

## **THE ROADMAP TO FREEDOM AND RECOVERY:**

**A Report on Ukraine's Changing Needs  
During the War**



**WORLD FOR UKRAINE (W4UA) FOUNDATION  
SUMMIT 2023 REPORT**

# ABOUT W4UA FOUNDATION

The World for Ukraine (W4UA) Foundation is a non-governmental institution whose primary goals are to integrate and support the efforts of non-governmental organizations, local and central governments, and corporate actors for the benefit of the Ukrainian nation. Since the outbreak of the full-scale invasion in Ukraine, the Foundation has organized two large-scale conferences that have gathered over 2,000 participants from across different sectors to strengthen their collaboration, exchange ideas and raise awareness about the ongoing efforts in Ukraine. Together, these events featured more than 80 panel discussions and workshops covering topics from humanitarian aid, psychological aid, social housing, reconstruction, employment of internationally displaced persons, to disinformation and accountability for war crimes.

Find out more: [www.w4ua.com](http://www.w4ua.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The W4UA Foundation thanks the speakers of the W4UA Summit 2023, whose active participation, contribution to panel discussions and exchange of expertise are at the heart of this report. We would like to give special thanks to organizations that have prepared with care and moderated with passion panel discussions and workshops that were held at the Summit (in an alphabetical order): Axelo, Centre for Information Resilience, City of Rzeszow, Corporate Connections, Council of Europe, Dignity, Eastern Circles, Integrites, Mediciner, National Psychological Association of Ukraine, Pilecki Institute, Project NADIYA, Regional Center for Human Rights, Task Force Antal, The Ukrainian House in Przemyśl, Ukraine Focus, and 361 Firm. The organizers also thank nearly 70 partners whose support made the W4UA Summit 2023 possible.

## REPORT PARTNERS

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# TESTIMONIALS



## Serhii Kryvohuz

*Adviser to the Minister of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine*

We cordially express our sincere gratitude for extending an invitation to attend the W4UA Summit. The opportunity to engage with thought leaders, gain insights into the latest developments, and collaborate on innovative solutions is one that we deeply appreciate.

We are aware of the significance of the W4UA Summit and the impact it has on fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and advancements in our shared areas of interest. It is a privilege to be part of this gathering, and I am committed to actively participating in all aspects of the summit to make the most of this valuable experience.

We would like to express our gratitude not only for the invitation but also for the effort and dedication that the organizing team has put into making this event possible. Your commitment to excellence is evident, and I am confident that the W4UA Summit was a resounding success for supporting Ukraine.

Thank you for this invaluable opportunity, and we look forward to fruitful cooperation in the future.



## Paweł Kowal

*Polish government's plenipotentiary for supporting Ukraine's reconstruction*

This report is a summary of the achievements of the World For Ukraine Summit, which I had the opportunity to participate in. This event played an important role: on the one hand, it reminded us of the huge humanitarian tragedy that still affects Ukraine, and on the other, we discussed opportunities and challenges related to building economic and social cooperation between our countries. In Warsaw, Krakow and Gdańsk we do not hear sirens from Kiev, so it is easy to forget that the war in Ukraine is taking a tragic toll every day in the form of people killed, injured and traumatized. There is constant multi-domain Russian aggression, which aims to destroy not only free Ukraine, but also the European security system that ensures peace for us all, including Poles. This is what the World For Ukraine Summit was about. You hold in your hands an up-to-date list of challenges facing Ukraine and all of us.





### **Konrad Fijołek**

*President of Rzeszów City*

The World For Ukraine Summit is a great meeting of civil society focused on helping Ukraine. I am very glad that it is taking place in Rzeszów, a central place on the map of international efforts to support our struggling neighbor. I am also glad that I could take honorary patronage of this event and that I had the opportunity to participate in it as a panelist. I talked, among other things, about how necessary it is to build synergy between administration and civil society, we did it in Rzeszów "before it was fashionable". The mechanisms of broad civic participation we introduced built trust, which resulted in the extraordinary involvement of residents in times of extreme humanitarian crisis, which we could not even imagine before. This report by the W4UA Foundation is another building block in strengthening these mechanisms. This is a summary of hundreds of valuable expert voices that were heard in September 2023 during the W4UA Summit. I invite you to read and draw practical conclusions.



### **Dr Iryna Degtyarova**

*SGH rector's plenipotentiary for cooperation with Ukrainian Universities*

The world stands with Ukraine and puts in the efforts in combating the challenges arising from the war, on the battlefield, on the frontline settlements, in the hospitals and schools, physically and virtually, helps refugees. Everyone is doing their best. Integration and alignment of the efforts, harmonizing support, exchange of experiences, learning from each other, communication and raising awareness should be the core principles. In the knowledge production and knowledge exchange international conferences, like W4UA, play a significant role, helping to structure the priorities and needs to develop adequate responses. The W4UA report as an outcome of the Forum, provides evidence, builds the knowledge and gives recommendations for different groups of stakeholders that will foster cross-sectoral cooperation and a better response. The report, as a comprehensive overview of the current and future challenges of Ukraine, will be useful for different institutions in their self-reflection and development of tasks for the future, and for experts and researchers interested in Ukraine.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This W4UA Report provides a range of recommendations for nongovernmental organizations, Ukrainian and foreign governments, media, and companies to address the needs and strengthen the response of these actors to the ongoing war in Ukraine. The report is based on the outcomes of over 35 panel discussions, presentations, and workshops held on September 28-29, 2023 in Rzeszów-Jasionka, Poland. The report comes at a time when the humanitarian landscape in Ukraine is stabilizing, partnerships between sectors continue to form, and there is a growing awareness of humanitarian and economic needs. And yet, the report adds value by highlighting the perspective of experts and practitioners on the necessary improvements to the ongoing activities, help to neglected and vulnerable groups, gaps in healthcare legislation, and the growing need for cross-sectoral cooperation to counter Russian disinformation and combat war fatigue.

**Chapter 1** discusses current humanitarian activities in Ukraine and mentions appropriate help for **vulnerable groups** to ensure that no one is left behind, including people with disabilities, returning soldiers and veterans, war crimes and human trafficking survivors, children with autism and elderly. This chapter further provides strategies for NGOs operating on the **frontlines** to improve their safety and outlines how NGOs can contribute to war fatigue by sharing **authentic Ukrainian stories**. Lastly, this chapter scopes **available technologies** and platforms that can modernize communications and administration of humanitarian aid in Ukraine.

**Chapter 2** raises awareness about responsible and ethical behaviors of non-governmental organizations operating in Ukraine, highlighting principles of the Code of Conduct that improve efficiency of humanitarian efforts, and promote transparency and accountability.

**Chapter 3** is rich in information about **mental health** of children, elderly, and veterans. This chapter provides strategies to adapt the Ukrainian educational processes to alleviate the trauma of children, underscores the importance of adapting humanitarian programs to the long-neglected needs of elderly, and considers current challenges facing **reintegration** and **rehabilitation** of war veterans. This chapter also makes critical observations about the need to adapt the profession of psychologists and improving knowledge of parents and teachers in regards to mental health of children.

**Chapter 4** discusses war crimes committed in Ukraine and provides suggestions on how to make domestic and international **accountability mechanisms** more effective. **A victim-centered approach** is suggested to ensure that individuals receive appropriate reparations that allow them to reintegrate into society, while also outlining possibilities for **compensation of businesses** affected by war. The urgent issues of **repatriating Ukrainian children** that were unlawfully deported to Russia and preventing children from being subjected to reeducation programs of Russia are highlighted here.

**Chapter 5** addresses the hindrances and opportunities of foreign investments in Ukraine. Here, the importance of providing suitable employment for Ukrainian refugees and its benefits to their integration into the host country's society are highlighted. Lastly, this chapter discusses positive changes in societal attitudes towards women in leadership in Ukraine.

**Chapter 6** text delineates challenges and solutions for Ukraine's infrastructure today and post-Russian aggression. Discussions encompass **rebuilding efforts, social housing policies, energy infrastructure damage**, and initiatives for sustainable housing solutions. Emphasis is on addressing immediate needs, fostering collaboration, and advocating for long-term resilient solutions.

**Chapter 7** examines modern **disinformation tactics** of Russia. Speakers provided specific instances of disinformation narratives and attacks on critical energy infrastructure, and suggested a multi-level approach that seeks oversight of social media platforms, identifies perpetrators and urges international action.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides key recommendations organized per stakeholder group: humanitarian organizations, Ukrainian government, foreign governments, corporations, and media. Further details about each recommendation can be found in the respective sections below.

## HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS:

**1. Make use of local resources, local personnel and establish local headquarters in Ukraine.** Familiarize yourself with local constraints, such as frozen budgets or shortages of personnel, and make sure your support is needs-based. Understanding the situation on the ground is essential to provide the right kind of support and will help streamline processes, reduce costs and improve the long-term operability of your organization.

**2. Avoid middlemen.** Deliver aid directly to the end recipients to ensure efficiency, reduce costs, and avoid mismanagement.

**3. When working at the frontlines, conduct regular risk assessments and stay unpredictable.** Maintain strict confidentiality of operational details like the location of warehouses, routes and timetables, and reduce exposure on the ground. Being fast and flexible reduces the risk of targeted attacks. Maintain open communication channels with other organizations operating in the area to benefit from each other's expertise.

**4. Cooperate with local authorities, civilian or military, to exchange information, contacts, and to coordinate efforts.** For long-term collaborations, consider signing a memorandum of understanding including issues such as codes of conduct, communication and feedback protocols, financial partnerships, and shared responsibilities and resources. If organizations cease to operate or adjust their activities, ensure sustainable transfer of knowledge and skills to the local administration to ensure the continuity of operations. Organize combined workshops and training sessions with local authorities and engage in joint policy advocacy.

**5. Leverage the „invincibility centers“.** These centers were set up by the Ukrainian government to provide electricity, heat, water and humanitarian resources. Making use of them allows organizations to ensure a stable food distribution and reach a broader audience.

**6. Create working relationships with local energy providers to maintain a near real-time information exchange regarding any disruptions.** Proactive communication will facilitate quick response measures.

**7. Introduce cyclical feedback mechanisms with beneficiaries.** Since needs can change rapidly, reacting to feedback

received is essential to ensure that aid remains relevant and timely. This could be achieved through regular surveys, impact assessments or interviews with the beneficiaries.

**8. Target fundraising efforts towards prominent, established donors.** Depending solely on smaller donors could pose financial instability during periods of war fatigue. Established donors, both domestically and internationally, provide the necessary stability to support projects with long-term objectives.

**9. Sign a Code of Conduct laying down rules of transparency and accountability.** This will increase awareness, improve the organization's credibility, increase donor confidence, and ensure compliance with legal rules. Consider signing the joint Code of Conduct initiated by the World for Ukraine Foundation, Ukraine Focus and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

**10. Keep detailed records of the organization's activities and all aid delivered.** Also document all collaborative efforts, capturing success stories, lessons learned and impact of delivered projects. Sharing reports with municipal authorities, donors, the media, and the local community reinforces trust, promotes transparency and ensures accountability.

**11. Combat human trafficking.** Prioritize both providing resources and quality care to the survivors and implementing active prevention and awareness campaigns to combat future human trafficking.

**12. Acknowledge the unique needs of the elderly.** Offer services that will appropriately address problems disproportionately affecting the elderly population: disability, social isolation, dementia, and missing technology skills which prevent them from seeking out help.

**13. Include migrant communities in dialogue to understand their needs and collaboratively foster solutions.** Establish strong ties with the Ukrainian diaspora, whose language skills and cultural knowledge are invaluable in crisis situations.

**14. Ensure that all personnel, especially new recruits, undergo comprehensive security training.** Emphasize the importance of avoiding hasty, ill-prepared actions that can jeopardize operations and lives. Address volunteer

fatigue with appreciation programs, ensure consistent emotional support, and offer regular check-ins.

**15. Help collect war crime evidence.** Cooperate with other stakeholders and the government to help prosecute criminals and protect the victims of crimes.

**16. Combat disinformation and propaganda.** Sharing reliable, factual information on the current situation can help counter harmful narratives.

**17. Regularly review technological possibilities to make your organization's work more effective and to adapt to evolving contexts.** While implementing technologies, remember to review and mitigate potential risks.

**18. Ensure to use only fact-checked information and avoid reposting Russian disinformation.** Utilize fact-checked sources of information, engage with the United Nations clusters and international forums, and establish partnerships with technology companies to identify and combat disinformation effectively.

**19. Organize workshops or training sessions on grant writing and funding applications.** This experience of well-established organizations may help smaller local organizations in Ukraine better navigate the international funding landscape and secure essential financial resources.

## **UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT:**

**20. Plan for long-term psychological support needs.** As mental health issues can surface long after the trauma has been experienced, provide long-term sustainable financing for mental health programs to ensure their continuation after the war. Strengthen the collaboration between Ukrainian psychologists and the government to address the gaps in mental health legislation, and advocate for better salaries to eliminate under-the-table payments and promote transparency in the medical profession.

**21. Invest in fast-track psychological training, including for school teachers.** Recognizing the shortage of psychologists and their time-consuming education, consider creating a streamlined, intensive training program for potential psychologists and facilitating the unbureaucratic involvement of university students trained in mental health issues. Furthermore, provide mental health training for teachers to establish a psychologically supportive environment in schools and other educational facilities.

**22. Promote the inclusion of veterans in civilian life.** This includes integration into various sectors, such as the economy, municipalities, civil society, and business, and providing psychological support for those traumatized by war.

**23. Invest in telemedicine.** This involves investing in the necessary infrastructure and training healthcare professionals in effective telemedicine communication to bridge the gap caused by language and cultural differences.

**24. Create a victim-centered approach system for war crimes reparations.** Victims should determine what kind of help, when and how they want to receive it. Create a proper coordination system for reparations with the involvement of civil society.

**25. Amend the legal system to facilitate the prosecution of international crimes.** Change the rules of procedure to allow for a longer period of prosecution, find effective mechanisms to compensate businesses for losses encountered as a result of the war, and consider a more flexible policy on declassifying evidence to facilitate the prosecution of Russian war crimes and combat Russian propaganda.

**26. Review and revise educational content, including textbooks, to remove trauma-provoking content.** The trauma-informed approach to education should be implemented at all developmental stages.

**27. Strengthen political efforts for the return of deported Ukrainian children.** If their return is not possible immediately, gaining a list of names of those children deported would already be of advantage.

**28. Address the needs of the elderly.** This includes implementing programmes on dementia to increase awareness of the disease as it disproportionately affects the older generation.

**29. Establish data clearinghouses.** These institutions should offer transparent and genuine data access for oversight by civil society organizations, journalists, and academics to counteract fake news and increase awareness of Russian propaganda.

**30. Prioritize the protection of vulnerable groups in the digital realm.** One often neglected group are military service members who are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of disinformation, including dangerous radicalization, due to their professional „in-silo” social isolation.

**31. Support programs that counter Russian disinformation abroad.** Support information initiatives with global outreach, such as programmes targeting Spanish-speaking countries, Francophone African countries, and Turkish and Arab audiences.

**32. Support aid organizations on the frontlines with intelligence information.** Provide them with assessments of risks to optimize operations. Maintain open communication



channels to tailor aid according to dynamic local needs, ensuring real-time knowledge exchange.

**33. Prioritize building underground power grids instead of overhead power lines that are more vulnerable to destruction.** Expand and improve cross-border power grid connections with European Union member states. Continue efforts to unify technical standards of power grids with those of the European Union to facilitate energy exports and imports and interoperability for repair and maintenance.

**34. Develop and communicate a clear post-liberation plan for areas currently under occupation.** The plan should ensure that immediate needs are met swiftly after liberation and that infrastructure can be rebuilt rapidly. The focus should thereby be on improving the Ukrainian infrastructure instead of just rebuilding it.

**35. Develop a comprehensive plan for post-war reconstruction of the energy sector.** This includes securing financing for the modernization of energy systems to make them more resilient to future disruptions and to bring them up to date with the latest technological advances.

**36. Prioritize the reconstruction of infrastructure facilities that will meet basic human needs.** This includes transportation infrastructure, such as bridges, and energy infrastructure. Give priorities in rebuilding Ukraine to local companies and pay attention to environmental restoration and ESG principles.

## **FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS:**

**37. Ensure an equal distribution of funds to aid organizations.** Local organizations currently only receive a small portion of the available funding. Furthermore, establish a list of trusted entities and individuals, for example mayors, who can be reliable partners in the usage of international funds. Collaborate with local Ukrainian NGOs to ensure aid reaches these verified recipients.

**38. Address the mental health needs of Ukrainians living abroad.** Ensure appropriate services are offered that consider language barriers and cultural differences.

**39. Encourage the employment of Ukrainians.** Ensure the recognition of Ukrainian qualifications and provide language training and job support to refugees. This also entails addressing and preventing all manifestations of discrimination against displaced populations in host countries and advocating for respect, understanding and solidarity with the displaced Ukrainian population.

**40. Find a balance between integrating Ukrainian children into foreign educational systems and helping them**

**maintain their connection with Ukraine.** This could be achieved by allowing Ukrainian teachers to teach Ukrainian children abroad or allowing Ukrainian children to pass Ukrainian exams online.

**41. Advocate for the assistance of international financial institutions.** Organizations such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank should consider providing guarantees to companies wishing to invest in Ukraine. Integrate private sector efforts with public procurement mechanisms to expedite aid and reconstruction.

**42. Demand ratification of the Rome Statute.** International partners, such as the European Union and individual member states, should exert pressure on the Ukrainian government to change its legal infrastructure on the prosecution of international crimes and to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to simplify claims against Russian war criminals.

**43. Strengthen international cooperation on countering disinformation.** Impose consequences on countries and entities responsible for disseminating harmful narratives. Increase NATO funding specifically designated for combating disinformation.

**44. Educate the public and political officials on Russian disinformation.** Governments should explain to the public why certain economic effects, such as higher gas prices, are a result of Putin's invasion of Ukraine and increase in gas prices might be short-term inconveniences serving long-term stability and safety. Offer politicians possibilities to participate in discussions with experts to address war fatigue.

**45. Prevent the war in Ukraine from being exploited for political gains during election campaigns.** Support from diverse political parties can help prevent these conflicts from creating division.

## **CORPORATIONS:**

**46. Initiate corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaigns and donate a portion of the profits to relief efforts.** Support could include assisting "invincibility centers" and winter shelters, providing generators, fuel, spare parts and know-how to maintain the power grid or improving access to mobile and independent internet, which is essential for communities during blackouts.

**47. Invest in smaller companies to fight corruption bot-tom-up.** Encourage start-ups and smaller companies to properly promote themselves and build a reputation to give them enough invested interest in their own country.

**48. Create joint ventures with Ukrainian companies abroad.** Let them maintain operations, gather know-how and experience. Make use of domestic insurance policies for companies investing in Ukraine, such as the recent Polish laws amending the law on export insurance.<sup>1</sup>

**49. Prepare for operations in Ukraine well in advance.** Foreign companies operating in Ukraine must be part of the Ukrainian market and preferably have a credit history, which can be gained by participating in existing small tenders. Invest in learning Ukrainian to reach a bigger audience.

**50. Prioritize transparency and act swiftly and decisively when addressing misinformation threats.** This is important to fight corruption which hinders development and reconstruction and avoid spreading misinformation which can cause significant economic risks. Social media firms should offer open-code access to entities combating disinformation, allowing them to understand the dynamics of social media channels used for disseminating malicious information. Proactively educate both the general public and employees about the complexities and dangers of social media platforms and support fact-driven platforms that debunk fake news.

**51. Invest in technological solutions and cooperate through open source information.** However, be aware of risks associated with the technologies used and try to minimize them as much as possible.

**52. Use investment arbitration to claim compensation for losses.** It is not the cheapest but the most effective way to get compensated. However, due to the high costs involved, this avenue only makes sense if the losses encountered are significant.

## **MEDIA:**

**53. Re-evaluate traditional fact-checking methods.** Focus on addressing the underlying beliefs and concerns that amplify the appeal of certain disinformation narratives. Engage and empower experts from diverse fields such as psychology, neuroscience, anthropology, and cultural studies. Position these experts as „truth proxies” to rebuild trust and guide the public towards credible sources.

**54. Educate the public about the Russian disinformation tactics, the mechanics of social media platforms, and the dangers of misinformation.** Arm individuals with resilience strategies to challenge content, prompting questions like, „Why am I seeing this? Who benefits from my belief in this?”

**55. Make the Ukrainian struggle relevant to the audience to fight war fatigue.** This could involve linking it to global themes or trends, or exploring new angles and stories. Regularly remind the public of the historical background, beginnings, causes, and evolution of prolonged war in Ukraine.

**56. Encourage more local, real-time documentation of events.** This footage can serve as undeniable evidence of the ongoing hostilities. Feature human stories from individuals directly affected by the conflict, like soldiers on the frontlines and their families, to provide an authentic perspective and foster empathy based on shared values, such as bravery, ingenuity, and resilience.

**57. Avoid leaving a narrative vacuum.** Once a disinformation narrative is debunked or countered, it is essential to immediately fill that space with accurate information and narratives. Otherwise, adversaries may exploit these gaps.

**58. Include positive stories in your coverage.** It is crucial to showcase the numerous instances of positive collaboration, such as the reconstruction of Bucha, where funding made a real difference. Also promote Ukrainian culture, fashion, food in order to maintain a positive focus on Ukraine's history and uniqueness.

<sup>1</sup> In July 2023, the Sejm lower house of the Parliament amended the Act on export insurance guaranteed by the State Treasury and certain other acts. It introduces mechanisms that are important for Polish entrepreneurs - securing payments from a foreign entity to a Polish exporter and the possibility for the Export Credit Insurance Corporation to reinsure insurance whose risks did not occur in the territory of Poland. <https://www.wnp.pl/finanse/polskie-firmy-wysylaja-coraz-wiecej-towaru-na-ukraine-wazna-zmiana-w-ubezpieczeniach,777757.html>. For a full version of the law see: <https://www.infor.pl/akt-prawny/DZU.2023.256.0001859,ustawa-o-zmianie-ustawy-o-gwarantowanych-przez-skarb-panstwa-ubezpieczeniach-eksportowych-oraz-niektorych-innych-ustaw.html>.

# INTRODUCTION

## ADDRESSING EVOLVING NEEDS

The second iteration of the World For Ukraine (W4UA) Summit convened on 28-29 September 2023, coinciding with the 18-month mark of Ukraine's ongoing conflict. Drawing together a diverse cohort of over 700 participants spanning the governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors, the Summit served as a pivotal moment for introspection amidst the relentless toll of the war on Ukrainian society.

The previous edition of W4UA Summit 2022 witnessed a surge in civil society engagement, prompting responses from numerous organizations who collected substantial individual donations and dynamically adapted to changing circumstances. By the 2023 Summit, the landscape had changed notably. Smaller organizations, grappling with decreasing funds due to growing war fatigue, had regrettably withdrawn. At the same time, bigger organizations had established their positions by fostering robust partnerships with local governments and fellow non-governmental organizations (NGOs), resulting in enhanced organizational stability and efficiency. This empowered them to efficiently deliver aid, including to the front lines. Concurrently, foreign NGOs increasingly opted for direct collaboration with local Ukrainian counterparts and recipients while sourcing humanitarian assistance from local producers, thereby contributing to the regional economy. The growing expertise of NGOs facilitated local governments in leveraging their

resources to address crisis situations. Speakers underscored the pivotal role of transparent reporting, financial audits, and anti-corruption measures, given the NGOs' important societal role.

Crucial priorities persist in addressing the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs), providing psychological trauma treatment, supporting war veterans, undertaking urban reconstruction, and strengthening demining efforts. The humanitarian landscape continues to evolve, with a renewed focus on reintegrating families returning to their homes after displacement and soldiers reentering civilian life. This edition delved deeper into mental health integration within Ukraine's healthcare system and scrutinized the far-reaching impact of disinformation on critical infrastructure and war narratives.

This comprehensive report encapsulates the multifaceted discussions held during the 2023 W4UA Summit's 35+ panels, encompassing humanitarian situation (Chapter 1), anti-corruption initiatives (Chapter 2), mental health (Chapter 3), justice efficiency (Chapter 4), economic considerations (Chapter 5), reconstruction endeavors (Chapter 6), and the pervasive influence of disinformation (Chapter 7). Throughout, it underscores the intrinsic value and benefits derived from fostering cross-sectoral collaboration to address Ukraine's intricate challenges.



## CHAPTER 1:

# HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

This section addresses the changing humanitarian needs of the Ukrainian people, makes suggestions for organizations working on the front lines, underlines the negative impacts of war fatigue on donations, and describes the positive effects of technological innovation in the humanitarian sector.



Panel discussion "Well-being of the Elderly in Ukraine in Focus". From the left: Natalia Yehorovets (W4UA Foundation), Varvara Tertychna (Starenki Charitable Foundation), Iryna Shevchenko (Nezabutni), Khrystyna Semegen-Bodak (Caritas Ukraine), Brittany Armstrong (Ukraine Telehealth Initiative), Valeriia Pali (National Psychological Association of Ukraine).





### 1.1. Leaving no one behind

As humanitarian aid efforts continue, attention should be paid to the principle of leaving no one behind. This principle entails that donors, organizations, governments and implementing partners carefully consider all individuals that may be affected, without discrimination, by their activities. To support such efforts, this section highlights some social groups that were highlighted by the speakers as especially important. This list is by no means exhaustive as the principle of leaving no one behind requires careful context-based evaluation of the groups affected by each activity.

While children affected by war are recipients of a significant amount of humanitarian and psychological aid projects (see section 3.1), the speakers highlighted the importance of including their parents or guardians in aid projects. This ensures that children receive long-term support by their families after humanitarian projects have ended. Olena Nikolaienko (Future for Ukraine) also mentioned that children with special needs should be addressed with due attention, such as children with autism who are particularly affected by the intermittent and online education.

Since most projects address the younger generations, several speakers highlighted the importance of meeting the needs of the elderly. Due to their limited mobility, many may be unable or unwilling to move out of their houses, even if they are on the frontlines. Such individuals may require special medical attention and are at serious risk of developing war-related traumas (see section 3.2).

Psychological aid is in great demand by all social groups in Ukraine (see Chapter 3). Nonetheless, the speakers mentioned the importance of specialized programs for veterans and victims of war crimes. These groups are particularly vulnerable to war-related traumas which may have lasting effects, if left unaddressed. Julia Sachenko (A21) furthermore explained that human trafficking victims are often overlooked by psychological and humanitarian assistance projects. A possible reason for this is the lack of reliable reports on the issue due to the inability to state with certainty how many people are affected by this phenomenon until survivors report themselves, as well as the reluctance of governments to make their estimates public in fear of public shaming. Nevertheless, as Julia Sachenko highlights and as discussed in our previous report of 2022, the scale of the problem is extensive and requires a proportionate response. There is a great need for quality care of survivors on the one hand, and active prevention and awareness campaigns to combat future human trafficking on the other. Mental health initiatives should also address the needs of Ukrainians living abroad, both those that have

been forced to displace as well as those who lived abroad previous to the war but whose families are affected by the ongoing hostilities.

Lastly, ongoing and future reconstruction projects should be implemented with the consideration of their social impacts. For example, the needs of disabled people should be addressed through appropriate design.

### 1.2. Front lines

There are hundreds of towns and villages along the 1,200-kilometer-long frontline where people have chosen to stay, despite the constant danger of Russian attacks. These areas need to receive substantial aid, including bare essentials such as food, clothing, blankets, medical supplies, hygiene articles, and power generators.

Delivering aid near the frontlines presents a multidimensional challenge that raises logistical, administrative, financial, accounting, security, and staff management concerns. In light of the attacks on humanitarian aid providers, which have included the destruction of warehouses and vehicles and the killing of personnel, practitioners have developed strategies to minimize the dangers. The speakers stressed, however, that it is impossible to entirely eliminate the risk.

Among the risk-minimizing measures is strict information management. As Christine Antal (Task Force Antal) emphasizes, nobody knows the locations of their warehouses or where they store valuable medical supplies. Transportation details are kept secret until the last possible moment. It is crucial to be unpredictable and to avoid detectable patterns. Vehicles should be changed frequently, warehouses should be spread out, and distribution times should be limited. As an example, Michel Capponi (Global Empowerment Mission, GEM) shared how his organization manages to unload 300 packages from a truck and distribute them to those in need in only 10 minutes. According to Viktor Shevchenko (Logistics Officer of the Territorial Defense Forces; CEO of logistics company Zammler), nighttime is the best time for deliveries to avoid hostilities. Relying on experienced and trustworthy staff is also essential. New personnel can bring risks – hasty and ill-prepared actions can lead to injuries, deaths and jeopardize entire operations. Equally important is supporting and empowering volunteers, many of whom experience significant stress and burnout.

Another vital aspect is networking and staying informed to understand the changing needs at different locations and times. Maintaining close relationships with local municipalities, the military, and other organizations on the ground is





crucial. With many organizations operating in the area, it is crucial to communicate with end recipients, often represented by municipalities. Local mayors play a pivotal role in indicating which items are abundant and which are in short supply. Moreover, accountability is paramount. GEM, for instance, maintains extensive documentation, with records signed by Ukrainian local authorities to validate the exact items delivered. Part of their policy emphasizes bypassing intermediaries for direct aid. As Andriy Dobriansky (Ukrainian Congress Committee of America) observes, needs change rapidly, making continual feedback essential.

### 1.3. War fatigue

As the war continues, many stakeholders are worried about war fatigue, also referred to as “Ukraine fatigue,” manifesting itself in Western societies. This term describes the sentiment of detachment from the conflict experienced as a result of high volumes of negative news. The Centre for Information Resilience has already observed that the public in neighboring countries as well as in the United States is more reluctant for their governments to send support to Ukraine.

The reasons for war fatigue are multifold. Many media providers are losing interest in stories from Ukraine. This is especially so due to new crises having emerged, such as the armed conflict in Israel and Gaza. The lack of exposure to news from the region can lead to a sense of normalization that results in audiences in the West becoming less compassionate. Besides the influence of media cycles, however, war fatigue is increased by deliberate disinformation conducted by the Russian Federation. It has become evident that Ukraine cannot withstand Russian aggression without continuous support from its allies which presupposes a political commitment that cannot be achieved without the public’s support for Ukraine. Simultaneously, growing war fatigue negatively impacts all forms of individual, corporate and governmental monetary donations that are crucial to sustain both military and humanitarian initiatives. As a result, war fatigue poses an existential threat to Ukraine which Russia exploits.

The Centre for Information Resilience, which traces online disinformation, noted that initially, this disinformation did not get much attention internationally which was also a result of President Zelensky’s relentless efforts to effectively communicate the realities of the war. Verified photos and videos from the war zones were available and widely shared online resulting in a sense of cultural kinship and sympathy towards Ukraine abroad. However, as the war in Ukraine is less frequently covered in Western media, Russian disinfor-

mation operates 24/7 to bolster the sense of fatigue and align its narratives with current political events. According to Yevhen Fedchenko (Stop Fake), common topics of targeted pro-Russian disinformation include narratives of Ukraine mishandling Western weapons, mismanagement of financial aid, negative portrayals of Ukrainian refugees, and opinions questioning the validity of photos and videos depicting Russian atrocities. These strategies are becoming increasingly decentralized through the use of domestically-operating intermediaries whose ties to Russia are often less obvious. The speakers warned that the international community often underestimates the subversive impact of such operations. In his documentary “Freedom on Fire” and on the panel, Evgeny Afineevsky shared his concern over a growing weaponization of the media.

In advising Ukraine on how to best counter such disinformation, the speakers insisted on the importance of not leaving a narrative void for Russian misinformation but filling it with authentic Ukrainian stories to maintain Ukraine’s presence on a global scale. To do so, the speakers advised Ukraine to take proactive steps in exposing false information and providing credible evidence to the contrary. Yevhen Fedchenko further suggested establishing a physical presence in various regions and languages to appeal to a wider audience through, for instance, a Spanish language hub for Spanish and Latin American audiences or content in Turkish. As Ukraine currently has valuable experience of countering disinformation, speakers also urged it to share expertise with other nations so they can learn from it.

### 1.4. Technological innovation

In a country with 180,000 NGOs and an active civil society, technology can help coordinate efforts and relieve organizations of repetitive paperwork to free time for on-the-ground assistance. Referring to a report he co-authored for ELRHS,<sup>2</sup> Anton Shevchenko (ITF Enhancing Human Security) explained that humanitarian aid of all kinds can benefit from innovation. He gave the example of cash assistance schemes which have run into many problems in Ukraine as they are delivered via digital channels and on a very big scale. Technology can aid the efficiency of such efforts but more exploration of technical solutions is necessary. Angelika Nocon (Tech to the Rescue) further added that technologies can make a difference mainly in communication: effective communication systems can relieve organizations of much manual work, and information-sharing mechanisms such as interactive maps can improve communication about basic services for refugees and IDPs.

<sup>2</sup> Nigel Timmins and Anton Shevchenko (April 2023) *Adaptive Innovation in the Ukraine Humanitarian Response: How Context, Leadership and Partnerships Matter*. <https://www.elrha.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Elrha-Ukraine-Case-Study-Report.pdf>.

Tech to the Rescue links NGOs in need of technical help with businesses that are willing to invest and offer guidance on technical solutions. Since the start of the project, 670 companies and 207 NGOs have joined the initiative and are now working together on 130 projects. SpivDiia is another example of how technologies can be leveraged to improve communication. SpivDiia is the largest charity platform connecting Ukrainians in need with relevant governmental and nongovernmental services. The system is now used by more than 40 organizations in Ukraine and has assisted more than one million people to date. The system has facilitated cooperation between organizations and can be adjusted to different donors and needs.

Another example of the effective use of technology was explained by Jean-Christophe Bonis (Team4Humanity). In his project, he and his team use 3D printing to re-construct buildings, such as schools. Using this innovative technology, they are able to print one building in only 40 hours which allows them to accelerate the process of rebuilding Ukraine.

Besides innovative technology used for information sharing and infrastructure rebuilding, demining remains a central issue of concern in Ukraine. The country is currently the most contaminated by explosives, much more so than other conflict areas worldwide. As people are returning to their homes, demining is essential to safeguarding their well-being. Anton Shevchenko pointed out that technology can help demining in many ways. Firstly, it can assist in educating people on how to behave when encountering explosives. This can be done through digital tools such as

augmented reality. Secondly, it can assist those who have suffered from an accident through, for example, psychological support. Finally, technology can help with the actual demining of the land through robotic innovation. This includes sensors used to identify mines during the long technical survey of the land, innovative platforms to carry the sensors, mechanical clearance equipment, and remote machines or robotic solutions to clear the land. This is especially important due to the lack of deminers and the large scale of contamination in the country. Innovation has created a new market for equipment; however, new technology will have to undergo strict certification and accreditation procedures.

Speakers agreed that the Ukrainian government has been very supportive and open to new technologies. Roman Brytanchuk (SpivDiia) stressed the importance of providing open technology that can be duplicated and adapted to a variety of contexts, so as to avoid the duplication of efforts. He suggested working together with UN clusters which can help to share information with most organizations working in the same field and during Ukrainian and international forums. Cooperation is, however, not just an issue for NGOs but should also be guaranteed between business partners. Looking towards the future, the speakers mentioned innovative technologies could involve artificial intelligence for information sharing, mine detection, agricultural uses, for the assessment of damages or losses, or for collecting evidence of war crimes. However, speakers agreed that dangers of technologies also have to be addressed accordingly, to prevent security breaches, biases, and misuses.



## CHAPTER 2:

# CODE OF CONDUCT

This section provides information on the proposed Code of Conduct for organizations operating in Ukraine and draws key conclusions in regards to its main objectives and benefits.



Brock Bierman (CEO, Ukraine Focus), one of the fathers of the initiative, signing the Code of Conduct installation.





During the W4UA Summit more than 60 organizations signed the Code of Conduct (CoC) regulating their operations in Ukraine. The objectives of the initiative are to strengthen civil society operating in Ukraine and raise their awareness about responsible and ethical behaviors. The code aims to ensure the efficiency of relief efforts while increasing transparency and accountability. The code also suggests that organizations in Ukraine can play an important role in ensuring that corrupt practices are properly reported.

The CoC is a joint initiative of the World for Ukraine Foundation, Ukraine Focus, Rotary International, Razom, Future for Ukraine, the Global Empowerment Mission, Project Nadiya, Let's do it Ukraine, and the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

At the panel discussion on the topic of the CoC, speakers shared their diverse perspectives on the importance and relevance of organizations implementing the principles found therein. Speakers agreed that civil society in Ukraine is agile, innovative, and widespread, yet would benefit from implementing CoC principles in order to promote a system of credibility, accountability, and transparency in the delivery of help. Brock Bierman (Ukraine Focus) highlighted that besides cooperation amongst NGOs, effective communication, cooperation, and coordination with all levels of the government

is crucial to ensure that aid is delivered according to current needs and avoids either duplication of efforts or negligence of certain groups. Iuliia Markhel (Let's do it Ukraine) agreed that it also requires local governments to learn how to better cooperate with NGOs productively in critical moments.

The major issue currently obstructing the credibility of civil society in Ukraine is corruption. The misconduct of one single organization can affect the trust of donors towards all of Ukraine's civil society, as pointed out by Daniel Runde (Center for Strategic and International Studies). According to John Hewko (Rotary International), the active involvement of citizens in signing petitions and protesting against corrupt initiatives is an example of how civil society can promote accountability and transparency in governance. The anti-corruption measures taken by the Ukrainian government were also recognised as important developments. Shams Asadi (Vienna City Council) pointed out that the fight against corruption, which Ukraine has actively started, is a first step towards membership in the European Union and is closely related to the betterment of human rights in Ukraine. Yuliia Darnytska (Chernihiv City Council) outlined a practical solution whereby NGOs can acquire a letter of recommendation from city councils to serve as validation of their integrity for grant applications and donor relations.





## Code of Conduct for Organizations Operating in Ukraine

In an effort to ensure the efficiency of relief efforts and demonstrate their commitment to transparency, accountability and eliminating corruption, the signatories commit to the following points in relation to their respective activities in Ukraine:

### 1. Ensure transparency.

Organizations should ensure that the names of their board members and executive leadership, and the history and age of the organization, is publicly available on their website.

### 2. Ensure independence from private stakeholders and avoidance of any conflicts of interest.

All employees of the organization should work independently from any private stakeholder, such as donors or private companies. Organizations shall avoid any actual or potential conflict of interest that a Board member or major donor may have with respect to the organization and its activities and such member's or donor's private business or other commercial interests.

### 3. Introduce regular reporting.

The organization shall have a formal audit of its finances and activities carried out by an independent third-party auditor at least every 24 months, and such audited report(s) and any related statements shall be made publicly available on the organization's website. If the organization operates in Ukraine through affiliates, an audit of the parent organization shall be sufficient. In addition, the organization should provide periodic updates relating to its projects and activities on its website and/or social media channels.

### 4. Regular consultation with stakeholders.

To ensure the effectiveness of relief and reconstruction efforts, the organization should consult on a regular basis with stakeholders who are involved, whether directly or indirectly, in the organization's activities, including donors, partners, relevant public and private sector entities and the intended beneficiaries in the communities served by the organization.

### 5. Consider long-term impacts.

Whenever feasible or practical, organizations should consider the long-term positive impact of their activities in critical areas such as education, health, infrastructure, water and economic development.

### 6. Cooperate with local authorities and other providers of aid.

Organizations should work with local authorities and other relief and reconstruction organizations to identify priority interventions and avoid duplication of efforts.

### 7. Support efforts to expose corruption.

Organizations should be active anti-corruption watchdogs and vigilant and vocal in exposing corruption.



# The project

## "ALL 4 UKRAINE"

### (ALL4UA)

The project "ALL 4 UKRAINE" (ALL4UA) was created on the initiative of the Economic Council to the Mayor of the City of Rzeszów, and operates in cooperation with the Rzeszów City Hall, the Podkarpackie Business Club, the National Chamber of Commerce (Krajowa Izba Gospodarcza), the Business Center Club, the Lewiatan Confederation, the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce, the WORLD FOR UKRAINE FOUNDATION (W4UAF) and the Rzeszów Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

#### I. Project Objective:

The aim of the "ALL4UA" initiative is to enable Polish business to take part in the process of rebuilding Ukraine after the end of war hostilities. Aware of the strategic location of Podkarpackie companies, we want to promote the idea of cooperation, knowledge sharing and establishing business partnerships between Polish and Ukrainian entrepreneurs. As part of the 'ALL4UA' initiative, we emphasise the need to build long-term business relations that will contribute to the successful economic recovery of Ukraine. For this reason, we do not close ourselves to contacts with companies from other countries in Europe and North America, which together with us want to create an environment conducive to joint activities for the economic development of both Regions.

#### II. Activities carried out within the framework of ALL4UA:

##### 1. Company Database

There is a database of Polish, Ukrainian and other European and North American companies, which have declared their willingness to participate in the ALL4UA project. More than 40 Polish companies affiliated with the Economic Council of the Mayor of the City of Rzeszów and within partner organisations and institutions have signed up for cooperation. These companies operate in a variety of sectors, including: services, manufacturing, construction, installation and logistics, and the capacities and deliveries they declare are at a level of around 40 million euros/month. The database of companies is being gradually updated.

##### 2. The World For Ukraine (W4UA) Summit and Economic Roundtable

Thanks to its cooperation with the WORLD FOR UKRAINE FOUNDATION (W4UAF), the Economic Council took an active part in the Economic Roundtable, sitting alongside representatives of authorities, government agencies, diplomacy and local governments. As part of the event, which took place on 28-29 September 2023 in Jasionka near Rzeszów, a debate was held, within the framework of which the possibilities of support for entrepreneurs interested in the Ukrainian market were presented, as well as issues related to risks and threats of doing business in Ukraine, safety of investments in Ukraine. Assumptions of the DREAM platform functioning were presented. The event was concluded by the signing of an agreement by the Rzeszów authorities with another partner city, Kherson. In order to support Polish entrepreneurs, the Economic Council invited the best experts in the fields of insurance, law and trade to implement the project.

##### 3. International cooperation and representation of the Economic Council before authorities and institutions

The project involves cooperation with local authorities in Poland and Ukraine, the governments of both countries, as well as the European Union and the United States. One of the activities is the submission of an official request for the participation of Polish companies in the process of Ukraine's reconstruction. Activities are planned to strengthen cooperation between Polish entrepreneurs and companies from other European and North American countries. Matching meetings between Polish and Canadian companies have already taken place.



## CHAPTER 3:

# MENTAL HEALTH

This chapter provides an outlook on the current mental health situation in Ukraine, outlining both the widespread needs of the general public as well as the special needs of children, elderly and veterans.



Panel discussion "Psychological Well-being of Ukrainian Youth". From the left: Tomasz Srebnicki (Polish Association for Cognitive and Behavioral Therapy), Olena Nikolaienko (Future for Ukraine), Pritan Ambroase (The Hollywood Insider), Jakub Grzebielec (Foundation 'Uskrzydlamy'), Joanna Hajduk (Save the Children Poland), Olha Mykytchyn (Children's Voices Foundation).



### 3.1. Psychological training

Observations from speakers highlighted the elevated focus on mental health in Ukraine amid the war, including initiatives led by the First Lady. However, the availability of proper psychological support remains inadequate for many Ukrainians. Notably, young individuals aged 18-25 remain hesitant to seek help due to prevalent societal stereotypes. Elderly individuals, who face relocation and subsequent loneliness, require substantial psychological support. Veterans, returning soldiers, and their families also necessitate this assistance.

Ukraine needs a long-term plan for widespread psychological support, acknowledging that trauma and mental health issues can persist post-conflict. To address the current shortage of psychologists and the time-consuming education in psychology, speakers recommend that the government implements a focused fast-track psychological training program, empowering Ukrainian psychologists with evidence-based tools and knowledge. Encouraging medical professionals to gain international experience and advocating for better salaries can improve healthcare effectiveness by reducing under-the-table payments and promoting transparency.



**By connecting the dots between NGOs, psychologists, social workers, and healthcare supporters – individuals who are truly dedicated to a brighter Ukraine – I believe we can eventually paint a more optimistic picture of Ukrainian healthcare. We just need to seize this opportunity and ensure not to miss this crucial moment.**

**Oleksandr Stakhovskiy,**  
Associate Profesor at the Department  
of Oncourology, National Cancer  
Institute in Kyiv

Speakers also proposed that therapy sessions should be widely available for the Ukrainian population, with government subsidies making them accessible or free. It is also important to provide long-term sustainable financing for the large programs affecting general populations, like the National Psychological Association of Ukraine's free psychological helpline for Ukrainians available in 21 countries. Telemedicine infrastructure has also been mentioned as a priority in order to improve training of healthcare professionals.

Improving the collaboration between Ukrainian psychologists and the government is crucial to address gaps in mental health legislation. A priority lies in creating an inclusive mental health support program for returning soldiers and refugees, aiming to tackle potential trauma and related mental health concerns. Additionally, there's a highlighted need to adapt Ukrainian legislation by including a separate category for mental health, currently absent from psychiatric health definitions. This adjustment would significantly enhance the systemic approach to mental health treatment across Ukraine.

### 3.2. Children

A special group in need of comprehensive psychological support comprises children, particularly teenagers aged 13-15 who were identified as particularly vulnerable during wartime by the Third Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen's commissioned study.<sup>3</sup> A survey among Ukrainian parents and teachers in April-May 2022 unveiled distressing statistics: roughly 30% of children experienced displacement, a third were exposed to frontline areas or temporary occupation zones, and 20% witnessed war firsthand. Approximately 30% experienced parental separation, with 15-18% fearing air raids and half grappling with emotional swings and anxiety. Moreover, 15% of children exhibited increased reliance on computer games, affecting their cognitive abilities and motivation. Notably, the survey also revealed that teachers themselves also require psychological support. Around 30% of teachers showed signs of post-traumatic behavior. Moreover, 10% of teachers were unaware of their students' experiences, crucial information for avoiding further trauma during lessons.<sup>4</sup>

Speakers highlighted that the process of acquiring war-related traumas continues for both children and adults. In Mykolaiv, 800 schools operate, some lacking windows, exposing

<sup>3</sup> *The Third Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen (2023) Research from 11 nations around the globe.* [https://www.president.gov.ua/storage/j-files-storage/01/20/41/48f9168da920789b2dcb058ac150d378\\_1694090239.pdf](https://www.president.gov.ua/storage/j-files-storage/01/20/41/48f9168da920789b2dcb058ac150d378_1694090239.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Kostenko, T., Dovhopola, K., Nabochenko, O., Kurinna, V., & Mykhaylyuk, V. (2022). Psychological well-being of children with special educational needs under martial law. Amazonia Investiga, 11(59), 98-107.* <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2022.59.11.9>.



children to loss and fear. Near Russian and Belarusian borders, learning faces challenges: offline classes are perilous due to shelling, and online education suffers from signal disruptions for safety. Students resort to individual tutoring, lacking systematic education. In occupied zones, Ukraine can't oversee education, complicating communication. De-occupied regions face destroyed schools, scarce teachers, and unusable educational facilities amid direct hostilities, prioritizing survival over learning.

It is a high priority to organize psychologically supportive environments in schools and other educational facilities. Currently, schools usually provide one psychologist per educational site. The speakers were concerned, however, that these school psychologists do not have the capacity to provide individual assistance to the children or teachers. They also underlined that school teachers do not have appropriate training to support the children's mental health and agreed on the need to provide mandatory courses on mental health for all teachers. Furthermore, it is essential to introduce a transparent supervising system of children by psychologists in Ukrainian schools.

Another priority is the development of trauma-aware educational schemes introduced with awareness to potential triggers in educational materials. Such triggers can include topics of home, parents, death, or even airplanes. Instead of removal, the speakers proposed considering content sensitivity and introducing the material skillfully. This approach requires the Ministry of Education's collaboration with psychologists, adequate training for teachers, and trauma-sensitive courses for parents.

Children impacted by war require tailored programs in schools and kindergartens. Olena Nikolaienko (Future For Ukraine) urged collaborative efforts among organizations to implement effective techniques through Ukraine's Ministry of Education. Joanna Hajduk (Save the Children Poland) stressed the need for varied support levels: structured adult supervision, emotional management learning, and psychiatric aid. Nikolaienko's program targets young kids to articulate feelings, employing art-therapy hubs as safe spaces. Hajduk's organization offers library spaces for self-organized studying, emphasizing proper NGO training for working with children. The Superheroes School initiative pioneers education for long-term hospitalized children, adapting curriculum to their individual capacities. Acknowledging the children's resilience, they strive to invest in their futures rather than viewing them solely as victims by avoiding retraumatization and preventing further distress.

Ukrainian children living abroad also face challenges, such as the difficulty of integrating into a new education system or following two education systems at once (online in Ukraine and in person abroad). The speakers suggested that host nations collaborate to maintain Ukrainian children's connection to their homeland, rather than imposing adaptation to different educational systems. It is furthermore vital to ensure that children living abroad are given the opportunity of continuing their Ukrainian education, for example by taking state exams online. Moreover, offering expanded free psychological support to both parents and children living abroad is essential.

### 3.3. Elderly

Although the elderly are amongst the most vulnerable, they are one of the least protected groups in Ukraine. According to the speakers, their needs are largely ignored by the state and humanitarian organizations. Varvara Tertychna (Starenki Charitable Foundation) suggested this may be due to age discrimination, which has resulted in the elderly population receiving insufficient medical and social care and not being provided with an environment suitable to their physical needs and potential disabilities. Out of the four million elderly people in Ukraine, 42% lack the money to buy food and basic medicine, according to Varvara Tertychna.<sup>5</sup> Khrystyna Semegen-Bodak (Healthcare Unit of Caritas Ukraine) added that 80% of pensioners, especially women, currently live below the poverty line. The war has negatively impacted their situation even further, as many elderly people have decided to stay in Ukraine where they suffer from the consequences of war, the lack of adequate services and the isolation from their loved ones who might have fled. There is thus a huge need for assistance.

One particular issue in this context is dementia, a cognitive disease which results in memory loss and primarily affects the elderly population. According to Iryna Shevchenko (Nezabutni Charitable Foundation), 90% of people affected by dementia are aged 60 or older. Since the awareness of dementia in Ukraine is very low, many of those affected do not seek medical care. This is problematic as 40% of dementia cases can be improved by up to 60% with appropriate treatment. The number of dementia cases in Ukraine amounts to 62,000 individuals as per government estimates. However, according to the Global Disease Burden Index, the numbers may be as high as 651,000 individuals.<sup>6</sup> The official statistics being about ten times lower shows the missing awareness of this disease in Ukrainian society. It is therefore essential to create a dementia-friendly society and counter the stigma attached

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International (2022) *Investigation: Older people's experience of war in Ukraine*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2022/12/older-people-ukraine-war-displacement-and-access-to-housing/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Nezabutni* (n.d.) Статистика-та-основні-цифри [Statistics and basic figures]. <https://nezabutni.org/about-dementia/what-is-dementia/statystyka-ta-osnovni-tsyfry>.





to mental diseases in general and dementia in particular. Iryna Shevchenko therefore stressed the need for the government and non-governmental sectors to work together in creating awareness and openness and improve medical as well as social services for the elderly affected by dementia.

Numerous speakers highlighted that the vital first step in aiding Ukraine's elderly is societal recognition of their needs. Semegen-Bodak proposed a social reform in Ukraine that would involve greater collaboration with humanitarian aid organizations to offer requisite services. Emphasized were educational programs for qualified staff and equitable pay for social workers. Brittany Armstrong (Ukraine Telehealth Program) stressed understanding the elderly's situation before service provision. She shared her organization's story of assisting the elderly through a tele health programme which ran into the problem of the elderly lacking the awareness of the service as well as the necessary technology. Her program adapted by reaching out to elderly at familiar spots like parks and setting up tech hubs to improve their connectivity. Armstrong advocated for prioritizing prevention over costly treatments resulting from neglected health.

### 3.4. Veterans

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine will result in numerous veterans requiring substantial assistance, spanning medical, psychological, and retraining. Tetiana Kalyta (Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine) highlighted the current efforts of developing a digital policy in this realm. The E-Veteran online platform, designed for veterans, families of deceased veterans, and their relatives, facilitates service requests and information access. Additionally, the Ministry of Veterans has initiated a psychological self-diagnostic website to expedite self-diagnosis and identification of needs by veterans themselves.

Regarding rehabilitation programs, speakers highlighted the benefits of peer-to-peer programs that facilitate recovery and adaptation to life's challenges. Such training programs extend to first responders like firefighters and doctors, also in need of support. Ukraine has implemented peer-to-peer assistance for veterans, gathering feedback for refinement via the Ministry of Veterans. A similar approach is taken at the Unbroken Center in Lviv where amputees serve as mentors, providing invaluable support to new patients and maximizing their independence through prosthetics. Joanna Józefiak (Mediciner) emphasized the positive effects their interactions with orphans and animals in shelters have on the mental health of veterans. These approaches aim to assist individuals in reclaiming previous lives or acquiring new skills, while fostering independence and mental well-being in the process.

In regards to physical rehabilitation programs, Oleh Bilianskyi (Unbroken) pointed out that the main challenge currently is the acquisition and manufacture of prostheses since demand is higher than supply. Unbroken continues to look for prostheses components both in Ukraine and abroad. Meanwhile, Unbroken has become a research and training base for other rehabilitation centers from all over Ukraine. For example, the center is gaining knowledge of and developing rehabilitation for a special trauma caused by the loss of sight, traumatic brain injuries, and restoration of speech.

The speakers also delved into the often unnoticed second-degree traumas affecting war veterans. Kseniia Voznitsyna (Ministry of Health of Ukraine) spoke about the effects of blast waves on the brain, which are not immediately noticeable but are commonly experienced by soldiers. Michael Meoli, a Tactical-Medical Educator, highlighted that in the United States, suicide was a frequent cause of death among American veterans, underscoring the dangers of PTSD for Ukrainian veterans.

Lastly, Voznitsyna stressed society's role in aiding veterans' reintegration. Relatives should learn how to cultivate empathy and communicate effectively to reduce the risks of veterans developing destructive behavior patterns. She also mentioned that corporate actors can play an important role in the reintegration process by providing new work opportunities.



**Many people around the world are surprised by the resilience of Ukrainians, and they are curious about the secret of our resilience. Our secret is the culture. Many people find psychological relief in connecting with their roots: reading historical books, wearing national dress, singing Ukrainian songs, and embracing our rich culture. Our culture can be both our weapon and our healing.**

*Valeria Palii  
President of National Psychological  
Association of Ukraine*



## CHAPTER 4: JUSTICE

Considering the evidence of severe crimes committed in Ukraine, ensuring accountability for perpetrators and reparations for victims is a priority. In this regard, this chapter outlines the importance of strengthening the domestic infrastructure to deal with such crimes, financing reparations for victims, compensating businesses, and holding perpetrators of crimes against children accountable.



Panel discussion "About Victims of War: Reparations for War Crimes Committed". From the left: James Patrick Sexton (Asser Institute), Pavlo Pushkar (Council of Europe), Deborah Ruiz Verduzco (International Criminal Court), Igor Cvetkovski (International Organization for Migration), Clara Lucia Sandoval Villalba (Global Survivors Fund), Olena Apchel (SEMA Ukraine), Victoria Kerr (Redress/Asser Institute).



## 4.1. Accountability for war crimes

Several avenues to accountability for war crimes have already been explored, both within the Ukrainian and the international judicial systems. On the international level, two days after the invasion, Ukraine filed a case at the International Court of Justice with allegations under the Genocide Convention. Furthermore, the International Criminal Court has opened investigations into several alleged crimes committed in the context of the war. Several European countries have also launched preliminary investigations, such as the joint investigations through Eurojust initiated by Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine in March 2022. Domestically, the Ukrainian authorities together with human rights groups and NGOs have documented evidence of crimes since the beginning of the war, establishing an expansive network of accountability initiatives. Questions remain, however, as to how these efforts can be harmonized and which ones are the most efficient.

A drastic increase in domestic cases can be observed following the full-scale invasion, according to Nadia Volkova (Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group). While previously, judicial efforts had to rely on evidence collected by NGOs through interviews with military staff returning from the frontline, they can now make use of much open source information and evidence from a variety of archives. There are also discussions about the possibility of establishing a centralized archive, the implementation of which in practice is still unclear, however.

Nadia Volkova, nevertheless, stressed the need for amendments to the domestic judicial system to enable the efficient prosecution of international crimes. One challenge in this regard is the non-recognition of open source evidence in the Ukrainian Criminal Code of Procedure which means that it is up to the judges' discretion to use it. Furthermore, the police do not have the power to investigate war crimes which has resulted in the loss of both time and money. Finally, the rules on criminal procedure currently limit the maximum period allowed for an investigation to 12 months, with the possibility of extending it to 18 months. Extending this limit would allow for more effective investigations due to the time-consuming nature of gathering evidence for international crimes. Another key problem of the domestic legal system is the absence of key judicial bodies and the lack of legal personnel, according to Veronika Kreidenkova (Public Integrity Council). Since the invasion caused both a large-scale resignation of judges and an increased need for criminal investigation, there are currently 2,000 open vacancies at the High Court of Justice. Furthermore, many judges are not trained for the investigation of war crimes.

The question thus remains what an effective system of legal accountability could look like. Three ideas have been proposed in this respect. Firstly, it has been suggested to introduce interna-

tional judges to the Ukrainian national courts to work on cases involving international crimes. This, however, is difficult in practice as the Ukrainian Constitution would have to be amended to allow for such an introduction, which is prohibited under martial law. The second option would be to introduce a separate court for war crimes. However, since the prosecution of war crimes is time-intensive and involves victims from all over the country, it does not seem feasible for a centralized court. Therefore, the favored option is to create a specialized separation within the existing courts, involving first instance, second instance, and appeals courts. While some judges have experience in this matter, others could be sent abroad for special training. It is, however, essential in this context to have strict integrity tests in place for judges assessing their suitability to be involved in the trials. Veronika Kreidenkova further stressed the importance of working together with international partners to put pressure on the Ukrainian government to implement the adequate and necessary changes to the domestic judicial system.

One of Ukraine's key allies, the United States' support is thereby crucial. On this note, David Schläefer (the United States Department of State) stressed that Ukraine is still a priority area for the United States, which aims to strengthen Ukraine on the battlefield, alleviate humanitarian issues, and support justice and accountability. Key efforts include the Yale Conflict Conservatory which is using commercially available technology, such as geolocation technology, to monitor crimes committed by Russia through the documentation of filtration, deportation, trafficking, and crimes committed in occupied Ukrainian cities. Furthermore, the United States has set up a Commission on Enquiry to investigate all alleged violation of human rights, and supports the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mechanism, the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, as well as emerging international mechanisms and infrastructure developing in Ukraine, such as the International Center for the Investigation of the Crime of Aggression, the Claims Registry, and potentially the special tribunal investigating international crimes in Ukraine. Finally, the United States is supporting Ukraine through the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group (ACA), a multinational initiative in conjunction with the European Union and United Kingdom, which is aimed at increasing Ukraine's capacity to try criminals. Considering the sheer number of cases, with 100,000 reported war crimes at the moment, the ACA is helping with the collection of evidence, as well as constructing and trying the cases. The initiative has been involved in all 100 successful prosecutions in some way and is now opening up to other nations as well. In summary, the United States supports an internationalized system of accountability, based on the Ukrainian judicial infrastructure with an international layer of support.

Opinions about creating a special tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression were varied. While the United States is generally in favor, others have disagreed. Arguments against the



establishment of a tribunal involve the reasoning that the crime of aggression is codified in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and should therefore be tried at the ICC, the high costs of establishing such a new entity, as well as questions of how victims could benefit from such a trial without clarification of who the victims of the crime of aggression are and how they could be compensated. Instead, Nadia Volkova suggested working on a mechanism that would allow the ICC to prosecute this crime and pushing the Ukrainian government to ratify the Rome Statute. She therefore suggested the European Union exert pressure on Ukraine to ensure their ratification.

### 4.2. Victims reparations

While evidence of war crimes has been collected in Ukraine since 2014 and judicial mechanisms for the prosecution of perpetrators exist, compensating victims now is important for them to be able to rebuild their lives as soon as possible.

One important group are victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Having lived through incredible trauma, their key needs include long-term medical assistance, advocate assistance, help with accommodation and employment, and official recognition of their victim status on the state level, according to Olena Apchel (Ukrainian Network of Women Affected by Violence - SEMA Ukraine). In providing this assistance, it is important to create mechanisms of immediate reaction to decrease the time before they can benefit from the support. While there are humanitarian organizations ready to provide help to victims, it is important to get compensation from the aggressor, according to Iryna Kireyeva. This is quite a long international process, but not an abstract one and important for the safeguarding of justice. An important recent development in this context is the establishment of the Register of Damages for Ukraine established by the Council of Europe in May 2023 which will collect claims and arrange direct compensations to victims without any mediator bodies.

It is thereby important to keep in mind that, since the main purpose of reparations is to integrate the victims back into society to approximately the same position as before the crime, it is necessary to create a system based on a victim-centered approach in Ukraine. This involves asking victims about the type of need required and allow them to have a say in its provision. On this note, it is important to establish a proper coordination process during the judicial proceedings involving not only the Ukrainian government, but also civil society by allowing them to help with the collection of evidence so as not to retraumatize victims by giving them the responsibility of collecting it, as Clara Lucia Sandoval Villalba (Global Survivors Fund) pointed out.

This raises the question of the financing of reparations considering the enormous extent of destruction in Ukraine.<sup>7</sup> According to a World Bank report in March 2023, 411 billion dollars are currently required for the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. Every month, another 5-10 billion dollars are added to this amount, according to Dariusz Szymczycha (Polish Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce). It is therefore important to find sustainable ways to finance reparations and avoid increased burdening of governmental funds. James Patrick Sexton (Asser Institute) discussed the idea of freezing Russian assets. According to him, although almost 300 billion dollars' worth of Russian Federation central bank assets have been frozen by sanctions, confiscating them is legally problematic. Furthermore, while it is possible to confiscate the funds of sanctioned individuals, such as Russian oligarchs, his avenue also has its limitations due to related human rights concerns. Dariusz Szymczycha suggested a different approach, pointing to the legal problems with freezing Russian assets in European banks. Instead, he suggested Ukraine's recovery should primarily be the result of cooperation between the public and state sectors.

### 4.3. Businesses compensation

An important, though sometimes neglected, aspect of providing justice in the Ukrainian context is compensating businesses for losses encountered as a result of the war. According to Timur Bondaryev (Arzinger Law Practice), businesses have several avenues for compensation. Firstly, until recently, businesses were able to make a claim before the European Court of Human Rights. While this was not the most efficient way of compensation, it was the most affordable and therefore popular. However, since Russia's departure from the Council of Europe in 2022, this is not an option anymore as the Court is only accessible for nationals of member states of the Council. Alternatively, businesses are able to make a claim before the Ukrainian national courts. While there have been some successful cases, a recurring problem in this regard is the sovereign immunity of states, a concept under international law that prohibits one state to hold another accountable. This complicates claims by Ukraine against Russia.

The most effective option, according to Timur Bondaryev, is therefore investment arbitration. While this is the most expensive route, awards gained this way are almost universally enforceable since many countries have signed the European Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Arbitration Awards. However, currently only old claims concerning the situation in Crimea since 2014 get financial support. The damages should therefore be significant to make the costs encountered through registration and representation fees worth it.

<sup>7</sup> The World Bank (23 March 2023) Updated Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/03/23/updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment>.



These discussions show the lacking avenues to ensure proper compensation of businesses for losses incurred due to the war.

#### 4.4. Children deportations

The Ukrainian authorities currently put the number of deported Ukrainian children at over 19,000,<sup>8</sup> although reported numbers differ. This, however, only includes those whose absence has been registered with the authorities and the real figures could be much higher, with NGOs estimating them to be at around 300,000, according to Iryna Kopanytsia (White Ribbon). At the time of the Summit, Ukraine had managed to repatriate only 386 children according to the speakers. As an especially vulnerable group, these children risk becoming victims of other international crimes like discriminatory persecution or violent crimes. The speakers stressed that this calls for a unique mechanism of repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration for Ukrainian children.

Several international crimes are being committed in this context. Firstly, the deportation of Ukrainian children into Russia constitutes forcible transfer of persons, deemed a war crime under international law.<sup>9</sup> Secondly, reports indicate re-education efforts imposing Russian values, language, and history on these children.<sup>10</sup> Some also face citizenship loss and adoption by Russian families, leading to an erasure of their Ukrainian identity, which violates fundamental human rights like the right to identity, private and family life, and education.<sup>11</sup> These actions should be prosecuted under international law, targeting both state entities and individuals responsible for breaching these rights, aiming to uphold the basic principles of human rights and protect the affected children.

In prosecuting these offenses, both national and international bodies can be engaged. In doing so, however, coordination between the different judicial entities is key, according to Javier Perez Salmeron (Global Rights Compliance). Furthermore, judicial processes might require the participation of the children themselves in which case it is important to protect them from retraumatization by, for instance, limiting the number of interviews. This requires a strong cooperation of prosecuting organizations, NGOs and journalists. Veronika Bilkova (Charles University Prague) further stressed the importance of reminding the public of this issue and pushing Russia to comply with at least some of their international obligations and, for instance, make public a list of children that were transferred.

Iryna Kopanytsia underscores that due to the illegal deportation of children to Russia, there are currently no official proce-

dures governing their lawful repatriation and NGOs wanting to bring them back face legal challenges. Hence, she emphasized the significance of collaboration, information sharing, and network development for NGOs involved in repatriating Ukrainian children.

Another aspect highlighted by speakers is the fate of children in occupied territories: although not deported, they face similar indoctrination methods, are compelled to learn Russian and endure pervasive war propaganda in schools, sports facilities, camps, and youth groups. There is also a threat of their relocation to Russia or parental rights limitations. Online schooling of these children by Ukrainian schools is penalized by Russian authorities if internet providers report such online activity. Furthermore, over 7,000 children remain in summer camps in Russia or Belarus. Hence, Mariia Sulialina (Center of Civil Education “Almenda”) urged foreign involvement in repatriating Ukrainian children and safeguarding those in occupied zones. Establishing a robust rehabilitation system for returnees and educating teachers on effective engagement with these children is essential.



**Ukrainian children are exposed to the so called 'patriotic reeducation' that means they need to speak only in Russian, they need to learn the Russian version of history, they need to sing the Russian Anthem, (...) some of them get deprived of their citizenship and some have been adopted, and that might mean the end of their traces.**

**Prof. Veronika Bilkova**

*Head of the Department of International Law at the Faculty of Law of the Charles University in Prague*

<sup>8</sup> Government of the United Kingdom (1 June 2023) *Deportation of Ukrainian children by Russia: joint statement*. [www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-on-deportation-of-ukrainian-children-by-russia](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-on-deportation-of-ukrainian-children-by-russia). Due to the rapid development of the war and the difficulty of gaining reliable information, the exact number varies. Most sources, however, mention a number above 19,000.

<sup>9</sup> Rome Statute, Article 7.

<sup>10</sup> Council of Europe (28 April 2023) *The forcible transfer and 'russification' of Ukrainian children shows evidence of genocide, says PACE*. [www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/the-forcible-transfer-and-russification-of-ukrainian-children-shows-evidence-of-genocide-says-pace](https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/the-forcible-transfer-and-russification-of-ukrainian-children-shows-evidence-of-genocide-says-pace).

<sup>11</sup> *The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 8; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 9, 12, 15, 26.*



## CHAPTER 5: ECONOMY

Although Ukraine is facing many challenges due to the ongoing hostilities, facilitating economic growth is a priority. This is mainly due to the importance of supporting corporations, ensuring widespread employment, and providing opportunities for foreign investments. This chapter also suggests several anti-corruption measures in support of consistent economic growth.



*Rafał Brzoska, Director of InPost receiving the honorary award for his contributions to support Ukrainian refugees in Poland delivered by the W4UA Foundation and Corporate Connections*



## 5.1. Foreign investments

In regards to the landscape of foreign investments in Ukraine, the speakers emphasized that, while some challenges persist, there are many business opportunities and initiatives mediating risks. For example, Poland's president recently endorsed a law reforming insurance policies for Polish firms investing in Ukraine, offering them a substantial business advantage. Ukraine has also taken initiative and created special economic zones that have fostered foreign investment. These initiatives have resulted in approximately 600 foreign companies, including furniture factories, paint and window manufacturers, continuing to operate in Ukraine despite the war-related risks. Amongst them are around 60 Polish companies specializing in construction materials, logistics, and EU integration consulting. New business opportunities are also arising. The Kharkiv region, for example, has seen an economic revival with around 8,000 small enterprises reestablishing their operations. The military administration is seeking technical support, training, and personnel for strategic partnerships. The region thereby not only needs humanitarian aid but also offers investment opportunities, particularly in machinery and agro-industrial sectors.

Roman Nikitov (ICU Ventures) observed a 20-year underinvestment in Eastern Europe's private capital, with only recent growth in private investments. In his opinion, the venture ecosystem lacks support for the substantial growth of small, innovative companies, which results in a gap in funding between



„The art installation authored by Dmytro Iv”

”

**Ukraine must fight corruption, put an end to it, and it must be said directly: corruption is the main obstacle of the development of business in Ukraine and it will be an even greater obstacle in terms of reconstruction. If Ukraine does not eradicate corruption with a hot iron, then this reconstruction will neither have the scale nor bring the desired results.**

*Rafał Brzoska  
President of Inpost and Integer*

early and late-stage firms, neglecting talent and opportunities. Viewing Ukraine and Poland as part of a broader Eastern European market is crucial. Ukrainian migrants in Europe have established numerous firms which have greatly benefited the regional economy. To this end, speakers noted that the United States investments could substantially contribute to the sustainable development of such smaller projects in Ukraine. Deeming the existing government startup programs inadequate, Nikitov further advocated for private funding, reduced bureaucracy, and investor engagement that adds real value, and entrepreneurs to effectively promote themselves and to articulate their aspirations globally.

Development banks such as the World Bank or European Investment Bank ought to take a more active role in Ukraine, bolstering economic support through increased foreign direct investments and bank guarantees. Integrating private sector endeavors with UN public procurement mechanisms is a crucial requirement for expediting aid and reconstruction efforts. The speakers also recommended that foreign entrepreneurs acquaint themselves with Ukrainian language and culture, and consult with local business centers before entering the market.





Discussing foreign investments in Ukraine, the speakers highlighted the hindrances posed by transparency deficits and complex tender participation processes and stressed the need for streamlined procedures. They also agreed, however, that refraining from investing in Ukraine due to corruption is counter-productive. Instead, they stressed the significance of investing in smaller businesses and individual entrepreneurs to combat corruption at grassroots level and bolster Ukraine's crucial small and medium-sized enterprise sector. This approach involves nurturing these entities, fostering a vested interest in their country, and encouraging their active participation in their nation's progress. Nikitov stressed that it is improbable that investments can rebuild war-affected areas without government guarantees. He suggested establishing production centers near the Polish border, urging European financial institutions to support such initiatives. Beyond material reconstruction, Ukraine needs structural reform, transparency and trust in the involved organizations, which will contribute significantly to the fight against corruption and the country's rejuvenation. Foreign-funded firms in Ukraine should uphold superior standards, ensure transparent management, implement ethical business practices, and comply with labor laws to shape a more prosperous and ethical Ukraine.

Lastly, it was discussed whether withdrawal from the Russian market is advisable. The speakers mentioned that numerous Polish companies have withdrawn in order to avoid financing the Russian government and its war efforts. The British American Tobacco (BAT), for instance, withdrew from the Russian and Belarussian markets on September 7th, 2023. The with-

drawal procedure had started in March 2022 but it took BAT a while to finalize the obligations arising from domestic and international law. The company currently does not receive any financial gain from sales on these markets anymore.<sup>12</sup>

## 5.2. Employment

Discussions at the Summit underscored the crucial need for providing suitable employment opportunities for Ukrainian refugees. Polish entrepreneurs have notably made an effort to employ Ukrainian workers. Rafał Brzoska (InPost), who employs 2,200 individuals in Poland — three times more than in pre-war times, with over 60 percent being women — emphasized the necessity for wage parity between Ukrainian and Polish colleagues, considering it a litmus test for business ethics. Dominik Leszczyński (DL Invest Group) praised the positive impact of Ukrainian migration on Poland's economy, describing Ukrainians' open-mindedness and ambition as assets. He advocated for the creation of a platform for Ukrainian businesses in Poland to gather experience for future endeavors in Ukraine. Rafał Sonik (Gemini Holding) also praised Ukrainians' strong work ethic and emphasized the importance of mutual respect. Sonik proposed that employers should consider offering slightly higher wages to Ukrainian workers as a gesture acknowledging their dedication and meaningful contribution to society. Ukrainians should not only be employed by corporations but can also be of great added value to humanitarian organizations who are operating in Ukraine, as acknowledged by Michael Capponi

<sup>12</sup> British American Tobacco (7 September 2023) Russia business update – agreement signed. [https://www.bat.com/group/sites/UK\\_CRHJSY.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DOCVEFRJ#](https://www.bat.com/group/sites/UK_CRHJSY.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DOCVEFRJ#).



Discussion panel "Empowering refugee communities - harnessing economic potential and promoting integration". From the left: Martyna Bogaczyk (Education for Democracy Foundation), Eva Hussain (Polaron), Anna Dąbrowska (Homo Faber), Konrad Fijołek (Mayor of Rzeszów), Igor Horków (Association of Ukrainians in Poland, Przemysł Branch), Grzegorz Gruca (Polish Humanitarian Action PAH) and Edwin Bendyk online (Batory Foundation)



(Global Empowerment Mission). Employing Ukrainian refugees does not only bring diverse perspectives and enriches the workforce but also provides them with opportunities for financial stability and a sense of belonging in the host country, fostering social integration and empowerment.

Particularly for Poland, the war in Ukraine has mobilized businesses in unprecedented ways. Besides employing Ukrainian refugees, Polish businesses have shown considerable engagement in philanthropic initiatives. Among them, The Corporate Connections™, a group of global business professionals, organized humanitarian efforts swiftly after the invasion. Brzoska recalled how entrepreneurs motivated each other, fostering a new mindset for companies of any scale to engage in societal contributions. This shift in approach now echoes in employee expectations. For example, Brzoska initiated a center in Warsaw aiding single Ukrainian mothers to find work while caring for their children. Smart assistance is crucial, he emphasized. Dismissing the outdated notion of prioritizing business over societal sharing, the speakers urged for united efforts against discrimination towards Ukrainians in Poland. They agreed that any such discrimination undermines the essential alliance between both nations, urging a collective stand against any such acts.

### 5.3. Women in business

Several panels discussed the theme of gender parity in business. Due to persistent gender stereotypes, speakers have noted that Ukraine has not seen many female entrepreneurs. The speakers estimated that out of every 330

enterprises in Ukraine, only about 11 are owned by women - and many of them are set up as sole proprietorships. However, since the start of the war, many men have left their homes to fight on the front and women have been left to provide for their families. To help women meet these challenges, Hanna Krysiuk leads the Business Women Club in Ukraine, which brings together successful business women for consolidation, development, communication, and collaboration. The club fosters the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and energy for community development, and makes resources available to women in support of their entrepreneurial goals. Furthermore, the speakers stressed the importance of a cultural shift in order for the society to adapt and accept women in leadership roles. Liudmyla Rusalina, a Ukrainian woman entrepreneur and president of the LVR group of companies, expressed hope that the war might bring the necessary conditions that will allow women to not only take leadership positions now but also maintain them after the conflict ends.



**Ukrainian women are now holding the economic front in Ukraine**

*Hanna Krysiuk*

*Founder and President of the Business Woman Club in Ukraine*



Panel discussion "Empowering Refugee Communities - Harnessing Economic Potential and Promoting Integration". From the left: Martyna Bogaczyk (Education for Democracy Foundation), Eva Hussain (Polaron), Anna Dąbrowska (Homo Faber Association), Konrad Fijołek (President of City of Rzeszów), Igor Horków (Association of Ukrainians in Poland), Grzegorz Gruca (Polish Humanitarian Action).



## CHAPTER 6:

# RECONSTRUCTION

Ukraine's infrastructure, severely damaged by Russian aggression, requires urgent attention. Discussions in the next sections revolve around rebuilding efforts, social housing, energy infrastructure damage, and solutions for sustainable housing. The focus lies on meeting the people's needs, collaboration, and finding long-term solutions.



*Photo representing President Konrad Fijolek of Rzeszów and Vice President Vitaliy Bielobrov of Kherson signing a partnership agreement. This collaboration aims to enhance investment, economy, culture, sport and other sectors between Rzeszów and Kherson.*



## 6.1. Infrastructure

Ukraine's infrastructure has been severely damaged by the Russian aggression. In places like the Donetsk region, there are hundreds of thousands of people who do not have access to water and electricity, and children who do not have access to education. According to the World Bank, the conditions of war have increased the percentage of people living in poverty from 5.5 percent to 24.1 percent in 2022, meaning that an additional 7.1 million people found themselves in poverty.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, considering the precise needs of the people is crucial.

The speakers specified that the reconstruction of transport and energy infrastructure should be a priority. Additionally, reconstruction needs to continue to address Ukraine's high pollution levels and ensure environmental restoration. Even prior to the war, Ukraine had aligned with EU environmental regulations, and speakers applauded the Verkhovna Rada for continuing its efforts to develop further legislation on the issue. Importantly, Michael Capponi (GEM) highlighted that reconstruction not only should but has already started in many places with the support of local governments and international partners, for instance in Bucha. This town - a symbol of Russian atrocities - has now largely been rebuilt.

The speakers also discussed the role of the private sector in the reconstruction efforts. Dariusz Szymczycha (the Polish Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce) stresses the importance of prioritizing Ukrainian companies within the country's economy during the rebuilding process. Graham Weihmiller (BNI Group) further noted that this approach will promote job creation and attract capital.

One significant issue pertains to authorization in the Ukrainian market, particularly the recognition of foreign engineers' qualifications. Companies seeking participation in Ukraine's reconstruction must establish legal presence and preferably possess a credit history, attainable through involvement in smaller tenders. During the panel discussion titled "Overcoming Access Barriers to the Ukrainian Market for Engineers and Construction Companies", emphasis was placed on the necessity of aligning legislation, which presently varies considerably between Ukraine and EU nations. For instance, while Polish engineers require membership in the Union of Engineers, Ukraine does not impose such a strict mandate, albeit possessing its own engineering union. Additionally, Ukraine boasts a robust multi-level certification system for design engineers. Foreign specialists receive certification corresponding to their actual levels of experience upon working in Ukraine. They can attain certification, but it remains a very complex process. Alterna-

tively, they are required to work under the guidance of a certified Ukrainian specialist. Rafał Potępa, a Council Member of the Małopolska District Chamber of Civil Engineers, anticipated that Ukraine's potential accession to the EU would enhance its access to foreign engineers and potentially resolve the shortage of qualified personnel which is so crucial for Ukraine's reconstruction efforts.

## 6.2. (Social) housing programs

Following the full-scale Russian aggression, several municipalities suffered significant depopulation and damage to houses and apartment buildings. According to Tetiana Melnyk, an infrastructure expert at the Association of Ukrainian Cities, this has led to approximately 600,000 individuals requiring improved living, which creates an immense challenge.

The speakers disagreed on whether Ukraine is currently experiencing a housing shortage. Oleksiy Feliv (Integrites) was of the opinion that there is indeed a shortage that resulted from the government's lack of preparedness. In contrast, Michael Capponi (GEM) found a surplus of available housing in Ukraine that requires proper utilization and adaptation. Many houses have merely minor damages that can be repaired at relatively low cost (around \$10,000-\$15,000), making reconstruction a more feasible option than relocating families to temporary accommodations like trailers. GEM has successfully renovated approximately 300 buildings, including about 200 private houses, installing around 5,000 to 6,000 windows monthly. Capponi mentioned that in rebuilding damaged houses, they have cooperated with local governments, hence improving the efficiency of their projects. He also applauded a government program offering financial compensation without claiming ownership. Applicants had to provide evidence of destruction, gain approval from a special commission, and could retain ownership. This initiative significantly mitigated the housing crisis, enabling people to avoid costly and undignified public shelters.

Temporary shelter solutions emerged as another crucial topic of discussion. Oleksiy Feliv concurred with Michael Capponi, viewing shelters not as a permanent solution but as an immediate response. Oksana Gedz (Right to Protection) has been tracking housing initiatives in Ukraine since the outset of the invasion. She reported that in July 2022, there were 171 collective sites accommodating 7,000 people; by May 2023, the number increased to 4,000 sites hosting 150,000 individuals. This expansion, although insufficient to cover all current housing needs, increased the costs for the governmental and non-governmental

<sup>13</sup> World Bank (30 November 2023) *The World Bank and Ukraine: Laying the Groundwork for Reconstruction in the Midst of War.* [www.worldbank.org/en/results/2023/11/30/the-world-bank-and-ukraine-laying-the-groundwork-for-reconstruction-in-the-midst-of-war](https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2023/11/30/the-world-bank-and-ukraine-laying-the-groundwork-for-reconstruction-in-the-midst-of-war).



sectors to maintain collective shelters. Despite acknowledging shelters as a short- or medium-term solution, speakers highlighted their downsides, such as related mental stress. Many agreed that the focus should shift towards providing exit options from collective centers and supporting sustainable, long-term housing solutions to ensure proper well-being. In addition to the quick renovation of damaged houses, Capponi also advocated for cash donations which can be used to pay rent instead of investing in building shelters.

The speakers shared valuable insights on social housing policies from their respective countries. Alina Muzioł-Węclawowicz critiqued Poland's 25-year-old social housing program for sustainability issues, funding deficits, and notably high participation fees, especially burdensome for young people. Shams Asadi, representing the city of Vienna, shared that Austria views housing as a fundamental human right, ensuring secure tenure and quality homes for around 60% of Vienna's nearly 2 million residents. This housing policy, funded by a 1% income tax shared between employers and employees, significantly enhances labor participation and contributes to Vienna's consistently high quality of life in rankings. Both perspectives, from which lessons were drawn for Ukraine, underscored the importance of developing coherent social housing policies.

In terms of near-future plans and recommendations for municipalities, addressing demographic and social hurdles—particularly employment—is imperative. This is because the shortage of housing often corresponds to the lack of essential commercial infrastructure in these areas. Oleksiy Feliv referred to the ongoing war tax in Ukraine, proposing its continuation after the war, especially for the sake of social housing. He acknowledged the Slavic cultural preference for home ownership over renting, highlighting once more the importance of repairing or rebuilding small houses. Alina Muzioł-Węclawowicz voiced worries about legal issues in post-conflict scenarios, drawing parallels with Warsaw's post-World War II experience. She emphasized the challenges posed by property disputes and advocated for necessary legal frameworks in Ukraine. Suggesting temporary laws facilitating reconstruction with flexibility, she also highlighted potential complications like claims from deceased property owners' successors, recommending special provisions to handle such situations. The Ukrainian speakers recalled Ukraine's 2014 regulation allowing lease payments to be converted into ownership rights, aiming to strike a balance between leasing and ownership. This balance is important to encourage private sector participation in the housing sector. Furthermore, the speakers advocated for a campaign to attract experienced professionals to municipalities, citing the significance of a cohesive team supporting the mayor's decisions.







*Panel discussion „Disinformation Warfare – Lessons Learned, Current Landscape and New Technologies“  
From the left: Christopher Fussner (International Democrat Union), Matthew Booth (UK Embassy in Kyiv), Jakub Olek (TikTok).*

### 6.3. Critical infrastructure under attack

The Russian attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure have caused extensive damage across the country, deeply impacting the economy and society. Destruction to the energy infrastructure, including the Kakhovka dam, have caused considerable hurdles especially during the winter period. A large portion of the district heating infrastructure in war-affected areas is damaged beyond recovery. Combined heat and power plants, which are crucial for district heating in cities, have also been targeted. From October 10 to the end of December 2022, the average Ukrainian household experienced a total of five weeks without electricity, according to the estimates by Galyna Petrushka (Lvivenergo). Ongoing and regular attacks left 12 million Ukrainians with no or limited access to electricity, disrupting internet communications, water supplies, and heating systems in sub-zero temperatures. These disruptions have significantly affected the water supply in major cities and have affected telecommunications and the banking sector, including payment processing, contributing to the economic crisis.

Initial estimates as of early 2023 suggest that the destruction of electricity, gas and heating infrastructure, as well as coal mining, has exceeded \$10 billion. Crucial needs include high voltage transmission equipment and substations, additional

generation and heating capacity for the most vulnerable cities from gas turbines or gas piston engines.

UNDP Ukraine showcased the impact of global cooperation by providing two high-capacity autotransformers in October 2023. The project, led by the Ukrainian Ministry of Energy and Ukrenergo operator, received significant aid from the Government of Japan. These vital devices play a crucial role in restoring and stabilizing the Ukrainian power grid, ensuring electricity access for over 500,000 people. Bolesław Pałac emphasized Poland's support for Ukraine's energy infrastructure since the war's onset. Poland provided numerous power generators through Lvivenergo, ranging from small household generators to an industrial-grade machine repurposed as a refugee shelter at a Lviv Technical University. This aid extended beyond emergency response, involving the rebuilding of transformers and grids. Additionally, efforts led by Olena Lapenko (DiXi Group) focused on preemptive measures, reconfiguring and redirecting power to minimize vulnerability and reduce power restrictions prior to potential attacks.

Lastly, the speakers proposed that Ukraine's adversities could lead to a wider acceptance of underground power cables in other nations. In contrast to vulnerable overhead lines on tall towers, underground structures offer increased resilience, significantly bolstering national security.



## CHAPTER 7:

# DISINFORMATION

Disinformation is undeniably a growing problem, especially when it is weaponized in times of war. This chapter summarizes key challenges and solutions proposed by leading experts, representing diverse voices from think tanks, social media companies, to organizations affected by Russian disinformation campaigns.



Panel discussion "Understanding War Fatigue - How to Keep the World Engaged in Ukraine". From the left: Nina Jankowicz (Centre for Information Resilience), Matthew Booth (UK Embassy in Kyiv), Evgeny Afineevsky (movie director), Sally Jastrzebska (TVP World).



This year's W4UA Summit delved into a range of disinformation-related topics. Throughout the panel discussions, it became evident that while disinformation historically roots itself in traditional media during conflicts, its strategic military application in today's digital world, notably by Russia, raises alarming concerns. Disinformation in the digital era is a deliberately constructed web of misleading narratives, explained Tom Southern (Centre for Information Resilience). He underscored that the ultimate aim of disinformation extends beyond targeting adversaries, and instead seeks to destabilize alliances. Russia has refined disinformation for geopolitical purposes, employing it to justify hostile actions. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine stands as a stark illustration of this tactic.

The speakers presented specific instances of Russian disinformation. For example, Yevhen Popov's IT company "Osavul" devised artificial intelligence tools to detect patterns in disinformation campaigns. They found that narratives about widespread mishandling of humanitarian aid in Ukraine were initially fabricated in Russia and intentionally disseminated across numerous social media platforms. The speakers highlighted that military personnel, due to their socially isolated environment and the insular nature of their service, are vulnerable targets for such narratives.

Russian disinformation also targets critical energy infrastructure in Ukraine. Galyna Petrushka, Communications Director at Lviv Energo, reported that during blackouts they observed multiple fake social media accounts using their official logo and name. These fake accounts were impersonating the energy provider and were spreading false schedules of power restoration which caused confusion amongst the public, further undermining their confidence in the energy provider and the local government.

Yevhen Popov outlined four major challenges associated with contemporary disinformation. Firstly, its accessibility and affordability have been magnified with the advent of open-source technologies like the GPT-4 language model. The ease of fabricating fake content such as photos, videos, voiceovers, and texts that is tailored to specific regions and languages is amplifying the impact of misinformation campaigns. Secondly, disinformation campaigns prioritize emotional triggers over factual accuracy, sowing confusion and discord. The orchestrators of disinformation manipulate emotions, effectively encouraging the sharing of misleading content, regardless of its truthfulness. Thirdly, the landscape of social media platforms today also means that disinformation can be

spread quickly and easily across various platforms and even be reproduced by professional news outlets. The dynamics of the "attention economy", illustrated by addictive "feeds" and "rolls" only amplify these concerns. This multi-platform approach makes it challenging to counteract disinformation because it appears more cohesive and believable. Fourthly, disinformation causes massive financial costs both in terms of damage to businesses and governmental costs incurred from counter-narratives and cyber security measures.

The speakers agreed that countering disinformation demands a multi-level approach. They recommended building resilience and unified resistance to safeguard societies from disinformation. Achieving this necessitates prioritizing education that educates users on recognizing and verifying online content. Simple strategies like questioning "Why am I seeing this?" or understanding social media mechanisms are invaluable. Nevertheless, the rise of deep fakes and advancements in artificial intelligence will increasingly challenge individuals' ability



**The disinformation (...) has consequences on economies. It has consequences on public safety, public health, and it has consequences on individual lives. And so we have to walk that very fine line between freedom of expression and (...) censorship and understand that there need to be consequences, because if there aren't, what's the reason (...) to stop doing this?**

***Nina Jankowicz***

*Vice President  
at the Centre for Information Resilience*



to identify disinformation. Hence, promoting the concept of "Truth Proxies" – trusted experts clarifying complex topics in the digital age – becomes crucial.

Nina Jankowicz (Centre for Information Resilience) called for legal solutions. She stressed that harmful repercussions of online narratives cannot be underestimated. While valuing fact-checking, she deemed it insufficient. Jankowicz proposed ensuring oversight of social media platforms

and sanctioning disinformation-spreading nations. Several speakers concurred with Jankowicz that social media platforms should be held accountable for spreading disinformation. Brett Lea (Discourse Digital) suggested that it is pivotal to identify the specific actors behind the disinformation campaigns which would unveil larger networks and their financial supporters. The speakers called upon the international community, especially the NATO alliance, to enhance funding and actively combat disinformation.



*Audiovisual installation titled "Shards of Unjudged Crimes" created on the basis of video testimonies and materials collected by the Rafał Lemkin Center for Documenting Russian Crimes in Ukraine was presented at the W4UA Summit to allow audience to read the shocking accounts of witnesses who experienced Russian captivity, torture, and carpet bombings.*



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