



TOWARD INCLUSIVE RECOVERY IN UKRAINE:

Engaging Women and Civil Society in Ukraine's Relief, Recovery, and Reconstruction

Ukrainian women and civil society organizations (CSOs) are [on the frontlines](#) of the war advancing peace and security. Women have taken on new roles and mobilized across the country to [lead](#) humanitarian relief efforts, [document](#) atrocities, [manage](#) key government and anti-corruption bodies, and [fight](#) in the armed forces. Women-led grassroots organizations have [expanded](#) their presence at the community level, and are utilizing their networks to get aid to vulnerable civilians. With access to marginalized and hard to reach communities, they are best placed to inform effective, fair, and sustainable distribution of resources.

At the same time, women and girls are hit hardest by the impacts of war. Since February 24, 2022, one-third of Ukrainians have been forced from their homes, [90 percent](#) of whom are women and children. Sexual violence is being used as a [tactic of war](#) and thousands of women are being trafficked across the border. The war has disrupted critical [social services](#) such as medical care and education, heightening women's care burden amidst rising food insecurity and energy poverty. Fighting continues to threaten women's livelihoods and wellbeing, and has [stymied](#) global progress on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Women are not only essential to the emergency response, but to Ukraine's successful post-war recovery and reconstruction, democratic progress, and EU integration. However, they are largely [absent](#) from formal decision-making platforms on de-escalation, conflict mitigation, and relief and recovery. Gender equality considerations remain [sidelined](#) in discussions on the war; local organizations lack critical funds, supplies, and freedom of movement; and more gender-disaggregated statistics are needed to effectively inform the crisis response. In line with international commitments, including UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, Ukraine and international partners must recognize the disproportionate impacts of the war on women and girls, in addition to their important role in planning Ukraine's future.

THE CASE FOR WOMEN'S INCLUSION & GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Women's participation in the design and implementation of Ukraine's recovery programs is critical to maximize the effectiveness of the reconstruction process, take into account differentiated needs, and [bolster](#) post-conflict development. From Afghanistan to Iraq to the Balkans, failure to prioritize inclusive recovery and the meaningful participation of women in all elements of society [undermined](#) the transition to peace. To ensure sustainable recovery in Ukraine, women and civil society need to be centrally involved in rebuilding the institutions that will foster long-term peace, stability, and development.

Ensuring women's inclusion in post-war recovery and development processes is [necessary](#) to fulfill Ukraine's international and national obligations to gender equality and human rights. Ukraine's National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security [recognizes](#) the need for women's full participation in society and peacebuilding and [gender integration](#) into state policy priorities. Gender mainstreaming in all areas of national policy is a [requirement](#) for European integration of Ukraine, and any post-war reconstruction initiatives supported by the European Union (EU).

G7 and donor countries, and especially those with Feminist Foreign Policies, also promote gender equality as fundamental pillars of their development strategies. The European Commission's June 2022 [communique](#) calls for a gender-sensitive approach to Ukraine's recovery, while international financial institutions (IFIs) that provide funds for Ukraine's reconstruction – including the International Monetary

Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – insist on [integrating gender](#) in core activities. G7 leaders [reinforced](#) the important role of civil society, including women’s organizations, as “active participants” in planning Ukraine’s future.

As the international community now mobilizes to respond to the war, they must ensure an inclusive and sustainable approach to Ukraine’s military, economic, and political reconstruction plans and processes. This includes ensuring women and CSOs are meaningfully involved in the G7’s multi-agency platform to coordinate aid to Ukraine, as well as the planning and implementation of the Ukraine Recovery Conference taking place in the United Kingdom in June 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote women’s participation, leadership, and decision-making in Ukraine’s planning frameworks and recovery process.

- G7 and EU Member States and multilateral partners should consistently and extensively consult with Ukrainian women’s organizations and CSOs to mainstream gender in planning frameworks.
- Ensure all G7 and EU-appointed working groups and multi-stakeholder assessment teams include at least one technical gender expert, in addition to Ukrainian women and civil society who have knowledge of the differentiated needs of women and girls in post-war reconstruction.

2. Ensure new funding enables women’s active participation in Ukraine’s recovery and advances gender equality. This includes:

- Investing in the capacity of local NGOs, women-led groups, and human rights monitoring organizations who can partner with the government on aid delivery, distribution, and oversight. In addition, ensure funding is widely available, accessible, and discussed at the local level.
- Earmarking a percentage of all funds for activities that support gender equality across housing, education, food security, livelihoods, and large-scale reconstruction investments. Funding should address the unique needs of refugees and internally-displaced peoples (IDPs), survivors of sexual violence, people with disabilities, and women heads of household, among others.
- Ensuring all funding proposals, regardless of focus, include a gender analysis. Gender analyses should acknowledge differences in economic activities, access to and control over resources, gendered social norms, physical security, and risks of gender-based violence.

3. Establish a gender-sensitive monitoring mechanism for the Ukrainian government to report on recovery progress, modeled off of the [Lugano Principles](#), and include clear gender equality indicators.

- In parallel, establish regional and local-level mechanisms (i.e. a digital platform on subnational aid) that enable the transparent and equitable use of funds and strengthen anti-corruption efforts.

4. Collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data, in line with Eurostat requirements, to ensure that relief efforts and long-term recovery initiatives are tailored to address the unique needs of men and women, using the European Institute for Gender Equality’s (EIGE) methodology to report on progress.

5. Prioritize the re-establishment of critical social infrastructure and services to reduce the care burden on women, re-incorporate displaced Ukrainians, and bolster economic recovery.

- Ensure schools, kindergartens, and daycares are reopened and support immediate access to comprehensive medical care and social assistance services. Additionally, offer widely-accessible housing grants, including to IDPs, and establish new public housing complexes in rural areas.

6. Integrate gender equality in Ukraine’s EU accession commitments to ensure gender is a core consideration during the adaptation of new legislation to EU standards.