



Lessons learned from humanitarian interventions in Ukraine (2014-2021)

Anna Louise Strachan
Consultant
December 2021

Question

What evidence and lessons are there from humanitarian protection, preparedness, and response efforts during various phases (including early stage) of the conflict in Ukraine?

Contents

1. Summary
2. Protect
3. Prioritise
4. Prevent
5. References

The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.

Helpdesk reports are commissioned by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office and other Government departments, but the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of FCDO, the UK Government, K4D or any other contributing organisation. For further information, please contact helpdesk@k4d.info.

1. Summary

Eastern Ukraine has been affected by conflict since 2014, resulting in large numbers of people requiring humanitarian assistance. Throughout the different phases of the conflict, numerous lessons have been learned by humanitarian actors. This report outlines lessons learned in three categories, protect (protecting civilians, humanitarian access and civil-military coordination), prioritise (prioritising effective humanitarian assistance to people in greatest need), and prevent (preventing and anticipating future shocks and rebuilding resilience in protracted and recurring crises).

The key findings from the literature for each of the categories are outlined below.

Prevent:

- Humanitarian actors have not adequately tailored interventions to the specific needs of the **large elderly population** in conflict-affected areas. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the needs of the elderly, who often have multiple vulnerabilities, such as chronic illness or disability. However, programming for persons with disabilities remains underfunded.
- **Mine action needs to be stepped up with particular emphasis on the provision of support to mine victims.** While Eastern Ukraine is one of the most mine contaminated areas in the world, assistance for mine victims is extremely limited, especially in the NGCA.
- **Support for women and girls remains underfunded.** Men are less likely than women to access protection services. Gender should be mainstreamed in all humanitarian interventions, considering the specific needs of both men and women in conflict-affected areas. In particular, there is a need for greater psychosocial support for GBV victims.
- **Accessibility** has been a challenge throughout the conflict and was hampered in the early stages by humanitarian actors' inability to agree on a unified position on accreditation to gain access to the NGCA (Non-Government Controlled Areas), as well as by restrictions on the types of humanitarian activities that could be undertaken in the NGCA.
- **Civil-Military Coordination** functions well under the leadership of OCHA's CMCoord. However, greater engagement with CSOs on civil-military coordination could be beneficial, and there is a need to clearly define the respective responsibilities of the Logistics Cluster and OCHA when it comes to civil-military coordination on issues like access in the early stages of humanitarian response.
- **Significant progress has been made in the field of protection of civilians.** The Civil-Military Cooperation Directorate (CIMIC) plays a key role in protecting the civilian population. However, it requires more staff and resources to be able to fulfil its role more effectively, and more female officers should be hired, given their successful approach to building trust between the armed forces and civilians.
- **The relationship between hybrid warfare and protection needs is under-researched.** Existing research suggests that enhancing civil-military dialogue, and using existing incident tracking mechanisms, are ways in which the risk posed by information warfare can be addressed.

Prioritise:

- **Cash assistance is the most appropriate form of assistance.** However, in the early stages of the humanitarian response, disagreements about the coordination of cash assistance between international agencies served as a challenge to effective implementation. Providing cash assistance in the NGCA continues to be challenging due to international restrictions on financial transactions in these areas and the lack of legally recognised financial service providers in the NGCA.
- **Coordination** is a cross-cutting issue, covered in the majority of the sections of this report. The existing literature suggests that while some challenges remain, most of the coordination issues experienced in the early stages of the humanitarian response have now been addressed.
- There is consensus in the literature on the need to increase **localisation** efforts, both to increase government ownership of the humanitarian response and to build the capacity of local NGOs.
- There are systems in place to ensure **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)** in the GCA, but there are significant gaps in AAP in the NGCA.

Prevent:

- Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the **humanitarian-development nexus**, and on transitioning from humanitarian interventions to development assistance. The literature highlights the differences in the types of support needed in the GCA and the NGCA, stating that while activities in the latter should continue, in the former, emphasis should be on the provision of support that cannot be provided by the government.

There is a limited body of literature on lessons learned from humanitarian interventions in the Ukraine. Evaluations provide some evidence on best practices and areas for improvement, but these are limited in number. While these evaluations often provide lessons learned and recommendations for specific organisations, many of these are applicable for other international humanitarian actors operating in Ukraine. While Ukraine has a well-established social protection system, there is limited evidence on the use of existing social protection mechanisms to channel assistance.

The existing literature on humanitarian interventions in Ukraine between 2014 and 2021 discusses persons with disabilities and the elderly from the perspective of inclusion in programming. There are also numerous gender analysis reports of conflict-affected areas, and gender is addressed in the context of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian interventions within programme evaluations.

2. Protect

Protection of the elderly and persons with disabilities

There is consensus in the literature that insufficient efforts were made to tailor humanitarian interventions to the specific needs of the elderly population in conflict-affected areas in Ukraine. The diagram below (*Figure 1*) outlines the intersectional

vulnerabilities of people in isolated settlements in the GCA (Government Controlled Areas). This highlights the large number of elderly people in need of humanitarian assistance. The number of elderly people in need of assistance in the NGCA is reportedly even higher, although the research undertaken for this report was unable to find data on the size of the elderly population in need in the NGCA. According to a report by UNDP, women make up two thirds of the population over 65 in Ukraine (UNDP, 2020, p. 17). While humanitarian actors, including DG ECHO, were reportedly aware of the large number of elderly people in need of assistance, they failed to adapt their approaches to meet their needs. Instead, they focused on contextually 'less relevant groups,' such as households with children and pregnant/lactating women (EC, 2020, p.14). It is important to note that the elderly were categorised as 'vulnerable,' and thus did receive support. This support was not, however, tailored to their specific needs. An evaluation of DG ECHO's humanitarian response in Ukraine in the period 2014-2018 notes while some improvements were made, there were still insufficient measures were in place to adequately meet the needs of the elderly in 2020 (EC, 2020, p. 15).

Given the relatively large elderly population in conflict-affected areas, there is also a significant population of persons with disabilities and those suffering from chronic illnesses, with many individuals having overlapping vulnerabilities, as shown in *Figure 1*. While Humanity and Inclusion was active in Ukraine in 2015, they were unable to secure funding for activities in 2016 (EC, 2020, p. 14). Subsequent programming has mainstreamed disability, and HelpAge undertook some activities targeting the elderly and persons with disabilities,¹ but programmes for persons with disabilities remain underfunded (UNOCHA, 2020a, p. 22). Disability and MHPSS (Mental Health and Psychosocial Support) were made priorities in the European Commission's 2018 HIP (Humanitarian Implementation Plan), although it was clear that these needs existed prior to this (EC, 2020, p. 20). While other reports and evaluations acknowledge the need for specific support for the elderly and persons with disabilities (e.g. UNOCHA, 2020a and DRA, 2018), the research undertaken for this report did not uncover any specific lessons learned from interventions focusing on experiences of aiding these groups.

Figure 1: Intersectional Vulnerabilities in the isolated settlements

This Table has not been included for copyright reasons. The full table can be viewed at <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/180926/1/1009211722.pdf> page 2

Source: REACH (2019)

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the need for psychosocial support, especially among the elderly. It also had a significant impact on access to healthcare for conflict-affected populations, with the elderly being most affected (UNOCHA, 2021, p. 8). The pandemic also increased the need for legal assistance, as people were not able to cross the contact-line from the NGCA to get birth certificates, pensions, and social benefits. However, due to movement

¹ <https://www.helpage.org/newsroom/press-room/press-releases/ukraine-crisis-disproportionately-affecting-older-people/>

restrictions the provision of legal assistance and individual protection counselling decreased by 42 per cent and 11 per cent respectively in 2020, compared with 2019 (UNOCHA, 2020a, p. 9).

Ukraine remains one of the most mine-contaminated countries in the world, but **assistance for mine victims is extremely limited** (UNOCHA, 2021, p. 9). This point is also made in several other reports and evaluations, with a briefing paper by the Protection Cluster in Ukraine stating that mines and explosive remnants of war were responsible for 42 per cent of civilian casualties in 2018, and two-thirds of all reported child casualties in 2017 and leaving many children with disabilities. (Protection Cluster Ukraine, 2018, p. 1). The briefing paper highlights the absence of coordinated mine action in the NGCA, providing recommendations for greater action across the GCA and the NGCA. It highlights the need for expanding mine risk education activities, mine victim assistance, including trauma care and rehabilitation services, and ensuring access and prioritising capacity building, with emphasis on training and support on data collection and management, coordination and quality management (Protection Cluster Ukraine, 2018, pp. 1-2).

Addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

While a number of organisations have engaged in programming for victims of SGBV, support for women and girls, including on GBV, reproductive health and empowerment, remains underfunded (UNOCHA, 2020a, p. 22). An evaluation of the Dutch Relief Alliance's 2017 joint response in Ukraine found that it was harder to reach men than women for protection activities. In particular, mixed groups on psychosocial support were predominantly attended by women. To address this DRA planned to implement more separate groups for men and women (DRA, 2018, p. 9).

A gender analysis published by USAID in 2017 highlights the need for gender to be mainstreamed throughout humanitarian interventions and transition assistance, ensuring that female IDPs do not just receive support related to GBV, but also in the areas of political and economic empowerment and access to services (USAID, 2017, p. 102). Other recommendations in relation to gender include, ensuring that the needs of male IDPs and men in conflict-affected areas are also met, especially in relation to employment, business-development support, psychosocial support, and access to services (USAID, 2017, p. 102). The need for capacity building support for NGOs and government agencies working with SGBV survivors is also emphasised, both in terms of capacity for providing comprehensive services and as well as specialised assistance for specific groups, such as male SGBV survivors (USAID, 2017, p. 102). The gender analysis also highlights the need for humanitarian aid programmes to include services to address the psychological impacts of conflict and trauma to reduce 'unhealthy and violent behaviours among men, and also enable survivors of gender-based violence to overcome stigma and shame and access support services' (USAID, 2017, p. 102).

Humanitarian Access

Humanitarian access to the NGCA has been an ongoing challenge throughout all phases of the conflict. In the early stages of the conflict, accessibility issues for humanitarian actors were largely related to insecurity. The absence of a legal framework for international humanitarian assistance also served as a significant obstacle for humanitarian actors. Access to the NGCA was severely restricted both due to the view that humanitarian assistance was being provided to armed actors and because of restrictions imposed by the de facto authorities in those

areas. These included cumbersome accreditation processes and limitations on the kinds of activities that humanitarian actors were permitted to undertake, including on needs assessments, protection programmes and monitoring (Barbelet, 2017, p. 6). Lack of coordination between humanitarian actors was also a major obstacle to access for all. The UN refused to accept the accreditation process for access to the NGCA, whereas ICRC and the Czech NGO PIN were able to negotiate access. According to a paper published by ODI, differences between approaches taken by international actors served as an obstacle for everybody (Barbelet, 2017, p. 19).

Limited access in the NGCA means that significant numbers of people remain without access to humanitarian assistance. The End-of-Year Report for the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) highlights the disparity in achievements between the GCA and the NGCA, with about 1.17 million people reached in the former and about 266,000 reached in the latter (UNOCHA, 2021 p. 6). However, the report notes that the number of people reached in the NGCA in 2020 constitutes a 77 per cent increase on the number reached in 2019, when less than 150,000 people were reached. The disparity between GCA and NGCA is attributed to restricted access to the NGCA for humanitarians (UNOCHA, 2021, p. 6). COVID-19 restrictions further exacerbated access issues to the NGCA (UNOCHA, 2021, p. 7).

Several reports and evaluations propose solutions to address the access issues outlined above. An evaluation of the Dutch Relief Alliance's (DRA, 2018, p. 5) joint response in Ukraine in 2017 emphasises the importance of building networks and partnerships to increase opportunities for operating in the NGCA. Moreover, the evaluation of the European Commission's humanitarian assistance in Ukraine between 2014 and 2018 states that there should be a 'two-track' HIP with separate sections for the GCA and the NGCA, to enable initiatives and partners to be better tailored to the NGCA context (EC, 2020, p. 67). The same report states that there is a need to increase funding for activities in the NGCA, while continuing to provide sufficient funding for the GCA to ensure that the NGCA population receiving services in the GCA continue to receive support, to address remaining critical humanitarian needs, and to ensure ability to respond to a new displacement crisis (EC, 2020, p. 68). An evaluation of the DRA's joint response finds that purchasing winter NFIs from local suppliers in the NGCA eliminates challenges associated with transporting items through checkpoints when coming from the GCA to the NGCA (DRA, 2018, p. 10).

Several reports highlight the need for flexible and unearmarked funding to enable humanitarian actors to provide assistance to populations in the NGCA. A report published by NRC notes that there is a need to advocate for this, and for the lifting of restrictions on funding for the NGCA (NRC, 2019, p. 21). An evaluation of the EU's engagement in Ukraine in the period 2014-2018 has a similar finding. It argues that one way to reduce earmarking would be to require implementing partners to provide less details in their proposals about what they would do and how they would allocate their funding. This would give partners the flexibility to respond to changing needs and priorities (EC, 2020, p. 68).

Civil-Military Coordination

Civil-Military coordination has largely been effective. OCHA implements a civil-military coordination mechanism (CMCoord). Its role is to 'establish and maintain a dialogue with the military and other armed forces, including the NSAGs, which includes the development of

specific mechanisms and the promotion of a principled approach to cooperation with the military' (R2P, 2019, p. 14). A report on humanitarian access by Right to Protection states that CMCoord is highly efficient (R2P, 2019, p. 14). The research undertaken for this report did not uncover any lessons learned specific to CMCoord. However, a lessons learned report published by the Logistics Cluster emphasises the need for clarity on the respective roles and responsibilities of the Logistics Cluster and OCHA when it comes to civil-military coordination, on issues such as access negotiation and convoy movements. The report recommends that roles be defined at the global level (Logistics Cluster, 2016, p. 25).

A report by DCAF on the role of CSOs in Ukraine provides several recommendations for the Government of Ukraine, which could also be adopted by international actors. The report suggests that, given the military's efforts to engage directly with conflict-affected populations, it would be useful to facilitate greater CSO involvement in civil-military engagement (DCAF, 2021, p. 33). It recommends identifying those CSOs that specialise in facilitating dialogue with local communities, and those that deliver educational assistance, and providing them with additional funds and resources (DCAF, 2021, p. 33). The same report states that coordination between CSOs working on humanitarian issues and interaction with the security forces is currently weak, and that there is a need for enhanced cooperation between them to avoid 'unnecessary duplication' and to enable them to 'combine resources and expertise to tap into additional donor assistance' (DCAF, 2021, p. 33).

Protection of civilians

While significant progress has been made, measures in place for the protection of civilians could be improved. In 2018, the Ministry of Social Policy established a committee for the evaluation of applications to qualify as a 'person with disability affected by war.' Those awarded this status qualify for benefits including, free medication and healthcare, 100 per cent discount on utilities, free transportation and loan discounts (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2019, p. 13). However, currently those eligible are limited to 'civilians injured directly by the conflict and whose harms were registered properly by the police,' which means that many civilians suffering from conflict-related wounds or trauma are currently excluded (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2019, p. 13). Ukraine has drafted a National Strategy for the Protection of Civilians, which is awaiting final approval by the President (Godefroy et al, 2021). A report published by the Stimson Center describes the strategy as 'innovative' stating that if approved, the document could serve as a 'source of inspiration for updating NATO's PoC framework and PoC efforts in other countries and contexts' (Godefroy et al, 2021).

The Civil-Military Cooperation Directorate (CIMIC) was established by the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the early stages of the conflict. While CIMIC has been described as 'indispensable,' there is a need for more resources and staff to enable them to better meet the needs of civilians affected by armed conflict (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2019, p. 32). Moreover, civilians do not fully trust in the military's ability to assist them, since military assistance remains dependent on the 'goodwill' of individual military commanders (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2019, p. 32). A report by the Center for Civilians in Conflict states that rather than providing assistance itself, CIMIC could be used as a referral system, collecting information about civilians' needs and sharing this with government agencies, CSOs and international humanitarian agencies (2019, p. 33). The report also recommends regular meetings between the military and civilians, which could take the form of townhall meetings to discuss protection and assistance. (Center for

Civilians in Conflict, 2019, p. 33). A blog post published by the Center for Civilians in Conflict finds that female CIMIC officers are particularly effective, as civilians are more willing to engage with female officers, perceiving them to be 'safer' and better able to understand their positions. The blog post states that more female officers are required, as increasing the role of female CIMIC officers in civil-military dialogues would increase their success rate.²

The nature of the impact of hybrid warfare on civilians remains under researched, especially in terms of the causal relationship between hybrid conflict activity and psychological harm (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2021, p. 22). The research undertaken for this report uncovered very little evidence on the linkages between hybrid conflict activity and protection. A report by the Center for Civilians in Conflict provides similar recommendations to those outlined in the previous paragraph, emphasising the need for civil-military dialogue to reduce mistrust that could arise from information warfare (2021, p. 21). It also recommends using the existing Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), Civilian Casualty Tracking Provisional Group (CCTPG) to track and analyse incidents involving the AFU, to prevent them being used for information warfare and to increase trust between the AFU, the Government of Ukraine and civilians (Center for Civilians in Conflict, 2021, pp. 19-20).

3. Prioritise

Cash assistance

Focusing on the early stages of the conflict, a UNHCR report published in 2015 highlights the need for ensuring that cash-based interventions are adapted to local context, especially given the fact that Ukraine has a well-established social protection system in place. The same report highlights the importance of adapting coordination structures to the stage of the crisis (UNHCR, 2015). A working paper published by ODI in 2016, states that humanitarian agencies' lack of experience in Ukraine, coupled with the country's 'complex bureaucracy' served as obstacles to cash transfer programming in the early stages of the conflict. Moreover, international agencies' differing views on the coordination of cash transfers and their inclusion in the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) were also a challenge (Bailey & Aggiss, 2016, p. 1 and UNHCR, 2015, p. 5). The report also highlights the politicisation of strategy and coordination and the fact that this deflected from finding the best way to assist those in need (Bailey & Aggiss, 2016, p. 1). The report recommends that donors 'encourage aid agencies to compete for resources based on their ability to form effective partnerships, their analysis of how best to engage with the government and their capacity to deliver appropriate and efficient programming' (Bailey & Aggiss, 2016, p. 1).

A 2016 report on the appropriateness of cash transfers by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) found that cash grants distributed by bank transfer provided flexibility for households to buy goods and services that best meet their needs (CRS & Caritas Ukraine, 2020, p. 3). While government requirements for the distribution of cash meant that it took 3-5 weeks for beneficiaries to receive the funds, the report finds that in-kind distribution would have reduced this by about a week, and

² #WPS20: The Crucial Role of Female Officers in Eastern Ukraine. Available at: <https://civiliansinconflict.org/blog/wps20-the-crucial-role-of-female-officers-in-eastern-ukraine/>

that the benefits of cash distribution outweigh any slight increase in the rapidity of distribution resulting from using alternative methods (CRS & Caritas Ukraine, 2020, p. 7). An evaluation of the Dutch Relief Alliance's joint response in Ukraine in 2017, includes the need for currency fluctuations to be monitored in its lessons learned. In 2017, they were able to reach many more beneficiaries than they had initially envisaged, partly due to favourable changes in the exchange rate (DRA, 2018, p. 7).

The 2020 Ukraine Humanitarian Fund annual report highlights the lack of evidence available on the feasibility of cash transfers at a larger scale in the NGCA. Moreover, international restrictions on financial transactions in the NGCA mean that there are no reliable financial service providers to implement cash transfers (UNOCHA, 2020a, p. 29). A report by ICRC states that the absence of legally recognised financial service providers in the NGCA meant that they had to provide in-kind assistance in these areas, instead of cash (ICRC, 2018, p. 47).

The existing literature highlights the fact that, unlike in many other humanitarian contexts, Ukraine has a well-established social protection system. However, while the possibility of linking cash transfers with existing social protection mechanisms was discussed in the early stages of the conflict, humanitarian actors decided that this would be difficult to achieve in the timeframe available for the response (Bailey & Aggiss, 2016, p. 12). While Ministry of Social Protection (MoSP) lists were used as a starting point for identifying beneficiaries by some agencies, they found that these contained large numbers of inaccuracies, with one UN agency reportedly needing to eliminate 40 per cent of the list, following their own verification process. Moreover, MoSP lists did not include those who had not registered as IDPs. UNHCR was the only agency to initially deliver assistance through the MoSP, but they later shifted to debit cards to increase speed and to enable unregistered IDPs to receive assistance (Bailey & Aggiss, 2016, p. 12). The research undertaken for this report did not find more recent information on linkages between cash transfers and existing social protection mechanisms.

An evaluation of DRA's joint response in Ukraine in 2017 highlights the success of a cash-for-work activity undertaken jointly between the consortium and local authorities. It finds that the activity contributed to community rehabilitation and sustainability while also increasing local authorities' responsibility towards the community. Based on the success of this activity, the evaluation advocates undertaking similar joint activities in the future (DRA, 2018, p. 6).

Coordination

Coordination is a cross-cutting issue that is highlighted in all evaluations and reports on the humanitarian response in Ukraine in the period 2014-2021. Reports focusing on the early stages of the humanitarian response examine the impact of coordination issues on providing humanitarian assistance to affected populations in the NGCA, as discussed in the first section of this report. They also discuss the role of coordination in the provision of cash assistance, as discussed above. Subsequent reports suggest that many of the initial coordination issues relating to access have been resolved (e.g. R2P, 2018).

An assessment of the Ukraine DFID INGO Consortium for multi-purpose cash assistance finds that collaboration and coordination can result in significant costs for consortium members, and that the time and costs involved in setting up a consortium do not necessarily translate into efficiency or effectiveness gains in the short-term (CaLP, 2020, p. 20). However, the consortium model does improve members' reach, both in terms of the number of beneficiaries they can

reach and geographically. Consortia also increase members' resilience to external factors, such as access constraints (CaLP, 2020, p. 20).

Localisation

In the NGCA, using local partners or volunteers to provide assistance was a necessity in the early stages of the conflict. However, there were several challenges associated with using local groups for implementation. Differing viewpoints on the need to adhere to humanitarian principles, including on issues such as bribing officials to gain access, proved challenging. This was addressed, to some extent, by training on humanitarian principles for local partners (Barbelet, 2017, pp. 16-17).

A 2019 study by NRC finds that investing in government-led coordination and ownership of the financing response is necessary, given that Ukraine has the potential to transition to a fully government financed response in the GCA in the medium-term (NRC, 2019, p. 20). Moreover, the European Commission finds that there is a need to convert international staff positions to national staff ones, and to build the capacity of national NGOs, as well as for partnerships between international organisations and national NGOs. These steps would reportedly reduce the cost of programme delivery and increase the sustainability of interventions (EC, 2020, p. 68).

An example of successful localisation is UNFPA's provision of MHPSS services for GBV survivors. UNFPA established mobile PSS (Psychosocial Support) teams for GBV survivors in conflict-affected areas, that have been described as a 'role model' for other interventions. The programme began in 2015 and by 2019 more than 200 PSS mobile teams had been set up by local authorities in regions outside those covered by UNFPA's intervention, in addition to those established by UNFPA (UNFPA, 2019).

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

While humanitarian actors are making efforts to ensure AAP, a number of gaps remain. A UNOCHA report on AAP in Ukraine finds that humanitarian agencies operating in the GCA are undertaking a range of community engagement activities that are making a positive contribution to an accountable humanitarian response (UNOCHA, 2020b, p. 2). However, there are gaps in terms of understanding people's information needs, communication preferences, and perceptions of satisfaction with aid in the NGCA (UNOCHA, 2020b, p. 2). The report outlines several recommendations to address these gaps, including revising the HCT's Collective AAP framework, with the aim of delivering common service AAP initiatives across the humanitarian programme cycle (UNOCHA, 2020b, p. 2). The report also recommends that feedback from affected populations be discussed regularly by the HCT. In addition, the report recommends establishing an inter-agency complaints and feedback mechanism to log and track issues raised by affected populations, and the establishment of a baseline of the status of 'AAP' in the NGCA (UNOCHA, 2020b, p. 3).

4. Prevent

Humanitarian-Development Nexus

There is consensus on in the literature on the need to place more emphasis on the transition from humanitarian response to development support. An evaluation of the EU's engagement in Ukraine finds that there is a need to work more strategically on the humanitarian-development nexus (EC, 2020, p. 68). This finding is supported by numerous other evaluations and reports. Livelihoods support is an area identified as an area where there is room for improvement, both by UNOCHA and the Ukraine Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster (FSLC). Due to limited capacity, most implementing partners address immediate food needs, while paying little attention to livelihood response and support (UNOCHA, 2021, p. 7). Moreover, there has been a significant increase in unemployment in conflict-affected areas in Ukraine. A 2021 advocacy note states that investment in livelihoods activities is insufficient and needs to be scaled up. The advocacy note argues that, despite COVID-19 restrictions, conditions for scaling up activities on agricultural inputs, micro-economic initiatives, household income-generating activities, rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure, and developing risk-informed programmes on fire prevention, linking farms to markets, and value chains. The advocacy note emphasises the need for providing essential services through 'a market-based approach, community participation and strengthening systems, as well as fostering partnership' (Ukraine FSLC, 2021, p. 2).

An obstacle to the transition from humanitarian to development programming is the lack of handover from current implementing partners to incoming development actors. In particular, there is a risk of humanitarian actors' operational knowledge and expertise being lost (NRC, 2019, p. 21). Some donors have provided support to those accessing humanitarian funding to enable them to also access development funding, with a view to facilitating continuity. However, this type of assistance has been ad hoc (NRC, 2019, p. 21).

The evaluation of the EU's humanitarian assistance in Ukraine states that programming in Eastern Ukraine should be narrowed down in preparation for humanitarian exit from the GCA. In the GCA this should involve focusing on those activities that cannot be provided by the Government of Ukraine. Activities in the NGCA should, however, continue and focus should be on partners whose response capacity needs to be sustained, should there be an escalation in displacement requiring a scale up of humanitarian assistance (EC, 2020, p. 69). The same report states that those organisations providing cost-recoverable services should shift to partial cost-recovery (EC, 2020, p. 69). In addition, the report states that advocacy should be undertaken through the HCTs (Humanitarian Country Team) and cluster leads for greater involvement of government ministries and local authorities in coordination for the GCA, with a view to moving away from humanitarian clusters towards development sector coordination systems. Humanitarian agencies should also align their activities to government systems and standards, as part of the exit strategy, and move towards harmonisation of salaries so that government and non-government staff receive similar compensation for 'similar work in similar working conditions' (EC, 2020, p. 69).

5. References

- Bailey, S. & Aggiss, R. (2016). *The politics of cash: A case study on humanitarian cash transfers in Ukraine* (Working Paper 502). ODI: London. <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/the-politics-of-cash-ukraine-1.pdf>
- Barbelet, V. (2017). *Humanitarian access and local organisations in Ukraine*. ODI: London. <https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/11746.pdf>
- CaLP. (2020). *Ukraine DFID-funded INGO Consortium: Case Study Findings*. CaLP: London. <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/calp-inter-agency-collaboration-cs-ukraine-web.pdf>
- Catholic Relief Services & Caritas Ukraine. (2020). *Appropriateness and impact of cash grants distribution in Eastern Ukraine*. <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/crscuacashprogramming20142016.pdf>
- Center for Civilians in Conflict. (2021). *Entering the grey-zone: Hybrid warfare and the protection of civilians in Ukraine*. https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CIVIC_Ukraine_Report_Web.pdf
- Center for Civilians in Conflict. (2019). *Falling through the cracks: Improving Ukraine's assistance to conflict-affected civilians*. https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2019_05_UKR_REPORT_FallingThroughTheCracksFINAL_eng.pdf
- DCAF. (2021). *Civil society in Donbas, Ukraine: Organisations and activities*. Geneva: DCAF. <https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/CivilSocietyDonbas.pdf>
- Dutch Relief Alliance. (2018). *Ukraine Joint Response III: Narrative End of Project Report*. <https://aidstream.org/files/documents/Narrative-Endreport-UkJR3-20180710080755.pdf>
- European Commission. (2020). *Evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian assistance in Ukraine, 2014-2018*. Brussels: European Commission. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/evaluation_eu_humanitarian_assistance_ukraine_2014-2018.pdf
- Godefroy, B., Baran, L. & Mamutov, S. (2021). *Building bridges: Reinforcing protection*. Washington DC: The Stimson Center. <https://www.stimson.org/2021/building-bridges-reinforcing-protection/>
- ICRC. (2018). *Cash Transfer Programming in Armed Conflict: The ICRC's Experience*. Geneva: ICRC. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/cash-transfer-programming-armed-conflict-icrcs-experience>
- Logistics Cluster. (2016). *Ukraine Lessons Learned Report*. https://cdn.logcluster.org/public/logistics_cluster_ukraine_lessons_learned_report_160407.pdf
- NRC. (2019). *Ukraine Country Study: Humanitarian Financing Task Team Output IV*. <https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/190621-output-iv-ukraine-report.pdf>

Protection Cluster Ukraine. (2018). *Mine Action in Ukraine*.

https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/2018_02-protection-cluster-mine-action_en.pdf

REACH (2019) Protection Assessment of Isolated Settlements in Government Controlled Areas Along the Contact Line.

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/reach_ukr_report_protection_assessment_february_2019.pdf

Right to Protection (R2P). (2019). *Humanitarian Access in Eastern Ukraine: An Overview*. Kiev: Right to Protection.

https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/Report_R2P_humanitarian_access_in_eastern_ukraine_2019_eng.pdf

Ukraine Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster (FSLC). (2021). *Advocacy Note*.

https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/ukraine_advocacy_finalnew.pdf

UNDP. (2020). *Humanitarian Sector in Ukraine: From Humanitarian Assistance to Development Agenda through Times of Pandemic*. Kiev: UNDP.

<https://www.ua.undp.org/content/dam/ukraine/docs/Covid%20response/Humanitarian%20Sector.pdf>

UNFPA. (2019). *Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: Ukraine Case Study*.

<https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/19-255-MHPSS-Case-UKRAINE-2019-10-04-1308.pdf>

UNHCR. (2015). *Review of Cash Coordination in Ukraine*. <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/erc-ukraine-coordination-of-cash-based-interventions-web.pdf>

UNOCHA. (2021). *Humanitarian Response Plan: End-of-Year Report (January-December 2020)*.

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2020_hrp-end_of_year_20210503_eng.pdf

UNOCHA. (2020a). *Ukraine Humanitarian Fund 2020 Annual Report*.

https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/ukr_uhf_2020_annual_report_final.pdf

UNOCHA. (2020b). *Strengthening System-wide Accountability to Affected People (AAP)*.

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/report_on_revising_the_ukraine_hct_collective_aap_framework.pdf

USAID. (2017). *Gender Analysis Report: USAID/Ukraine*.

https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00mq3k.pdf

Suggested citation

Strachan, A.L. (2021). *Lessons learned from humanitarian interventions in Ukraine (2014-2021)*.

K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

DOI:10.19088/K4D.2022.046

About this report

This report is based on six days of desk-based research. The K4D research helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of a selection of recent relevant literature and international expert thinking in response to specific questions relating to international development. For any enquiries, contact helpdesk@k4d.info.

K4D services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations working in international development, led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), with Education Development Trust, Itad, University of Leeds Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), University of Birmingham International Development Department (IDD) and the University of Manchester Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI).

This report was prepared for the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and its partners in support of pro-poor programmes. Except where otherwise stated, it is licensed for non-commercial purposes under the terms of the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#). K4D cannot be held responsible for errors, omissions or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this report. Any views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of FCDO, K4D or any other contributing organisation.



© Crown copyright 2021.