

# UKRAINE RESPONSE

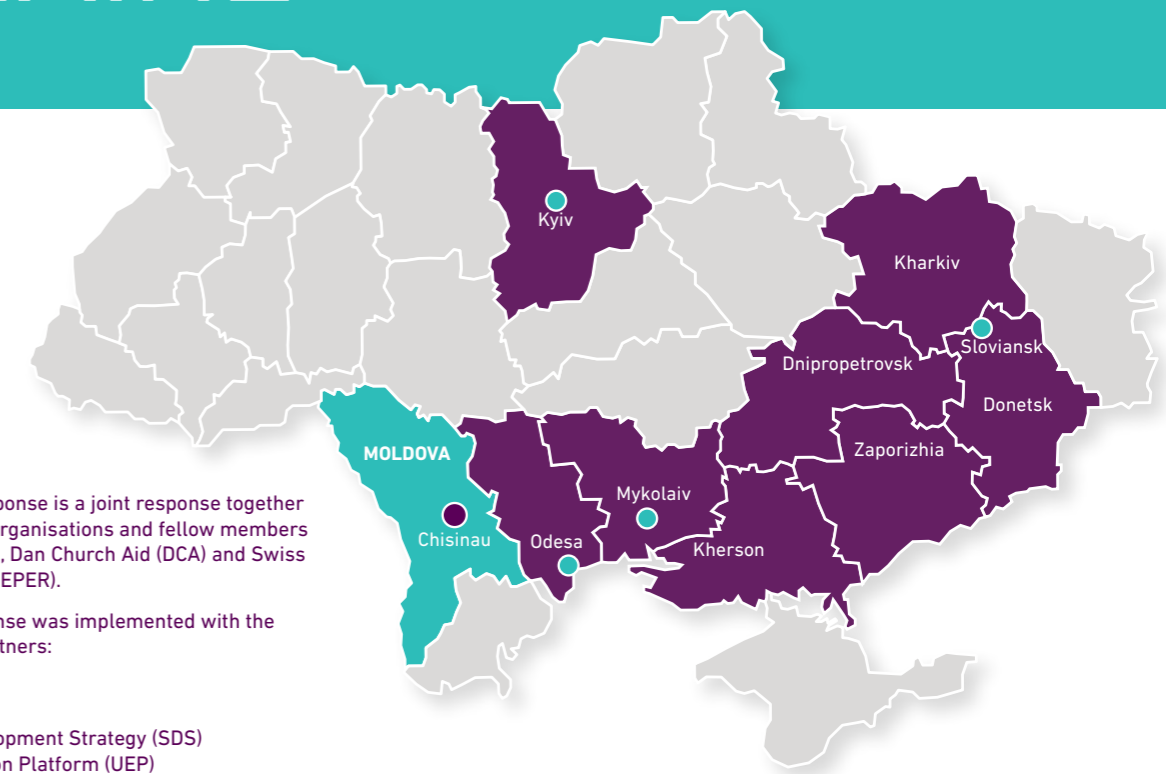


ANNUAL  
PROGRESS  
REPORT 2023



**NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID**  
actalliance

# UKRAINE



## PARTNERS

NCA's Ukraine response is a joint response together with NCA's sister organisations and fellow members of the ACT Alliance, Dan Church Aid (DCA) and Swiss Church Aid (HEKS-EPER).

In 2023, the response was implemented with the following local partners:

### Ukraine:

- Love & Kindness Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS)
- Ukrainian Education Platform (UEP)
- Iskra Voly
- Ukrainian Mental Health (UAMH)
- Faith Hope Love (FHL)
- The Way Home Foundation

### Moldova:

- Public Association CASMED
- Pro Cooperare Regionala (PROCORE)
- Centrul de Drept al Avocatilor (CDA – Law Center for Advocates)

The response is present with offices in Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Sloviansk, Odesa and Chisinau.

## AREAS OF INTERVENTION

COUNTRY/PROVINCE (OBLAST)	
<b>Ukraine</b>	
Kyiv	Kyiv, Irpin
Kharkiv	Bohodokhiv, Krasnokutsk, Krasnograd, Yzum, Kupiyansk, Chuhuiv, Zolochiv, Shevchenkove, Koziiivka, Nova Vodolaga, Spodobivka, Prikolotne, Kharkiv
Donetsk	Krasnotorka, Siversk, Toretsk, Konstantinovka, Limanskiy, Slovyansk, Oleksandrivka, Chasiv Yar, Syvatogorsk, Sviatohirsk
Kherson	Beryslaska, Posad-Pokrovske, Vysokopillia, Mylove, Kherson, Bilozerka
Dnipropetrovsk	Dnipro, Marhanets, Pokrovkse, Tsarychanka, Petrykivka, Magdalynivka
Mykolaiv	Mykolaiv, Partyzanske, Mishkovo Pogorilove, Koravelove, Kiriakivka,
Odesa	Odesa, Berezivka, Rozdilna
Zaporizhia	Zaporizhia, Ternuvate
<b>Moldova</b>	
Balti, Falesti, Edinet, Floresti, Glodeni, Telenesti, Stefan Voda, Basarabeasca, Soroca, Gagauzia, Chisinau	Balti, Falesti, Edinet, Floresti, Glodeni, Telenesti, Stefan Voda, Basarabeasca, Soroca, Comrat, Chisinau



Oksana Maksymenko is the project coordinator at the community centre "Way Home" for internally displaced people in Odesa. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

The present report covers results and activities implemented in 2023, financed with funds from the allocation received in 2022 and 2023. Results and activities in 2022 are reported in NCA's "2022 Progress Report to the Norwegian MFA".

Throughout 2023, the war continued to wreak havoc in Ukraine. Thousands of civilians including children were killed and injured. Hospitals, schools, apartment blocks, and individual homes were destroyed. People remaining in frontline areas could live for weeks without access to food, water, and heat, all the while under threat of bombardment. Electricity, heating plants, and water supplies were systematically targeted by shelling. The disruption of livelihoods and vital social services and prolonged displacement caused a massive humanitarian and protection crisis, including a mental health crisis marked by elevated stress, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) levels. The Ukraine GBV Sub-Cluster estimates that two-thirds of Ukrainian women had been exposed to some form of Gender-based Violence (GBV) before the war, and these risks has sharply increased since the February 2022 invasion<sup>1</sup>.

NCA's response in 2023 built upon the humanitarian efforts initiated in 2022. The activities included lifesaving aid such as Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services, and integrated protection programmes covering GBV, MHPSS, and counter-trafficking, along with winterisation efforts. Within the joint responses with DCA and HEKS-EPER, NCA took the lead in planning and implementing GBV, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), and WASH initiatives, ensuring programme quality and adherence to donor regulations, seconding technical experts and with support of NCA Head Office Ukraine team.

The destruction of the Kakhovka dam in June resulted in extensive flooding along the lower Dnieper River, impacting settlements across four oblasts: Kherson, Mykolaiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhia. Many homes along the river were flooded, prompting residents to relocate. Additionally, indirect effects included disruptions to drinking water access, livelihoods, electricity due to damage to the hydroelectric plant, contamination of irrigation water, land and soil damage, loss of livestock and significant ecosystem damage. With approval from the MFA to adjust plans and budgets for 2023, NCA successfully redirected resources originally allocated for other purposes towards addressing the urgent needs of individuals directly impacted by the dam destruction.

NCA's response addresses key priorities of the Nansen Support Programme: protection of vulnerable local populations still living close to the frontline or being internally displaced in Ukraine, protection against GBV, provision of MHPSS and provision of WASH services including repairs of heating centrals and other civilian infrastructure. The response includes Moldova where humanitarian assistance is provided for both Ukrainian refugees and vulnerable Moldovan host families. The response was planned, implemented, and monitored in partnership with national or local authorities and national organisations and cluster coordination structures, complementary to responses provided by other actors. Seven local Ukrainian NGOs and three Moldovan NGOs were recruited as local partners for the implementation of parts of the response. The response aimed to ensure inclusivity in programme design and implementation, seeking partners that target specific vulnerable rights holders, such as organisations focusing on gender equality, LGBTQI inclusion, rural community development, the socially disadvantaged, and people with disabilities.



*Taisia with her baby Denys at the protection center "Children New Generation" in Dnipro. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*



*At this centre for internally displaced in the city of Dnipro, the NCA response has contributed with necessary repairs of the building and WASH installations. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*

## NCA UKRAINE RESPONSE PROGRAMMING IN THE CONTEXT

### PROTECTION PROGRAMME (GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) AND MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS))

NCA's MHPSS programming in general is integrated with the GBV programming to improve the mental health and psychosocial well-being of women and girls and survivors of GBV. In the Ukraine response, NCA is working with MHPSS on a more general basis, offering services to people, including men and boys, who need mental health and psychosocial support without necessarily being GBV survivors or women and girls at-risk.

The war has significantly increased the risk of GBV, and multiple forms are being reported, including intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and economic abuse. There is a high risk of trafficking for sexual exploitation at borders. NCA partners adopted a range of approaches which enabled effective responses to women and girls' needs and maximised the impact of the initiatives on improving the quality of life and well-being of survivors and women and girls at risk. The GBV programme was aligned with international guidelines and standards, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

Women and girls survivors of GBV deserve high-quality services and support, so NCA and partners continued the efforts to build the capacity of staff at the field level in 2023. This programme component aimed to enhance understanding and capability in case management for GBV survivors, emphasising core concepts. Specifically tailored to the Ukraine emergency GBV response, it aimed to: strengthen knowledge of GBV core concepts among case management staff, establish a survivor-centred approach to service delivery, and ensure adherence to interagency standards and procedures throughout the case management process.

NCA GBV programming promotes women and girls' rights to equal power and autonomy in all societies. Hence, the response established a Women and Girls Safe Space (WGSS) in Odesa aiming to recovery and empowering women and girls to lead their communities forward. The WGSS provided an opportunity to increase women and girls' access to immediate life-saving care and psychosocial support, including GBV case management services, which are critical to women and girls' recovery and healing process. An MoU was developed and signed with the Social Department Services of Odesa to strengthen the referral pathway for GBV cases, and the

<sup>1</sup> <https://gbvaor.net/sites/default/files/2022-05/Ukraine%20GBV%20SDR%202025%205%2022%20Final%20format%20amended.pdf>





The "Ocean of Kindness" centre in Dnipro receives elderly and people living with disabilities from areas close to the frontline. NCA has supported the centre with new windows, heating, washing machines, dryers and hygiene items. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

provision of legal aid to adopt a holistic approach to service provision and enhance service linkages in the WGSS.

In addition to the WGSS in Odesa city centre, partners established mobile teams and WGSS to reach individuals and groups in remote areas. Support was provided to people in occupied and front-line territories, internally displaced persons, military families, veterans, the unemployed, children and adolescents, parents/guardians of minors, persons with disabilities, caregivers for persons with disabilities, the elderly, employees of NGOs, survivors of GBV, and those affected by war. Furthermore, the response conducted outreach and community engagement activities to raise awareness in the community on how to support survivors to access services and how to play a role in mitigating risks.

Moldova is a country of origin for human trafficking, including sexual exploitation, forced labour and begging. Women, children, people living with disabilities and refugees are especially vulnerable to recruitment into trafficking. Due to this situation, NCA partners conducted outreach and awareness-raising activities on prevention of human trafficking. NCA GBV prevention approach in Moldova and Ukraine sought to mobilise communities to challenge norms that sanction and perpetuate violence

and engage all community members to eliminate GBV in their own lives and speak out against it with peers, and support survivors to access information and services.

NCA partners utilised the contextualised 'The Helping Hand' concept to enhance mental health literacy among adolescents through interactive games. The use of the accompanying app, along with group activities, proved effective in delivering psychoeducation sessions to adolescent girls and boys. These sessions were tailored to address their unique needs, aiding in processing experiences, managing stress, and fostering resilience.

NCA partners utilised WHO Self Help+ programme, featuring five stress management sessions, to equip participants with vital coping tools. NCA partners conducted individual and group counselling sessions, they addressed the specific needs of each participant, helping them process their experiences, manage stress, and build resilience. The sessions incorporated a range of therapeutic techniques, including art therapy, music therapy, and mindfulness exercises.

Recognising the importance of equipping professionals with the skills and perspectives needed for this challenging work, supervision sessions for Mental Health

and GBV specialists were conducted, including cognitive behavioural therapy, gestalt therapy, psychodynamic therapy, positive therapy, Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), multimodal therapy, and psychiatric supervision. Supervisors possess extensive expertise in their respective therapy approaches and are equipped to assist specialists in delivering the most effective support to individuals in need.

## OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

A total of 4,664 women, men, girls, boys and non-binary were reached with GBV and MHPSS services, of these were 1,827 users of the WGSS. 301 cases were referred to specialised MHPSS services including psychiatric services, in-patient or out-patient care, and psychotherapy sessions for individuals and groups by trained psychologists and medical staff. In addition, partners successfully identified and referred cases to other MHPSS service providers for additional and necessary support.

The NCA response developed a GBV referral pathway to support responding to GBV in the operation areas, alongside the national GBV referral pathway developed by the national GBV sub-cluster. The purpose of the referral pathway is to support coordination among service providers to meet survivors' needs. It not only coordinates service delivery and facilitates survivor's access to services, but partners also use it to advocate for survivor's access to services, monitor service delivery, and follow up with survivors. NCA partners continued to monitor and audit the referral pathways within the areas of operation and found 100% have updated operational referral pathways. In addition, dignity kits were distributed to 1,925 women and girls.

Community-based prevention activities were designed to challenge attitudes, behaviours, and social norms related to GBV, integrating with sectors like WASH for culturally adapted approaches. NCA partners trained 303 staff, including non-GBV personnel, on GBV concepts and safe disclosure to enhance their ability to identify and refer cases safely. Through diverse approaches, partners raised awareness among 24,471 community members in Ukraine and Moldova, promoting shifts in social norms and disseminating information about accessing GBV services safely.

Several trainings were organised for staff and partners. A total of 233 staff members were trained on providing quality, age appropriate, focused PSS. The GBV and Protection team consisting of social workers, case workers, psychologists, medical health professionals, and legal assistants were all trained on WHO's Self Help+. It is a stress management programme that provides essential tools and techniques to help individuals cope with emotional and psychological impact of war. The teams

adopted the toolkit and delivered the sessions at the WGSS and centres under the supervision of the specialist. 102 case workers from partner organisations were trained on case management for survivors of GBV. The five-day training focused on reinforcing the knowledge of GBV core concepts among case management staff. The training strengthened the skills and knowledge on the provision of care for GBV survivors, which outlines a survivor-centred approach and process. Another three and a half day training course focused on providing duty and self-care support for GBV first responders. The course recognises the emotional challenges and stress that humanitarian work in response to GBV can bring, particularly in conflict contexts like Ukraine.

In Moldova, partners reached 13,219 community members by disseminating electronic leaflets on GBV prevention through Viber, Telegram and WhatsApp groups composed by refugees from Ukraine. Hundred posters containing GBV-related information and the related services available online, were produced and placed in Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs), public institutions and host community centres. Twenty-two GBV information sessions, attended by a total of 481 refugees and local community members, were conducted in Chişinău, Soroca, Căuşeni, Ştefan Vodă, Comrat, Basarabeasca, Edineţ, Făleşti, Floreşti, Bălţi, Glodeni, Teleneşti. Due to the high risk of trafficking at the borders between Moldova and Ukraine, 179 women, men, girls, and boys were reached on information session raising awareness on prevention of human-trafficking. A total of ten sessions were held in Comrat, Chişinău, Glodeni on the theme "Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings". The information session provided an access point for women and girls to access legal information and counselling on trafficking.



Protection coordinator (GBV/MHPSS) Jennifer Van Wyck (left) facilitating a training session in Mykolaiv. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid



# RESULT CASE 1

## FINDING SANCTUARY AMIDST CONFLICT: INNA'S EXPERIENCE OF THE HELPING HAND CENTER



*Inna Leonidovna together with GBV officer Tatiana Andronenko from HEKS-EPER during distribution of dignity kits. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*

The Helping Hand center opened its doors in April 2023, offering a range of services that include the provision of care for GBV survivors, psychosocial support, other relevant activities for women and girls at risk and affected by the war. Its activities are twofold: one aspect involves offering services aimed at creating a safe environment to share experiences and address different type of violence, discrimination, abuse and war-related mental health issues through services and activities like GBV case management, art therapy and psychological support sessions. The other aspect involves empowering and building confidence by acquiring new skills, such as language or IT courses, which can lead to income-generating opportunities.

Thanks to volunteers at the collective center for refugees, Ms. Inna became aware of the "Helping Hand" support center in Odesa, which provided her with vital assistance during a time of great need. Originally from Kherson, her hometown faced occupation from the onset of the full-scale war, compelling her to remain in the city despite the dangers. Following the city's liberation, intensified Russian shelling made Kherson increasingly unsafe, particularly in the vicinity of Inna's residence. Consequently, she made the decision to relocate to Odesa in pursuit of safety.

The "Helping Hand" support center played a crucial role in assisting Inna during this transition period. Through the center's programs, including language classes (Ukrainian and English), self-help sessions, art therapy, and access to psychologists, Inna was able to adapt to the challenges of her new life, combat feelings of isolation, and cope with the trauma of war.

In addition to these services, Inna also received practical support in the form of dignity kits, for which she expressed deep gratitude. The supplies and support services were facilitated by the HEKS-EPER team operating within the center, made possible through the funding provided by the Norwegian Church Aid.

Overall, Inna's experience underscores the importance of humanitarian aid in providing essential assistance to individuals affected by conflict. The support received from the "Helping Hand" center and its partners significantly contributed to Inna's ability to navigate the difficulties of displacement and rebuild her life in a safer environment.

# RESULT CASE 2

## CHILDREN OF THE WAR

**"When the children come to us, they are nervous and stressed, and many struggle with nightmares during the night and trauma during the day. With play, warmth, and psychological support we try to recover the child in these war-affected children," says psychologist Oleksandra Popasna.**

On a centre for families that are fleeing the war, we meet a handful of children who sit and concentrate over colourful drawings in a small classroom. They have come to the city of Dnipro together with their families from different war-torn areas of Ukraine. On the centre, where Norwegian Church Aid has ensured access to water, showers, and toilets, they get shelter, food, and psychological aid, and can participate in a broad range of activities.

*"Affected by their experiences, the children are quiet, withdrawn and scared when they come here. They sleep and eat poorly. Together with highly educated and experienced coworkers we give them a careful transition to other thoughts with the help of play and meetings with children in the same situation," says psychologist Oleksandra.*

*"When the children were drawing animals yesterday, they were suddenly crying. Many of them had to abandon their pets when they fled and are now sad and imagine them to have been killed by the bombs. It is tough to see such reactions in children, but this is also when we must get them to other and better thoughts with consolation, closeness and support."*

*"They are very nice here," says five-year-old Dasha and finishes her drawing of doves of peace, flying over a map of Ukraine. "The best thing I know are my new friends. And colouring."*



*Together with her family five-year-old Dasha receive shelter, food, psychosocial assistance and a large variety of activities. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid*



## WASH PROGRAMME

Indiscriminate attacks on power plants and water supply lines, including the breach of the Kakhovka dam in June 2023, have had significant and multiple impacts on the WASH situation and WASH service delivery to affected populations throughout 2023. This included interruptions in water supply, limited functionality of sanitation systems, and reduced access to basic hygiene material, especially for people with multiple vulnerabilities. In addition, district heating systems were impacted, as technical water pipe streams were damaged, exposing millions of Ukrainians to the harsh effects of the winter. The remaining populations in areas close to the frontline were faced with immense barriers to meeting their minimum requirements for water, sanitation, and hygiene.

In this context, NCA partners cooperated closely with key WASH duty bearers (Vodakanals and municipalities) and WASH cluster partners to design an effective, coordinated, and relevant response, aimed at addressing immediate needs, with additional considerations for durable solutions and sustainability. As such, the WASH response focused on increasing access to safe water through the establishment of new water points and ensuring uninterrupted water supply through the provision of generators and key equipment and materials for water network maintenance to water utilities (street network pipes, pumps, converters, and other accessories), in areas in Mykolaiv, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia oblasts. NCA partners also supported the restoration of a critical part of the district heating piping system in Mykolaiv city, ensuring heating supply to several thousand households. In addition, emergency water supplies were distributed to affected communities close to the frontline in Donetsk oblast as a last-mile option. Finally, NCA partners supported persons with disabilities and persons with limited mobility (elderly persons with health impairments but without official disability status) with additional hygiene material and other basic hygiene essentials, thereby improving their overall health and dignity.

### OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

A total of 277,482 people were reached through coordinated and complementary WASH assistance, spanning across several communities in five oblasts (Mykolaiv, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Donetsk). Activities ranged from repairing or upgrading large scale WASH infrastructure in urban and semi-urban areas,

direct cooperation with and support of key duty bearers and stakeholders, hygiene/NFI assistance to vulnerable individuals, such as people with disabilities and the elderly, and finally last-mile support to populations in close proximity to the frontline.

NCA partners supported the provision of solid waste management services in communities in Dnipropetrovsk, that host a large number of IDPs, benefiting 1,017 persons. This took place utilising a cash-for-work modality, employing 52 persons, based on vulnerability criteria. The support of 52 people with paid work which provided them with additional income will help them cover their basic needs, including food, housing, and transportation. The generators that were distributed in three communities (reported below under Output 3.3 for water) had an indirect impact on sanitation, as the WASH authorities that received them used them for multiple purposes, based on their need and given that sanitation services were also impacted by attacks on power supply infrastructure and subsequent power cuts, for example for de-watering of floodwater.

A total of 261,323 people were supported with essential and improved water supply services, through the below:

**New water points:** NCA partners drilled and installed five new drinking water points, in a containerised form, including all equipment and material, tap stands, and water treatment system. This was implemented in one location in Mykolaiv Oblast (Mykolaiv city), one in Zaporizhia oblast (Ternuvate town), and three in Dnipropetrovsk oblast (two in Marhanets city and one in Pokrovkse village). Two boreholes were drilled in Kherson Oblast, while one additional borehole was planned, but was not completed during 2023. The new water points ensured access to safe drinking water for targeted communities that have been either cut from the network or did not have enough functioning water supply systems.

**Support undisrupted safe water supply:** This was achieved through the direct provision of material and equipment, such as water pipes, cables, and pumps, to Vodakanals, who are the key duty bearers responsible for



Emergency water distribution in Siversk, Donetsk region.  
Photo: Yana Tanchak/HEKS-EPER



WASH Coordinator Damian Seal at the pipe that supplies heating to 160,000 people in Mykolaiv, Ukraine.  
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

operating and maintaining water supply and providing WASH services to the targeted population, including in frontline areas. This is in line with WASH cluster guidelines, and in coordination with the Vodakanal Cell, and it took place following standard procedures on how the material and equipment were handed over and utilised. The communities that were supported were Ternuvate, in Zaporizhia Oblast, and Bilozerka, in Kherson Oblast.

NCA partners also procured and delivered three generators in communities across Donetsk that were used as backup power sources during long power outages and blackouts. This included:

- a 22-kVA generator to the administrative building in Krasnatoroka, also supporting the “Unbreakable” point, a key facility providing essential services to villagers, including acting, among others, as a warming centre during winter.
- a 22-kVA generator to the hospital in Konstantinovka that also ensured uninterrupted operation of critical infrastructure, particularly the therapeutic department of the multidisciplinary intensive care hospital, and
- a 65 kVA generator in Syvatogorsk at the Vodokanal that ensured uninterrupted operation of the water purification station, providing clean water to the remaining residents of Sviatohirsk.

**Emergency water supply:** In response to the urgent request by affected communities in Siversk and Chasiv Yar, both located in close proximity to the frontline, a swift and coordinated effort was undertaken to procure and distribute 13,823 bottles containing 6 litres of water. The activity supported the remaining population, that has been forced to live in the basements of buildings and other shelters for protection from ongoing armed clashes and heavy bombardment.

**District Heating:** NCA's partner supported the restoration of heating services in Mykolaiv city, through the provision of an industrial water treatment unit for the system and the replacement of approximately 300m of mains pipe and eroded pipes for a residential block identified as predominantly elderly social housing. This project was completed in time and was put in use on October 15th, providing effective protection from the harsh effects of winter.

NCA partners distributed personal hygiene items to 1,460 persons with disabilities and persons with limited mobility (elderly persons with health impairments but without official disability status). This initiative has helped improve hygiene conditions and provide basic hygiene essentials, including adult diapers, thereby reducing the risk of illnesses, and improving the overall health of residents.



## MULTIPURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE AND WINTERISATION PROGRAMME

The distribution of winter clothing and sleeping bags initiated in 2022 continued during the first part of the year, while NCA's main contribution in 2023 to alleviate peoples' suffering during winter was by ensuring the heating supply (mentioned as part of the WASH response). MPCA in Kherson (Kherson Oblast) and in Konstantinovka (Donetsk Oblast) provided vital support to the most vulnerable people affected by the war. When the Kakhovka dam incident happened, the NCA response provided vouchers to people directly affected by the flooding. In Moldova, voucher assistance was given to Ukrainian refugees and vulnerable host families. NCA's partners participated in cash working groups (CWGs) both in Ukraine and in Moldova and the amounts were aligned with CWG standard allocations. Overall, the data reflects a successful cash and voucher assistance programme that efficiently reached and supported a larger number of beneficiaries, accurately disbursing funds to address immediate needs with the aim to reach positive outcomes such as improved well-being and basic needs coverage. HEKS-EPER is registered in the de-duplication system operated by World Food Program (WFP), utilising blockchain to verify whether the potential beneficiary is already recipient of any current or planned cash assistance.

### OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Winterisation: 493 sets of winter clothing and sleeping bags were distributed as a continuation of activities initiated in 2022. Additionally, power banks were distributed in Kharkiv and Donetsk to help families with limited access to electricity to charge their electronic devices throughout the day.

The response successfully reached 8,948 beneficiaries with multipurpose cash assistance. This indicates efficient use of available funds to extend assistance to more individuals. Each beneficiary received the CWGs recommended amount of 6,660 UAH to cover their basic needs for three months, enabling them to utilise the funds according to their needs. The majority of beneficiaries allocated the largest amount of their funds towards essential expenses such as medication (23.57%), rent or shelter (19.11%), childcare or protection (15.61%), and food (14.65%). Generally, people were satisfied with the amount of cash received. The majority were very satisfied (81.85%), while the remaining individuals were somewhat satisfied (18.15%).

In addition, 1,200 beneficiaries directly affected by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam received vouchers valued at 5,000 UAH to help them fulfil their immediate needs, including water, food, hygiene products, clothing,



Temnous Marina Ivanivna with winter clothing kit in Koziivka. Photo: Danielle Preiss/Norwegian Church Aid

and household items. Vouchers were chosen instead of cash to ensure a fast and effective response in a situation where many services were disrupted, and it was feared that relaying on bank services would cause delays. The findings from the Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) highlighted that the value of the vouchers received was sufficient to address people's primary needs resulting from the flooding, as reported by 96.03% of survey respondents.

In Moldova, where government regulations do not allow humanitarian actors other than UN organisations and direct UN partners to distribute cash, 2,033 refugees and vulnerable host families in the districts of Balti, Falesti, Edinet, Floresti, Glodeni, Telenesti and Stefan Voda received vouchers of 2,000 MDL (104 EUR). Both in Ukraine and Moldova the vouchers were redeemable at supermarkets nationwide, allowing beneficiaries who relocated to other regions to benefit from them without geographic constraints. A restriction was implemented wherein alcohol and tobacco products were excluded from coverage.

## RESULT CASE 3

### SOLIDARITY THROUGH VOUCHERS: HOW THE BURLACU FAMILY OVERCAME CRISIS WITH FOOD ASSISTANCE

Days spent in an underground bunker amid constant bombardments. This is the story of the Burlacu family from the Kharkov region, Ukraine.

The head of the family, Vladimir, a 45-year-old man originally from Moldova, finally decided to take his wife and 13-year-old child and flee from the war, leaving behind everything they had built over a lifetime. Facing relentless attacks, the Burlacu family was forced to make the painful decision to leave behind everything they had built in Kharkov. In the midst of danger, they returned to Vladimir's childhood home in northern Moldova.

"My wife is from Ukraine, and 20 years ago, I made the decision to move our livelihood to the neighboring country, where we together started a family. I never believed we would have to leave our home because of war, but we returned to Moldova without practically taking anything," says Vladimir.

The food voucher offered by Norwegian Church Aid had a profound impact on the Burlacu family's life during this crisis period.

"Thanks to this money, our family managed to survive during this stage. We immediately went to the store and bought food. We were able to use these 2000 lei for a month because we bought only the essentials. But I want to tell you that help came just in time because we had absolutely no income or means of support," Vladimir recounts with difficulty.

This helping hand extended in the most difficult moment gave them a ray of hope, both to Vladimir and to his wife and daughter, and this can already be seen on their faces, now brightened by surprise. The entire family hopes to return someday to Ukraine, to the house where their daughter grew up, but in the meantime, their life is taking shape here, in Moldova, with daily challenges and distance learning lessons.



Photo: Andras D. Hajdu/HEKS-EPER



## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

### IMPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS ON PROGRAMMING

With the frequency and intensity of hostilities, monitoring of the situation to determine access to areas represented a major challenge. Coordination with other humanitarian actors and specialised organisations like International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO), as well as local knowledge was pivotal. Continuous coordination and collaboration with local authorities was paramount to establish and maintain access, prepare for activities, ascertain the urgent need of the population and obtain updated information including lists of residents. During the implementation of the response in 2023, the access was not hindered in a way that impacted the response's course, but sometimes adjustments had to be made, for instance, change to another, nearby location or adjusting the time plan. For example, due to high shelling risks, local partner Iskra Voly had to change the planned distributions of hygiene items in November and December to one simultaneous distribution in December.

The destruction of the Kakhovka dam created access challenges, since both riverbanks were extensively mined, and many mines were displaced because of the subsequent flood. The flood also released a significant quantity of chemicals, along with biological waste, which contaminated water sources. HEKS-EPER had already been working in the area and staff were able to gain access thanks to established contacts and networks.

For the response in Moldova, there were no challenges with access in 2023.

Overall, the response successfully addressed the challenges of humanitarian access, with proactive risk management, collaboration, and adaptation to changing conditions as key success factors.

### IMPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES ON PROGRAMMING

The humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, independence, and humanity were upheld in all phases of the response. Additionally, the response employed a

“Do No Harm” approach, which involved analysing both the intervention and the context to mitigate any potential exposure to security risks. This approach aimed to ensure that the assistance provided did not inadvertently exacerbate existing tensions or vulnerabilities within the community.

**Humanity:** Repairing the district heating network in Mykolaiv provided heating for 160,000 residents, as well as electricity. Water supply services were provided to vulnerable populations, hygiene kits were procured and distributed to persons with disabilities. Gender balance was emphasised throughout project implementation, advocating for the dignity of every individual and people were assisted, irrespective of origin or affiliation. By providing cash or voucher assistance, the response ensured that beneficiaries had access to essential goods and services, thereby protecting their life and health while at the same time empowering them to make choices according to their own priorities and preferences. In some hard-to-reach areas close to the frontline, where markets did not function because of the war, in-kind assistance has been provided to vulnerable people, while at the same time encouraging those who remained living there to heed government advice to evacuate.

**Impartiality:** The guiding principle of impartiality was strictly adhered to in the beneficiary selection process. Selection criteria were defined based on the needs and vulnerability of individuals affected by the war, ensuring that assistance was provided regardless of gender, religion, class, political beliefs, nationality, or race and based on objective criteria rather than any form of bias. Parts of Eastern Ukraine are deeply affected by complex intra-community dynamics for instance between people who stayed during the Russian occupation and people who fled and then returned when areas were recaptured by Ukraine. To navigate this challenging situation, the response has preferred direct implementation rather than working with local partner organisations in these areas. The presence of own staff on the ground made it possible to verify distribution lists and ensure impartiality and neutrality of targeting, selection and execution of cash and voucher assistance. In Moldova, humanitarian assistance was provided to both refugees and host communities. Open tenders were conducted during procurement to ensure transparency and avoid discrimination among contractors.

*Humanitarian Operations Team Leader Renata Marie Ellingsen together with Olga Marenich from our partner HEKS-EPER at a shelter in Kostiantynivka, 15 km from the front line in Ukraine. The center offers activities for children and adults, and NCA has distributed both cash and hygiene articles to internally displaced people.*  
Photo: Yana Tanchak/HEKS-EPER



**Independence:** Procurement and funding procedures were conducted in accordance with professional standards, preventing the influence of subjective motives of staff or organisations on these processes. Projects did not impose their agenda but responded to specific requests from local authorities, demonstrating independence from vested interests. Assistance was provided based on assessed needs and humanitarian principles without undue pressure or influence from external factors.

**Neutrality:** The response collaborated with local governing structures and communities, as well as civil society actors, ensuring alignment with local needs and avoiding interference with political agendas. There were no political or ideological motives, the organisation focused solely on humanitarian needs.

### RISK MANAGEMENT

The response in Ukraine is characterised by significant risk, especially for operations that are conducted on the frontline and neighbouring areas where constant shelling poses a threat to the safety of staff members, partners and contractors, as well as the beneficiaries. Constant interaction and coordination with local authorities have been paramount to manage risk and gain access to populated areas in high-risk territories. Careful planning and risk assessing at all stages of the response, utilising various measures including documentation, collaboration, monitoring and learning from experience helped to minimise risks encountered during implementation. HEAT training is mandatory for all staff deployed from NCA and for all local staff working close to

frontline areas. Personal protective equipment and first aid kits have been purchased. The personal protective equipment is available in the car for all field trips (to be used if needed) while staff always carry first aid kits..

In Moldova, due to the mobility of refugees between Moldova and Ukraine, coordination with the authorities is essential to establish stable and reliable channels for delivering and monitoring assistance.

Given the volatile context, changes can occur unpredictably, necessitating flexibility and agility to adapt to new circumstances and requirements. In 2023, the re-direction of activities to respond to the needs of people directly affected by the Kakhovka dam destruction is the most significant example of the need to adapt quickly and respond to a new crisis.

**Internal risks** in working with contractors, including delayed work execution, changes in contractor personnel, difficulty in finding contractors meeting quality, time, and cost requirements, especially for suppliers of mental health and psychosocial services. Engaging additional specialists, planning longer therapy terms and supplies, and hiring full-time staff made it possible to manage this risk.

**Financial risks** associated with changes in the actual cost of work exceeding the initial budget. Cost savings and redistribution helped to cover budget overruns. Bureaucratic risks leading to project implementation delays and sometimes loss of locations to other actors, due to lengthy permit and approval acquisition processes. Agility, flexibility and timely linkage to authorities with clear explanation on project objectives helped with getting the necessary green lights.



**Weather risks** associated with changing weather conditions during project implementation. Adverse weather conditions can lead to work delays especially in construction interventions, resulting in additional costs and inconvenience to consumers. Therefore, the driest month(s) was chosen for work execution.

**Human rights, including the rights of people with disabilities:** Feedback collected from beneficiaries and the project staff stated that the project effectively addressed the diverse needs of individuals, taking into account factors such as gender, disability, and vulnerability. Elderly individuals, those with limited abilities, and mothers with young children were prioritised, allowing them to receive assistance promptly and bypass long queues.

**Women's rights and gender equality:** NCA partners focused on gender equality as a cross-cutting commitment in all its projects to make them more effective and sustainable and to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. Programmes did not discriminate based on gender and actively focused on ensuring access to services for all.

## PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE AND PREVENTION OF FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

NCA's response is guided by the ACT Alliance Code of Conduct Policy (2016) and Norwegian Church Aid's (NCA) Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) and Child Safeguarding (CS) Policy (2021). These policies extend to all NCA staff and affiliated personnel, encompassing temporary staff, external consultants, volunteers, and interns. NCA's sister organisations and fellow members of the ACT Alliance, Dan Church Aid (DCA) and Swiss Church Aid (HEKS-EP-ER) are equally committed to the ACT Alliance Code of Conduct Policy and have their own PSHEA and safeguarding policies.

Various safeguarding processes and tools have been put in place to ensure protection from SHEA and prevent aid diversion from occurring. These include but are not limited to Anti-corruption policy, Code of Con-

duct trainings, trained SHEA Focal Points, Memoranda of Understanding with partners and authorities, Field Financial and Administrative Guidelines, Feedback, Complaint and Response Mechanism, and regular monitoring of activities. Any reported suspicion of SHEA or aid diversion would be subject to immediate internal investigation to ensure that circumstances leading to such misconduct (if proved by the investigation) do not repeat, and a report would be submitted to the donor in due course. The investigation may be accompanied or followed by activity suspension, HR disciplinary measures, suspension of payments, and others. Exact measures would always depend on the type of allegations and the investigation's findings.

In 2023, NCA complaints mechanism didn't receive any SHEA-related cases in Ukraine. However, factors such as limited public understanding of the concept, low awareness of gender roles and power imbalances, and competition over scarce resources, particularly in remote regions, highlight the need for careful risk management. NCA's programme representatives are participating in the Ukraine PSHEA working group.

## WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

NCA is strongly committed to the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 and advocates for the inclusion of women across all its programming, reaffirming women's vital role in preventing and resolving conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping.

The project effectively addressed the intentions of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) by implementing activities aimed at raising awareness of GBV human trafficking, with a specific focus on women and girls affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Through targeted awareness-raising campaigns and community outreach initiatives, the project worked to inform individuals about the prevalence, impact, and consequences of GBV and human trafficking. By fostering dialogue and understanding, these activities helped challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes while promoting a culture of respect and equality.

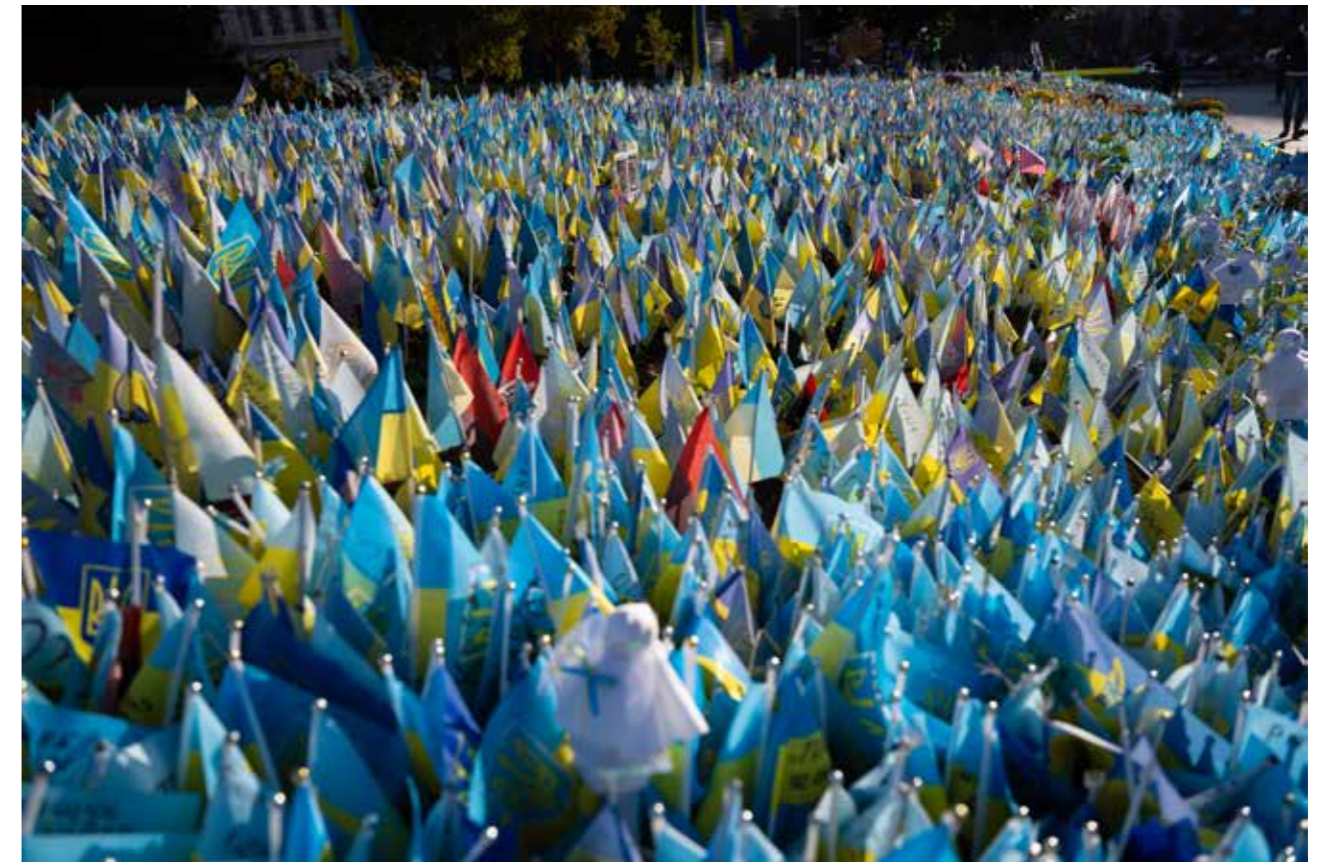
Furthermore, the project provided critical support to women and girls by offering legal counselling services aimed at informing them of their rights and available

services in cases of GBV or human trafficking. By empowering women and girls with knowledge and information, the project contributed to strengthening their ability to seek help, access justice, and navigate support systems effectively. Overall, by combining awareness-raising activities with targeted legal counselling and referral services, the project exemplified a holistic approach to addressing the objectives of UNSC Resolution 1325. Through its efforts to combat GBV and human trafficking, particularly among women and girls, the project contributed to promoting their safety, well-being, and empowerment in conflict and post-conflict settings.

## DEVIATIONS

In line with practice for the SPA agreement between NMFA and NCA 2020–2024, NCA did not submit a results framework with targets specific for the Ukraine response in 2022 and 2023. This is why results are presented without comparison with targets.

High shelling risk led to the suspension of borehole installation by one contractor in Kherson oblast, leaving one borehole incomplete and funds unused as of December 31, 2023.



All the flags represent deceased during the war. Maidan Square, Kyiv.  
Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid





Emergency water distribution in Siversk, Donetsk region.  
Photo: Yana Tanchak/HEKS-EPER

# ANNEX 1: RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Outcome 1	Indicators	Actuals					TOTAL
		girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non- binary <sup>1)</sup>	
<b>Outcome 1</b> People affected by crisis access life saving integrated protection and assistance appropriate and relevant to their immediate needs	<b>1: % NCA responses supported by NCA Head Office ERT personnel, humanitarian thematic advisors, humanitarian support functions</b>						
<b>Output 1.3</b> Response operations are predictable and effective through NCA surge capacity and emergency supplies	1.3.1: # of roster members deployed			1	5		6
<b>Output 1.5</b> People affected by crisis meet their prioritized basic needs through multipurpose cash assistance	1.5.1: # of people who are able to meet the basic needs of their households, according to their priorities	1,473	1,518	5,644	3,546		12,181 <sup>2)</sup>
<b>Output 1.6</b> People affected by the crisis are able to meet their immediate winterisation needs	1.6.1: # of people provided with support for winterisation	512	508	1,109	871		3,000

<sup>1)</sup> We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary, as we had 11 persons receiving psychosocial care that identified as such

<sup>2)</sup> Including 8,948 persons who received MPCA and 3,233 who received vouchers



Outcome 3	Indicators	Actuals					TOTAL
		girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary <sup>1)</sup>	
<b>Outcome 3</b> Communities affected by crisis demonstrate improved hygiene practices and access life-saving WASH services appropriate and relevant to their immediate needs	<b>3: # of women, girls, men and boys reached with WASH services</b>	27,641	21,584	124,645	103,612		277,482 <sup>2)</sup>
<b>Output 3.1</b> Women, girls, men and boys are enabled to improve hygiene practices and have access to hygiene items to protect against WASH related health risks	3.1.4: # of women, girls, men and boys reached through hygiene promotion activities (distribution of 3 months hygiene kit)	1,547	1,547	3,367	2,639		9,100
<b>Output 3.2</b> Women, girls, men and boys access safe, appropriate and hygienic sanitation services, including environmental sanitation (i.e. excreta management, waste management, vector control)	3.2.1: # of women, girls, men and boys with access to safe, user-friendly and gender appropriate sanitation facilities and/or services	202	221	780	657		1,860
<b>Output 3.3</b> Women, girls, men and boys access safe, equitable and sustainable quantity of water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene	3.3.1: # of women, girls, men and boys with safe, equitable and sustainable access to a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene	24,801	19,816	117,037	99,669		261,323
<b>Output 3.4</b> Women and girls of reproductive age, and women, girls, men and boys with incontinence, have access to appropriate hygiene supplies and WASH facilities that support their dignity and well being	3.4.1: # of targeted women and girls of reproductive age with access to appropriate materials and information ensuring dignified menstrual hygiene management (REVISED)	1,091		2,648			3,739
	3.4.3 # of people with incontinence with access to appropriate materials, facilities and information to manage incontinence in a dignified manner (REVISED)			813	647		1,460

<sup>1)</sup> We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary, as we had 11 persons receiving psychosocial care that identified as such

<sup>2)</sup> A total of 277,482 people were reached through a coordinated and complementary WASH assistance

Outcome 4	Indicators	Actuals					TOTAL
		girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary <sup>1)</sup>	
<b>Outcome 4</b> SGBV Survivors access life-saving, specialized SGBV services appropriate and relevant to their immediate needs	<b>4: # of survivors accessed services</b>	458	251	3,490	454	11	4,664
<b>Output 4.1</b> SGBV survivors access quality, survivor-centred and professional clinical care for sexual violence and all forms of SGBV	4.1.1: # of health care providers in referral health facilities trained on clinical management of rape			49	9		58
<b>Output 4.2</b> SGBV survivors safely access quality, survivor-centred mental health and psychosocial support focused on healing, empowerment and recovery	4.2.1: # of women, girls, men and boys using MHPSS services (only referral to specialised services)	5	3	271	22		301
	4.2.3: # of GBV staff trained to provide quality, age-appropriate, focused psychosocial support to women and girls			150	11		161
<b>Output 4.3</b> GBV survivors access appropriate, quality case management services including coordinated care and support to navigate available services	4.3.1: # of GBV caseworkers trained on quality GBV case management services			61	41		102
	4.3.2: % of survivors (who completed feedback survey) who are satisfied with the case management services provided	88.5%					88.5%
	4.3.3: % of locations with updated operational referral pathways (linking multisectoral services)	89.3%					
	4.3.4: # of women and girls using women and girls' safe spaces to meet their needs (e.g. attending one cycle of recreational /psychosocial sessions)	90		1,656			1,746
	4.3.5: # of women and girls receive dignity kits, and/or cash and voucher assistance to reduce GBV risk and promote safety, and dignity and skills training	305		1,620			1,925
<b>Output 4.4</b> SGBV programming addresses harmful social norms and systemic gender inequality and informs communities about available services	4.4.1: # of GBV programme staff, including volunteers and community workers, trained on GBV guiding principles and GBV Core Package			195	112		307
	4.4.2: # of women, girls, men and boys reached through outreach activities	1,681	1,103	17,388	4,299		24,471
<b>Output 4.5 (Ukraine response specific)</b>	4.5.1: # of women, girls, men and boys receiving psychosocial care	453	248	3,219	432	11	4,363*
	4.5.2: # of staff members trained on providing quality, age appropriate, focused psychosocial support to women, girls, men and boys			168	65		233

<sup>1)</sup> We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary, as we had 11 persons receiving psychosocial care that identified as such

<sup>2)</sup> Including 11 persons who identified as non-binary

Outcome 6	Indicators	Actuals					TOTAL
		girls 0-17 yrs	boys 0-17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary <sup>1)</sup>	
<b>Outcome 6</b> Enhanced protection of children and young people in situations of crisis and conflict	6: # of children and young people reached	102	77				179
<b>Output 6.2</b> Children are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence	6.2.1: # of children and young people accessing community-supported child-friendly spaces	102	77				179
<b>Output 6.4</b> Enhanced protection of women and children who are at risk of human trafficking, and organised prostitution	6.4.1: # of community awareness raising sessions focusing on prevention of trafficking			10			10

<sup>1)</sup> We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary, as we had 11 persons receiving psychosocial care that identified as such

Outcome 7	Indicators	Actuals					TOTAL
		girls 0-17 yrs	boys 0-17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary <sup>1)</sup>	
<b>Outcome 7</b> NCA's humanitarian response operations are environmentally sustainable and in line with humanitarian and accountability principles	7: % of humanitarian responses that have applied the Core Humanitarian Standards						
<b>Output 7.3</b> NCA's humanitarian operations are compliant with financial and procurement policies and guidelines	7.3.1: # of NCA and partner staff trained on financial management, procurement policies, human resource management, and field-based accountable monitoring			25	26		51

<sup>1)</sup> We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary, as we had 11 persons receiving psychosocial care that identified as such



**NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID WORKS WITH PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS AROUND THE WORLD IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO ERADICATE POVERTY AND INJUSTICE.**

We provide emergency assistance in disasters and work for long-term development in local communities. In order to address the root causes of poverty, we advocate for just decisions by public authorities, businesses and religious leaders.

Norwegian Church Aid is an ecumenical, diaconal organisation for global justice. We work where needs are greatest, with no intention of changing religious affiliation of our beneficiaries.

To ensure the efficiency and quality of our work, Norwegian Church Aid is a member of ACT Alliance, one of the world's largest humanitarian alliances.

The alliance consists of church-based organisations throughout the world and cooperates with organisations of other religious faiths.

**nca.no**

**Telephone: +47 22 09 27 00**

**Email: [nca-oslo@nca.no](mailto:nca-oslo@nca.no)**



**NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID**  
actalliance