

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT REPORT UKRAINE

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PEACE
SUPPORT
UKRAINE

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1. ABOUT PEACE SUPPORT UKRAINE

Peace Support Ukraine (PSU) is a 6-month first phase project that aims to lay foundations for long-term nonviolence and peacebuilding work in Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus in support of local and national partners. It is implemented in partnership with PATRIR (Romania), Un Ponte Per (Italy), Nonviolence International Ukraine (Ukraine), Institute for Peace and Common Ground Ukraine (IPCG) (Ukraine), and the All-Ukraine Youth Centers (AUYC) (Ukraine) in Ukraine with the support of 8x1000 funds of Italian Buddhist Institute Soka Gakkai. Peace Support Ukraine supports Ukrainian civil society organisations, youth, activists and experts to address priorities they identify and work on critical peace and nonviolence issues even in the midst of war. PSU works to support Ukrainian citizens to be the owners and agents of change in their society and to build hope for their future and positive change in their everyday lives during and after the war. At the same time, PSU aims to support local and national organizations and authorities in Ukraine and to ensure EU and international organizations and partners increase support for peacebuilding, trauma recovery and nonviolence in Ukraine; and direct nonviolent resistance and opposition to the war in Russia and Belarus.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been prepared as part of the multi-phase assessment mission of the Peace Support Ukraine project by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) of the Romanian Peace Institute (PATRIR) together with partners in Ukraine and in the diaspora. Although the full assessment will analyze the period between July 2022 and November 2022, this document shares preliminary findings to inform further strategic analysis of the developing situation on the ground and concrete actions to strengthen the international response to sustaining efforts by Ukrainian civil society, state and nonstate actors, while ensuring comprehensive inclusion of Ukrainian voices. It represents the first part of a two-stage review of the needs, challenges, opportunities and critical areas of action identified by Ukrainian civil society organizations, experts, local authorities and national government institutions addressing the impact of the invasion and war on the people of Ukraine. As well as identifying key priorities for peacebuilding and addressing the impact of the armed conflict, invasion and temporary occupation of Ukrainian territories now, during the war, the report also identifies key measures needed to prepare now to be able to address critical needs for peacebuilding, stabilization and post-war recovery and peace consolidation after the ending of the war.



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3. PARTNERING FOR PEACE IN THE MIDST OF WAR

The scale of the challenge of addressing the impacts of the war on the people of Ukraine and peacebuilding in the midst of the full-scale war requires deep, authentic solidarity with those working on the front lines on the ground in Ukraine, thorough understanding of the situation and nourishing and supporting real partnerships and collaboration. Recognizing, supporting and strengthening the vital role, capacity and ownership of Ukrainian civil society and state institutions is essential. INGOs, which have been significantly absent inside Ukraine during the war, can support and assist, but leadership, ownership, and primary support for direction setting, strategic planning for peacebuilding and nonviolence, implementation and strengthening capacity should remain with local and national actors in Ukraine. Closer strategic and operational partnerships between international actors with regional and local organizations are critical – as is strong coordination, collaboration and partnership amongst international actors to avoid duplication, competition or redundant, parallel programming. Peace Support Ukraine prioritizes supporting, developing and deepening the role of local and national actors in addressing the impacts of the war, peacebuilding, and supporting direct non-violent resistance in the occupied territories, and works with both state and non-state actors as well as the breadth of European and international peacebuilding organizations engage to support peace and recovery in Ukraine.



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4. RUSSIAN INVASION & WAR IN UKRAINE: A FLUID AND HIGHLY VOLATILE CONFLICT

KEY INDICATORS	Changing conflict environment	High levels of Ukrainian solidarity and joint work, feeling of national identity awakening	Need for psychological support and work with Trauma
	High risk of new threats (nuclear power plants/weapons; Russian offensive)	Emergence of newly de-occupied territories	Decrease in the ratio of humanitarian assistance
KEY TRENDS	Physical violence and threats to activists' safety on occupied territories	Increased levels of internal polarization	Low level of trust towards certain INGOs
	Continuous relocation (change of dynamic from West to Central Ukraine)	Lack of transparency and clarity of some organizations' work	Propaganda narratives and presence of multidimensional identity elements

5. PRELIMINARY HIGHLIGHTS

- Even in the midst of war there is substantial need for peacebuilding programming, from strengthening local peace capacities in local government authorities and civil society organizations to improving mediation and dialogue skills in humanitarian response, strengthening do no harm in aid delivery, supporting psycho-social and trauma care, direct assistance to nonviolent resistance and non-cooperation in the temporarily occupied territories, and much more;
- There are already existing and strong local and national capacities in many key areas relevant to this work in Ukraine, including, in particular, dialogue and mediation skills. International organisations, partners and donors should prioritize listening to and authentically supporting local and national capabilities in Ukraine, rather than designing interventions and measures from abroad or to meet own-organization interests;
- Ukrainian civil society and state (local and national authorities) should be further supported with strengthening additional key peacebuilding capacities and competencies in critical areas identified by stakeholders on the ground as priorities, including: improving coordination and communication capabilities of local authorities and civil society in recovery and local peacebuilding programming; strengthening capacities for joined up analysis and identification of needs for peacebuilding and recovery in newly liberated areas; joining identification of local tensions and emerging conflict issues with planning and delivery of peacebuilding measures to address these; improving emergency trauma psychology and trauma-informed care, strengthening and dramatically scaling support for nonviolent resistance in the occupied territories, and much more;

- “Peacebuilding” is critical now even in the midst of war, but this term is highly contentious in the current context in Ukraine. Instead, actors should focus – in the immediate term – on using words that address the specific function/tasks to be addressed, eg: trauma informed care; recovery and stabilization; social cohesion and inclusion; strengthening local coordination capabilities; supporting nonviolent cooperation; while integrating effective peacebuilding practices into these;
- European and international partners working to support peacebuilding and peacebuilding-related programming in Ukraine should: prioritize listening to and supporting local and national capabilities and actors in Ukraine; substantially improve robust coordination together to ensure complementarity and doing more together than can be done apart and avoiding overlap/duplication or redundancy of efforts; develop context-appropriate programming that addresses both urgent/immediate needs and begins today to lay foundations for short-, medium- and long-term programming, placing priority emphasis on local/national ownership and strengthening capabilities;
- International aid, humanitarian assistance and recovery interventions by international donors, partners of Ukraine, and international NGOs need to substantially improve their performance in accountability to Ukrainian citizens and authorities, coordination of efforts, delivery on promises, development of support mechanisms to Ukrainian state and civil society efforts that are appropriate to context and need, and address critical shortcomings and bad practices that have been identified currently;
- On a national level, there is the need to work on human rights protection of vulnerable groups, including those of contentious objectors to military service.

6. EMERGING NEEDS & RECOMMENDATIONS

LOCAL NGOS, PRACTITIONERS & ACADEMIA

- Support retreats, recovery and trauma informed care for peaceworkers, dialogue workers, mediators. Also priority for humanitarian workers, human rights workers, medical staff and all front-line responders
- Support trauma recovery programming and support for those with acute / intensive combat experience even now, during the war
- Support integration of dialogue and mediation skills and teams, and trauma informed care, with humanitarian response, IDP programming and addressing community level social tensions and impacts of the war
- Provide trauma first aid courses and trainings for dialogue workers, humanitarian workers and FLPs who would benefit from this
- Favour an area-centered approach, including both internally displaced persons and host communities when working with social cohesion – to tackle and avoid harshening tensions and competitions for resources
- Recognise the need to address both humanitarian needs and restoration of the social fabric, increasing programming on social cohesion, community resilience and research on polarization to address internal conflict lines within the country
- Inclusion of youth and women – leadership trainings and presence in the policy-making, as per UNSCRs 2205 and 1325 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and Women, Peace and Security (WPS)
- Development of joint coordination and communication platform in the triangle – civil society-donors-authorities

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN UKRAINE

- Support strengthening of capacities in local government structures for post-war recovery and stabilisation, and peacebuilding, mediation and dialogue to address local social tensions and impacts of the war
- Prioritise strengthening capabilities for strong coordination, collaboration and partnership with civil society actors, including coordination platforms bringing together local government authorities, state services, civil society and volunteer responders, local businesses, and international NGOs and donors, to improve coordination and implement sectoral and area-based approaches to stabilisation, recovery and social inclusion
- Working with civil society organisations ensure improving communications to citizens so citizens know what services are available to them to support in the midst of war and for recovery from the impacts of the war
- Ensure prioritisation of programming on trauma recovery and care, particularly for IDPs, children and youth affected by the war, and front line responders, including local authorities, medical workers, civil society organisations and volunteers
- Where relevant and beneficial, create local humanitarian hubs including physical spaces and infrastructure to support local authority and civil society coordination and humanitarian response at local levels

6. EMERGING NEEDS & RECOMMENDATIONS

UKRAINIAN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

- Integrate planning for social cohesion and peacebuilding into recovery and stabilisation planning. Strengthen and support the Centre for Peacebuilding within government and collaboration nationally and locally with civil society peacebuilding capacities and expertise
- Improve coordination with local and national civil society actors and response and give greater voice to the need for international actors, organisations and donors to continue to support humanitarian needs through the winter and coming period
- Improve clarity of communications to those living in the temporarily occupied territories, to help them know they are not alone and are supported, and to improve clarification on what constitutes 'collaboration' and what is responsible support for the needs of the local population
- Give greater attention to the importance of non-cooperation and nonviolent resistance to the occupation, including in the temporarily occupied territories, and create a joint task force with civil society and international partners to support this
- Create a joint task force with civil society partners to identify lessons learned and best practices in addressing the crimes of war and transitional justice, drawing from national and international experiences while creating a model and approach appropriate for Ukraine and long-term social cohesion and peace
- Dedicate efforts, even and especially in the midst of war, to uphold and protect human rights, including of vulnerable groups, national minorities and conscientious objectors to military service
- Ensure support nationally – as is being done – for trauma informed care and addressing the impact of trauma on the society, front line responders, combatants, and children and youth, including support for integration of trauma-informed education across all levels of schooling and university studies



Stop the War Now with All Ukrainian Youth Centre (AUYC)



Stop the War Now with National University of Chernivtsi



Stop the War Now with Ukrainian Pacifist Movement

6. EMERGING NEEDS & RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERNATIONAL NGOS

- Prioritise – as is done by many – support for and implementation by local and national Ukrainian stakeholders and capabilities
- Work to strengthen and support local capabilities now in Ukraine, realising this will also benefit local and national ownership and capabilities now and for long-term recovery, stabilisation and peacebuilding in Ukraine
- Ensure strong coordination and working with national and local government and Ukrainian civil society organisations, as well as improve coordination amongst international actors
- Develop a clear Code of Conduct to guide international NGOs and agencies in good practice and accountable programming and delivery in Ukraine
- Ensure peace and conflict sensitivity across all programming, including humanitarian, development, recovery and IDP support
- Ensure staff deployed to Ukraine are well / better trained and prepared to understand the local context. Try to reduce rapid/high rates of turnover and ensure staff are able to develop better understanding of the local context and strong partnerships
- Adapt and improve funding mechanisms, grant procedures, and accountability, transparency and reliability to local and national partners. While there are understandable donor requirements and requirements for good aid and humanitarian work, international NGOs and donors should ensure their funding and grant mechanisms are supportive of the local context and appropriate, and do not place unnecessary / excessive burdens on local implementers;
- Ensure a higher level of accountability by international NGOs and staff in the quality of their work and implementation in Ukraine, and improve partnership-based approaches to working with local and national partners
- Recognise the need to integrate key areas of trauma-recovery and support, social inclusion, social cohesion, and peacebuilding programming in humanitarian, recovery, stabilisation and development planning and programming
- Support and strengthen local government capacities and LGA-CSO lead on coordination and area-based planning. Make consultations with local stakeholders a continuous and assiduous practice, ensuring sensitivity and open, safe, spaces with local actors, including participatory action research
- Ease small organizations and informal volunteer networks' access to grant opportunities, e.g. providing forms and supporting documents in Ukrainian language, simplifying grant proposals and reporting procedures, and ensuring clear instructions and constant communication with local stakeholders



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7. CONCLUSIONS

1. Recognise the ownership, power, capability and expertise of local peacebuilding organisations and experts – and support and strengthen this capacity;
2. Recognize the critical importance of peacebuilding and nonviolence even during and in the midst of war and ensure coordinated support, funding lines and prioritization;
3. Strengthen integrated planning and joint analysis: humanitarian response, recovery and peacebuilding, including across agencies, national and local authorities and civil society organisations;
4. Embrace complexity, create entry points for effective peace support and provide dedicated and enhanced, robust support to non-violent resistance;
5. Develop context-appropriate approaches to peacebuilding and definition of the term, while being able to use other languaging appropriate to the context in the immediate term;
6. Create a long-term vision for recovery and peace consolidation in Ukraine placing ownership and capability of local and national state and nonstate actors at its heart, and begin supporting capacity strengthening – including of coordination, planning and implementation capacities – now integrated into the humanitarian response and recovery;
7. When approaching peace consolidation and reconstruction, support economic independence and autonomy of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, placing emphasis on internal drivers of recovery and supporting these over financial benefits of external agencies and interests.



Kick-Off Meeting PSU



All Ukrainian Youth Centre (AUYC)



Stop the War Now with All Ukrainian Youth Centre (AUYC)



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All Ukrainian Youth Centre (AUYC)



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PATRIR, The Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR), was founded in 2001. Comprising the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the International Peace and Development Training Centre (IPDTC) and the European Peace Department (EPD), the Institute is the first international organisation in Romania's history called upon by governments, the United Nations, and international agencies to improve peacebuilding and peace support operations worldwide.



Un Ponte Per (UPP) has been present in Italy and Iraq since 1991, in Lebanon since 1997, and in Syria and North Africa since 2014. The association aims to prevent new conflicts, particularly in the Middle East, through information campaigns, cultural exchanges, cooperation projects, and peacebuilding programs, with a strong gender approach.



Nonviolence International (NVI) was founded by Palestinian activist Mubarak Awad in 1989. It seeks a world of justice, peace, and environmental sanity where the worth and dignity of all people is fully realized and conflicts are resolved without resorting to violence, and advocates for active nonviolence and supports creative constructive nonviolent campaigns worldwide.



The Institute for Peace and Common Ground (IPCG) has been developing a culture of dialogue and working in peacebuilding for more than 25 years. IPCG is a leading organization in the field of mediation, which has introduced the practices of restorative justice and dialogue as a technology for resolving acute socio-political and ethnic conflicts. IPCG's mission is to help groups and communities achieve positive and sustainable change by promoting dialogue, capacity building, and educational and training activities. The IPCG team has been conducting mediation training on conflict resolution since 1996.