# OPTIONS FOR SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING LOCAL HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN UKRAINE:
## A SCOPING EXERCISE REPORT

COMMISSIONED BY: DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE (DEC)

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Цей звіт також доступний українською мовою.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 resulted in the world's fastest growing displacement and refugee crisis since World War II. There are more than 7.6 million Ukrainian refugees across Europe, and another 6.2 million displaced inside the country. There continue to be acute humanitarian needs across the country, likely to be exacerbated this coming winter.

In response, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal in early March. It has so far raised £380 million from the British public, with some funds matched by UK Aid. DEC members are committed to strengthening local humanitarian action.

The importance of supporting and strengthening local humanitarian action – and civil society more broadly as a consequence – has been widely acknowledged in recent years. A vast array of commitments have been made across the global humanitarian sector aiming to reinforce, not replace, national and local systems. These are included in the Agenda for Humanity, Grand Bargain, Charter for Change, and most recently Pledge for Change. Progress has been limited.

## Scoping exercise

A scoping exercise was commissioned by DEC to gather ideas, options and approaches from local and national actors (L/NAs) implementing humanitarian response activities in Ukraine on the most important areas for supporting and strengthening local humanitarian action. The findings and recommendations will inform further DEC fund investment and programmatic approaches by DEC members. They are also relevant for other stakeholders funding, implementing and/or supporting humanitarian response activities in Ukraine. For example, recommendations for DEC may be helpful for donors and funders; those for DEC members may be useful for other INGOs and UN agencies. Some findings and recommendations are beyond DEC's mandate and influence, but are included as they may help guide other stakeholders.

Over 120 people from 72 agencies and networks were consulted in August to November 2022; 42% L/NAs and 58% international NGOs, UN agencies and networks. A full list of participating agencies is included in Annex 1. Further input was gathered from almost 60 survey respondents; over half of which represented L/NAs. In addition, well over 150 resources were reviewed, including reports, articles, news stories, podcasts and webinars. Preliminary findings and emerging recommendations were presented for feedback and verification to more than 70 people, and shared for comment with many more.

L/NA participants represented the full diversity of Ukrainian civil society groups – formal and informal, well-established and new, small and large NGOs, volunteer and community groups, community funds and foundations – so do not represent a homogenous group. However, the four areas prioritised by L/NAs as most important for supporting and strengthening local humanitarian action were fairly unanimously agreed. Below are the four priority areas:

## Priority 1: Funding and financial management

Less than 1% of humanitarian contributions has been transferred directly to national NGOs in Ukraine to date. The findings mirror other studies in other humanitarian contexts. Many L/NAs are struggling to access funds rapidly, or at all, to sustain their vital humanitarian activities. For many, this is largely due to lengthy, complex, and often duplicated international due diligence processes. A harmonised verification process which is contextualised for Ukraine's legal frameworks and takes into account the need for speed is crucial. As are new funds which are accessible for L/NAs with reduced and/or proportionate due diligence requirements. Quality funding – predictable, multi-year and flexible – is also required. Plus, the provision of fair indirect cost recovery (ICR) or 'overheads' rates are long overdue. L/NAs also want funds for consortia to allow peer-learning and exchange.

## Priority 2: Capacity strengthening and organisational development

True complementarity is needed in the Ukraine response, where the capacities of all groups and agencies are recognised, harnessed and combined for effective humanitarian action. There is little evidence this is happening. L/NAs want capacity strengthening support in the form of mentoring, accompaniment and secondments which is tailored to their needs and requests, not short, one-off, online trainings on topics decided by others. A mechanism to coordinate capacity strengthening initiatives which are available is needed. DEC is already funding a Response Learning Hub which will provide free online training courses on humanitarian essentials in Ukrainian. Support for organisational development is also important for L/NAs.

## Priority 3: Equitable partnerships

Pressure to respond and spend funds rapidly vs lengthy and complex due diligence processes mentioned above were identified as barriers to working in equitable partnerships. It was recognised that building trust takes time. A platform providing a database of (verified) agencies operating in Ukraine was suggested as one way to build bridges between international agencies and L/NAs. An independent assessment of partnership quality in Ukraine was also proposed. Tensions in partnerships of international and L/NAs were highlighted related to the humanitarian principle of neutrality vs a lack of separation of civilian and military aid by many L/NAs.

## Priority 4: Coordination and collaboration

In general, L/NAs want to be involved in the international humanitarian response, but struggle to actively participate in Cluster and Working Group meetings due to language/terminology barriers and time constraints. Some felt meeting agenda were more tailored to international actors; further outreach efforts are needed and planned. The idea of a coordination forum to provide space for L/NAs to meet, learn, share and coordinate was very popular. The importance of translation and interpretation was also highlighted. Plus, coordination across DEC members.

The most popular activities identified to support local humanitarian action in Ukraine were:

1. Establish a new pooled fund which is accessible for L/NAs and has reduced, and tiered, due diligence requirements.

2. Develop a platform (possibly centred around a wider 'hub') which builds a database and harmonised verification process for L/NAs leading humanitarian activities.

3. Support a coordination mechanism for L/NAs, while also better enabling their engagement in the formal Cluster coordination system.

Other relevant findings from the scoping exercise which did not fit neatly into one of the four priority areas included cross-cutting issues, and areas mentioned by a smaller proportion of participants, or by only one category of agency/group:

- Humanitarian principles
- Language and communication
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
- Accountability
- Corruption and transparency
- Cash programming
- Human Resources (HR)
- Operating environment
- DEC good practice
- Community philanthropy
- Inclusion

Recommendations are included throughout the report. Many can be actioned rapidly. Others will take more time. Some might require sector-wide influence and change. A matrix of recommendations is included in Annex 2. In the words of more than 90 Ukrainian organisations in a recent open letter to international donors and organisations: *If not now, when?*

This full report is also available in Ukrainian.

# CONTENTS

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[1] Included in order of reference. There are duplications in the list for materials referenced multiple times.

# ACRONYMS

A selection of acronyms that are used more than once, or are important terms, below:

| | |
|---|---|
| 5W | Who is doing what, where, when and for whom |
| AAP | Accountability to affected populations |
| C4C | Charter for Change |
| CHS | Core Humanitarian Standard on |
| DEC | Disasters Emergency Committee |
| HCT | Humanitarian Country Team |
| HNO | Humanitarian Needs Overview |
| HPC | Humanitarian Programme Cycle |
| HRP | Humanitarian Response Plan |
| IASC | Inter-Agency Standing Committee |
| ICR | Indirect cost recovery ('overheads') |
| IDP | Internally displaced person |
| INGO | International NGO |
| L/NA | Local and national actors |
| M&E | Monitoring and evaluation |
| MPC | Multi-purpose cash |
| PSEA | Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| PSS | Psycho-social support |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN) |
| OECD DAC | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee |
| RSH EE | Regional Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub – Eastern Europe |

# INTRODUCTION

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the world's fastest growing displacement and refugee crisis since World War II followed. More than 7.6 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe, and another 6.2 million displaced inside the country[i]. In response to escalating humanitarian needs, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)[2] launched the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal in the UK on 3 March 2022. The Appeal has so far raised £380 million from the British public, with some funds matched by UK Aid.

The following DEC members and their partners will be responding to humanitarian needs in Ukraine and neighbouring countries[3], with DEC funds, for at least the next 3 years:

| | |
|---|---|
| Action Against Hunger | Concern Worldwide (UK) |
| ActionAid | International Rescue Committee (IRC) |
| Age International | Oxfam GB |
| British Red Cross | Plan International UK |
| CAFOD | Save the Children UK |
| CARE International UK | World Vision |
| Christian Aid | |

Strengthening local humanitarian action is a key priority for the DEC. The secretariat and members are committed to ensuring humanitarian response is as local as possible, by supporting and strengthening local and national groups, organisations and networks to effectively respond to priority needs. To inform this approach for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, DEC commissioned this scoping exercise. The focus of the scoping was Ukraine.

## SCOPING EXERCISE

**Purpose:** to localise the design process for the development of ideas, options and approaches to support, strengthen and accelerate 'localisation' / local humanitarian action in DEC's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal response. The findings of the scoping exercise will provide a basis for further DEC fund investment and will inform programmatic approaches by DEC members.

**Timeline:** 3 months (mid-August to mid-November).

**Scoping team:** Lizz Harrison, supported by Dmytro Kondratenko and Kateryna Korenkova.

**Methodology:**

- *Literature review:* >150 (English) resources reviewed[4].

- *Sampling:* starting with DEC member partners and existing contacts, followed by a 'snowballing' technique supported by participants and networks.

- *Consultations:* open conversations in Ukrainian or English with key guiding questions. In-person, multiple-organisation group sessions were planned for local and national actors (L/NAs), following an ideation approach (e.g. 'brainstorming'), and online for international actors. The approach was adapted to the availability of participants and the shifting security environment; the majority of sessions were held online, using tools to support an ideation process, and participants could either join scheduled group consultations or arrange consultations convenient for their organisation/ network.

- *Online survey:* in Ukrainian and English. Providing an additional (quicker) method for participation. Intended to triangulate qualitative data, not to provide a large quantitative dataset.

- *Feedback and verification:* preliminary findings and emerging recommendations were presented to more than 70 people in English and Ukrainian online sessions.

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2   The DEC is made up of 15 member charities, a board of trustees, and a small secretariat in the UK.
3   Poland, Romania, Moldova and Hungary, and cross-border support from Romania and Slovakia.
4   Including reports, articles, briefing notes, statements, webinars, podcasts, media and more.

**Limitations:**

- *Purpose of the scoping:* a summary of the purpose and aims of the scoping exercise was shared widely, but there was some misinterpretation of the purpose with a number of participants viewing consultations as an opportunity to seek funds.

- *Limited engagement of DEC member partners:* just 8 partner organisations of DEC members participated in the scoping exercise. It was noted that, at the time of this scoping, there were a number of other requests for DEC members and their partners time in Ukraine: Real-Time Review, Perceptions Tracking Study, and Phase 1 reports.

- *Limited availability:* understandably, staff and volunteers of organisations responding to humanitarian needs in Ukraine are extremely busy and have limited time to join consultations. In response, consultations were made available at times convenient to each organisation, reducing cross-organisation discussions.

- *Security:* the security situation deteriorated further during data collection, so the majority of consultations were conducted online, reducing creative energy somewhat.

- *Heterogeneity of participants:* the scoping sample cannot be representative of the huge numbers and diversity of local and national actors (L/NAs) engaging in the humanitarian response. Therefore, not all findings are relevant for all groups. As with any study, a summarisation process is necessary.

**Participants:**

- *Consultations:* with 125 people representing 72 organisations. See Annex 1 for a list.
  - Local and national actors (L/NAs): 30 (42%)
  - International actors: 42 (58%)
  - DEC members partners: 8 organisations (partners of: CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Plan and Save the Children).

- *Survey:* 59 respondents (39 Ukrainian language survey; 20 English language survey).
  - Local and national actors: 53%
  - International NGOs: 29%
  - Donors / funders: 12%
  - United Nations (UN): 3%
  - Other: 3%

# BACKGROUND

A number of global commitments were made at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016 aiming to increase support for locally led humanitarian action, or 'localisation'; 8 of the DEC members are signatories of the Grand Bargain[ii], and 8 of the Charter 4 Change[iii]. Seven DEC members signed the new Pledge for Change[iv]. There has been slow global progress to date. In fact, there was a halving of the global proportion of directing funding to local and national actors (L/NAs) from 4% to 2% in 2021[v]. In Ukraine, less than 1% of humanitarian contributions has been transferred directly to national NGOs[vi]. Funding is one component. Investment in L/NA capacity strengthening and organisational development, commitments to equitable partnerships between international actors and
L/NAs, and greater engagement of L/NAs in coordination mechanisms, are also vital if leadership is to be shifted to crisis-affected people and the agencies that support them. The Ukraine response might be a 'game-changer'[vii] [viii]; a vital opportunity to demonstrate global commitments made[ix] [x] [xi].

Work has already been done defining key terms. Therefore, this scoping exercise did not attempt to add to this work, but instead used the following existing or simplified definitions:

| | |
|---|---|
| Local and national actors (L/NAs)* | Organisations engaged in relief that are headquartered and operating in Ukraine and which are not affiliated to an international NGO[5], and state authorities of Ukraine engaged in relief, whether at local or national level.[6] [xii]* |
| International actors | International NGOs, UN agencies, and representatives of international networks and fora that are not headquartered in Ukraine. This includes country offices of INGOs in Ukraine. |
| Donors and funders | Entities that fund humanitarian action in Ukraine. Note: for many L/NAs, this includes international actors as intermediaries between them and donors/funders. |
| Partner | Organisations that are working together in some way. In reality some relationships are more contractual than genuine 'partnerships'. |
| Localisation | In a narrow sense, localisation can be seen as strengthening international investment and respect for the role of local actors, with the goal of reducing costs and increasing the reach of humanitarian action. In a broader sense, it can be viewed as a way of re-conceiving the humanitarian sector from the bottom up. It recognises that the overwhelming majority of humanitarian assistance is already provided by local actors.[xiii] This scoping exercise largely used the term 'local humanitarian action' as a more easily understood concept. |

*For the purpose of this exercise, the term 'L/NAs' encompasses all local and national entities engaged in humanitarian response in Ukraine, including: civil society organisations (CSO), community-based organisations (CBO), non-governmental organisations (NGO), disabled persons organisations (DPO), women-led organisations (WLO), community funds and foundations, volunteer groups, and more, whether they are formally registered or not.

Outlined in various reports to date, L/NAs were implementing the vast majority of humanitarian aid inside Ukraine in the first few months[xiv]. There are numerous stories from varying sources, of volunteer and civil society groups providing the immediate responses[xv] [xvi] ; navigating the complex and dynamic political, social, economic and security context. See more on the operating environment in: <u>Other: Operating environment</u>.

Following the immediate response, the 'internationalisation' of the response began[xvii], with very little contextualisation, or assessment of existing capacity. Global commitments aim for the international response to reinforce, not replace, local systems. International actors should be seeking to complement, support and fill gaps in the locally-led response. But it appears the 'as local as possible, as international as necessary'[7] approach has not been realised in Ukraine.

As outlined above, 13 of the 15 DEC members are responding to needs in Ukraine and/or neighbouring countries with funds raised by DEC. The *DEC Collective Initiative Policy* was adapted to be fit-for-purpose to the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal[xviii]. In response, a number of DEC members joined forces to identify what actions and activities might support and strengthen local humanitarian action in Ukraine[xix]. Throughout the report, they are referred to as the 'localisation collective initiative' group[8]. DEC Secretariat has provisionally agreed to allocate up to £3 million of Appeal funds to support a 'collective initiative' focusing on this topic. DEC members could also add to these funds themselves. This scoping exercise is intended to present the priorities of L/NAs in Ukraine and provide recommendations for such an initiative.

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[5] A local actor is not considered to be affiliated merely because it is part of a network, confederation or alliance wherein it maintains independent fundraising and governance systems.

[6] Categories of measurement agreed by Grand Bargain signatories for tracking progress on localisation.

[7] A term used by the UN Secretary-General at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) 2016.

[8] Currently comprising: Action Against Hunger, ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Concern, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children, and Tearfund. With some significantly more active than others.

# KEY FINDINGS

**Applicability of recommendations**

While the primary purpose of this scoping exercise was to provide recommendations to DEC Secretariat and members, as outlined above, a number of findings point to clear recommendations for other stakeholders. Rather than preparing two separate reports – one internal, one public – the full findings and recommendations are available to all in this report.

> **Recommendations in the report:**
>
> • **For DEC members:** also relevant for other INGOs and UN agencies.
>
> • **DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group**\*: a also relevant for other stakeholders to consider when allocating funds to support locally-led humanitarian action.
>
> • **For DEC Secretariat:** also relevant for donors and funders of humanitarian action, and particularly for the other 8 members of the Emergency Appeals Alliance (EAA)[9].
>
> • **For other stakeholders:** included for reference. Could inform DEC member advocacy.
>
> See: Annex 2 for a matrix of recommendations.

*\*DEC funds available for a 'localisation collective initiative' are almost certainly lower than all of the options below would require. Therefore, the 'localisation collective initiative' group of DEC members will need to agree which to prioritise.*

**Priority humanitarian needs in Ukraine (current and projected)**

It was not an aim of the scoping exercise to identify the specifics of current or projected humanitarian needs in Ukraine. However, inevitably these were raised in consultations. Those that have particular relevance for supporting local humanitarian action are outlined below.

*Preparing for winter ('winterisation'):* there was a noted difference in focus between L/NAs and international actors. Many international actors reported providing blankets, warm clothing, and materials for temporary repairs to homes. L/NAs noted this approach as unsuitable for the severe winter temperatures in Ukraine, and particularly in the recent wake of Russian airstrikes targeting energy infrastructure. Many L/NAs reported prioritising permanent home repairs, and ensuring electricity and heating supplies. City councils are working to repair public heating systems, equip underground shelters with facilities, and establish emergency heating centres.

*Further widescale displacement:* many participants were predicting further large-scale displacement as temperatures drop. Particularly if airstrikes continue and/or result in more widespread power outages[xx]. Some predicted dispersal from cities to rural areas; making humanitarian response from city-hubs extremely challenging. In this case, nimble, responsive L/NAs with networks of volunteers have a clear advantage over international actors.

*Psycho-social support (PSS):* humanitarian actors – of all sizes and scope – highlighted the need for PSS for their (national) staff and volunteers, as well as populations in need. For L/NAs, the last 8+ months have seen people working long hours with limited time off, often at great personal risk, in addition to being personally affected by the war. Partnerships and funding should go beyond financing and include PSS[xxi]. One DEC member mentioned the Community Resilience model as a useful tool; a low-cost, non-technical approach.

Survey respondents were asked to select the top four areas of support which they believed were **most important to strengthen local humanitarian action**, from a list of 12 options. See Figure 1 below for the disaggregated ranking. This ranking in the survey closely triangulated with the discussions in consultations so are used as the layout for the report. Interestingly, the top four areas selected also completely align with the priority areas common across the National Localisation Frameworks developed in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan as part of the DEC-member consortium project *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships:* Financial Resources, Capacity, Partnerships, and Coordination[xxii].

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9 Find out more: bit.ly/3hMK9Xe.

*Figure 1: Survey respondent selection of top four areas most important for strengthening local humanitarian action*
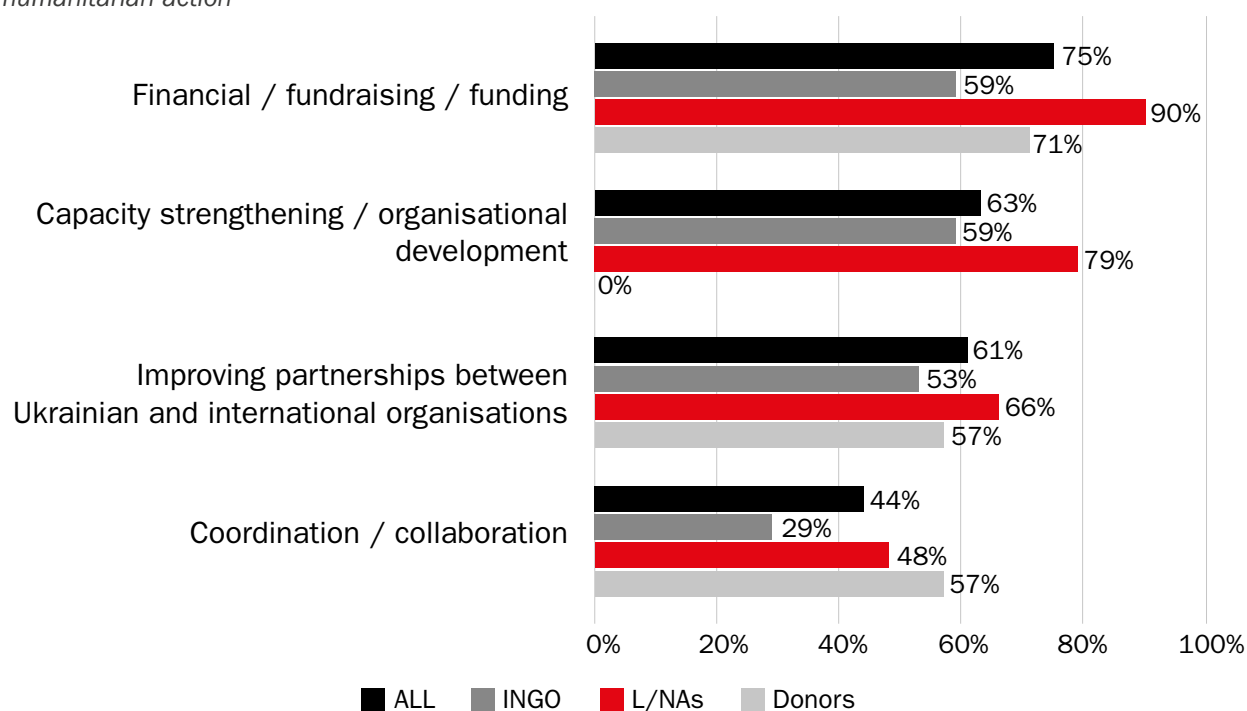


## PRIORITY 1: FUNDING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The total funding for humanitarian response in Ukraine reported to the Financial Tracking Service (FTS)[xxiii] is 3.48 billion USD. The vast majority of this has been allocated to UN agencies, followed by significantly smaller proportions to the Country-based Pooled Fund (Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF)), International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and international NGOs. DEC's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal raised the second largest Appeal sum to date; more than the previous six Appeals combined. At the time of writing, DEC was the 5th largest source of all reported humanitarian funding in Ukraine – following USA, the European Commission, Germany and Japan[xxiv] – putting it in a strong position to influence change.

Sector-wide commitments were agreed in the Grand Bargain in 2016 to increase the proportion of funding to local and national responders as directly as possible; currently set at a minimum target of 25%. Progress has been limited. In Ukraine, less than 1%[xxv] of humanitarian contributions has been transferred directly to national NGOs[xxvi]. This is despite the fact Ukrainian L/NAs are generally credited with implementing the vast majority of the immediate response activities.

The proportions of funding that DEC members spent 'through partners' was reviewed for three recent completed DEC Appeals in 2021[xxvii]. The findings showed that 2 of 3 Appeals met the Grand Bargain target, but proportions varied significantly across responses and phases. Recommendations included in the paper are repeated throughout this report.

| DEC Humanitarian Appeal | Total funds raised | % to local partners |
|---|---|---|
| Rohingya Crisis, Bangladesh (2017) | £30 million | 25% |
| Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami, Indonesia (2018) | £29 million | 45% |
| Idai Cyclone, Mozambique (2021) | £43 million | 16% |

**DEC Secretariat:** to commit to a 25% minimum target for funds transferred to L/NAs for every Appeal, meeting the target collectively at first, and agree a route map and timeframe with members that consistently fail to meet this. Publish percentages.

The priority area for L/NAs for supporting local humanitarian action in Ukraine was funding and financial management. This priority was clear in consultations, and supported by survey responses; 90% of L/NA survey respondents selected this area. The most popular activities proposed in the survey are outlined below, in order of priority highlighted in consultations:

| Support activity | %[10] |
|---|---|
| New funding pots available for local organisations only | 50 |
| Reducing due diligence processes to access existing funds | 39 |
| Flexible, multi-year funding | n/a[11] |
| Increasing allocations of indirect cost recovery (ICR) / overheads for L/NAs | n/a[12] |
| Project development and proposal writing support | 55 |
| Funds for consortia of Ukrainian organisations to work together | 41 |
| More guidance and support on applying for Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF) | 43 |

## New funding pots available for local organisations only

Many participants talked about the restrictions for L/NAs accessing funds for humanitarian response, with some local actors saying they do not have access to funds at all. It seemed clear that the Grand Bargain commitment to *"make greater use of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders"*[xxviii] was not being realised. A recent joint statement on localisation from the Ukraine Advocacy Working Group (AWG) pointed to a need to establish new pooled funds with less bureaucracy able to give smaller, faster grants.

In addition, around three-quarters of L/NAs said the timeframe for agreeing funding for activities needs to be quicker[xxix]. L/NAs gave examples of waiting up to 3 months for proposals to international actors to be approved, by which time needs had changed. Inflexible compliance regimes delay decisions and are counter-productive to rapid response.

There was strong consensus that a fund which disburses rapidly and directly to L/NAs would strengthen local humanitarian action. Consultation discussions highlighted, a fund should:

- Be managed by a committee of L/NAs which is carefully selected to ensure a representative, participatory, collective and inclusive process for decision-making.

- Be accessible to all types and scale of L/NA.

- Rapidly review funding requests, with short approval times.

- Use tiered due diligence which are realistic and proportionate to the funds granted, with the lowest tier being for grants of up to £4,000.

- Have minimum requirements for proposal and reporting.

- Work to build L/NA track record and capacity to manage larger grants, with the longer-term view that they might 'graduate' to UHF and other funding eligibility.

- Be informed by learning from those with expertise and experience managing local funds.

- Encourage other funders, donors and agencies to contribute; making it a pooled fund.

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10  % of those survey respondents that selected the 'financial / fundraising / funding' area who selected each activity. There was no limit on the number of sub-options respondents could.

11  This was not an option in the survey, but raised in a significant number of consultations.

12  This was not an option in the survey, but raised in a significant number of consultations.

> **DEC Secretariat:** to allocate funds for a 'localisation collective initiative' which might include the establishment of a fund to disburse grants to L/NAs, a platform to support and verify Ukrainian L/NAs, and other activities as prioritised by L/NAs and outlined in the report.
>
> **DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group:** to consider establishing a fund which disburses small grants to L/NAs. Firstly, establish an expert group to guide a fund establishment process. A number of actors exist with experience in: piloting or managing small grants facilities / programmes (Christian Aid, Save the Children, Tearfund, Zagoriy Foundation, Swiss Government, FCDO, The Bearr Trust), implementing tiered due diligence processes (Start Network, UHF), participatory grant-making (GlobalGiving[xxx]), and supporting community funds and foundations (Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF)[xxxi], National Network for Local Philanthropy Development, Moloda Gromada[xxxii]). There are likely to be many more.
>
> **DEC members:** to consider contributing additional resources to new or existing pooled funds which provide grants for L/NAs.

## Reducing due diligence processes to access existing funds

Most agencies highlighted or recognised INGO due diligence processes for L/NA partners as extremely time-consuming. The time-consuming, resource-intensive, and often duplicated processes disproportionately burden L/NAs, and remain one of the biggest obstacles for enabling localised humanitarian action. Many new groups providing humanitarian support in Ukraine started as small informal groups of friends or residents in besieged areas or areas of active hostility. Due diligence requirements of international actors make it extremely challenging, if not impossible, for such groups to fulfil capacity assessment and due diligence requirements[xxxiii]. This effectively excludes the most local actors from the response.

Some INGOs said their processes were significantly lighter in Ukraine than previous humanitarian responses, with a few saying they were testing new, lighter due diligence processes in Ukraine to inform possible changes in global organisational policy.

The need to harmonise due diligence processes across international agencies to reduce the burden on local partners is mentioned in much of the literature[xxxiv] and in the recommendations from a recent roundtable of Ukrainian organisations[xxxv]. L/NAs want due diligence 'passporting'[13] to be used across all international agencies, not just DEC members. DEC allowed such passporting for its members in the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal response; recognised by many as good practice. Only 3 DEC members used it, and a number of programme staff were not aware of it. Some said their internal systems would not allow it anyway so further efforts are needed. Learning from a new pilot of Charter for Change (C4C) signatories may also inform this[14]. However, passporting is not sufficient, and contextually-appropriate risk management processes are crucial to ensure humanitarian financing is mobilised as rapidly as it is needed.

Efforts are also needed to map and align standard international due diligence expectations with the legislative framework which Ukrainian L/NAs operate under. A number of complexities and contrasts exist, including Ukrainian laws around taxation of aid recipients and very different requirements for auditing organisational accounts, which will need to be bridged. As one L/NA participant said, *"due diligence processes are impossible to complete for many Ukrainian organisations; not because we don't want to, but because we don't have the information presented in the right way".*

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13  Due diligence passporting is the process whereby the due diligence process of one DEC member agency for a L/NA is accepted by another DEC member, reducing time and duplication for L/NAs.

14  In this pilot scheme, CAFOD, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Christian Aid, Kerk in Actie, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF), Tearfund and Trócaire's due diligence processes and requirements will be examined by Humentum to identify best practice and the scope for simplification and harmonisation.

**DEC Secretariat:** to facilitate or fund a mapping of international due diligence best practice with what is feasible for L/NAs registered in Ukraine, taking into account the complexities and contrasts of Ukrainian legislation. Ideally this is led by Ukrainian experts in legislation, auditing and compliance. This mapping should then identify options for 'bridging' where international requirements and Ukrainian L/NA documentation do not align. DEC might insist that its members budget for auditing support for their L/NA partners to support this process.

**DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group:** to consider contributing 'collective initiative' funds for the establishment of a L/NA platform where Ukrainian L/NAs are supported to gather documentation and evidence necessary for international due diligence processes, and provide a centralised, nationally-managed verification scheme. More in: Equitable partnerships.

**DEC Secretariat:** to facilitate a meeting of member staff responsible for setting organisational due diligence requirements – likely to be finance and compliance staff as a starting point – to conduct a joint review and mapping. This mapping should aim to develop a realistic, feasible and proportionate 'due diligence minimum standards' across all DEC members which is as light as organisational policy and UK legislation allows, and forms the basis of any future DEC due diligence passporting.

**UK-based international humanitarian agencies and donors:** to coordinate on influencing the UK Charity Commission to adopt an agreed 'due diligence minimum standards'. DEC Secretariat and members, FCDO and other UK-based international actors, should advocate for standards appropriate for rapid international humanitarian response. Referring to the Dutch Government and ICRC-led process on risk-sharing under the Grand Bargain could be helpful.

## Flexible, multi-year funding

Globally, recent donor practice has not shown an increase in percentage of multi-year and flexible funding[xxxvi]. Recommendations for this are outlined by the Grand Bargain Intermediaries Caucus[xxxvii], and it is a clear part of global commitments.

Many L/NAs in Ukraine want more flexible funding which is predictable and multi-year. DEC provide funds to members for up to 3 years, following an adaptive management approach which allows flexibility; this was recognised as good practice. The extent to which this was passed on by DEC members to their partners was not assessed in the consultations. Two recommendations were outlined for DEC in the 2021 localisation scoping paper; included below.

**DEC Secretariat:** to encourage members to sign multi-year agreements with L/NAs for Phase 2 of an Appeal. Require DEC members to report on the number of multi-year agreements.

**DEC members:** to reflect the flexibility and multi-year funding they receive from DEC in agreements with partners.

## Increasing allocations of indirect cost recovery (ICR) / overheads for L/NAs

Many L/NAs highlighted that funds provided by international actors for running costs, administration, and overheads were insufficient[15]. This has also been discussed in the recent sub-national meetings on localisation in Ukraine[16]. Failing to provide overhead costs for L/NA partners is not only unfair, but also runs counter to sector-wide commitments to support L/NA capacity strengthening and organisational development. More in: Capacity strengthening and organisational development. Lack of funding for this, further undermines L/NA's ability to access pooled or bilateral funding, thus trapping them further, as highlighted in research conducted by 4 DEC members in South Sudan in 2016[xxxviii]. In recent global research, the majority of project grants reviewed did not cover full and fair administrative costs. Most L/NAs involved in the study did not have many unrestricted reserves, affecting staff retention and sustainability[xxxix].

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15   No standard definitions exist but IASC has provided a helpful distinction between direct, administration/support/shared costs, and indirect/overheads: bit.ly/3UDHCN6

16   Facilitated by the Advocacy Working Group in November; so far in Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia.

In other recent research on overhead cost allocation in the humanitarian sector, only 2 INGOs – DEC members CAFOD and Christian Aid[17] – of the 13 mapped, have global policies on sharing or providing overheads to local and national partners[xl]. Charter for Change signatories already commit to paying "adequate administrative support". IASC's recent guidance on providing overheads to L/NA partners outlines recommendations for INGOs, including developing organisational policies for this. IASC outlines advocacy to donors including: committing to covering the full direct and indirect costs incurred by all implementing partners in delivering activities, and actively incentivising change[xli]. DEC Secretariat should take note.

DEC Secretariat was recommended to agree on the most appropriate model for financing L/NA overhead costs in the 2021 internal DEC localisation scoping paper. DEC Secretariat currently provide up to 7% of humanitarian response budgets to DEC members for 'Management Support' (essentially ICR). In addition, DEC members are *encouraged* to pay a fair share of overhead costs for L/NA partners, which can be covered from within the humanitarian response budgets (not impacting on members' 7%). The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Humanitarian Funding Guidelines[xlii,] requires that the lead partner must pass on their own overheads rate to all L/NA partners, or use a rate of 10%, whichever is highest. See below also for a recommendation for UHF on this.

> **DEC Secretariat:** to require that DEC members budget a minimum 10% rate for ICR for partners in all future humanitarian response budgets.
>
> **DEC members:** to develop organisational policies on ICR for L/NA partners delivering humanitarian action, which commit fair coverage. CAFOD and Christian Aid already have them.

## Project development and proposal writing support

Support for project development and proposal writing was selected by 58% of L/NA survey respondents. A recent Learning Needs Analysis in Ukraine also showed project planning as a secondary priority (following needs assessment and coordination)[xliii]. In consultations, L/NA staff and volunteers highlighted the importance of support on project development and proposal writing primarily to enable access to donor funds.

RedR UK has recently offered free online training in Ukrainian and English on humanitarian project cycle management, including on project identification and design, and project planning and implementation; more dates may be added[xliv]. The Crisis Leadership Programme[xlv], an 8-week training course aiming to strengthen the leadership skills of people providing frontline assistance in the Ukraine crisis, includes a session on project cycle management. The session will cover topics on project planning and design. The programme is run by the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership (CHL), and the first round funded by DEC though DEC member Save the Children with Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA). Under the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, DEC has also funded a Response Learning Hub managed by Save the Children and HLA. The online portal[xlvi] already provides a small number of online training courses in Ukrainian; more are expected. One training, not yet available in Ukrainian, is an introduction to proposal and report writing. More in: Capacity strengthening and organisational development.

> **Response Learning Hub:** to make online trainings available at the Response Learning Hub on project development and proposal writing in Ukrainian.

## Funds for consortia of Ukrainian organisations to work together

Survey responses suggest there is appetite for Ukrainian organisations working together in consortia; 39% of L/NA survey respondents selected this support area. However, this was not raised much in consultations. It is possible that this option in the survey was so popular simply because it suggested the possibility of accessing funds. However, there are clear advantages of L/NAs working together in consortia. These include: opportunities for peer learning and exchange, building networks of L/NAs, complementarity, and combined geographical outreach. This last point may be particularly important if projections of further winter displacement resulting in the dispersal of internally displaced persons (IDPs) across rural areas are realised. L/NAs will almost certainly have an added advantage of operating in such an environment.

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17 Another DEC member – Oxfam – announced a similar commitment at the Pledge for Change launch

Another advantage of working thorough a consortium or coalition model is that due diligence requirements of members could be proportionate to the budget and role they are playing; a tiered approach mentioned above. For example, a lead partner might complete a full due diligence process, but sub-partners complete a lighter version. Consortia or coalition members can also work to ensure accountability by checking and vouching for each other.

Learning on mutual accountability from community funds, and the survivor and community led response (sclr) approach[xlvii] of DEC member Christian Aid and their partner in Ukraine – Alliance for Public Health (APH), could be shared. Also, learning from The Share Trust's Local Coalition Accelerator (LCA) pilots in other countries[xlviii]. Interesting examples from other countries include in Myanmar where a number of sub-national networks and coalitions have emerged to coordinate and guide L/NA's humanitarian response and advocacy in the country[xlix].

> **DEC members:** to consider supporting and funding consortia of L/NAs in Ukraine which enable peer learning and local coordination. Consider the sclr and LCA approaches.

## More guidance and support on applying for Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF)

Not many L/NAs mentioned the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF) in consultations, but overall, almost half of L/NA survey respondents wanted more guidance and support on applying. The UHF plans to increase awareness and outreach among smaller L/NAs. However, a recent online information meeting for prospective applicants was conducted only in English, with reported requests for it to be in Ukrainian denied.

To date, the UHF has pre-approved 92 organisations as eligible for funds; 38% are national NGOs. UHF's capacity assessment and due diligence process usually takes months to complete. In the first 7 months of the humanitarian response, UHF received registration requests from over 120 national organisations and fast-tracked temporary eligibility to a small number that met minimum eligibility criteria and demonstrated capacity (assessed by UN agencies or donors in country). The majority of requests were rejected however, including organisations that were established following the February 2022 invasion as they were considered ineligible as they did not have sufficient track record to meet the minimum eligibility criteria.

In 2021, 40% of the UHF grant value was transferred directly to national NGOs; recognised as good practice. Since February 2022, this proportion has reduced to 19%. To note however, while the proportion has halved, the absolute figures have more than quadrupled from 5.6 million USD to 22.6 million USD to national NGOs. Around 66% of proposals received from national NGOs for the second, third and fourth UHF Reserve Allocations launched after February 2022 were successful. According to the UHF, proposals that were not successful were not in line with the allocation strategy and relevant Cluster guidance, or with overall low quality compared to other submissions. The reported lack of L/NA engagement in Cluster meetings in this scoping therefore is likely to have ramifications on funding access. More in: Coordination and collaboration.

> **UHF:** to outline and share plans for how the UHF strategic priority of localisation will be realised in Ukraine; including conducting information sessions in Ukrainian, adopting a fair overheads policy for sub-implementing partners, and working to increase the proportion of funds granted directly to L/NAs to at least a minimum of 25%[18].

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18  The last two recommendations are also included in the AWG joint statement on localisation.

# PRIORITY 2: CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

International agencies continue to side-line or undermine L/NAs and compete for resources, using risk and capacity concerns for the slow shift to localise[l]. Capacity strengthening is a major element of all three sets of global humanitarian sector commitments endorsed at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016; Agenda for Humanity, Grand Bargain, Charter for Change. *"But why is our potential the only problem?"* ask more than 90 Ukrainian organisation signatories of an open letter to international donors and NGOs. As they say: *"…we are rooted in our communities and have the historical, cultural, linguistic and contextual knowledge and understanding of local realities sufficient to respond effectively"*[li]. The term 'capacity sharing' recognises this need for two-way learning, but appears to be lacking in practice. Global consultations with L/NAs are currently in process to gather feedback on a draft IASC scoping paper on capacity sharing for humanitarian action[lii]. This may provide a good guide.

The main obstacle to more complementarity between local and international actors, is a lack of recognition of local capacities[liii]. Complementarity is where all capacities at all levels – local, national, regional, international – are harnessed and combined in such a way to support the best humanitarian outcomes for affected communities[19]. It is needed in Ukraine[liv]. It is one of the Principles of Partnership[lv], and crucial in meeting the aim of humanitarian action being 'as local as possible, as international as necessary'.

But the unequal way capacity is assessed and understood is influenced by those with the most power in humanitarian action[lvi], which in turn is influenced by historical legacies and colonial dynamics[lvii] [20]. Power in humanitarian action generally continues to lie with donors, UN agencies and large INGOs. As a result, higher value is placed on capacities which international actors possess, which leads to a failure to recognise and value existing local capacities. Compounding this issue is the practice of staff 'poaching' which undermines the local capacity that international actors are seeking to strengthen[lviii]. More in: Other: Human Resources.

A secondary priority area for supporting local humanitarian action was capacity strengthening and organisational development. This priority was clear in consultations, and supported by survey responses; 79% of L/NAs selected this area. The most popular activities proposed under this survey area are outlined below, in order of priority highlighted in consultations:

| Support activity | %[21] |
|---|---|
| Tailored training, mentoring, secondment or accompaniment as prioritised by Ukrainian organisations | 68 |
| A mechanism to coordinate capacity strengthening initiatives offered by international NGOs for their partners | 45 |
| Support for organisational development | n/a[22] |
| Establishing a network of local training providers on humanitarian topics | 20 |

## Tailored training, mentoring, secondment or accompaniment as prioritised by Ukrainian organisations

Firstly, it is important to recognise the huge diversity and differing capacities of L/NAs across Ukraine. International actors supporting capacity strengthening / sharing activities should therefore tailor them to respond to requests from L/NAs and fill identified gaps, rather than using a generic plan rolled out for all local partners[lix]. Secondly, the methodology is crucial. L/NAs highlighted the value of mentoring, accompaniment, exchange, and secondment. Not short, one-off, online trainings. These are also recommendations in *Pathways to Localisation*[lx].

A lack of capacity scoping was highlighted in recent study *Enabling the Local Response* in Ukraine[lxi]. Since then, RedR UK conducted a Learning Needs Analysis which highlighted the following broad

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[19]  The working definition outlined in Barbelet (2019).

[20]  Participants of discussions for *Time to Decolonise Aid* (PeaceDirect; 2021) described this emphasis on lacking local capacity, indicating it as an example of structural racism in the sector.

[21]  % of those survey respondents that selected the 'capacity strengthening / organisational development' area who selected each activity. There was no limit on the number of sub-options respondents could.

[22]  Not an option in the survey, but raised in a significant number of consultations.

areas: protection and accountability; humanitarian systems, structures, and principles; humanitarian programming; and personal safety, security and wellbeing[lxii]. Also useful are training topics highlighted in research on *Partnerships in Conflict* which includes: security management, conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity, advocacy, understanding the international system, and mainstreaming gender, conflict and security[lxiii]. OCHA also surveyed NGOs for training needs[lxiv]. Save the Children and Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA) are now using this information, and their understanding of the 'essentials' from other responses, to translate existing training into Ukrainian, Polish and Romanian for those working on the response. These will be available soon on the DEC-funded Response Learning Hub.

L/NAs in Ukraine consulted in this scoping exercise highlighted capacity strengthening topics including: accessing donor funds (including project development and proposal writing, mentioned earlier in the report), fundraising, organisational development, procurement, HR management, coordination with media, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), volunteer management, and accounting. A number of L/NAs mentioned needing support on compliance with standards, e.g. financial management, reporting, safeguarding, humanitarian principles, and humanitarian standards (e.g. Sphere, Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)). As highlighted in the feedback and verification process, many of these topics appear to be focused on meeting the demands of international donors and organisations, rather than on programme quality and accountability to affected populations (AAP). This raised the question of whether international actor expectations have skewed L/NA prioritisation for capacity strengthening. However, the findings somewhat align with recent global research by HLA which found that many L/NAs wanted to strengthen operational aspects of their work rather than 'technical' areas[lxv].

It is important not to assume that international actor staff have the necessary skill set to provide quality capacity strengthening support. International actors should ideally conduct an assessment of their own internal capacity on this[lxvi]. National entities should also be considered, for example the NGO Resource Center; already providing training and support to a wide variety of organisations in Ukraine. National NGOs which access funding were recommended to increase support and training to other local organisations, including through peer support and learning, in research conducted by a consortium of 4 DEC members in South Sudan[lxvii]. Ukrainian L/NA interest in opportunities for peer learning and exchange is highlighted earlier in this report, through consortia. Although the idea to establish a network of local training providers on humanitarian topics was not particularly popular in the survey; see more below. Replicating the Capacity Strengthening Task Force model in Poland could also be considered[23].

> **DEC members:** to prioritise and provide tailored support, mentoring and accompaniment for L/NA partners following a joint assessment of their capacity strengthening / sharing needs (ideally as part of a two-way review of complementarity and partner added-value).
>
> **DEC members:** to consider and assess internal capacity to provide capacity strengthening support to L/NA partners in Ukraine. Where it is lacking, consider funding partner staff and volunteers to participate in existing training courses[24] [lxviii], and direct partners to available free online training[25] – including the new Response Learning Hub – and/or training / capacity strengthening support and resources available in Ukraine[26].

Given many L/NAs in Ukraine are new to humanitarian response[27], there was some surprise that topics relating specifically to humanitarian sectors, principles and standards were not prioritised. A recommendation from a recent roundtable hosted in Ukraine by the National Network for Local Philanthropy Development, the facilitator of the open letter to international donors and NGOs, was for donors and international organisations to create mentoring programmes for small and newly-established Ukrainian organisations[lxix].

One of the 12 options in the survey for 'areas most important for strengthening local humanitarian action' – 'humanitarian-specific topics (e.g. shelter, WASH, HCT etc.)' – was only selected in their top four by 13% of L/NA respondents. This lack of prioritisation might be due to the fact that many L/NA responses are holistic and flexible, and adapt to the changing needs shared directly by those affected, and L/NAs do not

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[23] Led by HLA, Mercy Corps, Plan International and RedR.

[24] One example is the 6-week Crisis Leadership Programme training run by Centre for Humanitarian Leadership (CHL). The current round is free for participants; funded by DEC through HLA.
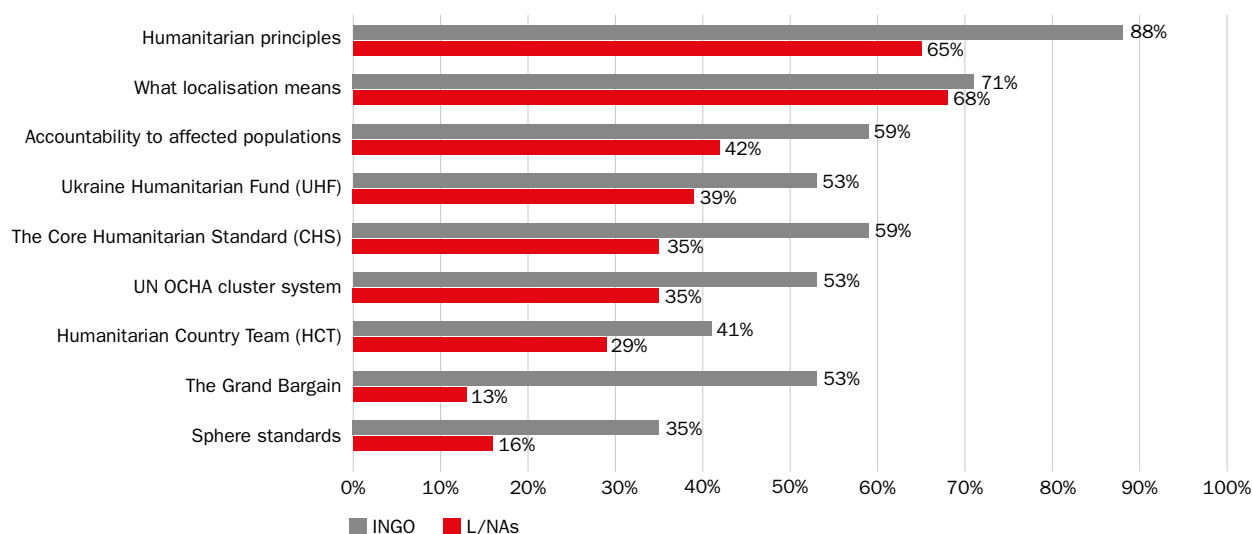
[25] RedR UK are providing a number of free online trainings. Find out more: bit.ly/3g2FOyz.

[26] Such as the NGO Resource Center mentioned earlier.

[27] Either because they are newly-established, or because they pivoted their work.

separate technical and operational topics in the same way that INGOs do[lxx]. Particularly smaller L/NAs tend not to work in sectors or silos in same way that the international humanitarian sector is set up to do. L/NA survey respondents that selected this area prioritised sub-topics: WASH, nutrition and psychosocial first aid[28].

*Figure 2: Survey responses for 'feelings of confidence explaining to a colleague'…*



No L/NA survey respondent selected the sub-topic: 'UN humanitarian coordination system (Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Clusters etc.)'. This is interesting given only 29% of L/NA survey respondents felt confident explaining what the HCT is, and 35% the Cluster coordination system. Above, Figure 2 shows self-reported understanding of other humanitarian sector topics of L/NA survey respondents, alongside INGO survey respondents.

Consultation participants highlighted that they want to be involved and included in the international humanitarian response, so it not due to a lack of interest or willingness. Many international actor participants mentioned the value of the CSO roundtable hosted by OCHA in Dnipro in August 2022 which included an introduction to the international humanitarian system. Further sub-national events were recommended[lxxi]. The sub-national localisation meetings currently on-going, organised by Advocacy Working Group (AWG) members partly addresses this recommendation No L/NA survey respondent selected the sub-topic: 'UN humanitarian coordination system (Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Clusters etc.)'. This is interesting given only 29% of L/NA survey respondents felt confident explaining what the HCT is, and 35% the Cluster coordination system. Above, Figure 2 shows self-reported understanding of other humanitarian sector topics of L/NA survey respondents, alongside INGO survey respondents.

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> **Cluster leads:** to provide accessible information explaining the international humanitarian system: principles, funding, actors and Cluster coordination.

Interestingly, a survey sub-option – 'Capacity assessments and development plans for Ukrainian organisations, conducted by external / independent group/consultants' – was only selected by one L/NA respondent. However, organisational development or capacity strengthening plans informed by capacity self-assessments, might better enable L/NAs to plan their own journey, and/or exert influence on international NGO partners to provide tailored support. Future learning from an HLA initiative where grants will be provided for L/NAs to design their own learning agenda will be helpful. Organisational plans might also ensure L/NAs have full ownership over the capacity sharing process, and not be influenced unduly by external actors; a recommendation in the global draft IASC scoping paper on capacity sharing mentioned

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[28]  Note: these cannot be assumed to be representative of L/NAs across Ukraine as they are the priorities of a very small number of survey respondents.

above. Finally, they might also provide a clear basis for international NGOs – or Capacity Strengthening Task Forces like the one in Poland – to coordinate capacity strengthening initiatives; particularly when L/NAs have multiple international NGO partners.

> **L/NAs:** to consider developing capacity strengthening and/or organisational development plans, informed by self-assessments, to influence and guide conversations and negotiations with international partners on what support is needed, if any.

Finally, a number of DEC members highlighted challenges with reporting to DEC on capacity strengthening initiatives they had undertaken which did not fit neatly into a 'training' category, e.g. mentoring, accompaniment, exchange and secondment mentioned above. In addition, the 2021 internal localisation paper made a number of recommendations for DEC on capacity strengthening which are included below.

> **DEC Secretariat and members:** to consider how the impact of mentoring, accompaniment, exchange and secondment initiatives with L/NA partners could be monitored, measured and reported on more effectively.
>
> **DEC Secretariat:** to update the Operations Manual to clarify that members can and should invest in strengthening L/NA capacity. Create a budget line explicitly for activities to strengthen L/NA capacity. Once DEC has built up an evidence base on expenditure on capacity strengthening, decide whether it is appropriate to set a funding target[lxxiii].

## A mechanism to coordinate capacity strengthening initiatives offered by international NGOs for their partners

A mechanism to coordinate capacity strengthening initiatives offered by international actors to L/NAs was not specifically mentioned in consultations. However, the frustration and time-consuming process of L/NAs being expected to attend multiple 'mandatory' trainings provided by international actor partners (often duplicated by others) was highlighted. The idea of a coordination mechanism for capacity strengthening initiatives was selected by 39% of L/NA survey respondents, suggesting there is an appetite for this.

It is likely that improved coordination across DEC members will result in improved coordination and collaboration on capacity strengthening initiatives offered by members to their partners in Ukraine, particularly where they share partners. Therefore, for a recommendation here, see more in: Coordination and collaboration.

Mentioned above already are the prioritised topics, preferred methods, and some of the training providers this scoping exercise identified. The Response Learning Hub already represents an investment by DEC (and the HLA Regional Centre in Eastern Europe) in providing one place for capacity strengthening initiatives to be accessed.

## Support for organisational development

The topic of organisational development was one of the most commonly mentioned areas for support by L/NAs in consultations. Some L/NAs highlighted the need for support to develop organisational strategies and policies. Topics included: communications, safety and security, and financial management. A recommendation on this has been made by a number of DEC members in previous studies over the years[lxxiv]. Support in understanding donor policies was also mentioned. In addition, as already mentioned above, the need for funds for such processes were commonly mentioned. More in: Increasing allocations of ICR / overheads for L/NAs.

The Global Education Cluster and Global Protection Cluster's *Framework for Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of National and Local Actors*[lxxv] provides a guide, and recognises the lack of focused attention on this area. A number of international actors consulted also mentioned the need for institutional support, but also recognised that attempts to 'professionalise' smaller, local and/or volunteer-based organisations might in fact undermine the advantages that they bring to the response: adaptability, responsiveness, and ability to access hard-to-reach areas. For example, during the humanitarian response in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, L/NAs reduced their visibility, worked through covert networks, and retained the flexibility and reactivity to respond to needs as quickly and effectively as possible[lxxvi].

**Establishing a network of local training providers on humanitarian topics**

Only 16% of L/NA survey respondents selected the sub-option idea of establishing a network of local training providers on humanitarian topics. It was also not mentioned in consultations. However, some consultation participants raised the issue that many trainings were conducted in English by people who did not have deep contextual or cultural knowledge of operating Ukraine. Perhaps these challenges can be addressed by the points raised above.

# PRIORITY 3: EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships were recognised by many participating INGOs as a major part of their approach to humanitarian programming. Equitable partnerships are another major element of all three sets of global humanitarian sector commitments endorsed at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), and mentioned explicitly in the 2021 OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) *Recommendation on enabling civil society in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance*[lxxvii]. INGOs are recommended to re-evaluate partnerships with local organisations so that they are *"more equitable, and mutually accountable, and support and strengthen local leadership and sustainability"* in *Time to Decolonise Aid*[lxxviii]. In addition, 7 DEC members recently pledged to support equitable partnerships which *"will prioritise and value the leadership of national and local actors and invest in making partners stronger and more sustainable"* in the Pledge for Change[lxxix].

The value of genuine partnerships are now well understood and documented. A study in 2016[lxxx] by 4 DEC members in a different conflict setting – South Sudan – identified strong to moderate potential and contribution of partnerships in meeting all of OEDC DAC criteria[29]. In follow-on research conducted by a consortium of 6 DEC members, good partnerships were recognised by L/NAs in South Sudan as those which *"explicitly and strategically aimed to strengthen local leadership of humanitarian action through training and mentoring, policy development, contribution to overheads, and flexible funding and reporting arrangements"* [lxxxi]. Some of these components are mentioned already in the report, and some below.

A number of challenges highlighted in the consultations around partnerships were related to speed and spend. A number of INGOs mentioned the external pressure from donors and OHCA to rapidly develop partnerships. These were perceived as unhelpful as it did not consider the time it takes to scope for, identify, and build genuine partnerships. However, a high proportion of L/NAs highlighted the long process time for establishing partnerships with INGOs and the need for this to speed up. Similarly, some DEC members highlighted pressure to spend funds from DEC in Phase 1, which they felt was counterintuitive to building genuine partnerships, which take time and trust. However, this balancing of speed and meeting immediate needs vs partnership and programme quality is not unique to the Ukraine response. Ideas to address this issue in some of the literature highlight the effectiveness of investing in disaster preparedness, resilience building and partnership development in advance of any disaster. However, the response in Ukraine is recognised by international actors as being similar in some ways to the response in Kosovo in 1999 where most international agencies had limited or no presence or experience in the country beforehand[lxxxii].

A further challenge for partnerships in Ukraine mentioned by INGOs, was the struggle to balance strict adherence to humanitarian principles versus developing partnerships with local organisations where the line between civil and military aid beneficiaries is less distinct. More in: Other: Humanitarian principles.

The extent to which partnerships between international actors and L/NAs in Ukraine were fair, genuine and equitable was not raised much in consultations by L/NA participants. However, improving partnerships between Ukrainian and international organisations was significant for survey respondents: 65% of L/NA respondents selected it in their top four. Every local NGO survey respondent selected this area. The most popular activities proposed under this survey area are outlined below, in order of priority highlighted in consultations:

| Support activity | %[30] |
|---|---|
| A platform to verify local organisations and build bridges between Ukrainian organisations and international organisations and donors | 67 |
| An independent study / assessment on the quality of partnerships between Ukrainian organisations and international NGOs | 36 |

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[29]  Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, and connectedness. OECD DAC criteria has replaced coverage and connectedness with coherence, impact and sustainability.

[30]  % of those survey respondents that selected the 'improving partnerships between Ukrainian and international organisations' area who selected each activity. There was no limit on the number of sub-options respondents could.

## A platform to verify local organisations and build bridges between Ukrainian organisations and international organisations and donors

Many humanitarian actors highlighted the lack of any list or database of agencies operating in the country, creating a barrier to establishing partnerships, coalitions and consortia, and hindering coordination. Many INGO participants said they wanted to identify new partners but did not know where to start. One INGO participant said that OCHA were insisting that everyone worked with local organisations but yet provided no facilitation for this such as sharing a list or database of L/NAs. Apparently the development of a list was attempted in Dnipro but was not user-friendly and required training on how to use it.

The idea of a platform to list and verify L/NAs in Ukraine as one route to bridging the gaps between L/NAs and international actors was a very popular one. This was popular in both the survey and in consultations; 45% of L/NA and 42% of international actor survey respondents selected this option. The idea also captured the interest and support of many in the feedback and verification sessions. In addition, participants of the recent roundtable hosted by the National Network for Local Philanthropy Development recommend the creation of *"a platform where various Ukrainian NGOs will be gathered with descriptions of their needs, problems, stories, and contacts"*[lxxxiii]. Some international actor participants advised that such a list or database should be managed by those with a coordination mandate (such as OCHA) in feedback and verification sessions. Other disagreed and pointed to the low engagement of L/NAs in the UN humanitarian coordination mechanisms as one clear reason why not (more in: Coordination and collaboration). Many agreed it should be developed by a Ukrainian entity.

As the idea was listed under the survey area 'improving partnerships between Ukrainian and international organisations' it is included in the report here. However, it also links to sections above about due diligence. Ideas also emerged about the value of a 'hub' which might centre around such a platform and help to remove other blockages and delays on supporting and strengthening local humanitarian response. Ideas mentioned for a hub include:

- A platform to develop and maintain **a database of L/NAs** and international actors operating in Ukraine[31]. This was highlighted as crucial to increase visibility of the huge number, and diverse range, of L/NAs in Ukraine. 5W[32] already gather this information for actors involved in Cluster coordination. More in: Coordination and collaboration.

- A hub could **develop and trial a harmonised verification process** for actors in the database. Public data collected for completed due diligence processes could be made available on the platform. The hub should map and align standard international due diligence expectations with the legislative framework which Ukrainian L/NAs operate under. Contracting an independent auditing firm might help. Learning from a project piloting a collective visibility and working compliance model in Odesa might also help[lxxxiv].

- A hub could provide a place where actors on the database can **access technical support and advice** on international due diligence requirements. Funds could be allocated to provide accounting advice and support.

- The platform could present **information on funds and grants** available for L/NAs. For these last 3 points, see more in: Funding and financial management.

- The platform could present information on available **trainings for L/NAs**, linking to online training available, e.g. the Response Learning Hub. More in: Capacity strengthening and organisational development.

- Some international actors also mentioned the option that a hub could provide a **partnership brokering service**, for example to support L/NAs to negotiate fair terms in partnership agreements with international actors. However, a partnership brokering service or platform was not a sub-option any L/NA respondents selected.

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[31] Also addressing the need for a donor-resourced mapping of CSOs, volunteer groups, and potential private sector partners, outlined at the OCHA-hosted, CSO roundtable event in Dnipro in August.

[32] Who is doing What, Where, When and for Whom (5W).

**DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group:** to consider funding the establishment and maintenance of an online platform which develops a database of actors in Ukraine. As part of a wider hub, the platform could trial a harmonised verification process, provide information on funds and grants available for L/NAs, share information on available trainings, and links to other useful platforms. Consider and review Zagoriy Foundation's proposal to establish a platform[lxxxv]. Coordinate closely with organisations with a coordination mandate such as OCHA and ICVA.

**Response Learning Hub:** to map and provide information on online and in-person training planned in Ukrainian on the Response Learning Hub platform.

## An independent study / assessment on the quality of partnerships between Ukrainian organisations and international NGOs

There was limited discussion in consultations on whether INGOs are engaging in genuine partnerships with, or sub-contracting, L/NAs. However, some larger L/NAs with existing partnerships said the partnerships were very good and there was trust. Around one-third of L/NAs said they were really grateful for their INGO partner(s). Good relationships between DEC members and their partners was also highlighted in the DEC Real-Time Review[lxxxvi]. L/NAs who had only been working in partnerships since February 2022 highlighted that it takes times to build (two-way) trust. Smaller L/NAs described sub-contracting relationships more than genuine partnerships. Around one-third of L/NAs said donors and intermediaries should open local offices only if they are unable to find partners to work with.

A number of INGOs and UN agencies said they conduct partnership reviews to identify areas for improvement. However, there was a recognition that any internal assessments or reviews are likely to be influenced by power imbalances inherent in partnerships where one partner funds another. An independent study or assessment, which could be anonymous and conducted for the purposes of understanding the current state of partnerships in Ukraine more broadly, might highlight quite different findings than internal reviews.

**DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group:** to consider budgeting for an independent study / assessment on the quality of partnerships between Ukrainian organisations and INGOs. As a minimum, such an assessment should be conducted for DEC members and their partners.

DEC does not currently – explicitly or otherwise – state what it expects of its members in relation to partnerships. A number of DEC members highlighted this as a missed opportunity for promoting equitable partnerships. The Principles of Partnership could be referenced[33].

**DEC Secretariat:** to integrate the Principles of Partnership into the DEC Operations Manual, proposal and reporting templates, and include them in the membership review process.

## Other – Equitable partnerships

Other components mentioned in consultations by L/NAs were related to: the length of partnerships, providing fair ICR rates, working in consortia, and support for exchange visits. All of these points are also covered, to some extent, in: Funding and financial management.

The need for longer-term partnerships was mentioned by around one-third of Ukrainian L/NAs, who highlighted a need to look towards recovery and rebuilding while continuing to respond to existing and emerging humanitarian needs. There is already a good understanding of INGOs of the need for longer-term partnerships – it is a recommendation in *Pathways to Localisation*[lxxxvii] – but INGOs mentioned balancing short-term funds with commitments for longer-term partnerships. This is an area where predictable, multi-year funding is crucial.

The issue of allocating fair and proportionate budgets for ICR for L/NAs as a crucial component of genuine partnerships is already outlined earlier in the report.

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33  Principles of Partnership are: Equality, Transparency, Result-oriented approach, Responsibility, and Complementarity. Find out more: bit.ly/3SZqj80.

The value of working in of being part of international-local consortia for humanitarian response activities was highlighted by around one-third of L/NAs in consultations. One reason may be that it provides them with access to funds while buffering them from some of the demands of international donors. Another is linked to the idea outlined earlier in the report that being part of a consortia enables peer learning and exchange.

Surprisingly little was mentioned about security risk management in partnerships. Research and guidance on this exists and should be reviewed by international actors[lxxxviii].

> **Donors and funders:** to prioritise funding for multi-year humanitarian response activities implemented by consortia including a range and diversity of actors.

Finally, a number of L/NAs wanted learning opportunities through study / exchange visits to international intermediaries and donors. However, more research may be needed to understand the beneficial impacts of this versus the high cost per participant for such exchanges.

## PRIORITY 4: COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

A commitment in the Grand Bargain around coordination is to *"support and complement national coordination mechanisms where they exist and include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms as appropriate and in keeping with humanitarian principles"*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Humanitarian Cluster Coordination System – 'Cluster coordination' – officially activated across the whole country in mid-April 2022[34], although it took a few more weeks before all Clusters were active in all key oblasts. Now, there are 10 Clusters, 3 Sub-Clusters and multiple Working Groups operational in Ukraine[lxxxix]; with OCHA 'field teams' present in 10 locations[35]. Of the members of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)[36] in Ukraine, only 2 (of 19) are Ukrainian organisations, demonstrating the internationalisation of what started as a localised response. More progress is needed to rebalance the power dynamics in coordination in the favour of L/NAs in Ukraine.

An evaluation conducted in Ukraine in July-August[xc], highlighted a lack of 'area based coordination' (rather than sector-based, the trademark of Cluster coordination). It identified the most effective way to ensure the humanitarian response adapts to rapid changes, is for analysis and decision-making to take place locally, taking all sectors into account. A learning review for the Indian Ocean Tsunami response in 2005 recognised that local coordination is often more effective[xci]. International actor participants in the scoping mentioned improvements in this area since the early days of the war, and OCHA humanitarian hubs are now active.

Coordination and collaboration was the fourth priority area for supporting local humanitarian action in Ukraine selected by survey respondents overall; 45% of L/NA respondents selected it. The most popular activities proposed under this survey area are outlined below, in order of priority highlighted in consultations:

| Support activity | %[37] |
|---|---|
| Establishing a coordination mechanism for Ukrainian organisations | 58 |
| Improved coordination across DEC members | n/a[38] |
| Translation and interpretation services (e.g. English to Ukrainian) | 31 |
| Establishing a hub for learning and innovation on localisation (managed by Ukrainian organisations and supported by international organisations) | 62 |
| Information and support on engaging in the cluster coordination system | 27 |
| Support and coordination on advocacy and lobbying | 23 |
| A physical space / hub for Ukrainian organisations to meet and work from | 35 |

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[34] Clusters were already activated in Donetska and Luhanska oblasts of Ukraine in late 2014.
[35] Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kropyvnytskyi, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Poltava, Vinnytsia, Donetsk and Luhansk.
[36] The key inter-agency humanitarian leadership body in a country; bringing UN and NGOs together.
[37] % of those survey respondents that selected the 'Coordination / collaboration' area who selected each activity (respondents could select an many options as they wanted).
[38] Not an option in the survey, but raised in a significant number of consultations with DEC members

## Establishing a coordination mechanism for Ukrainian organisations

The majority of participants highlighted a real need for a mechanism that provides a space for L/NAs, including local authorities, to discuss and coordinate on issues relevant to them, in Ukrainian. No evidence was found of any existing such mechanism in Ukraine for L/NAs. Although a number of L/NAs do already coordinate across their own areas of interest or ideology in Ukraine, such as networks of community funds and faith-based networks. Two approaches to support L/NA coordination emerged, which were discussed in feedback and verification sessions. No consensus was reached on the best approach, though L/NAs were more inclined towards a separate mechanism, and international actors towards a joint.

1.  **A 'L/NA Coordination Forum' specifically for L/NAs, led by L/NAs.**

    Many believed a 'national coordination forum' would enable cross-learning, collaboration, agreement on advocacy points, and provide a coordinated route to liaise with international actors effectively. Any new coordination mechanism is likely to face some of the same challenges that the Cluster coordination mechanism has, as L/NAs across Ukraine are certainly not a homogenous group, and there are huge numbers of them. Some suggested that new 'sub-national L/NA coordination forums' could link up to a 'national coordination forum' to address some of these challenges.

2.  **A mixed NGO Forum.**

    An NGO 'coordination support function' has been re-establishing in Ukraine, following a 3-year break. Participants that mentioned this called it the 'NGO Forum'. A coalition of INGOs are currently covering the cost of the NGO Coordinator position. Currently, meetings are largely attended by Country Directors of INGOs with a small number of large national NGOs included. Conversations are in English and focus largely on issues of visas, registration as well as Cluster coordination issues, updates from the Advocacy Working Group, security, and operations. Discussions are starting on whether this becomes a mixed forum, by inviting L/NAs, or an INGO Forum. If it becomes a joint forum, work will be required to understand what L/NAs want, adapt meeting agenda, provide interpretation and translation etc. There may need to be joining criteria which will almost certainly create tensions if they include that L/NAs adhere to international humanitarian principles.

International participants highlighted learning which should be considered from different coordination approaches followed in responses in: Poland, Myanmar, NW Syria, and Pakistan.

It was noted that L/NA coordination should not be seen as a solution to a lack of engagement of L/NAs in Cluster coordination, as they need to be there to influence international processes. See more below. Further consideration will likely also be needed to ensure approval and buy-in from the Government of Ukraine.

> **DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group:** to consider budgeting in a 'localisation collective initiative' for the development and implementation of an independent, rapid, online survey to further understand the preferences of L/NAs on how best to support national coordination. It is crucial that this is coordinated closely with ICVA and the Ukraine NGO Coordinator. Further budgeting should be allocated to support whichever approach is identified as the most effective. For example, budget for staff salaries, admin costs, and interpretation and translation, will be crucial for the effective implementation of a coordination mechanism.

## Improved coordination across DEC members

The majority of DEC members consulted highlighted a need for better coordination across the membership. This was mentioned more by programme/operational staff than senior leaders. This was also a clear finding of the recent DEC Real-Time Review[xcii]. A lack of coordination across DEC members was seen as a missed opportunity for collective problem-solving, sharing learning, collaborating on partnerships, and discussing localisation. Coordination across DEC members is also important for due diligence passporting, identifying opportunities to work in consortia, and coordinating capacity strengthening initiatives; all mentioned earlier. Another area of particular importance for working collectively is on contextual analysis which informs strategic decision-making and adaptive management, and informs contingency plans[xciii]. This will be extremely important as the humanitarian context and needs continue to shift.

DEC member participants recognised the crucial role the secretariat could play in facilitating such coordination. Staff wanted regular meetings, but requested a kind of 5W for the DEC response, with a contact list of key focal points across DEC members, as a minimum. It should be noted that DEC

Secretariat has attempted to facilitate coordination in previous responses and had limited engagement of members.

> **DEC Secretariat:** to ask DEC members what coordination facilitation they want, and invest in supporting it. As a first step, DEC Secretariat could share a very simple survey or organise a first meeting to understand what format, frequency, length, and agenda is most useful.

Some DEC member participants also suggested a recommendation to facilitate the coordination of local partners of DEC members. It was understood that this could enable L/NA partners: to hold DEC members to account on their commitments to equitable partnerships; identify possibilities for working in consortia or harmonising approaches and support provided, particularly where L/NAs have multiple DEC member partners; and provide a platform for L/NAs to exchange, learn and share. A version of such a recommendation was included in the 2021 internal localisation scoping paper, with an emphasis on learning. However, any plans for such coordination should consider the burden on L/NAs time, and budget for it accordingly.

> **DEC Secretariat:** to connect L/NA partners of DEC members in Ukraine to allow cross-learning and sharing, the development of collective advocacy, and enable a collective feedback mechanism for DEC members.

## Translation and interpretation services (e.g. English to Ukrainian)

The challenge of language and communication was raised in almost every interaction with international actors, and in most consultations with L/NAs. Perhaps unsurprisingly, translation and interpretation services were a higher priority for Ukrainian L/NAs than for international actors. Of those that selected the 'Coordination / collaboration' area in the survey in their top four, 50% of L/NA respondents selected this sub-option compared to 0% of INGO and UN respondents. Many recognised that working in English by default is exclusive; this is not new to the Ukraine response[xciv]. Although there are a number of languages used across Ukraine, no participant mentioned any other than Ukrainian. This might of course further highlight the exclusion of those that use different primary languages.

At a recent roundtable of Ukrainian L/NAs a recommendation was shared that *"the staff of every organisation cooperating with Ukraine must have a translator from Ukrainian into the official language of that organisation"*[xcv]. Interestingly, language was not mentioned at all in the reflections from the CSO roundtable hosted by OCHA in August[xcvi]. A number of international actors have employed the services of translators and interpreters. DEC does not restrict budget for this. However, many international actors seem to rely on their Ukrainian staff to provide this support. One international participant said: *"national staff members spend half their time translating for their international colleagues, partners and/or donors, and people think it's easier and quicker than it is. This is a chronic waste of skilled, experienced humanitarian's time"*.

Many actors also mentioned the 'humanitarian language' which may be new to L/NAs that are newly established or newly engaging in humanitarian action. One L/NA participant said that *"even in Ukrainian meetings we end up speaking English as all the terminology – imposed by the international / UN system – is easier in English"*. The large number and array of acronyms, jargon and terminology specific to humanitarian action effectively excludes many L/NAs from actively engaging in conversations. See more detail on this in: Language and communication. Learning could be gathered from the *Translation Glossary Project* where community members worked together to create a free Chichewa-English translation glossary of development terminology. A step-by-step handbook is available[xcvii].

> **Response Learning Hub (or new L/NA platform):** to consider supporting the development of a Ukrainian language glossary of key terms and acronyms used in international humanitarian response.

## Establishing a hub for learning and innovation on localisation (managed by Ukrainian organisations and supported by international organisations)

Overall, 29% of L/NA survey respondents chose the option to establish a hub for learning and innovation, and slightly lower for international actors (21%). This is one of the preliminary ideas the DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group had. Discussions in consultations around such a hub focused on coordination and learning. These are outlined earlier in the report. More in: Equitable partnerships.

## Information and support on engaging in the cluster coordination system

Many INGO participants shared that Cluster coordination was too slow to establish in Ukraine and improvements are still needed. Denise Brown, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, said recently that Cluster coordination was one of two priority areas which needed significant improvement, the other area being progress on localisation[xcviii].

Numerous L/NA participants expressed a desire to engage in the international humanitarian response in Ukraine. However, understanding of the Cluster coordination system and the HCT remain low at 35% and 29% of L/NA survey respondents reporting confidence in explaining these. As one L/NA participant shared: *"many local and national organisations have not implemented humanitarian responses before and do not know the systems, mechanism, words and jargon"*. Another shared that *"some local organisations join the [Cluster] coordination meetings but there is so much work to do. It is so hard to find the time to join conferences and discussions for local organisations."*

Seven months on from official activation of Cluster coordination, participation of L/NAs remains limited. Those that do attend Cluster and Working Group meetings, tend to be the 'traditional'[39], well-established NGOs. These same L/NAs were also more likely to get responses to queries sent to Cluster leads; a number of L/NA participants expressed frustration that they received no response to emails. Volunteer groups are mostly unaware of international humanitarian coordination and funding[xcix]. It has been noted that just ensuring L/NA presence in Cluster meetings is not enough. Strengthening local actors' understanding of the international humanitarian system and highlighting areas or opportunities for local actors to fully engage in and influence processes such as the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) has been identified as a priority for coordination groups to pursue. L/NAs are also recommended to proactively propose themselves as partners for in-country coordination leadership roles[c]. UN participants of this scoping shared that OCHA is actively seeking to find better ways to reach out to L/NAs and understand more about what their needs are. Guidance and recommendations on this have existed for some time, so this scoping will not add to them[ci].

All Cluster coordination meetings are reportedly in Ukrainian and English. Many L/NAs said discussions in Cluster meetings are relevant and useful only for international agencies; although some of this might be based on assumptions rather than experience given so few reported attending the meetings. However, some INGO participants talked of one-way communication in meetings with no opportunity to learn, share or build relationships with others, including L/NAs. L/NAs want meetings to focus on practical problem-solving not just sharing updates. UN participants noted these desires but highlighted the challenges in coordinating multiple agencies with differing preferences, mandate, scale and reach. One of the sub-national coordination hubs covers 12 oblasts so it's impossible for Cluster meetings to really dig deep.

> **OCHA and Cluster leads:** to ensure that L/NAs are represented in Cluster coordination[cii] through continued outreach efforts in Ukraine. To share information and support – in Ukrainian – explaining what Cluster coordination is, what the benefits of engaging are, and how to engage. Where possible, consider shifting agenda and formats of meetings to allow active participation of L/NAs, while still meeting international actor needs. See also the recommendation above on the development of a Ukrainian glossary of international humanitarian acronyms and terms.

This lack of engagement in the cluster system also has an impact on the number of funding options available. More in: Funding and financial management.

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[39] A category identified in *Enabling the Local Response* (Humanitarian Outcomes; 2022).

## Support and coordination on advocacy and lobbying

Almost 20% of L/NA survey respondents selected the area 'Research / advocacy' in their top four areas important for strengthening local humanitarian action. In consultations, a number of L/NAs also highlighted advocacy. Some L/NAs were interested in engaging with joint advocacy campaigns but also highlighted the time-consuming and long-view nature of advocacy campaigns, as well as a lack of funding (e.g. for staff time) to engage. For INGOs, it was mainly staff with advocacy roles or focus that mentioned the importance of advocacy in consultations.

One joint advocacy campaign in Ukraine which has gained a lot of attention is the open letter to international donors and NGOs signed by more than 90 Ukrainian organisations: *If not now, when?*[ciii]. A similar open letter to international donors and organisations wanting to help Ukrainian refugees in Poland has been signed by more than 70 Polish organisations[civ]. Topics of interest for advocacy campaigns that L/NAs mentioned include: Ukrainian taxation on humanitarian response activities, reduced checks/ inspection by authorities on humanitarian activities, respect for the rights of persons with disabilities, and localisation.

An active Advocacy Working Group (AWG) is coordinating across NGOs in Ukraine and now has dual-language meetings, minutes and outputs. This group, and particularly the localisation sub-group, was mentioned by a number of L/NA participants. One INGO participant said that the AWG has a collaborative spirit, but a lot of the staff involved are not based in Ukraine. They are working towards attracting more L/NA participants. The group has developed and shared various briefing papers, including one for the incoming Humanitarian Coordinator in September[cv]. They are also the instigators of recent sub-national meetings on localisation[40], addressing a recommendation following OCHA's CSO roundtable in Dnipro mentioned earlier.

## A physical space / hub for Ukrainian organisations to meet and work from

Of the L/NA survey respondents that selected the 'Coordination / collaboration area', 50% selected the option of a physical space or hub to meet and work from. However, the idea was not raised by L/NAs in consultations. The option was developed following conversations about the fact that many L/NA staff and volunteers are displaced themselves (including to areas without an existing office), perhaps working from home, and with limited places to meet colleagues and peers in-person. A collective working space might have been more attractive to smaller L/NAs and budget might have been allocated to ensure such a space had an underground shelter close by, and a generator to provide consistent electricity, heating and internet connection. Given there was limited discussion on this, a recommendation might be simply for DEC members to liaise with their local partners to ensure their facilities are sufficient.

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40  So far, meetings have been held with approximately 50 participants in Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia.

# OTHER RELEVANT FINDINGS

Other relevant findings which did not fit neatly into one of the four priority areas included cross-cutting issues, and areas mentioned by a smaller proportion of participants, or by only one category of agency/ group. Some are more general, and less specifically linked to supporting and strengthening local humanitarian action.

# 1. HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Understanding of, and adherence to, international humanitarian principles[41] is a topic already mentioned in earlier report sections: Capacity strengthening and organisational development, Equitable partnerships, and Coordination and collaboration. Below is a summary of findings relating to this topic from this scoping exercise which have not been covered earlier.

Firstly, differing views on humanitarian principles are not new or unique to the response in Ukraine. DEC-member consortium research on partnership-based humanitarian action in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan in 2019, recognised that humanitarian principles and accountability are extremely important in humanitarian partnerships, but language – and potentially understanding – differs. It recommended holding discussions around understanding of humanitarian principles[cvi]. A key learning from the Kosovo humanitarian response in 1999 – in many ways the most similar recent humanitarian context to Ukraine – was the importance of being guided by the humanitarian principles and sector standards[cvii].

Almost two-thirds of L/NA survey respondents said they would feel confident explaining what the humanitarian principles are[42] (compared to 88% of international actor respondents). Only 23% of L/NA survey respondents selected the area 'International humanitarian principles and standards' in the top four most important for supporting local humanitarian action. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine recently said: *"our humanitarian response is welcomed, but our principles are not"*[cviii].

The majority of INGO and UN representatives who participated in the consultations raised the challenge of ensuring principled aid in Ukraine; in particular in line with neutrality. Neutrality commits humanitarian actors to "abstain from taking sides in hostilities. To refrain from engagement in political, religious, racial or ideological debates and controversies". Put simply, most international actors believe that providing humanitarian aid to those engaged in "hostilities" in Ukraine, such as military personnel, would contravene this principle, reduce their negotiating power and ability to keep staff safe, and raise questions about humanitarian responses in other countries at war including Syria, Yemen, and Myanmar. The projection that *"many humanitarian organisations will step away from the principle of humanitarian neutrality…. [and] will opt for political solidarity with Ukrainians and recognise humanitarian aid as an important part of Ukrainian resistance…"*[cix] does not appear to have materialised. In fact, many international actors are still talking about this issue as a major barrier to working with L/NA partners. Many international actors believe that abandoning the humanitarian principle of neutrality in this crisis would have wide ramifications for future humanitarian responses, and on-going operations in politically-complex contexts such as Palestine, Myanmar and Ethiopia[cx].

A number of L/NAs talked about providing humanitarian aid to both civilian and military beneficiaries. The distinction between civilians and military is probably less clear than many international actors seemed to suggest, as many formal and informal military units exist. Reflections from the CSO roundtable hosted by OCHA in August, noted that the "breadth with whom organisations/volunteers/responders work or support does vary, with certain partners wishing to support the Ukrainian defenders in arms"[cxi]. A study conducted in Ukraine in August on Charity in times of war outlined that, of the survey respondents who were involved in charity and volunteering since the start of the war, 86% helped the army and 67% helped 'other beneficiaries'[cxii]. For many Ukrainian L/NAs, the open letter to international donors and NGOs articulates their feelings on the subject: *"…We do not want to remain 'neutral'. The value of human life must come first, and supporting the needs of those on the front line can significantly reduce the amount of civilian aid needed and the number of casualties…"*[cxiii].

One international actor participant said they were in discussions with potential local partners who talked about providing ammunition, armoured vehicles and drones to the military, and that ultimately they explained that their principles and values did not align and they could not enter a partnership. Other agencies were prepared to work with these organisations so long as the funds they provided were only used to support the humanitarian needs of civilians. One L/NA participants said: "the Ukrainian response is neutral as it does not ask internationals for funds for ammunition or weapons, that is the responsibility

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41 International humanitarian principles are: humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.

42 Note: this does not denote agreement or adherence.

of the government, but it is a new reality of charity that we want to provide food for all people affected by the war and that includes military". Some Ukrainian L/NAs are prepared to separate their support to civilians and military, and use different funds, but others are not. Those that are prepared to may need support, and funding, to do so. Those that are not prepared to are unlikely to be viable partners for INGOs and UN agencies (at least in the short-term). One sub-option in the survey, under the area 'Financial / fundraising / funding', was 'support to Ukrainian organisations to separate civilian and military aid activities' was only selected by 19% of L/NA and 21% of international actor respondents.

> **All those involved in the response:** to continue open conversations with each other to understand differing views and identify ways to work together.

## 2.   LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

The challenge of language and communication is already covered earlier in the report related to translation and interpretation. Other points related to language are outlined below.

To support and strengthen local humanitarian action in Ukraine, it is essential that language barriers are addressed in the largely English-centric international humanitarian response. Systematic translation and interpretation into Ukrainian are necessary to truly enable the active participation and effective communication of L/NAs. Other local languages should also be considered. This burden should not be placed on national staff with other expertise and roles. DEC Secretariat confirmed that costs for translation and interpretation in DEC member response budgets are not restricted in any way.

> **DEC members:** to budget necessary funds for externally-provided systematic translation and interpretation in all responses and collective initiatives.
>
> **DEC Secretariat:** to translate report templates for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal into Ukrainian, to be available as a reference document even if members and their partners are still required to report in English. Consider translating reporting templates into relevant local languages for all future humanitarian Appeals.

Outlined earlier, language barriers also include the humanitarian acronyms and jargon commonly used by international actors. Everyone involved in the humanitarian response in Ukraine has a role to play on this. Ideally all international actor communication and documentation are available in the preferred language(s) of the L/NAs that are expected to engage with them. If translation is not possible for all written communication and documentation, then a 'plain language review' will help. Guidance and recommendations exist for such processes[cxiv][cxv]. Investment in this will benefit the response in Ukraine and other responses more broadly, and be part of anti-racist and decolonial practices[cxiv]. DEC Secretariat recently conducted a plain language review of the Operations Manual; noted as good practice.

> **All involved in the response:** to be mindful of the words and terminology used; avoid jargon, spell out acronyms, explain terms.
>
> **DEC members:** to conduct a plain language review of all organisational documents and templates that partners are expected to engage with[43].

## 3.   MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

DEC Secretariat uses the IASC harmonised report template (8+3)[cxv] for narrative reports; members generally recognised this as good practice. However, report templates are only available in English, and reports can only be submitted in English. See issues on this in: Language and communication.

DEC members with multiple L/NA partners highlighted challenges in the reporting timelines set by DEC Secretariat. They felt at a disadvantage in meeting reporting deadlines. It takes time to review multiple reports, provide useful feedback and request clarifications, before collating and submitting financial and

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[43]  As DEC Secretariat's report template follows the harmonised (8+3) report template, it is assumed that accessibility has already been considered.

narrative reports. Ultimately, DEC reporting timelines disincentivise members in working in partnership with multiple L/NAs; particularly those where capacity sharing activities include DEC members strengthening L/NA partner reporting skills. However, reporting timelines are set from the beginning of any DEC Appeal and are fairly inflexible due to fixed onward reporting deadlines for DEC Secretariat. Short extensions are possible.

**DEC members working with multiple L/NAs:** to request allowable extensions for reporting deadlines from DEC Secretariat (up to 4 extra days).

Consultations highlighted that L/NAs understand that reporting is required, and some don't find it a big challenge. But some highlighted that reporting (and proposal writing) is a real challenge and they do not have staff to support. This was heard particularly from Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) led by persons with disability.

**DEC members working with DPOs:** to consider allowing alternative reporting methods for DPOs and other L/NAs who struggle to prepare formal written reports. For example, partnership agreements with DPOs could allow verbal reports.

A small number of L/NAs highlighted challenges with a lack of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialists in-country, but this was not discussed further in detail. A number of L/NAs highlighted a need to increase the detail in, and cross-checking of, needs assessments conducted. This was largely related to the issues of relevance and inclusion. Around one-third of L/NAs highlighted that some of the aid provided to date was not relevant. One example was where internally displaced persons (IDPs) had been provided with food kits which they did not want and sold them at the market. Some L/NAs highlighted that the specific needs of persons with disability were not being met as disabled persons organisations (DPOs) were not involved in the needs assessment processes[44]. The role of Government in assessing needs and coordinating needs assessments was not mentioned in any consultations. When this was raised in feedback and verification sessions, some L/NAs highlighted that they did not trust the Government to be solely responsible for coordinating needs assessments.

**Cluster Coordinators:** to ensure that L/NAs are actively informing needs assessment and the contextualisation of Cluster minimum standards.

# 4.  ACCOUNTABILITY

Only 16% of L/NA survey respondents selected 'Accountability to affected populations / safeguarding / Do No Harm / monitoring and evaluation' in their top four support areas most important for strengthening locally led humanitarian action. Survey results showed that 42% of L/NA survey respondents would feel confident explaining what Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) means (compared to 59% of INGO survey respondents). Although significantly fewer said they would feel confident explaining: Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and Sphere standards; 35% and 16% of L/NA survey respondents.

Very few L/NAs mentioned accountability and safeguarding in consultations, and none mentioned Do No Harm or Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). To note, it was mainly staff with safeguarding roles that mentioned these factors in consultations with international actors. However, concerns were raised that there very few safeguarding issues are being reported across the response. DEC is funding the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub for Eastern Europe (RSH EE) which aims to provide practical and accessible safeguarding resources in Ukrainian and languages of refugee-host neighbouring countries.

**DEC members:** to direct L/NA partners to the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub for Eastern Europe (RSH EE) to access resources and support.

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44  Although the good work of the Age and Disability Technical Working Group (ADTWG) was mentioned.

# 5. CORRUPTION AND TRANSPARENCY

The issue of corruption in Ukraine was mentioned as a concern in a number consultations with INGOs. In 2021, Ukraine had a Corruption Perception Index score of 32[45] (for comparison, UK's is 78)[cxviii]. In addition, armed conflict is generally understood to be an exacerbating factor in the existence and development of corruption[cxix]. This provides a basis for some of the concerns raised, along with some reports that local groups either intentionally lacked accountability and transparency mechanisms or were unfamiliar with them[cxx].

Very few L/NAs raised the issue of corruption. In the survey, just 16% of L/NA respondents, compared to 32% of international actors, selected 'Legal / governance / anti-corruption / transparency' in their top four support areas for strengthening locally led humanitarian action. The following activities were most popular: support for organisational financial audits (10% of all survey respondents), organisational policy development support (8%), and guidance on organisational governance (7%). These activities would reduce fiduciary risk[46] more broadly. Some are mentioned earlier in the report. Given limited data in this area, recommendations are not provided. However, in acute emergency conditions there will inevitably be some corruption and losses, and some argue that 'something is better than nothing'[cxxi].

# 6. CASH PROGRAMMING

Cash programming and coordination was mentioned specifically by a number of international participants. Almost all DEC members are delivering cash assistance. Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) was reported as the most common approach, particularly at the start of the response. In the early days, each agency appeared to work quite separately with their own process, app or approach[cxxii]. There was some suggestion that the situation has improved with the presence of the Cash Working Group (CWG)[47]. However, frustrations remain, including a feeling of powerlessness to influence discussions from smaller agencies, and the exclusion of L/NAs. For example, one international participant said that there was no openness to discussions on the distribution of physical cash. Some shared that this may be the only or most effective way to provide support to those in rural areas where phone and internet connectivity is unreliable and banks may not be functioning. This may also be the case for reaching those in occupied areas, although additional challenges exist here for access and security.

One international actor said: *"There was no real effort made to get local organisations involved [in cash programming] or to check if they had the capacity for cash coordination"*. According to some international actors, this has been further compounded by the digitisation of cash programming becoming so high-tech that it is excluding local organisations from contributing. The CWG has reportedly developed new Terms of Reference for the group and is looking for an NGO co-chair. However, the group also recently ended the option to join meetings online which was widely believed to be exclusionary for smaller agencies; both international and local/national. The Common Cash Delivery (CCD) Network[48] is apparently looking at the CWG coordination structure and will soon launch a survey to gather ideas from L/NAs on the barriers and constraints for participation in CWG. The CCD Network also conducted a workshop on localisation in the Ukraine response in October, but some international participants felt it failed to learn from other networks and working groups engaging on this topic.

L/NAs were more concerned that digital cash transfers and distributions risk missing people who cannot use or access digital systems, such as those with limited connectivity and/or digital literacy, including older persons, persons with disabilities, and those in occupied areas. A recent study conducted by the Age and Disability Technical Working Group (ADTWG) to determine the state of readiness for winter of older people and persons with disability, found that 62% of the >2,800 respondents said they are not ready for the winter season. The biggest concerns were all related to income and cash – size of pension, price increase, low/insufficient income[cxxiii].

The use of group cash transfers (GCT) and support to local community-based groups, to design and implement their own relief and recovery interventions, was highlighted by a number of agencies as a good example of shifting power and supporting the leadership of crisis-affected people. The survivor and

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[45] A country's score is the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0-100. 0 = highly corrupt, 100 = very clean.

[46] The risk that money or materials are not used for intended purposes (i.e. fraud, theft, corruption).

[47] The CWG is a technical working group within the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) focusing on Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) programming.

[48] A network of 14 large INGOs that focus on cash programming in crises; 50% are DEC members.

community led response (sclr) approach[cxxiv] [cxxv] is followed by DEC member Christian Aid and their partner in Ukraine, Alliance for Public Health. The approach also strengthens local civil society; important for future recovery and reconstruction.

> **DEC members:** to use any new cross-DEC coordination mechanism to highlight examples of new and particularly effective approaches which shift power to L/NAs, including in particular the sclr approach.

## 7.   HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)

Staff movement from L/NAs to international actors risks not only undermining the capacity of L/NAs for humanitarian response, but also poses a threat to Ukrainian civil society for managing recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. The Pledge for Change signatories recognise this, saying: INGOs competing for funds, facilities, and talent can unintentionally weaken civil society[cxxvi] [49]. Around one-third of L/NAs highlighted that international actors pay significantly higher salaries than they are able to pay their staff, thereby presenting a risk for staff movement.

However, the issue of staff movement from L/NAs to international agencies was not mentioned by many participants in this scoping. This is somewhat surprising given research conducted a few years ago by 4 DEC members found that L/NAs are most likely to lose their staff to INGOs in this period; 6-12 months after an emergency response is triggered[cxxvii]. Staff 'poaching' was also only mentioned by a small number of participants. Only one L/NA survey respondent selected the sub-option 'Compensation / training for new Ukrainian organisation staff who are replacing staff recruited by INGOs / UN (the issue of staff 'poaching')'. Poaching is generally recognised as unethical recruitment practices such as deliberately soliciting staff participating in coordination meetings, headhunting, and failing to honour notice periods or allow reasonable transition periods[cxxviii]. A draft concept note on good recruitment practices has been tabled at the HCT[cxxix] which promotes a systemic approach to the recruitment of national staff. Recommendations are included for some common minimum standards, such as maintaining professional standards such as formal work advertisements, taking up references, and respecting notice periods. L/NA participants who did mention staff movement highlighted measures taken to retain staff and volunteers including providing benefits or compensation for unpaid roles, highlighting common values, stress management and team-building.

> **DEC members:** to follow the recommendations on good recruitment practices tabled at the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Ukraine.

Some INGOs mentioned the difficulty in recruiting staff for their response. Ukrainians with relevant experience, skills and competencies are in high demand, but many have left the country. Some INGOs also mentioned how time-consuming it is getting international staff into Ukraine; visa and registration issues are impacting operations and are a widely discussed topic at the (I)NGO Forum. Around one-third of L/NAs mentioned INGO partner staff turnover[50], rotation or short-term contracts as really delaying the development of partnerships and trust-building. A lack of institutional memory was mentioned as a reason for delays in approving proposals and funds.

Some agencies mentioned joint advocacy to the Government of Ukraine to expand the exemption from military conscription from UN staff to those engaged in the humanitarian response more broadly. However, according to at least one L/NA participant, L/NAs are against this request as they believed that the evidence that would be required to receive this exemption would be easier for INGOs to produce than L/NAs. If this were the case, it might make INGOs even more attractive to prospective employees, and potentially erode the capacity of L/NAs further, along with state systems and services, if staff move to avoid conscription.

## 8.   OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The operating environment was largely described by international participants as one with a strong and functioning Government, a capable and active civil society, a complex legislative environment, recent

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[49]   Also, one of the 8 commitments in Charter for Change (C4C) is to "address and prevent the negative impact of recruiting NNGO staff during emergencies."

[50]   Also raised in the DEC Real-Time Review as an issue.

[51]   A number of mobile phone apps transmit alerts to users when airstrikes are anticipated.

[52]   Various Telegram accounts provide live updates on the context, situation and response.

experience of invasion and conflict, highly digitised[51], with a vocal social media presence[52], all framed by a culture moulded by its post-Soviet history[cxxx] but looking to a European future. In other words, fairly unique. The issue of corruption is covered earlier in the report. This context is relatively unique for recent humanitarian response, but many argued that the response was not. Most participants agreed that the international aid response had not been tailored, adapted or adjusted for the context at all. One international participant said the response was a *"copy and paste job"*. There was also acknowledgement from participants that the culture in Ukraine is not understood well by internationals, and that humanitarians with experience in more similar crises in Kosovo and the Balkans are now retired.

Many L/NAs mentioned in consultations that they need support in understanding Ukrainian legislation. This is mentioned briefly earlier in the report in relation to taxation and accounting. More in: Funding and financial management. Around one-quarter of L/NAs also mentioned legal and taxation complexities in hiring staff. In addition, many said they were struggling to get quick approval from local authorities for their humanitarian activities; particularly related to procurement of goods. INGOs mentioned being restrained by visa limitations, registration processes and a complex legal framework.

A number of different contexts exist within Ukraine with differing levels of needs, access and insecurity. These include: 1) contested areas: intense fighting and/or under siege, with acute humanitarian needs; 2) areas occupied by Russian forces, or Russian influence: de facto authority is unclear, and Western-funded agencies may struggle to operate here due to sanctions, insecurity and risk of being targeted by Russian forces; and 3) areas under Ukraine Government control: with relative peace, many IDPs, and also increasingly impacted by Russian airstrikes targeting energy infrastructure[cxxxi]. Challenges of access to occupied areas were mentioned by very few participants. More mentioned the clear needs and access challenges of newly liberated areas. *Enabling the local response* suggested that "international agencies lack incentives to operate in the places of greatest need, where security risk from combatants combines with fiduciary risk imposed by donors to create too high a threshold for most". As common for other conflict-related responses, L/NAs that are the least resourced and equipped bear the biggest risks[cxxxiii]. As long as safety and security management is well planned and resourced, access to crisis-affected populations is a clear advantage of L/NAs over INGOs[cxxxiv].

However, there was a surprising lack of prioritisation of security risk management in consultations, despite the clear risks of operating in such a conflict. Only 10% of L/NA survey respondents selected the area 'Safety / security / risk management' in their top four most important areas. A small number of L/NAs mentioned a need for training on security risk management. However, the security environment requires strong collaborative coordination efforts, including collective security analyses; these appear to be lacking. Linked to insecurity, a number of L/NAs mentioned a lack of insurance for their staff and volunteers. A sub-option on this in the survey was only selected by 5% of respondents overall.

> **DEC members:** to budget appropriate costs to support L/NA partners to navigate the complex legislative environment in Ukraine.
>
> **DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group:** to consider allocating budget to enable L/NA access to lawyers and legal aid when needed in any 'localisation collective initiative'. This could form part of the platform and wider hub idea.

## 9.  DEC GOOD PRACTICE

Any review will identify gaps and areas for improvement. As such, a number of recommendations have been made for DEC. However, it is also important to note the areas participants highlighted where DEC are doing well, following best practice. In some areas, they are leading the way. The following are the good practice areas highlighted in the scoping:

- Tracking funds to DEC member partners.

- Encouraging DEC members to cover fair and reasonable ICR for partners.

- Providing flexible and multi-year funds[53].

- Using the harmonised reporting template ('8+3 template') for narrative reports.

- Conducting a 'plain language review' of the Operations Manual.

- Suspending the 'clawback' rule for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal[54].

- Allowing due diligence passporting. More in: Funding and financial management.

## 10.  COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY

Participants representing community funds highlighted the vital role of community philanthropy[cxxxv] in local humanitarian action and in contributing to "a more resilient, independent, and diverse civil society"[cxxxvi] – something which Pledge for Change signatories commit. The OECD DAC recommends *"supporting civil society strategic alliances, networks, platforms and resource centres at regional, national, and sub-national levels..."*[cxxxvii]. Ukraine entered the top 10 most generous countries in the world in 2021 – the only European country in there[cxxxviii], and saw increased involvement in charity and volunteering since the Russian invasion[cxxxix]. Many say they will continue supporting charities and volunteering after the war. Failing to nurture this sense of civic duty through the humanitarian response would be a missed opportunity in building a strong civil society that will be so essential for post-war rebuilding: reconstruction, coping with collective trauma, and the reintegration of returning IDPs and refugees.

## 11.  INCLUSION

Humanitarian actors mentioned the importance of including traditionally marginalised, particularly vulnerable, or discriminated against people. The following groups were mentioned:

*Persons with disability (PWD):* concerns around access to cash assistance was mentioned earlier in the report. in addition, a recent survey to determine the level of readiness for winter for older persons and PWD identified that 32% of respondents said the bomb shelters in their community were not accessible, increasing risk from airstrikes and shelling[cxl].

*Women:* it is widely evidenced that gender-based and sexual violence increase in times of conflict[cxli]; stories from Ukraine confirm this[cxlii]. Yet, limited safeguarding issues are being reported. Only a small number of women's rights organisations were involved in the scoping.

*LGBTQI+ persons:* often suffer additional forms of discrimination and face specific risks and challenges when displaced, with some stories of LGBTIQ+ persons being denied entrance to collective centres[cxliii]. LGBTIQ+ groups can provide more information and guida.

*Race:* there were some reports of restrictions on people of colour seeking refuge in neighbouring European countries. Discrimination against Roma people was also mentioned.

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53   DEC Appeal phases are over 3 years and follow an adaptive programming approach.
54   The rule of requiring members to return unspent funds to the DEC at the end of each phase.

# ANNEXES

# ANNEX 1: PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

| Local and national actors (L/NAs) | |
|---|---|
| Aliance Dobrych Sprav | Fund of Berezan community |
| Alliance for Public Health (APH) | Fund of Kherson community |
| Boyarka municipality fund | League of the Strong |
| Caritas Kyiv | Moloda Gromada (Young Community), Odesa |
| Caritas Odesa UGCC | National Assembly of People with Disabilities (NAPD) |
| Carriers of the Peace | National Network Local Philanthropy Development (NNLPD) |
| Charitable fund "Ruky druzhuv", NGO Community development fund | NGO 10th of April |
| Charity Fund "Dim Myloserdia" | NGO City Care Center |
| Charity Fund "Spadshyna" | NGO Resource Centre |
| Community Charity "Ridnia", Striy | Non-violent Peaceforce |
| Community Fund "Bari" | Novoyavorivsk community fund |
| Community Fund "Podilska Community" | Tabletochki CF |
| Community Fund "Voznesenska" (Mykolaiv oblast) | Ukrainian Education Platform (UEP) |
| DePaul Ukraine | Women's Consortium of Ukraine |
| Dubno city community fund "Dobrobut" | Zagoriy Foundation |

| International actors | |
|---|---|
| ActionAid | ICVA |
| ALNAP | International Rescue Committee (IRC) |
| CAFOD | NGO Forum |
| CDAC | OCHA |
| Centre for Humanitarian Leadership (CHL) | ODI |
| Christian Aid | Oxfam |
| CHS Alliance | Partnership for Transparency Fund Europe (PTF) |
| CLEAR Global | PeaceDirect |
| Conflict Management Consulting (CMC) | Plan International UK |
| Dan Church Aid (DCA) | RE:ACT |
| Depaul International | Refugees International |
| Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) | Social Development Direct |
| Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) | Start Network |
| Global Education Cluster / Save the Children | Tearfund |
| Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) | The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) |
| Global Giving | The Share Trust |
| Ground Truth Solutions | UK-MED |
| Groupe URD | Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF) |
| HelpAge | UN Vinnytsia |
| Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) | WeltHungerHilfe |
| Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA) | World Vision International |

# ANNEX 2: MATRIX OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Key: Timeframe:** *Short* = quick-win / high priority. *Medium* = might take longer / medium priority. *Long* = might take a while.

Recommendations included in 2021 internal DEC localisation scoping paper.

| DEC Secretariat | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Recommendation** | **Area** | **Timeframe** |
| To commit to a 25% minimum target for funds transferred to L/NAs for every Appeal, meeting the target collectively at first, and agree a route map and timeframe with members that consistently fail to meet this. Publish percentages. | Funding & financial management | Medium |
| To allocate funds for a 'localisation collective initiative' which might include the establishment of a fund to disburse grants to L/NAs, a platform to support and verify Ukrainian L/NAs, and other activities as outlined in the report. | | Short |
| To facilitate or fund a mapping of international due diligence best practice with what is feasible for L/NAs registered in Ukraine. This mapping should then identify options for 'bridging' where international requirements and Ukrainian L/NA documentation do not align. | | Short |
| To facilitate a meeting of member staff responsible for setting organisational due diligence requirements to conduct a joint review and mapping. This mapping should aim to develop a realistic, feasible and proportionate 'due diligence minimum standards' across all DEC members which is as light as organisational policy and UK legislation allows, and forms the basis of any future DEC due diligence passporting. | | Long |
| To encourage members to sign multi-year agreements with L/NAs for Phase 2 of an Appeal. Require DEC members to report on the number of multi-year agreements. | | Short |
| To require that DEC members budget a minimum 10% rate for ICR for partners in all future humanitarian response budgets. | | Medium |
| To update the Operations Manual to clarify that members can and should invest in strengthening L/NA capacity. | Capacity strengthening & organisational management | Short |
| To create a budget line explicitly for activities to strengthen L/NA capacity. | | Medium |
| To decide whether it is appropriate to set a funding target for capacity strengthening activities once an evidence base has been built. | | Long |
| To work with members to consider how the impact of mentoring, accompaniment, exchange and secondment initiatives with L/NA partners could be monitored, measured and reported on more effectively. | | Medium |
| To integrate the Principles of Partnership into the DEC Operations Manual, proposal and reporting templates, and include them in the membership review process. | Equitable partnerships | Medium |
| To ask DEC members what coordination facilitation they want, and invest in supporting it. As a first step, DEC Secretariat could share a very simple survey or organise a first meeting to understand needs. | Coordination & collaboration | Short |
| To connect L/NA partners of DEC members in Ukraine to allow cross-learning and sharing, the development of collective advocacy, and enable a collective feedback mechanism for DEC members. | | Short |
| To translate report templates for the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal into Ukrainian, to be available as a reference document even if members and their partners are still required to report in English. Consider translating reporting templates into relevant local languages for all future humanitarian Appeals. | Language & communication | Short |

| DEC members | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Recommendation** | **Area** | **Timeframe** |
| To consider contributing additional resources to new or existing pooled funds which provide funds for L/NAs. | Funding & financial management | Short |
| To reflect the flexibility and multi-year funding they receive from DEC in agreements with partners. | | Short |
| To develop organisational policies on ICR for L/NA partners delivering humanitarian action, which commit fair coverage. | | Medium |
| To consider supporting and funding consortia of L/NAs in Ukraine which enable peer learning and local coordination. | | Medium |
| To prioritise and provide tailored support, mentoring and accompaniment for L/NA partners following a joint assessment of their capacity strengthening needs. | Capacity strengthening & organisational management | Short |
| To consider and assess internal capacity to provide capacity strengthening support to L/NA partners in Ukraine. | | Medium |
| To work with DEC to consider how the impact of mentoring, accompaniment, exchange and secondment initiatives with L/NA partners could be monitored, measured and reported on more effectively. | | Medium |
| To budget necessary funds for externally-provided systematic translation and interpretation in all responses and collective initiatives. | Language & communication | Short |
| To conduct a plain language review of all organisational documents and templates that partners are expected to engage with. | | Medium |
| *For DEC members working with multiple, smaller L/NAs:* to request allowable extensions for reporting deadlines from DEC Secretariat, up to 4 days. | M&E | Short |
| *For DEC members working with DPOs:* to consider allowing alternative reporting methods for DPOs and other L/NAs who struggle to prepare formal written reports. | | Medium |
| To direct L/NA partners to the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub for Eastern Europe (RSH EE) to access resources and support. | Accountability | Short |
| To use any new cross-DEC coordination mechanism to highlight examples of new and particularly effective approaches which shift power to L/NAs, including in particular the sclr approach. | Cash | Short |
| To follow the recommendations on good recruitment practices tabled at the HCT in Ukraine. | HR | Short |
| To budget appropriate costs to support L/NA partners to navigate the complex legislative environment in Ukraine. | Operating environment | Short |

| DEC 'localisation collective initiative' group | |
|---|---|
| **Recommendation** | **Area** |
| To consider establishing a fund which disburses small grants to L/NAs. Firstly, establish an expert group to guide this. | Funding & financial management |
| To consider contributing 'collective initiative' funds for the establishment of a L/NA platform where Ukrainian L/NAs are supported to gather documentation and evidence necessary for international due diligence processes, and provide a centralised, nationally-managed verification scheme. | |
| To consider funding the establishment and maintenance of an online platform which develops a database of actors in Ukraine. As part of a wider hub, the platform could trial a harmonised verification process, provide information on funds and grants available for L/NAs, share information on available trainings, and links to other useful platforms. Consider and review Zagoriy Foundation's plans and proposal to establish such a platform. Coordinate closely with organisations with a coordination mandate such as OCHA and ICVA. | Equitable partnerships |
| To consider including budget for an independent study or assessment on the quality of partnerships between Ukrainian organisations and international NGOs. As a minimum, such an assessment should be conducted for DEC members and their partners. | |
| To consider including budget for the development and implementation of an independent, rapid, online survey to further understand the preferences of L/NAs on how best to support national coordination. Further budgeting should be allocated to support whichever approach is identified as the most effective. | Coordination & collaboration |
| To consider allocating budget to enable L/NA access to lawyers and legal aid when needed in any 'localisation collective initiative'. This could form part of the platform and wider hub idea. | Operating environment |

| Other stakeholders | |
|---|---|
| **Recommendation** | **Area** |
| **Response Learning Hub** | |
| To make online trainings available at the Response Learning Hub on project development and proposal writing in Ukrainian. | Funding & financial management |
| To map and provide information on online and in-person training planned in Ukrainian as part of the Response Learning Hub platform. | Equitable partnerships |
| To consider supporting the development of a Ukrainian language glossary of key terms and acronyms used in international humanitarian response mechanisms. | Coordination & collaboration |
| **Cluster coordination** | |
| **Cluster leads:** to provide accessible information explaining the international humanitarian system: principles, funding, actors and Cluster coordination. | Capacity strengthening & organisational development |
| **OCHA & Cluster leads:** to ensure that L/NAs are represented in Cluster coordination through continued outreach efforts in Ukraine. To share information and support – in Ukrainian – on Cluster coordination. Consider shifting agenda and formats of meetings to allow active participation of L/NAs, while still meeting international actor needs. | Coordination & collaboration |
| **Cluster Coordinators:** to ensure that L/NAs are actively informing needs assessment and the contextualisation of Cluster minimum standards. | Monitoring & evaluation |
| **Donors / funders** | |
| **UHF:** to outline and share plans for how the UHF strategic priority of localisation will be realised in Ukraine; including conducting information sessions in Ukrainian, adopting a fair overheads policy for sub-implementing partners, and working to increase the proportion of funds granted directly to L/NAs to at least a minimum of 25%. | Funding & financial management |
| **Donors:** to prioritise funding for multi-year humanitarian response activities implemented by consortia including a range and diversity of actors. | Equitable partnerships |
| **Others** | |
| **L/NAs:** to consider developing capacity strengthening and/or organisational development plans, informed by self-assessments, to influence and guide conversations and negotiations with international partners on what support is needed, if any. | Capacity strengthening & organisational development |
| **UK-based international humanitarian agencies:** to coordinate on influencing the UK Charity Commission to adopt an agreed 'due diligence minimum standards'. DEC Secretariat and members, and FCDO and other UK-registered international actors, should advocate for standards appropriate for rapid international humanitarian response. Referring to the Dutch Government and ICRC-led process on risk-sharing under the Grand Bargain could be helpful. | Funding & financial management |
| **All:** to continue open conversations with each other on humanitarian principles to understand differing views and identify ways to work together. | Humanitarian principles |
| **All:** to be mindful of words and terminology used: avoid jargon, spell out acronyms, explain terms. | Language & communication |

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*Note:* items are listed in <u>order of reference</u> in the report, allowing easy access for readers. Some items are referenced multiple times so appear multiple times in the list below. Total: 95.

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