Funding Models for Sustainable Growth

In concrete terms, what kinds of support do Ukrainian CFs require? Interviews with individual CFs and support networks – in addition to a broader analysis of grants and other data – suggests the following:

More Funding to CFs

- CFs’ organizational structures are robust enough to be able to absorb – and disburse – more resources, with many well-positioned for the next stage of organizational growth. Grantmaking, accounting, reporting, measuring and learning systems are all already in place and have been tested since the start of the full-scale invasion.

Application of Appropriate and Context-Sensitive Compliance and Reporting Requirements

- While external donors may have specific accountability requirements to their own stakeholders, it is important to find ways to balance demands for data and evidence from external actors with existing measurement and reporting frameworks developed internally by CFs. The fact that CFs are particularly concerned about specific measures, such as levels of trust and social cohesion in the community, strengthening local philanthropy and cultures of giving, and fostering community engagement, should be of interest and importance to any funder investing in Ukraine.
- Identify opportunities to co-create metrics so that they combine upward and downward accountability requirements and, at a minimum, do not undermine established processes – and, even more importantly, relationships with community partners. Grant reports to the GFCF demonstrate that Ukrainian CFs are collecting and analyzing data on outcomes consistently and in participatory ways, and that they are able to define and evaluate success in the context not just of projects but of community priorities as well.
- Recognize the fast-changing pace – and trauma – associated with the war, and the reality of the burnout of key staff. CFs have small staff teams with limited capacity to complete complex application forms, or at least by doing so, they are distracted from core community work. Application and reporting requirements that emphasize

processes and purpose – as well as practical outcomes that account for funding spent as well as broader community-level changes – are recommended, as are those that build in flexibility in the event of sudden shocks or developments.

- Leverage qualitative insights: enable CFs to report on “soft” indicators like shifts in community trust, willingness to volunteer and local capacity-building. These factors are critical in assessing the broader impact of CFs’ work in uncertain environments.

Engage with CFs as Future Recovery Leaders

- Recognize CFs as key actors in any post-war recovery, leveraging their conflict-sensitive approaches and expertise in mental health, psycho-social healing, veterans’ reintegration and local economic revitalization.
- Support CFs in addressing complex, multi-dimensional recovery efforts, ensuring resources are directed efficiently to community-led solutions.
- Partner with CFs to mobilize their local knowledge and expertise, ensuring reconstruction efforts are inclusive and sustainable.
- Expand Core Support
- Provide unrestricted funding to CFs to sustain operations and enable long-term sustainability, particularly as the magnitude of challenges during wartime demands full-time engagement and professionalization of core teams.
- Core funding is critical to avoid reliance on unsustainable volunteer structures, ensuring CFs can maintain their capacity to respond to crises and prepare for recovery.
- Expand funding to allow CFs to increase their peacebuilding impact. Their robust organizational structures are well-positioned to manage further growth and funding.

Foster Existing Collaborations

- Leverage the NNLPD as the most appropriate entry point for funding partners. The network can assist with matching donors to relevant CFs by thematic or geographic focus, as well as with managing funds for sub-granting.
- Recognize the NNLPD’s role in developing the CF network in Ukraine through initiatives like the Community Foundation School and targeted support for youth

through Youth Banks in communities. Direct support for the NNLPD (core funding, organizational development, etc.) will strengthen the network and individual CFs.

- Engage ISAR Ednannia for the broader capacity-building of civil society actors. With decades of experience, ISAR Ednannia provides sub-granting, training, advocacy and peer-learning programmes to foster organizational development across various models.
- For funders unable to engage directly with local actors, partner with the GFCF as a trusted intermediary to channel resources effectively.

Advance International Connections and Knowledge Exchange.

- Facilitate the establishment of twin city relationships and advance city-to-city partnerships to foster international collaboration.
- Provide platforms for CFs to share their experiences, represent Ukrainian culture, and participate in global peer-learning and networking events.
- Organize study trips and exchanges between Ukrainian CFs and their international counterparts to share knowledge and best practices.
- Strengthen ties between CFs and the Ukrainian diaspora to leverage their resources and build international solidarity.
- Support efforts to document the activities and experiences of Ukrainian CFs, highlighting their impact and amplifying their stories to global audiences.

8. Conclusions and Next Steps

8.1. The Case for Investing in Local Leadership

The resilience and effectiveness of Ukrainian CFs during the war offers a powerful testament to the critical importance of local leadership in times of crisis. CFs have proven to be agile and deeply committed actors, navigating immense challenges while fostering trust, cohesion and tangible impact within their communities. Their role is not only pivotal now, but will be indispensable in the post-war recovery phase.

The war continues to strain local resources, erode social bonds, and destabilize communities. Immediate action is needed to ensure that CFs have the capacity to maintain their critical operations while preparing to lead long-term recovery efforts. The international community must seize this moment to provide the support CFs need to sustain their work and scale their impact.

CFs act as natural entry points for post-war recovery due to their established presence, trust and networks within their communities. They possess a nuanced understanding of local needs, enabling them to prioritize interventions that deliver meaningful and lasting results. Their ability to mobilize local resources and stakeholders positions them as critical hubs for planning and executing recovery efforts.

Global initiatives like the #ShiftThePower movement advocate for empowering local actors to lead their own development. Ukrainian CFs embody this principle, ensuring that decision-making remains anchored in the needs and priorities of their communities. Investing in these organizations is no longer just an opportunity – it is a necessity in order to secure an equitable and sustainable future for Ukraine.

8.2. Aligning Global Solidarity with Local Realities

Ukrainian CFs have demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to foster resilience and social cohesion during wartime. Unlike larger, external organizations, CFs operate at the grassroots level, maintaining a direct connection to their communities while adapting swiftly to changing needs. Their ability to navigate the complexities of wartime challenges while fostering trust and unity within fragmented populations is unparalleled.

CFs uniquely blend crisis response with long-term development, a dual focus that sets them apart. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, they have not only offered emergency response and distributed humanitarian aid but have also acted as hubs for rebuilding social bonds and maintaining community identity. For example, CFs have organized joint initiatives that bring together displaced populations and host communities, fostering mutual understanding and inclusion. These activities directly combat the fragmentation caused by displacement and trauma, reinforcing social cohesion in ways that external actors cannot replicate.

As Ukraine transitions toward recovery, CFs will remain central to efforts to rebuild not just infrastructure but also the social fabric of communities. Their deep local knowledge allows them to identify and address unique challenges, such as integrating IDPs or providing psycho-social support to trauma-affected populations. Their established networks with local governments, businesses, and civil society ensure that resources are deployed efficiently and equitably.

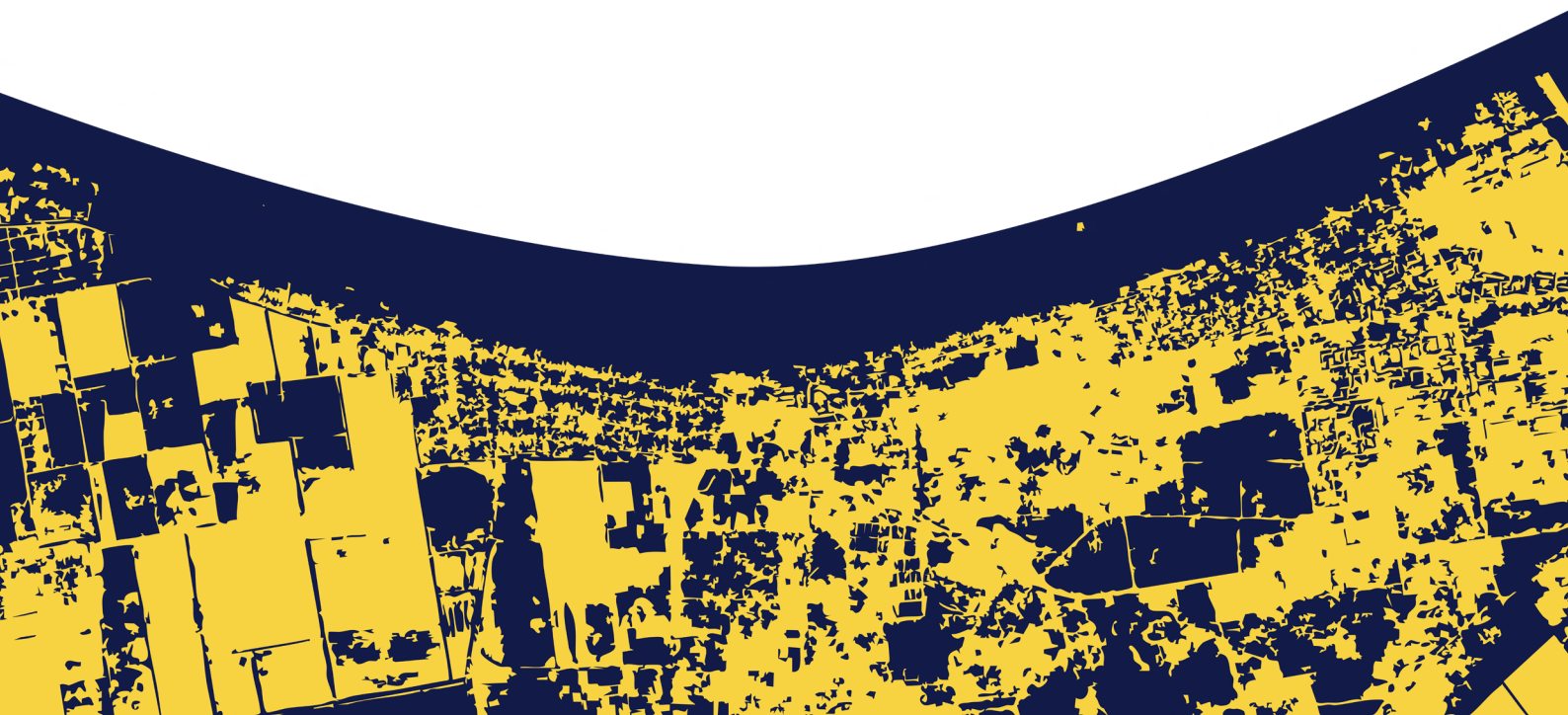
The urgency to support Ukraine's CFs cannot be overstated. Their work in maintaining social cohesion and resilience during the war has been critical to preventing deeper societal fractures. In the recovery phase, their leadership will be vital in ensuring that reconstruction efforts do not just rebuild what was lost but create stronger, more united communities. For international stakeholders, partnering with CFs offers a unique opportunity to align global principles with proven, impactful local action. By investing in these organizations, the global community can help Ukraine emerge from conflict stronger, more cohesive and more resilient.

At the same time, Ukrainian CFs also offer a powerful example of a set of organizational practices and a broader architecture for community-led development, elements of which may be relevant to civil society actors in other conflict environments who are looking beyond more conventional intermediary funding models.

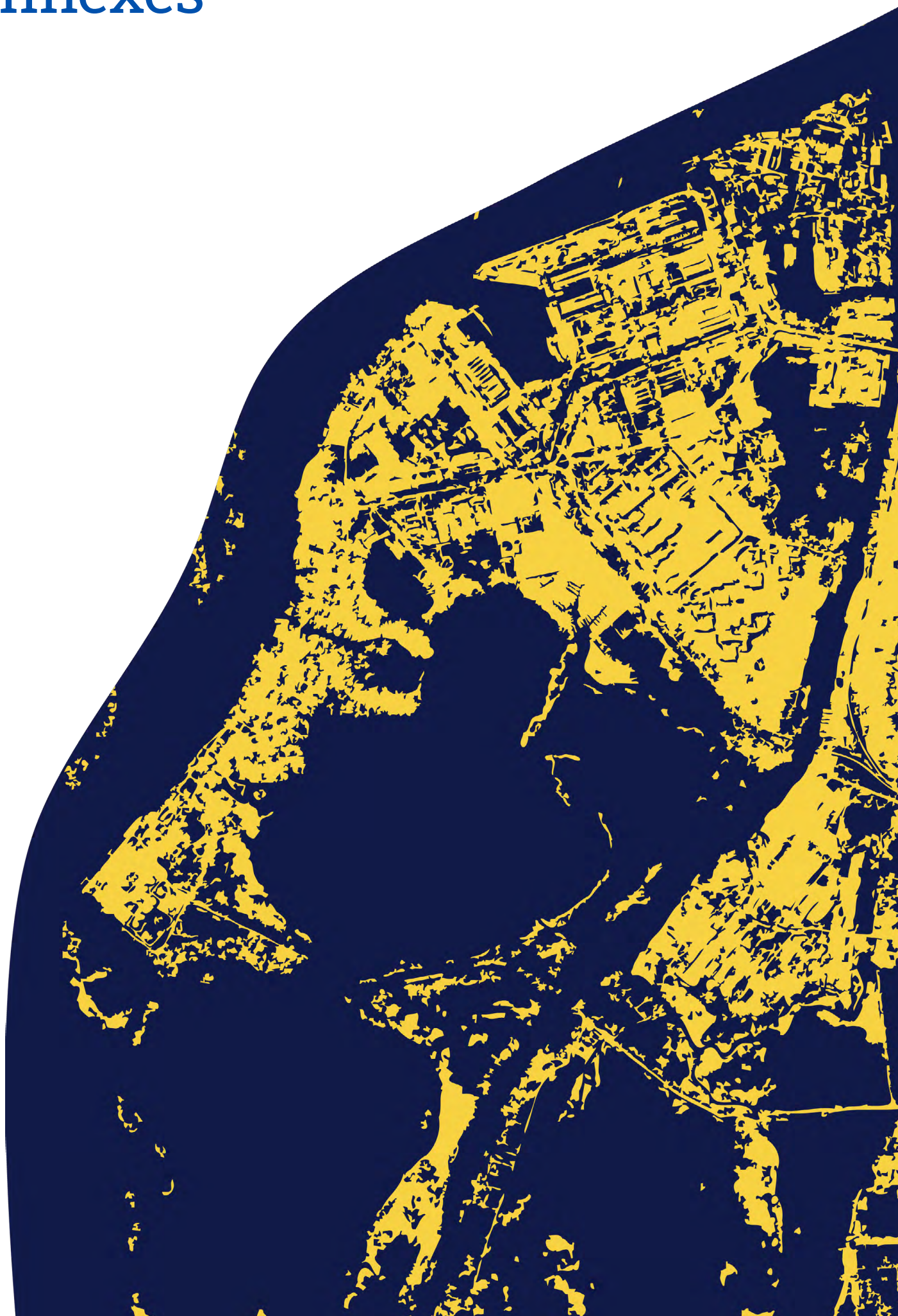
8.3. Next Steps: Strengthening the CF Ecosystem

To further support the growth and impact of CFs in Ukraine, the following actions are critical:

- 1. Increased funding for CFs, including core support:** As the war drags on, financial and human resources are starting to be depleted. Funding for both programmes and core costs is essential to enable CFs to continue to respond to the ongoing crisis, as well as to prepare for recovery.
- 2. Recognition of CFs as future recovery leaders:** CFs will be important actors in post-war recovery, capable of mobilizing local expertise and resources for reconstruction efforts and doing so in a context and conflict-sensitive manner. Many already have skills and experiences on a wide range of topics from mental health and psycho-social healing, through to veterans' reintegration and local economic revitalization
- 3. Measuring what matters:** In addition to delivering programmes and other activities, CFs prioritize other metrics in their work, such as building trust, strengthening local philanthropy, fostering community engagement, etc. Conventional donor reporting requirements are often administratively burdensome and oriented to the specific accountability requirements and interests of the funder. However, for funders committed to advancing locally-led development, there are significant opportunities to adopt reporting requirements that combine the vertical accountability needs of donors with broader kinds of data based on community priorities that reflect the full scope of CFs' contributions in uncertain environments.
- 4. Investing in the existing ecosystem and established networks:** The>NNLPD – which specializes in supporting CFs through tailored training, mentoring and networking – has stepped forward to play an important leadership role since the start of the full-scale invasion, leading global advocacy campaigns and channelling resources to its members, while ISAR Edhannia continues to provide core and project support to CFs as well as broader capacity-building for diverse civil society actors, as well as sub-granting and advocacy.
- 5. Advance international connections and knowledge exchange:** Fostering international partnerships and facilitating knowledge exchange will strengthen Ukrainian CFs' capacity, their global visibility and their participation in global efforts and conversations around philanthropy and international development. Participation in international conferences and convenings, study trips and exchanges, twin city initiatives, partnerships with Ukrainian diaspora networks, and documentation of case studies, stories, etc. are all critical ways to enhance their role as global leaders in resilience and social cohesion.



Annexes



Annex 1: International Definition of CFs and the Related Conceptual Discussions

The Council on Foundations in the United States defines community foundations as follows:

“Community foundations are grantmaking public charities that are dedicated to improving the lives of people in a defined local geographic area. They bring together the financial resources of individuals, families and businesses to support effective non-profits in their communities. Community foundations are key players in identifying and solving local problems. They provide grants to support a wide range of nonprofit activities, such as arts, education, health, human services and disaster relief. By pooling resources from multiple donors, they can address critical needs more effectively and efficiently.”

[Some researchers point out that:](#) “Although historically these organizations have had a geographical focus, with each foundation serving locally or regionally, the term ‘community’ has begun to shift to a broader, more global context over recent years. A ‘community’ can be where you currently live, where you went to college, where you grew up, where you work, where you worship, where you spend time on the weekends, or a variety of other factors. Today, these foundations are taking on new forms that go beyond geography to focus on elements of individual identity and religion.”

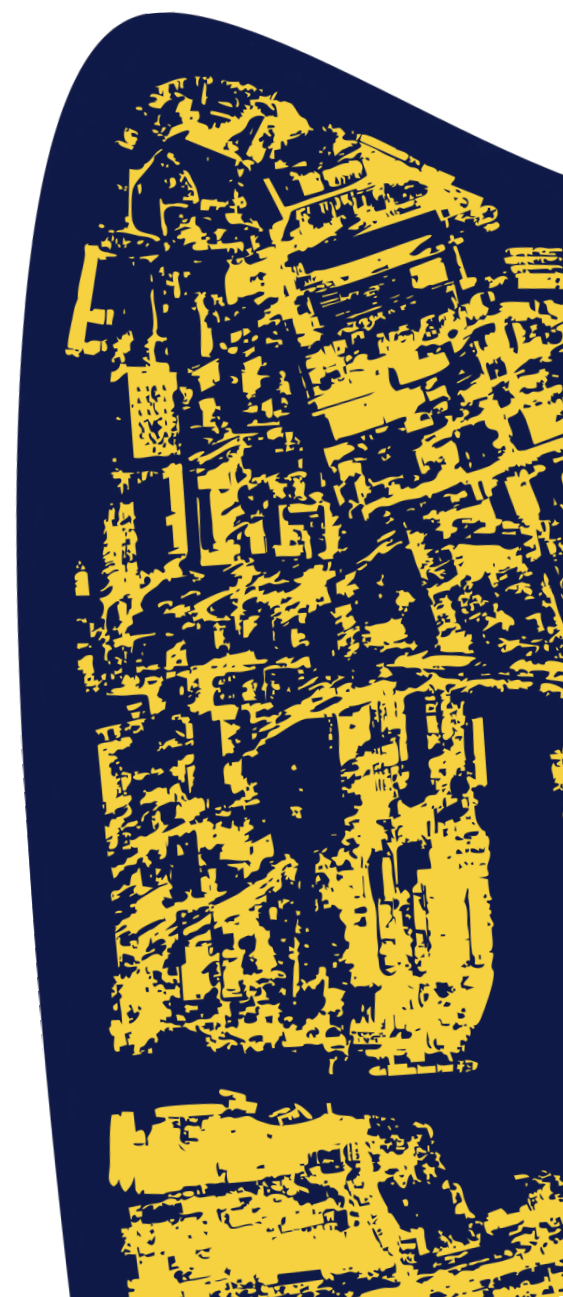
The GFCF, which works globally, supports a diverse set of organizations that may not be “community foundations” per se, but that identify with the concept and practice of community philanthropy. This includes community philanthropy organizations, community foundations, women’s funds, socio-environmental funds, national public foundations and other grassroots grantmakers. The interests of some of these organizations may be tied to a particular geography, while others organize around themes and issues of importance to a particular community or group of people. The unifying link is that these organizations recognize, value and aim to grow local assets and resources as a central pillar of community-owned and community-led development.

The Mott Foundation, which has been supporting community foundation development for decades, offers the following definition and criteria:

- Place-based institutions which are primarily locally resourced and locally governed, it is not limited to a specific identity group or issue area (“local resources for local needs” principle).

- A permanent institution which can act in a strategic long-term manner and adapt if the situation changes over time.
- An independent institution from specific political or religious views; it implies multiplicity of funding sources.
- An institution which funds others and helps develop local capacity and ecosystem including through grants allocation.

A consistent element across all of these definitions is the idea that the initiative for its creation should come from inside the community, not from the outside. This is the only way not to distort local processes and do no harm.



Annex 2: Context, Background and History of CFs in Ukraine Prior to the Beginning of the Full-Scale Invasion

The evolution of CFs in Ukraine can be described in the following phases:

- Inception and early development (1995 – 2005)
- Expansion and increased impact (2005 – 2019)
- Strengthening the network and adaptation during crisis (2019 – 2022)
- Responding to the full-scale invasion and international collaboration (2022 – present)

Phase 1: Inception and Early Development (1995 – 2005)

The Princes-Benefactors Ostrozky Foundation was established in 1995 and is recognized as the oldest CF in Ukraine. Some others, including the Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst, Moloda Gromada and Voznesensk Community Foundation followed in 2003 – 2004, and focused on fostering local philanthropy and civic engagement. These early efforts were supported by the Mott Foundation and ISAR Ednannia. Jointly, they played a vital role in bringing the CF concept to Ukraine. The development of these foundations was influenced by the broader movement of CFs worldwide, particularly those in North America and Western Europe.

Analysis of the sample of GFCF partners in Ukraine shows that the establishment of CFs in Ukraine has happened in an organic manner;² there have been no “big bangs.” This can serve as evidence that they are indeed locally born and driven, not created because of external influence and incentives.

Phase 2: Expansion and Increased Impact (2005 – 2019)

During this phase, CFs in Ukraine expanded significantly in number and influence. They received significant capacity development support, including study tours to learn how the CF model is applied in the other countries. They began playing a more prominent role in addressing local issues, including education, healthcare and environmental protection, by providing grants and mobilizing local

resources. The decentralization reform in Ukraine, which increased the power and budgets of local authorities, further enhanced the role of CFs in engaging citizens in local governance and development projects.

In 2009, ISAR Ednannia was the first actor in Ukraine to start educating local CSOs about the work of CFs. This work has recently been handed over to the NNLPD and continues till today.

Phase 3: Strengthening the Network and Adaptation During Crisis (2019 – 2022)

In 2014, the fourteenth meeting of the community of practitioners on the organizational development of community funds in Ukraine was held at the initiative of ISAR Ednannia, at which it was decided to set up a network to provide regranteeing, fundraising and organizational capacity-building services. The result was the establishment of the NNLPD, which has been increasingly active since 2019.

Following the Russian annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine, CFs adapted to address the urgent needs of displaced populations and war-affected communities. They played a crucial role in delivering humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and supporting IDPs.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the development and operations of CFs in Ukraine, shaping their role in local communities in several ways:

- **Increased role in crisis response:** The pandemic pushed CFs in Ukraine to the forefront of local crisis response. They mobilized quickly to provide essential services, such as distributing medical supplies, food and financial assistance to vulnerable populations affected by the pandemic. Their ability to rapidly deploy resources allowed them to address crucial and immediate needs during the health crisis.
- **Innovation / digital transformation:** The pandemic accelerated the digital transformation of CFs in Ukraine. With restrictions on in-person gatherings, many organizations shifted to online platforms for fundraising, community engagement and decision-making processes.

² Dates of establishment of GFCF partners included in the research are as follows: 1995 (one organization); 2000 – 2010 (four organizations); 2010 – 2015 (six organizations); and, 2016 – 2020 (three organizations).

This shift not only maintained their operations during the pandemic but also opened new avenues for reaching wider audiences and donors.

- **Strengthening of community ties:** The pandemic highlighted the importance of strong community ties and local networks. CFs in Ukraine played a key role in fostering solidarity and mutual aid within communities, helping to build resilience against not only the pandemic but also other crises, such as the initial phase of Russia's invasion.
- **Focus on vulnerable groups:** The pandemic also brought greater attention to the needs of vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, low-income families and individuals with disabilities. CFs prioritized these groups in their relief efforts, ensuring that support reached those most in need.
- **Long-term strategic shifts:** The experience of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic led many CFs to incorporate more robust crisis management and disaster preparedness into their strategic planning. This made them better equipped to respond to the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Phase 4: Responding to the Full-Scale Invasion and International Collaboration (2022 – Present)

Most Ukrainian CFs have continued their operations since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, though their number has decreased. In 2024 there were 21 CFs active in Ukraine, [according to the European Community Foundation Initiative](#), down from [33 operational CFs before the beginning of the full-scale invasion](#). The>NNLPD currently counts 15 organizations as members. There are more organizations who operate as CFs, however, do not call themselves as such, according to the observers. There have been several changes in the way CFs operate, including the following:

- Humanitarian response as a new area of engagement.
- Growth in scale and complexity.
- Regranting remains at the heart of the model.
- Sharing and mutual support on a new level.
- Network strengthening and development deepened.
- Increased share of international funding.
- International advocacy ramped up.

More detailed information and examples follow.

Humanitarian response as a new area of engagement:

Although CFs had limited experience with humanitarian activities prior to the beginning of the full-scale invasion, they had the necessary prerequisites – including trusting relationships in their communities, and systems and processes necessary for transparent operations – to start acting as humanitarian hubs when community needs built up over the first weeks of the war. For example, the Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada, located in Vinnytsia in central Ukraine, became a huge humanitarian hub following the invasion, through which many other CFs have received humanitarian assistance. As of early 2025, the foundation continues to supply the Foundation for Community Development in the east of the country with goods to be distributed as part of humanitarian aid packages.

Growth in scale and complexity: Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion in 2022, the majority of the GFCF's partners have experienced growth of their annual budget by several times. This includes three organizations whose operations have grown more than tenfold. It illustrates their relevance and capacity to adapt. Most of the GFCF's Ukrainian CF partners have increased their programmatic budget year-on-year during the war. It could mean that crisis response mode has required CFs to perform more activities themselves, rather than empowering and resourcing others to do so. Prospective funders / supporters should consider enabling CFs to gradually shift back into the role of enabler rather than a doer.

Regranting remains at the heart of the model: More than half of the GFCF's partners are engaged in grantmaking, and the total amount of funds disbursed in grants doubled or even tripled over the 2022 – 2024 period for some CFs.

Sharing and mutual support on a new level: Ukrainian CFs have supported each other in many ways based on the principle of sharing. For example, the Berezan Community Foundation and Kahkovka Community Development Fund worked together to provide suitable housing for IDPs in host communities, while the Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada works with the Foundation for Community Development in the east of the country to distribute humanitarian aid packages. Additionally, when the staff of the Foundation for Community Development temporarily relocated to the west of the country in 2022, they quickly formed a new working relationship with the Bari Community Foundation. These examples are a powerful illustration of the importance of local networks, solidarity and collaboration in times of crisis and need.

Network strengthening and development deepened: The network of CFs continues to grow, with the NNLPD offering the Community Foundation School for interested CSOs to build up their operations. According to the NNLPD, more than 60 CSOs applied for their school in 2023, of which 20 were invited to the initial training module. Ten of these are currently receiving mentorship support from more established CFs based on a “peer-to-peer” principle.

Increased share of international funding: Until 2022, the funding for Ukrainian CFs came mostly from local sources, some 70 – 80% according to ISAR Ednannia. The situation changed dramatically after the beginning of the full-scale invasion, as a significant share of locally-raised financing is now supporting the Ukrainian army. CFs have reported a reduction of the share of locally-mobilized resources in their budgets to circa 20%, according to the same source. Still, even during the war, all the reviewed projects from the GFCF portfolio in Ukraine had a strong element of local resource mobilization. This feature remains an important element of the CF’s identity and a prerequisite to assure their independence and rootedness in their community.

International advocacy ramped up: The Ukrainian CF movement has also been increasingly recognized and supported by international networks, such as the European Community Foundation Initiative, which has facilitated collaboration and resource mobilization across Europe. In 2022, just several months after the beginning of the war, the NNLPD led outreach around the powerful open letter [If Not Now, When? An Open Letter to International Donors and NGOs who Want to Genuinely Help Ukraine](#), which was received as a clearly articulated request to international partners to act in the spirit of decolonization, accountability to local people, #ShiftThePower and localization. The letter included the following asks:

1. Cut the bureaucracy.
2. Let local civil society actors decide our priorities and how we wish to act in solidarity in this conflict.
3. Invest in ways to help local people tell our own stories and to help us explain what we are doing to help. This supports deeper understanding and helps us to secure access to resources directly.
4. Start to learn from us.

The full text of the Open Letter is included as Annex 7 of this report.



Annex 3: CF Operating Model: Acquired Criteria and the Related Organizational Development Path

Evidence has shown that local actors demonstrate higher efficiency in delivering aid, as compared to international non-profit organizations. This was the message of the 2024 report [Passing the Buck: Economics of Localizing Aid in Ukraine](#). As described in section 3.1. of this report, the NNLPD has developed a clear development path for its members.

As each CF advances to a higher level of its organizational maturity, it can gain access to a wider range of options offered by the NNLPD. CFs may receive organizational development support from the NNLPD to accompany this transformation.

Criteria 1: Local Resource Mobilization

Metrics	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Share of local resources in CF budget	40%	60%	80%
Funds dissemination	Re-granting from international and domestic donor funds.	Same as level 1.	Same as level 1, also regular grant competitions and stipends from diverse sources.
Sustainability		The CF has: regulations on working with donor funds and the process of measuring the effectiveness of their use; and, an established package of services for local, national and international donors.	CF creates sustainable sources of income, including, but not limited to, an endowment or social enterprises.

Criteria 2: Community Research

Metrics	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Annual community assessment	Focused on needs. Based on a survey.	Focused on needs and resources. Based on combined methods including, but not limited to, surveys, focus groups and public discussions.	The CF has a mechanism for involving citizens who have initiatives to improve the quality of life in the community, or resources that they want to donate to the public good.

Programming approach	In line with the identified needs.	Programmes are designed to address the needs of the community, using the resources identified.	The CF has a system of communications to highlight the problems and needs of the community in order to find resources and ways to solve them.
Evaluation		The effectiveness of programmes is monitored based on identified indicators of community needs.	

Criteria 3: Providing Support to Other NGOs and Initiative Groups

Metrics	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Capacity development instruments for local initiative groups and NGOs	Training on project management, fundraising, etc.	Thematic grant competitions and activities to strengthen the capacity of local initiative groups.	A permanent grant competition for the development of local initiatives, public events to highlight local initiatives and events to unite and network local initiatives.

Criteria 4: Management is Carried out by a Board of Reputable Citizens Broadly Representing all Sectors of the Community

Metrics	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Governance requirements and inclusion	A clear operating structure for fund management and decision-making.	A clear and functioning governance structure consisting of citizens broadly representing all sectors of the community.	In addition to the previous levels, regular events for members of the management structure to be actively involved in the CF's programmes.

Annex 4: Summary of GFCF Grants to Ukrainian CFs Since the Beginning of the Full-Scale Invasion

Grant sizes generally ranged from US \$18,000 – \$20,000. Grant information current up until 15 February 2025.

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
Bari Community Foundation					
15 Oct – 31 Dec 2022	Voznesensk, Mykolaiv region	Renovations to a hostel to provide temporary housing for IDPs	Crisis response / IDPs	■ Accommodation provided for ten families ■ Different community groups worked together ■ Co-financed with local authorities and entrepreneurs	■ New skills and knowledge for the foundation team, leading to establishment of new projects and grant competition in their home city (Bar)
Berezan Community Foundation					
20 Sep – 15 Dec 2022	Berezan, Kyiv region	Renovations to a dormitory to provide temporary housing for IDPs	Crisis response / IDPs	■ Accommodation provided for 60 families ■ Local youth group, women's group, businesses and authorities contributed goods with an estimated value of US \$12,120	■ New local supporters for the foundation ■ Joint project and strengthened relationship with the Kakhovka Community Development Fund
Boyarka Community Foundation					
15 Jun – 31 Dec 2022	Boyarka, Kyiv region	Small grants programme supporting community initiatives addressing humanitarian needs of community members and IDPs	Small grants	■ Ten grants made, from a possible 36 applications ■ US \$1,882 collected from community members to support the grants programme ■ Increased solidarity and social cohesion in the community	■ Trainings of new volunteers and activists ■ New grant management skills for foundation staff ■ New level of communications outreach (an estimated 11,000 individuals reached)

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
1 Mar – 30 Nov 2023		Psychological recovery and small grants for social projects	Small grants / mental health and psycho-social support	■ 68 psychological and cultural events held with 1,087 participants ■ Ten grants made, from a possible 42 applications ■ Additional funds for four more projects raised ■ US \$2,900 mobilized to support the grants from locals and Ukrainians in the diaspora	■ 137 publications produced, with 60,000+ views ■ New volunteers mobilized (40% submitted grant ideas for the first time) ■ Systems for project selection put in place involving community members, building trust in the foundation and its transparent ways of working
15 Mar – 15 Dec 2024		Small grants for local initiatives to support vulnerable children and adolescents	Small grants / children and youth / mental health and psycho-social support	■ 18 grants made, from a possible 47 applications ■ 99 events organized by sub-grant recipients, attended by 1,171 individuals (including 981 adolescents) ■ Just under US \$500 collected from local individuals to support the grants, one local business provided \$150 to one of the initiatives that was not selected for funding	■ New relationships with local cultural and educational institutions ■ Media campaign “Children in Time of War” drawing attention to children and adolescent’s mental health reached 72,000 people ■ Wider participation from the community in the selection and evaluation of grants, further positioning the foundation as a trusted local actor
Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada					
1 Jan – 31 Mar 2023	Vinnytsia	Small grants to create and equip “Invincibility Points”	Crisis response / small grants	■ 20 Invincibility Points established, providing emergency access to electricity, hot water, etc. during blackouts ■ US \$1,083 raised by the community to support these ■ Community revitalization	■ Foundation’s reputation as a stable presence in the community, and ability to provide financial and non-financial support, enhanced

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
15 Sep 2023 – 31 March 2024		Grant competition to support local institutions offering psycho-emotional support	Small grants / mental health and psycho-social support	■ 20 grants made, from a possible 40 applications ■ US \$1,260 raised by grant awardees to further support their work ■ Emotional relief for community members	■ Relationships with grant applicants deepened, strengthened networks and capacity building of local institutions
15 Oct 2024 – 31 Mar 2025		Small grants programme for medical and educational institutions in Vinnytsia, with a focus on psychological relief	Small grants / mental health and psycho-social support	Grant activities ongoing at time of report publication	
Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst					
1 Nov 2022 – 31 Jan 2023	Kherson region	Direct financial assistance to families with children in Kherson	Crisis response	■ Efficient and transparent direct cash support to 271 families with children ■ Initial commitment to mobilize €1,300 from other sources, ultimately €32,000 was mobilized	■ Robust procedures put in place for monitoring the allocation, disbursement and use of funds ■ Fundraising strategy developed ■ Reputation strengthened – the foundation was rated with five stars (the top rating) by the Association of Charities in Ukraine due to their commitment to transparency and accountability

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
10 Mar – 15 Aug 2023		Direct financial assistance to families with children in Kherson	Crisis response	■ Efficient and transparent direct cash support to 280 families, which included 581 children ■ US \$5,540 additionally mobilized from individuals and Ukrainian businesses	■ Moral and financial support to the people of Kherson ■ Increased number of staff, upgraded policies, re-registered foundation in a safer location ■ Online research panel created, involving the dispersed Kherson community, bridging local government, state authorities, NGOs and citizens ■ Cycle of monthly video interviews introduced, website updated including web-based fundraising platform
9 Jun – 31 Aug 2023		Emergency support for flood relief efforts in Kherson	Crisis response	■ Established volunteer centres to help residents clean up flooded houses ■ Updated the electrical wiring at the Blood Service Centre ■ US \$185,000 mobilized, in cooperation with the NNLPD, to support flood relief efforts	■ Empowered and resourced local volunteer organizations ■ The web platform Hear the Kherson Community created
1 Mar – 30 Jun 2024		Restoring critical services in Kherson	Crisis response	■ Procured new equipment for the Blood Service Centre, and raised more than US \$15,000 from Ukrainian businesses and individuals to support this ■ Purchased tools for city power engineers who repaired damaged power grids and overhead lighting systems	■ Moral and material support to the people of Kherson

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
15 Dec 2024 – 15 Mar 2025		Renovating and equipping the Social Centre for Mother and Child and the Crisis Centre	Crisis response	Grant activities ongoing at time of report publication	
Community Foundation of the City of Dubno					
1 Jun – 30 Nov 2022	Dubno, Rivne region	Supporting IDPs and other vulnerable groups, with a focus on psychological assistance	Crisis response / IDPs / mental health and psycho-social support	■ Focus groups and needs assessment carried out with IDPs, through which action points for targeted assistance were developed ■ Communication channels established on Viber and Telegram (250+ members per channel) ■ Psycho-social assistance provided to 50 people ■ Support to volunteer centres engaged in humanitarian response ■ Just under US \$1,000 in additional funding raised	■ Volunteering capacity of IDPs strengthened – they prepared five grant applications and two business plans ■ Two IDP initiative groups formed ■ Expanded networks: other NGOs were invited to the presentation of the results of the focus groups
15 Mar – 15 Sep 2023		Institutional strengthening of the foundation	Small grants / volunteering	■ A study on the actual needs of young people and socially active community members conducted ■ “School of Active Citizenship” for local leaders on the basics of civic engagement launched ■ Three ideas for local social action projects supported with US \$1,000 each ■ US \$1,600 raised from local authorities and businesses	■ Public relations, information and stakeholder engagement activities strengthened ■ Partnerships and cooperation with local authorities, businesses and civil society leaders developed

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
1 Apr – 15 Dec 2024		Building community leadership and civic participation, with a focus on youth	Small grants / volunteering / children and youth	■ Second edition of the School of Active Citizenship held, with 27 participants ■ Small grants for three local initiatives made ■ Procurement of equipment for the Youth Centre, and a range of activities organized there	■ Strengthened and expanded local volunteer capacity ■ Foundation's communications and social media presence strengthened, to build bridges with new donors
Foundation for Community Development					
15 Jun – 31 Dec 2022	Bar, Vinnytsia region	Support services for IDPs	Crisis response / IDPs / mental health and psycho-social support	■ Psycho-social, legal and informational support for IDPs ■ Help Centre for IDPs established, where 300 individuals stayed ■ Humanitarian aid distributed ■ Gatherings, events and conversations organized for IDPs and community residents – dedicated space for children included ■ Local activism advanced, including a successful fundraising campaign to upgrade medical equipment at the local hospital	■ Integrated foundation staff (formerly based in Kramatorsk, Donetsk region) in Vinnytsia ■ New relationships with local actors, including the Bari Community Foundation
1 Aug – 30 Nov 2023		Advancing activists' skills including fundraising, and organization of integration activities for IDPs with a focus on youth	IDPs / volunteering / children and youth	■ Consultations and roundtable meetings held with different community groups ■ Fundraising events organized in three rural villages – equipment purchased for rural schools with funds raised ■ Summer camp organized in Lithuania for children / youth IDPs	■ Advanced local philanthropy – successful fundraising events increased interest and motivation of community members to create their own CFs ■ Strengthened ties with different groups in the community ■ Systemic approach to crisis response developed from consultations

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
1 Apr – 31 Jul 2024	Kramatorsk, Donetsk region	Developing new social partnerships between community groups, and providing opportunities to participate in community life for the most vulnerable	IDPs / social cohesion / children and youth / women / elderly / mental health and psycho-social support	■ Trainings held for 17 young people, encouraging volunteerism and activism, social projects developed and links made with other youth groups in Poland and eastern Ukraine ■ IDP integration activities conducted on a peer-to-peer basis ■ Trainings on starting new businesses attended by 81 people and connections made with local employment centres – six people found new employment and three started a new business ■ 51 women attended art therapy courses ■ US \$1,800 mobilized to support these activities ■ A more united and cohesive community	■ Reintegrated foundation staff and activities back in Kramatorsk ■ Strengthened ties between youth initiatives
1 Feb– 30 Jun 2025		Establishing a volunteer network to assist vulnerable people in frontline communities	Crisis response / volunteering / elderly / people with disabilities	Grant activities ongoing at time of report publication	
Kakhovka Community Development Fund					
15 Oct 2022 – 31 Jan 2023	Berezan, Kyiv region	Renovations to a dormitory to provide temporary housing for IDPs	Crisis response / IDPs	■ Accommodation provided for 60 families ■ Local youth group, women’s group, businesses and authorities contributed goods with an estimated value of US \$12,120	■ Joint project and strengthened relationship with the Berezan Community Foundation ■ Lessons garnered on working with IDPs for future work in Kakhovka

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
Moloda Gromada					
1 Jun 2022 – 30 Jun 2023	Dubechna and Rudkivska	Awareness raising about use of the Citizen Token System (CTS) for community projects in two rural communities	Volunteering / technology	■ 14 projects implemented by citizens, products and services worth US \$44,600 raised to address local and national challenges ■ Communities increased the impact of community support (both financial and in-kind) up to 17 times, and directed this support to people living in poverty ■ Established the Community Resilience Foundation supporting micro-entrepreneurship	■ Level of professionalism of the project's team and local partners increased ■ Modern teamwork technologies advanced
1 Aug 2023 – 31 Jul 2024	Artsyz, Odessa region and Malyn, Zhytomyr region	Expanding the use of CTS to two additional communities	Volunteering / technology	■ 40 trainings / meetings offered by new “Help Desk”, a virtual space for involved communities to request technical support, and to meet others for peer learning ■ More than 10,000 new people informed about CTS, while 1,226 were engaged ■ Approximately US \$39,000 in donations, goods and services mobilized	■ New relationship built with one local city council, who contributed funds to the initiative ■ Positive engagement of residents in civic action and local decision-making processes
15 Oct 2024 – 15 Jun 2025	Rudkivska	Scaling up of the Community Resilience Foundation	Volunteering / technology	Grant activities ongoing at time of report publication	

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
Princes-Benefactors Ostrozky Foundation					
1 Aug 2022 – 28 Feb 2023	Bila Krynytsa and Privilnye	Strengthening social cohesion through breadmaking	IDPs / mental health and psycho-social support / social cohesion	■ 21 breadmaking sessions held (versus ten planned), thanks to additional contributions from local authorities and business ■ 300+ IDPs and representatives of host communities participated ■ Eight facilitators trained and equipped to facilitate breadmaking sessions as an inclusive method of working with vulnerable groups ■ 100,000 bread products produced and distributed to vulnerable groups, with a value of approximately US \$30,000 ■ Strengthened relationships between IDPs and host communities	■ Formalized methodology, and an empowered network of local volunteers ■ Trust built in involved communities ■ Relationships with new donors, including three international donors, a local individual who contributed US \$6,250 in cash, and local businesses who provided an estimated US \$9,000 of in-kind support ■ New cooperation with the Community Foundation of the City of Dubno to install a breadmaking facility in a local centre in Dubno working with disabled people
15 Apr 2023 – 31 Mar 2024	Ukraine-wide	Psycho-social support for IDPs through breadmaking and a grants programme aimed at strengthening social cohesion	Small grants / IDPs / mental health and psycho-social support / social cohesion	■ Seven grants made, from a possible 102 applications, each received US \$1,000 (priority given to areas with high concentration of IDPs) and attended a three-day training at the premises of the Community Foundation of the City of Dubno ■ 46 facilitators trained ■ Participants raised more than US \$10,000 in cash and in-kind support, while the foundation mobilized an additional US \$35,000+ from local sources	■ New partnerships of actors created to implement the programme together, including local civil society groups, municipal institutions, psychologists, entrepreneurs, etc. ■ Programme expanded to nine regions of Ukraine ■ Report published on how bread therapy can help integrate vulnerable groups into the social and economic life of a community

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
				■ An estimated 50,000+ bread products produced and delivered ■ Two female IDPs in Rivne met as a result of the programme, they established their own micro-bakery which the State Employment Centre supported with US \$6,350	
15 Oct 2024 – 31 Aug 2025	Rivne region	Addressing local issues and integrating IDPs and other vulnerable groups	IDPs / social cohesion	Grant activities ongoing at time of report publication	
Ridnya Community Foundation					
1 Jun – 30 Nov 2022	Lviv region	Grant competition aimed at supporting community-led social initiatives and economic development	Small grants / IDPs / social cohesion / volunteers	■ 50 social initiatives implemented ■ 500 new volunteers mobilized ■ Mentorship provided to initiative groups ■ US \$12,000 of additional funding mobilized by the local groups	■ Increased local interest in the foundation – at some points they received more than 20 grant applications per week ■ Knowledge built on strategies for building social cohesion ■ Developed new strategies to deal with volunteer burnout ■ Regular meetings and strategic sessions on social innovations introduced ■ Social capital increased and trust built with the initiative groups
1 Apr – 31 Dec 2023		Fostering local leadership and participation at the most local level	Small grants / IDPs / social cohesion / volunteers	■ “Local Action Groups” in small communities activated through mentorship and small grants ■ Over US \$20,000 additionally mobilized	■ Expanded network of local activists

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
					■ Civic spirit and solidarity built: mentors were offered stipends for time spent, though all mentors declined, preferring that available funding be directed to the Local Action Groups
15 Mar – 15 Dec 2024		Engagement with grassroots groups, helping them to formalize and develop their visibility and capacities	Small grants / IDPs / social cohesion / volunteers	■ Local Action Groups active in ten communities ■ Some have notable achievements: in Stryi a group convinced the local authorities to create the "IDP Council", an advisory body within the local government made up of IDPs that advises on local policies and programmes ■ Network of mentors expanded, who help to facilitate conversations for the Local Action Groups with local authorities and entrepreneurs	■ Emphasis on working in rural communities received as a sign of solidarity and moral support, leading to increased trust ■ The foundation moved to its new Resource Centre, a physical meeting point for mentors, the wider community of Local Activity Groups and other NGOs
Teple Misto					
15 Feb 2025 – 31 Jan 2026	Ivano-Frankivsk region	Institutional strengthening, while consolidating outreach and partnerships	Mental health and psycho-social support	Grant activities ongoing at time of report publication	

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
Voznesensk Community Foundation					
15 Jul – 15 Dec 2022	Mikolayiv region	Food security, job creation and strengthening social cohesion through a community farming programme	Small grants / IDPs / social cohesion / livelihoods	■ 191 people, including 65 IDPs, trained at the new Center for Agricultural Competences ■ Agricultural machinery and 30 composters procured and distributed to community members ■ Seed bank, including 13,000 packages of seeds, created ■ Individual consultations organized with more than 125 households on agricultural processes, resulting in 21 requests for micro-grants to support these initiatives ■ Projects worth more than US \$6,000 supported, with the participants' own contributions amounting to more than US \$1,000 ■ New relations between IDPs and community members who undertook projects together ■ Feasibility study for the creation of a wholesale and retail market for agricultural products prepared	■ The foundation confirmed its status as a local leader and as an organization that provides systemic support for addressing local problems in crisis situations
1 Jun – 31 Dec 2023	Voznesensk, Mikolayiv region	Supporting the longer-term integration of IDPs in Voznesensk	Small grants / IDPs / social cohesion / livelihoods / women	■ Research conducted on the needs of IDPs in the community, based on information provided by 156 IDPs	■ Established new relations with local businesses and government, who supported the grant activities

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
				■ Established an Adult Education Center for IDPs to acquire new skills for employment – built on land donated by the local municipality and equipped with goods supplied by local businesses ■ Organized and conducted activities that aimed to build trust between IDPs and community groups, including an art exhibition “Home” which shared IDPs’ personal stories ■ Repaired and refurbished common areas of three local dormitories where women IDPs are housed	■ Deeper appreciation gained for need to provide psycho-social support, in addition to material support
15 Sep 2024 – 15 Jun 2025		Expanding educational and economic opportunities for women in Voznesensk	IDPs / livelihoods / women	Grant activities ongoing at time of report publication	
Zhytomyr Community Foundation					
15 Jun – 31 Dec 2022	Zhytomyr region	Inclusion of IDPs and supporting other vulnerable groups	Crisis response / IDPs / women	■ Through a series of “Meaningful Meetings” and questionnaires, needs mapping completed pertaining to IDPs and vulnerable families ■ More than 1,250 families supported with humanitarian aid packages ■ Connections between IDPs and host community established	■ The foundation’s office became a focal point for IDPs and others, with between 15 to 20 individuals visiting daily, though sometimes this was more than 50 – a more efficient procedure for offering support was later introduced ■ New active volunteer who is an IDP herself engaged in the work who may, long-term, become a full-time team member

Grant Dates	Geographic Focus of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Focus of Grant	External Impact	Internal Impact
				■ Telegram channel established, through which immediate needs from community members are shared ■ €30,000 additionally mobilized	
15 Apr 2023 – 30 Jun 2024		Social inclusion of IDPs	Small grants / crisis response / IDPs / mental health and psycho-social support / women / livelihoods	■ Updated the needs mapping ■ Continued Meaningful Meetings, attended by 310 individuals – some offered psycho-social support, others were more sociable meet-ups ■ Increased empathy and reduced tension between community members and IDPs ■ Delivered humanitarian aid to six smaller cities and villages ■ Made 17 small grants supporting self-employed IDP women and other vulnerable women in the community, additional support offered as they developed business plans	■ Further involvement of IDPs in the work of the foundation, particularly as volunteers ■ Wider reach across the region, away from urban centres, meant new relationships and trust built

Annex 5: Examples of Missions and Values of Ukrainian CFs

Ukrainian CFs are locally rooted philanthropic organizations, who operate in an independent and transparent manner. Examples of missions and values of CFs demonstrate that those organizations indeed aim to improve the quality of life in communities, encourage local communities to undertake their own development initiatives, and unlock philanthropic resources within and across communities.

Berezan Community Foundation

- **Mission:** To create positive changes in society, to help active people change the lives of Berezan and its residents for the better.
- **Values:** Legality and integrity, publicity and transparency, the best international practices and European standards of charity.

Boyarka Community Foundation

- **Mission:** To make the Boyarka community cohesive, vibrant and positive by uniting its active members, supporting socially useful initiatives, interesting ideas and progressive undertakings.
- **Principles:** Ukrainian patriotism and independence of Ukraine; development of communities and territories of the Boyarka community; support for public initiatives, social projects, good deeds and progressive initiatives; constructive cooperation with local authorities; full neutrality and **equidistance** from all political forces; acceptance of donations from anyone, regardless of political or religious preferences, nationality or personal beliefs.

Charitable Foundation Podilska Hromada

- **Mission:** To activate the community and unite its efforts and resources to address urgent needs by developing a culture of charity / philanthropy and implementing charitable programmes on the basis of equal dialogue, openness and transparency.
- **Values:** Honesty, trust, tolerance, responsibility, fairness and solidarity / team spirit.

Community Foundation of Kherson Zakhyst

- **Mission:** We unite the community for positive change by supporting civic initiatives and developing systemic philanthropy.

Community Foundation of the City of Dubno

- **Mission:** To make the city better together!
- **Vision:** A successful organization that works effectively for community development, involving local residents.
- **Values:** Openness, humanity, legality and accountability, charity and philanthropy, partnership and mutual understanding.

Moloda Gromada

- **Mission:** To support people in their aspirations and activities to improve the lives of their local communities as an integral part of the whole world. The goal is to strengthen civil society in Ukraine through the development of citizen participation and community assets, including social capital, with the help of original solutions.

Ridnya Community Foundation

- **Slogan:** Let's be rich in good deeds! Doing good deeds is our job and we love doing it. And we also manage to infect people with it, to teach them how to do it. Sooner or later, a person will think about what good I have done in this world, who I have helped. A person who does a good deed is healthy, joyful and happy. They have incredible energy and magnetism.
- **Vision:** In each territorial community of the region, there are sustainable public structures that interact with the Ridnya Community Foundation, which develops local philanthropy, attracts external funding and operates financial resources at the level of development budgets within its area of influence.

Annex 6: Funding Sources of Ukrainian CFs

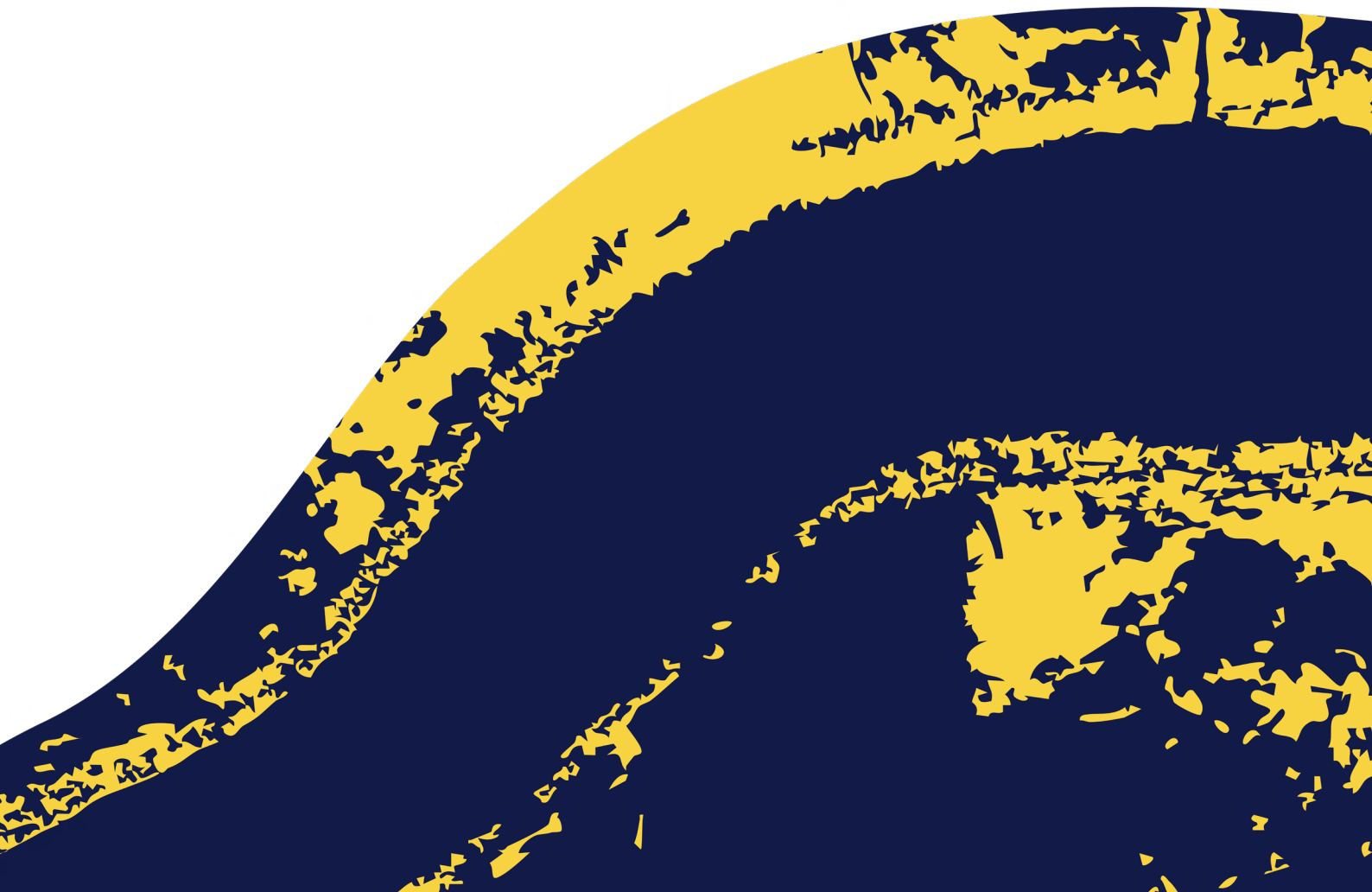
Historically, CFs in Ukraine have raised most of their funds from local sources, including individuals, businesses and their own social enterprises. According to data from ISAR Ednannia, the 12 – 13 oldest CFs in Ukraine raised over US \$15 million between 2009 and 2021, of which only 30% came from international sources.

The war has inevitably had an impact on CFs' funding sources. Firstly, it has led to a drop in local funding for community work, with the focus of local donors shifting towards support for the Ukrainian army. Meanwhile, support from international sources has increased and, as a result, it now constitutes a much higher proportion of CFs' budgets.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion some of the new actors that have entered the support ecosystem for Ukrainian CFs include the Ukrainian diaspora abroad, the broader Ukrainian public through crowdfunding web platforms such as Be Kind, and international sources including foreign embassies, individuals and other European CFs and their networks, such as the European Community Foundation Initiative.

In 2023, the proportion of support from external sources had risen to 64%, although it should be noted that CFs also raised more than US \$1 million in local money during the second year of the full-scale invasion.

Historically, the principle of “local funding for local needs” has been at the heart of the Ukrainian CF model. Preserving this distinct role of CFs as builders of local ownership and local power through the harnessing of local philanthropy and other assets is something that CFs – and any external supporters – should strive to protect. The use of measures that focus not only on the total financial value of local contributions and sources of support, but rather emphasize the number of contributions / people involved, may be one way to preserve and recognize the principle of local ownership and avoid a situation where CFs become treated simply as local implementing partners.



Annex 7: An Open Letter to International Donors and NGOs Who Want to Genuinely Help Ukraine

This letter was published in August 2022 on both the GFCF and NNLPD websites.

We are Ukrainian CSOs and allies who are actively working to ensure that local civil societies have the ongoing resources and power they need to respond to short-term and long-term needs in our communities.

Many of us have already been taking a leading role in the humanitarian response, both in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. From the outset of the Russian military attack, we have been at the forefront of the response to ensure people are safe and looked after in this conflict, and that systems are in place to rebuild our communities when, hopefully, the conflict subsides. In Ukraine, almost all humanitarian aid has been provided by 150 local NGOs, church associations and 1,700 newly created volunteer-based CSOs. Many of these informal volunteer groups are now permanent active organizations operating in the region.

Although the international humanitarian sector has raised many millions of dollars, we have failed to see resources coming our way. In May, the UN Financial Tracking Service showed that UN agencies received about two-thirds of humanitarian aid funding to Ukraine. International NGOs received 6% of the funding, while national Ukrainian NGOs received a scant 0.003% of the total amount. This doesn't factor in the many millions that INGOs have been securing through direct appeals to the public. Yet we are the ones with access, local knowledge, connections, language and – most important of all – the personal commitment to saving lives and delivering help no matter what.

During the past four months of full-scale war, our members and colleagues have faced considerable challenges to gain access to the system of international funding that, even in the midst of a crisis and with local human resources and know-how at the ready, prioritizes international organizations over local ones.

We call on donors and INGOs to rapidly consider a different approach in this war – one that builds on successes elsewhere, but that can also be used to model the behaviour we know will nurture stronger civil societies everywhere. Many of our allies in the #ShiftThePower movement have already pioneered the knowledge on how to do this in other contexts.

We don't have to wait until the war ends – here is a simple list of the immediate things we think you can do to shift the power to local organizations, where it is most needed:

1. Cut the bureaucracy.

Despite official statements of international organizations saying that they seek to support local public initiatives in Ukraine, the reality is that in order to receive these funds, tens, or hundreds, or even thousands of procedures are required. We don't have the human resources to do this, nor do we think this is a priority. Trust and accountability are basic principles for cooperation. Ukrainian NGOs cannot afford to fill out grant applications in volume, nor multiple, repetitive, lengthy due diligence procedures, by some designated international deadline. We are working in the conditions of hostilities. Small organizations need unrestricted flexible funding, provided rapidly: we can demonstrate our legitimacy in other ways, through our actions on the ground and the validation of our peers, the networks that we belong to and the communities we serve.

2. Let local civil society actors decide our priorities and how we wish to act in solidarity in this conflict.

In the midst of the war, we cannot ignore the needs of combatants. We know that aid is rarely "neutral." Yet we are being prevented from receiving much-needed resources because of a bias towards this assumption about "neutrality." The aid sector has documented multiple ways in which even so-called "neutral" aid has unintended consequences and can make inter-group divisions worse and reduce self-reliance and harm local markets.

We do not want to remain "neutral." The value of human life must come first, and supporting the needs of those on the frontline can significantly reduce the amount of civilian aid needed and the number of casualties. Whilst we recognize that international organizations may want to be perceived as such, it should be up to local civil society in these circumstances to determine our own approaches and priorities.

Our approach and demand for solidarity-based funding is supported by the academic Hugo Slim, who has written that "solidarity and not neutrality, should dictate the actions of the international humanitarian community working with and in Ukraine." According to Slim, this approach would be following the long-held tradition of "resistance humanitarianism" that

was part of the resistance to Nazi-occupied Europe; and more recently seen in places like Myanmar and Syria.

Needs are changing rapidly and are different in different parts of the country and for different populations. We are far better at identifying what divides and connects people because of our historical and cultural knowledge and our more nuanced understanding of local alliances and support networks. Funding should remain flexible for us to deliver based on the priority needs local communities are asking for. Misguided assumptions about neutrality shouldn't be a barrier to funding. Wouldn't you want the same if you were also in a dangerous crisis?

3. Invest in ways to help local people tell our own stories and to help us explain what we are doing to help. This supports deeper understanding and helps us to secure access to resources directly.

INGOs and international agencies have been appropriating our knowledge and telling the listening and giving public what they think we need. To INGOs we say, "Stop trying to speak on our behalf and stop controlling narratives in ways that advance your own institutional interests!"

The technology and methodologies exist that can enable local people to share our experiences and needs. Listening to local people will help you to understand the horrors of the war crisis and the varied and changing needs. This results in greater solidarity and accountability and can influence where and how individual donors or institutional donors and the wider public choose to support us. That's true accountability, where local people profile our own experiences and have the power to speak openly and report safely.

We therefore ask the international community to invest in strengthening these collective common systems so that we can easily and efficiently tell our own stories and communicate in our own language with a sympathetic public. We also ask you to listen to and amplify our voices, experiences and activities, in our name. This will actively build solidarity and understanding of the role of local actors in relief, recovery and rehabilitation work. This will also support us to secure more direct and sustainable resources.

4. Start to learn from us.

We understand that a significant amount of funding provided by numerous international organizations is used for "capacity building." But why is our potential the only problem? Do you know enough about how to work with the localization of international resources?

As noted earlier, we are rooted in our communities and have the historical, cultural, linguistic and contextual knowledge and understanding of local realities to respond effectively. Many of us organized and led public activities and community development long before the war. We believe

that it is international organizations that often need to develop their own organizational capacity and knowledge of our context, our networks and what local civil society looks like in the long-term. Perhaps you can translate some of our resources into English to better understand our knowledge and existing approaches.

We want to promote bilateral interaction, instead of copying outdated bureaucratic schemes. Every day we take notes about our achievements and mistakes so that we know what we still have to learn.

When the hostilities die down, international resources will be very useful in streamlining our experience. We are ready to teach how to react and learn how to communicate. Today we can provide many practical solutions for improving the system of efficient use of resources.

Enough talking, it's time to act! If not now, then when?

There have been many commitments and conferences about "the participation revolution", decolonization, accountability to local people, #ShiftThePower, localization, the Grand Bargain and equitable partnerships among others. There has been enough talk! The gap between narrative and action is wide. Now we need to see action.

Now is not the time to excuse inaction by blaming "the aid architecture", "the system", "managers", or "donors." Each person working in INGOs or donor organizations can contribute towards this change, whether it involves relaxing some of the rigid systems, sharing risks more equitably, advocating for alternative kinds of accountability metrics, or experimenting with new approaches and new (local) partners. And yes, this means challenging your own power and exercising humility.

We have an opportunity here to leave what's old and doesn't work behind in ways that can improve our situation in Ukraine immediately and that can have lasting impacts around the world too.

The immediate response and the long-term post-conflict response will require a strong, well-resourced and resilient local civil society. We need to be supported to be civic actors in our own right, not simply projectized mimics of INGOs or "service providers." We are grateful to the international community that has shown solidarity and supports Ukraine by supporting this diverse, locally-rooted, active and committed network of actors in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, and we encourage the rest to come on board too.

By taking some of these immediate steps, your support will go a lot further to helping people affected by the war in Ukraine and many of us working on social justice throughout the world.

Annex 8: GFCF Approach to Partner Selection and Evaluation

A key element of the GFCF's approach to grantmaking in Ukraine since the full-scale invasion has been flexibility. CFs there are working in unpredictable, dangerous and tumultuous circumstances: not only does the daily reality of war often disrupt plans, but it also takes its toll on CF staff and their community partners. In terms of the GFCF's grantmaking, every effort is therefore made to make the process as smooth as possible for partners. With the support of the NNLPD, in 2022 GFCF grant forms (both the application form and reporting templates) were translated into Ukrainian. CF partners are encouraged to complete these forms and to communicate with GFCF in the language of their choice. The GFCF is prepared – as much as funding sources allow – to adjust budgets, activities, grant periods, etc. as required by partners over the course of a grant.

In terms of the grantmaking process, grant applicants are invited to submit a short concept note to the GFCF outlining the objectives and timeframe of their proposed work, along with an estimated budget. This is reviewed by GFCF staff. If it is deemed to be relevant and appropriate, a full grant application is invited. Some information collected via grant applications includes:

- **Basic information about the organization:** Such as its legal status, contact details, internal structure and governance, etc. A number of supporting documents are also submitted along with the application, including: the organization's registration document; most recent audited financial accounts; most recent annual report; and, a list of current board members. If any of these documents are not available in English, they can be submitted in Ukrainian.
- **Broader information about the CF as an organization and the context it operates in:** Including when and why was the organization formed, its mission, as well as the context for local philanthropy in its region and / or community and how the CF is building local philanthropy. The application also requests a description of the community served by the CF, the most pressing issues there, and a sense of how the CF responds. Additional questions garner a sense of the CF's grantmaking, priorities for the coming years, and key internal and external challenges.
- **More detailed information on the proposed grant activities:** This includes the background and purpose of the grant, objectives, activities and potential peer-learning and sharing opportunities. A more detailed project budget

is also submitted, which includes an estimation of the local resources (cash and in-kind) to be raised to support the work.

- **Financial information:** Which includes organizational budgets, a list of current and potential donors, and information on the CF's endowment (if applicable).

If this is the first time an organization is applying for GFCF grant funding, three references are consulted in connection with the application.

Once a grant is made, the GFCF's approach is largely "hands-off" in terms of grant activities. Though Ukrainian CFs are regularly invited to wider GFCF and #ShiftThePower gatherings, and often request the GFCF's support on their own initiatives. For example, GFCF participation in conferences and convenings organized by CFs, providing references in cases where funding is sought from other donors, organizing joint advocacy initiatives, etc. Regular communication is the norm.

One month after the end of the grant period, CFs are expected to submit a narrative report, financial report, and supporting documents to accompany the financial report. The narrative report invites grant partners to describe grant activities, successes, challenges and efforts around local resources mobilization. The form also includes a list of 20 possible grant outcomes. The same indicators chart is included in the application form, allowing for progress on the 20 different indicators to be assessed over the course of a grant period. Partners are asked to rank each indicator on a scale of one to five, from "not at all important" up to "centrally important." They are further asked to elaborate on what they deem to be the top three indicators. The same chart is completed by GFCF grant partners around the world, and is not tied to one specific geography. Like this, it is possible to note wider trends and priority areas across the GFCF's global network.

Annex 9: Services Offered by the NNLPD

The NNLPD invites its members – who satisfy pre-defined organizational requirements – to participate in the “Community Foundations of Ukraine” programme and receive the following services:

1. Capacity building and support

- Participation in the annual conference of CFs to share experiences and reflect on the year.
- Access to the self-development grant competition for CFs. The competition rules are governed by the “Regulations on the Small Grants Competition” and the “Regulations of the NNLPD on Grants / Subgrants.”
- Access to relevant and highly specialized training at the request of CFs.
- Access to an online hub with relevant information and useful resources for CFs, including but not limited to: manuals, books, recordings of conferences and lectures, templates of organizational documents, presentation materials, etc.
- Information sheets on opportunities for CFs.
- Participation in exchange programmes between CFs in Ukraine and in other countries.
- Individual consultations with the team of the NNLPD.

2. Communications

- Coverage of the work of the CF on the website of the NNLPD.
- Coverage of the work of the CF through a monthly email digest for NNLPD’s audience.
- Presentation of the CF’s activities at international conferences.
- Access to branded products for CFs, including clothes, badges, booklets, handouts, etc.
- Access to presentation materials about the CF model.

3. Funding

- Participation in grant / sub-grant programmes conducted by the NNLPD, which are organized at the request of several CFs with the involvement of funding from third parties.
- Assistance in finding donors for the programme / project of the CF. Support during negotiation procedures, including negotiation facilitation and translation.
- Access to the newsletter of open grant opportunities.
- Support in negotiating and establishing partnerships with businesses and business foundations.

4. Advocacy

- Participation in the development and implementation of a national advocacy strategy to protect the interests of CFs.
- Participation in training to develop advocacy skills amongst CF teams.
- Access to consultations on platforms where representatives of CFs can present their advocacy priorities.

5. Developing a favorable environment for local philanthropy

- Attracting investments in local businesses through community foundations to increase the financial capacity of businesses to invest in charity and to establish partnerships between community foundations and businesses.
- Bringing innovations to the community through community foundations, including through exchange visits.
- Promoting social entrepreneurship in communities through training and grant competitions.
- Promoting community centres in communities, which will provide a space for communication between business, government and the community.
- Developing visionary projects for communities to engage business and media in the activities of CFs.



The GFCF works to strengthen, harness and demonstrate the value of community philanthropy as an essential element of community-led development and as a strategy for shifting power. Through small grants, technical support, peer exchange and evidence based learning, the GFCF helps to strengthen community philanthropy institutions around the world, so that they can fulfill their potential as vehicles for locally-led development, and as part of the larger global infrastructure for progressive social change.

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