Call for communication, collaboration, and cash: Perceptions of aid in Ukraine
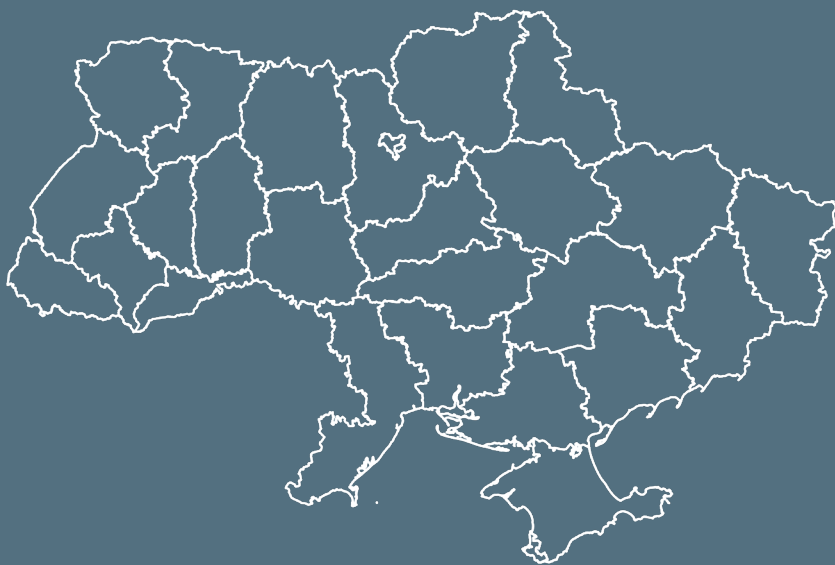
Ukraine • February 2023

GROUND TRUTH
SOLUTIONS

Contents

Additional information:

Introduction

On 24 February 2022, the onset of full-scale war in Ukraine provoked one of the biggest humanitarian crises on the European continent in recent decades. Large-scale Russian attacks forced millions to leave their homes; almost 5 million people are currently internally displaced and 8 million are refugees.[1]

Displacement and destruction leaves people in Ukraine with a wide range of needs. Previously occupied territories have endured major devastations and trauma. The east and south are grappling with large numbers of displaced people. Regions close to the frontline and non-government-controlled areas are largely cut-off from help and face continuous aggression. There is frequent population movement and ongoing border crossings in both directions. Affected people and humanitarian organisations are grappling with yet another large-scale offensive from Russia as the war enters its second year.

The well-funded 2022 humanitarian response[2] aimed to provide aid based on the views and expectations of people affected by war.[3] In this highly digitalised lower middle-income country, humanitarians set out to do aid different[4] this time. The focus on cash assistance, localisation, and accountability to affected people has never been stronger.[5] But despite best efforts, research[6,7] shows that a lot remains to be done to make this response different. Many humanitarian organisations have set up cash systems largely in parallel to existing social protection schemes. Direct funding to local organisations, at the time of research, was still at less than 1% of total funding, as low as anywhere else.[8]

In 2023, accountability to affected populations remains a key pillar of the response.[9] How do affected people in Ukraine think the humanitarian response has fared, after almost one year of full-scale war? What are their priorities for aid provision and what should be done differently?

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[1] UNHCR. 2023. "Ukraine Refugee Situation"

[2] UNOCHA. 2022. "Financial Tracking Service"

[3] UNOCHA. 2022. "Flash appeal Ukraine"

[4] CAFOD, Christian Aid, et al. July 2022. "Ukraine – An opportunity for the Grand Bargain signatories to translate their commitments to local leadership of crisis response into practice"

[5] IASC. 2022. "Joint NGO Statement on Cash Coordination in the Ukraine Crisis Response"

[6] Disasters Emergency Committee. January 2023. "Options for supporting and strengthening local humanitarian action in Ukraine: A scoping exercise report"

[7] CALP Network. 2022. "Linking Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection in Ukraine: Emergency Response inside Ukraine Thematic paper"

[8] Disasters Emergency Committee. January 2023. "Options for supporting and strengthening local humanitarian action in Ukraine: A scoping exercise report"
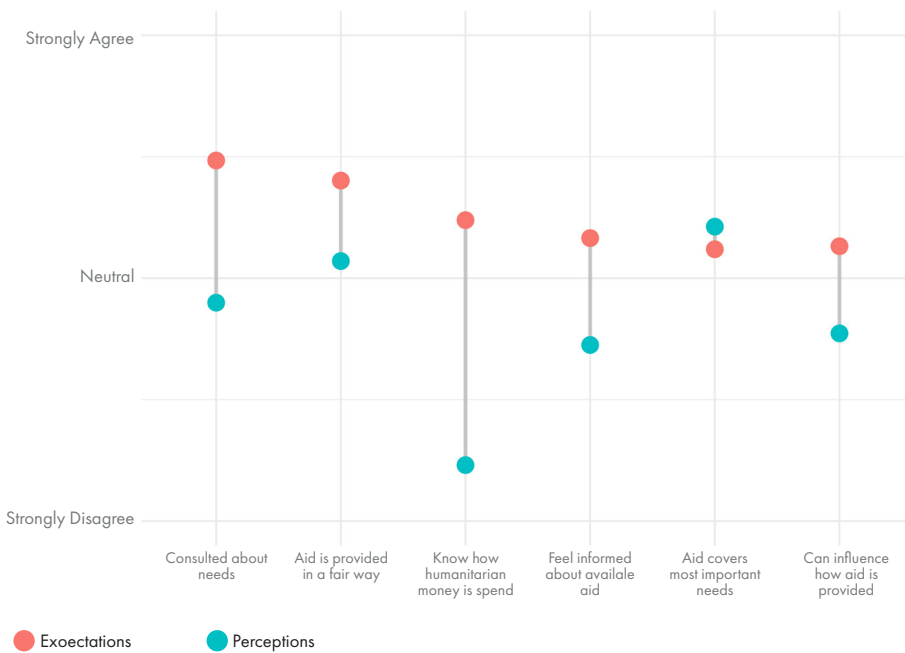
[9] UNOCHA. February 2023. "Ukraine: Humanitarian Response Plan"

Executive summary

People in Ukraine have relatively low expectations of how aid should be provided, potentially because most people in Ukraine, except people living in eastern Ukraine, had little experience with humanitarian aid before the full-scale February 2022 invasion. Qualitative enquiry helped us understand better why expectations were low, and what people do find important when it comes to how aid is provided. People want to know more about how aid provision works: how money is spent, how to access assistance, and how decisions are made about who gets what. But an overload of information in general leaves them confused about what news they can trust. People – mainly older persons – explain that while they appreciate the highly digitised humanitarian response, they need offline interaction too. Most people would like to be asked about their needs, and look for ways to connect with aid providers, especially when they have specific questions for humanitarians.

Why track expectations?

To understand how people experience a response, it is useful to know their initial expectations. Contrasting expectations with perceptions highlights priority areas for action. The graph on the left illustrates the gaps between people's perceived importance and lived realities of certain priorities. The widest gap exists between the expectation to be informed about how humanitarian organizations spend money and the actual level of awareness: whereas 60% describe this as important, only 7% feel informed.

Legend: ● Exoectations ● Perceptions

Chart categories: Consulted about needs | Aid is provided in a fair way | Know how humanitarian money is spend | Feel informed about availale aid | Aid covers most important needs | Can influence how aid is provided

Vertical axis: Strongly Agree — Neutral — Strongly Disagree

Focus group participants recognised that certain groups receive more attention from aid workers, including older persons, persons with disabilities, families with small children, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). But despite these efforts, people living in rural areas and older persons feel left behind. They find it more difficult to access aid than other groups, mainly because of this strong focus on digital communication. Older persons ask for offline registration and interaction because of a lack of digital skills, while rural communities are struggling because of the attacks on energy infrastructure and looted smartphones and computers, leaving them in need of in-person interaction as well.

Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), funded by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) and in collaboration with Open Space Works Cooperative and the Kyiv International Institute for Sociology, spoke to over 2,000 people in Ukraine between September and December 2022. Through quantitative phone surveys and qualitative group discussions and interviews with affected people and local humanitarian agencies, we aimed to understand people's views on access to assistance, aid-seeking behaviour, information access, knowledge of feedback mechanisms, fairness and we asked what respresentatives of local aid organisations want from the humanitarian response. After our data collection we organised two virtual workshops with national and international aid workers to discuss the findings and co-create recommendations.

Recommendatons in this report are based on qualitative and quantitative discussions with communites and key informants, and two workshops with humanitarians (national and international NGOs and UN agencies). They are presented as:

👥 Recommendations from communities

👥 Recommendations from local organisations

🦺 Recommendations from humanitarians

Key findings

Over half the people surveyed (**55%**) and **three-quarters** of people who self-identified as being in need have received aid or services at least once since the full-scale war began. Despite this high proportion, **over half the Ukrainians surveyed say they need more assistance**.

Aid recipients most often receive food (**77%**) and cash and voucher assistance (CVA) (**51%**). **Cash is cited as what people want most from aid providers**. People most often receive aid from international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), closely followed by governments and local volunteer groups.

Older persons (60+ years old) are less satisfied than other groups with the assistance available to them, saying they need more support than other age groups. **21%** of older persons say they are in need of assistance but have not received any. Older persons also find accessing aid more difficult than younger people. Too little CVA reaches them. Only **27%** of older persons have received CVA, compared to **51%** of the total surveyed population. Older persons feel less informed about the aid and services available to them, find that aid is provided unfairly, and do not feel their needs are considered.

Women are more likely to identify as "in need" and are more likely to apply for aid than men.

One-fifth of our respondents are internally displaced. Internally displaced people (IDPs) have received assistance more often than non-IDPs (**94% vs 68%** have received aid at least once since 24 February). However, **89%** of IDPs had at least one unmet need in the last month, and they are less satisfied with the humanitarian response than non-IDPs.

To apply for aid, people most often use official websites and apps from aid providers (51%). Older persons are more likely than younger people to use in-person or phone registration and less likely to use social media and official websites and apps.

People in Ukraine seem to have lower expectations of aid overall than respondents of GTS surveys in other crisis contexts. Expectations are highest on transparency: people want to know what aid is available and how aid money is being spent.

Three-quarters of people surveyed do not know how to ask a question, provide feedback, or make a complaint about aid and services, and only a few (**7%**) had done so at the time of data collection.

We talked to

2,023 people through quantitative phone surveys and 146 people through qualitative interviews.

Quantitative sample (n=2,023)

Gender

Women (55%): **1,114**

Men (45%): **909**

Age

18–29 (11%): **226**

30–44 (28%): **566**

45–59 (26%): **527**

60+ (35%): **704**

Aid received

Yes (75%): **512**

No (25%): **1,511**

Internally displaced

Yes (22%): **443**

No (78%): **1,580**

Main language used at home

Ukrainian (48%): **964**

Russian (26%): **536**

Both (18%): **359**

Qualitative sample (n=38)

12 Focus group discussions;

26 Key informant interviews.

Location

Storozhynets, Chernivtsi oblast;

Zdvyzhivka, Kyiv oblast;

Borodyanka, Kyiv oblast;

Koriukivka, Kyiv oblast;

Mykolaiv city.

Recommendations from communities

- Prioritise cash assistance – people say it is the most useful kind of aid.

- Create physical places in communities where people can register for aid, find relevant and up-to-date information from different aid actors / government, and can receive aid in the same place.

- Use clear language and more visuals; ensure that information is accessible to older persons and persons with disabilities – for example, by using bigger letters and pictures – and simplifying explanation on procedures and eligibility criteria.

- Increase understanding of barriers experienced by people with different disabilities (psychosocial, physical).

- Focus on emerging vulnerables groups and people who are missed by eligibility criteria, such as people who are officially registered as employed but lost their income, and relatives of veterans and military.

- Improve distributions:
    - Manage queues using digital tools, give clear instructions and provide in-person support;
    - Transport humanitarian aid to recipients with access barriers, e.g. ensure there is a system to support for example people with physical disabilities, caregivers, and families with small children in transporting aid to their homes.
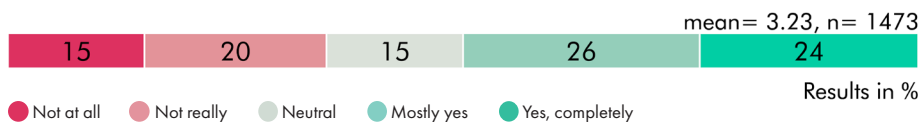
Recommendations from humanitarians

- Coordinate information sharing: create centralised information-sharing system with information about all humanitarian assistance available, actors present, and make sure face-to face information sharing is complementary to digital communication. Include local actors in the design and process. Include information on where to find specific types of aid (medication, etc) and what is available for different types of people, e.g. eligibility criteria, types of aid that are distributed, which groups of people are targeted, etc.

- Focus on accessibility and inclusion to increase access for vulnerable groups: include local actors in the process of identifying vulnerable groups of people and let them lead this process. More granularity is needed in how vulnerabilities are measured.

- Collaboration between local and international actors: integrate local NGOs into local and national coordination structures and streamline coordination and distribution processes (in line with centralised and coordinated information systems), also in order to improve relevancy of aid.

- Focus on emerging vulnerable groups because of the war – bring attention to those groups, not yet included or on the radar.

- Increase aid delivery in remote areas and especially in newly liberated areas through coordination with local organisations. In many remote areas, especially in the previously occupied territories, needs of affected people are high. Working through local organisations can address these needs fast.

- Include local organisations in the coordination space, this is necessary to improve participation with communities and local actors.

- Make sure feedback mechanisms are responsive and adequately capacitated: people need to be aware how their feedback and complaints are used: closing the feedback loop.
    - Before a feedback mechanism is implemented, adequate capacity to address feedback should be ensured;
    - A way to track the responsiveness of feedback mechanisms is adding indicators to PDM surveys on what % of people were satisfied with the response to their feedback.

Most aid was relevant, but people's needs have evolved

Early aid efforts met 59% of people's most important needs, when only 50% of people expected it to.

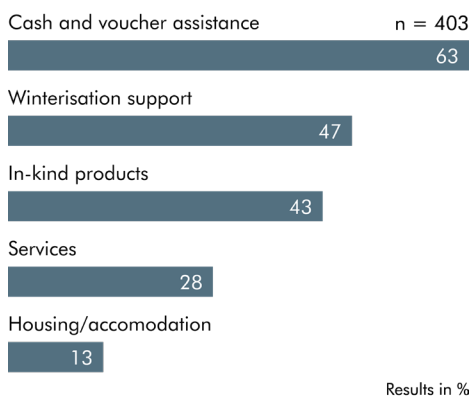**Do you expect that aid cover your most important needs?**

mean= 3.23, n= 1473

15	20	15	26	24

Results in %

● Not at all　● Not really　● Neutral　● Mostly yes　● Yes, completely

Do you think aid meets your most important needs?

mean= 3.43, n= 1479

10	17	14	38	21

Results in %

● Not at all　● Not really　● Neutral　● Mostly yes　● Yes, completely

Of the 27% of people for whom aid has not met their most important needs, 63% said cash assistance is their priority, followed by support for the cold winter. In Mykolaiv, Chernivtsi, and Chernihiv, affected people say a lack of medication – especially for chronic conditions[10] – is especially pertinent in frontline areas, because of high prices and shortages. Low supply, high prices, and the need for prescription make access to hormone therapy difficult, which affects the LGBTQIA+ community.

What needs remain unmet?

Cash and voucher assistance　　　　n = 403

| 63 |

Winterisation support

| 47 |

In-kind products

| 43 |

Services

| 28 |

Housing/accomodation

| 13 |

Results in %

Base: aid recipients who reported that aid didn't cover the most important needs

Winterisation support: warm clothes, blankets, insulation or heating of buildings, fuel, repair of damaged houses

In-kind products: food, water, hygiene, clothes, etc.

Services: health/mental health services, legal help, transportation/evacuation, etc.

Most people we interviewed, across different regions, said cash delivery should be more widespread, because of increasing food and heating prices and the flexibility of this kind of aid: it allows people to access the specific goods and services they need, such as housing repairs and utility payments. Financial aid is particularly critical for women, as a lot of men are serving at the frontline in the army.

> The biggest problem for now is accessing medicine. It was especially urgent when massive pharmacy stores shut down in Ukraine and we had to order medicine from abroad.
>
> We still order hormonal therapy medicine for transgender people from abroad, as they are not available in Ukraine.
>
> *– Representative of NGO 'Insight', Kyiv*

> I live in a house and only turn on the heating for 2–3 hours a day. For those in apartments with central heating, I cannot even imagine how much they pay.
>
> *– Woman, Mykolaiv (close to frontline)*

> Prices are increasing every day. Yesterday, I bought water for 14 hryvnias. Today – 17. Eggs are also expensive.
>
> *– Man, Mykolaiv (close to frontline)*

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[10]　FGD participants specifically mentioned a lack of medication for diabetes, oncological conditions, autoimmune diseases, depression, and elevated blood-pressure.

One in four people need services like health and legal support. In focus group discussions (FGDs), many participants requested psychological support – especially for children, young people, and marginalised groups. Healthcare is critical, according to NGOs working with refugees, displaced persons, and Roma communities. Organisations working with persons with disabilities underline the need for special equipment like beds and wheelchairs.

Flexibility is needed to support long-term recovery

People's needs evolve, and humanitarian organisations should support long-term recovery by adapting the assistance they provide. People often mention the need for psychosocial help, integrating veterans and displaced persons into society, sustainable development of volunteer initiatives, and preventing professional and emotional burnout among war-affected people. These needs become more pressing every month. Community representatives and local NGOs therefore emphasise the need to address humanitarian and protection needs in a sustainable way that simultaneously strengthens local systems. International organisations with the bulk of the resources know they need to consider rapid changes in the frontline situation, the de-occupation of some regions, and deterioration elsewhere. Agencies rightly focus on direct humanitarian assistance but could do more towards long-term recovery.

In all locations where we conducted qualitative discussions, people express the need for employment, citing the decimation of small businesses. Where employment rates were already low before the war, such as Chernivtsi, unemployment is rising. Displaced persons, women, LGBTQIA+ persons, and Roma communities require special attention, particularly as they face potential discrimination when seeking employment.

People noted that many development projects have been on hold since the full-scale war began. Some organisations stopped their activities altogether, and others redirected resources to humanitarian aid. This development is especially worrisome since these organisations provide systemic support to specific groups such as persons with disabilities.

> **👥 Recommendations from communities**
>
> • Prioritise cash assistance – people say it is the most useful kind of aid.

> **👥 Recommendations from community representatives and local NGOs**
>
> • Consult local populations, partner with the private sector, and partner with local authorities. This will build local communities' resilience.

> 66
>
> General reports from our therapists show the situation is extreme: people have suicidal thoughts, they are extremely desperate due to unemployment and family issues, and they are grieving a lot.
>
> *– Representative of NGO 'Insight', Kyiv*

> 66
>
> Asylum-seekers cannot access free healthcare. Let's not forget that mental distress caused by marginalisation and the obstacles of immigrant life also cause health problems.
>
> *– Representative of charitable organisation Rokada, Kyiv*

> 66
>
> We need to be more flexible and realise we need changes. Food packs are not needed much anymore; we have to change our priorities and think about returning to normal life.
>
> *– Representative of NGO 'MriyDiy', Mykolaiv*

> 66
>
> In terms of inclusion, we have to create possibilities for war veterans and their families to be integrated back into society.
>
> *– Representative of Kyiv Union for people with disabilities, Kyiv*

> 66
>
> [Internationally funded development projects], and many others stopped operating when the war began, and all our funds were transferred to humanitarian aid.
>
> *– Representative of 'People's House of Ukraine', Chernivtsi*

> 66
>
> Several projects stopped, and the grants now go towards war-related issues. Several NGOs stopped functioning because of inadequate project grants; renewal discussions began only recently. Social support work stopped, which is not good.
>
> *– Representative of Kyiv Union for people with disabilities, Kyiv*

Long-term support to Ukrainian communities identified by civil society organisations (CSO) and NGO representatives

Develop action plans for previously occupied territories;
- Plans should outline:
  - Short-term (humanitarian) and long-term (development) support;
  - Key stakeholders for systemic recovery.

- Plans should include:
  - Humanitarian hubs;
  - Heating and electricity points;
  - Reconstruction of community infrastructure, primarily social infrastructure;
  - Psychosocial support for local residents and municipal/ humanitarian workers.

Support small businesses in liberated locations and safe communities;
- Focus on rural and remote areas;

- Support should include:
  - Training in business planning;
  - Affordable micro-grants for business development.

Document war crimes;

Monitor and respond to human rights violations, including:
- Supporting women who have suffered from GBV during occupation;

- Searching for missing persons.

Establish long-term development support to reduce dependence on humanitarian aid;
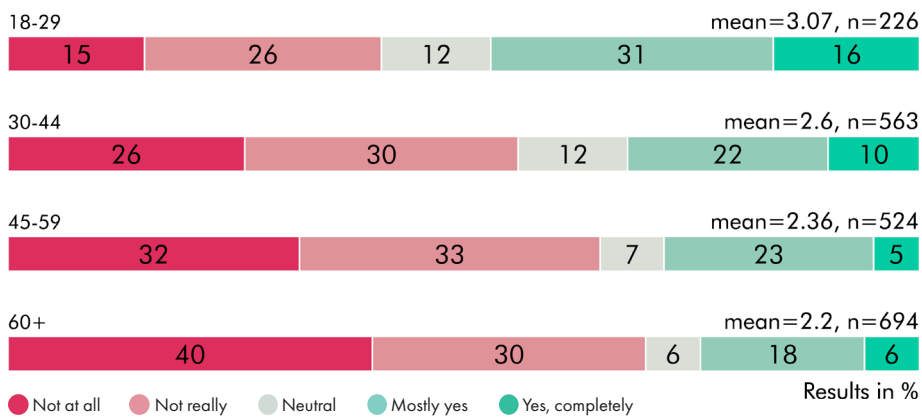- Focus on:
  - War-affected groups like IDPs, veterans, and liberated communities;
  - Inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities;
  - Children and young people.

- Employment support and skills training:
  - Driving classes for women with cars;
  - English language lessons;

- Community-based social services:
  - IDP integration into local communities;
  - Reintegration of war veterans and their families into their home communities;
  - Rehabilitation services for people with physical injuries from the war;
  - Human rights education and streamlined training for municipal workers and local authorities.

- Education for children and young people:
  - Hybrid education formats and tools (laptops, tablets, internet access, power banks);
  - Partnerships with youth centres and youth NGOs;
  - Equipping youth spaces in remote areas;
  - Safety training for teachers, youth workers, children, and young people, including mining safety and first-aid medical training.

An abundance of information leaves people confused

Information overload confuses people about the humanitarian assistance available to them. Among people we spoke with, 61% feel uninformed about aid and services they can access. Older persons over the age of 60 feel even less informed, with 70% unaware of what aid they can access. In REACH's Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA), 38% of people named a lack of information on registration and where aid is provided as their main barrier to accessing aid.[12]

In FGDs, people spoke of difficulties navigating excessive information about aid from organisations with independent websites and social media channels. A displaced person in Boryspil, Kyiv said "they can post an announcement about humanitarian aid, and it just gets lost very quickly. People have to remind each other constantly. There are too many posts, and they are delivered too late sometimes." Small rural communities in remote and previously occupied areas struggle to obtain online information due to poor electricity and internet connections.

Do you feel informed about the aid and services available to you?

18-29   mean=3.07, n=226
| 15 | 26 | 12 | 31 | 16 |

30-44   mean=2.6, n=563
| 26 | 30 | 12 | 22 | 10 |

45-59   mean=2.36, n=524
| 32 | 33 | 7 | 23 | 5 |

60+   mean=2.2, n=694
| 40 | 30 | 6 | 18 | 6 |

● Not at all   ● Not really   ● Neutral   ● Mostly yes   ● Yes, completely

Results in %

Information needs ℹ

- What types of aid are available to which people?
- What opportunities are there to receive more aid?
- How can I express gratitude?
- How can I seek clarification?
- How can I make specific requests?

Informal communication is crucial but complicated

Personal contacts are crucial for spreading information within communities. Many people receive information from neighbours, family, friends, and unofficial sources, such as social media groups. But people doubt the accuracy of such information.

Social media including Facebook, Viber, and Telegram channels and groups are popular information sources, according to participants in qualitative discussions. However, people noted that moderation is often weak, and that using such channels can be inconvenient. Preferences for social media channels are understandably age-dependent: older persons rely more on Viber and younger people prefer Telegram and Facebook.[11] REACH household monitoring surveys (HMS) also found that most people received information about humanitarian aid through phone communication. In the REACH MSNA, 48% of respondents prefer some form of face-to-face interaction, 40% choose phone calls, and 10% prefer Viber.[12]

Barriers to accessing information

Despite abundant information, people in Ukraine do not know which information to trust. "Official"[13] information is not always clear, and misinformation abounds. There are widespread disinformation campaigns, propaganda, conspiracy theories on European involvement, and distorted war narratives by Russia[14] but there are fraud incidents too.[15] Most information is online, which is a further hurdle for those with limited internet access. The wave of attacks on energy infrastructure since October 2022 has made things worse.[16]

A woman from a previously occupied community in Kyiv oblast stated, "Village residents know little about humanitarian aid and nothing about how humanitarian funds are spent." An older woman from Koryukivka, Chernihiv oblast, noted that "not all older people have smartphones, so they cannot transfer information into the Diia app[17] or to the international organisations and receive financial assistance". Older persons require in-person help desks and more visual information. They lack the skills to navigate online information channels and verify information. Roma communities in Ukraine face difficulties accessing information due to low literacy and language barriers,[18] a lack of electricity and technology. For people living in previously occupied areas, destroyed energy infrastructure – including electricity, internet, and mobile connections – means they lack information about humanitarian assistance.

> 66
> *The only way to learn about humanitarian aid is from other people.*
>
> *– Man, Borodyanka (previously occupied), Kyiv oblast*

> 66
> *The disadvantage can be that information from other people lacks authenticity. People are not very accurate when sharing information, which may cause conflicts in the community and with humanitarian organisations. It would be better to have a reliable channel for verified and complete information, and clear eligibility criteria.*
>
> *– Man, Koriukivka (previously occupied), Chernihiv oblast*

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[11] This corresponds with general social media consumption in Ukraine. Younger people use Facebook and Telegram more often and they use Viber to communicate with older relatives.

[12] REACH. 2022. "Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment"

[13] Official information means information that comes directly from information channels from aid providers, the government, or traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television

[14] OECD. 2022. "Disinformation and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine"

[15] OCHA. September 2022. "Fraud alert: UN warns the Ukrainian citizens and aid organizations about scam schemes using the name of the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund"

[16] International Federation for Human Rights. December 2022. "Ukraine: Russia's attacks against energy infrastructure violate international humanitarian law".

[17] The Diia-app is an app that allows Ukrainians to access digital documents, such as ID cards, passports, driver's license, and more than 50 government services. From: Diia - Wikipedia
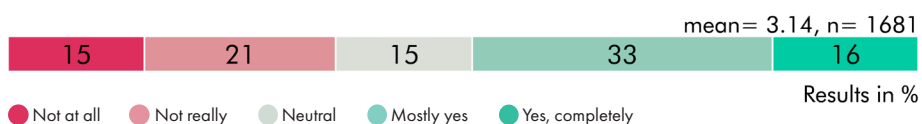
[18] Oxfam International. October 2022. "Roma refugees from Ukraine face Europe's coming winter with added burden of hostility and discrimination".

Community leaders and representatives of local CSOs serve as natural mediators between humanitarian organisations and affected people, especially small rural communities and stigmatised communities such as Roma, LGBTQIA+, and persons with disabilities, for whom information access may be limited. A representative of the Roma Women's Fund "Chirikli" in Kyiv, stated, "If there is no mediator in a community, I am afraid it is harder for people to find information about humanitarian aid." A representative of the NGO Roma Association ZOR in Chernihiv, added, "The majority of Roma people in Ukraine are illiterate and cannot use information resources. This has been a big issue for a long time because so little action is taken towards development of Roma communities."
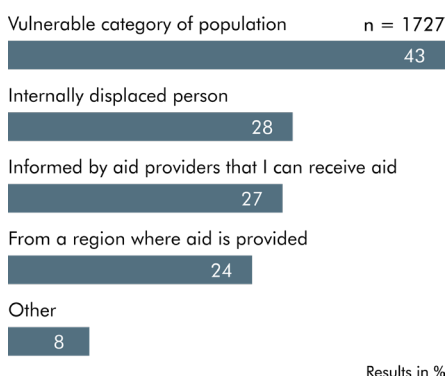
Who is eligible? How to apply? Where to receive aid?

People are frustrated with the lack of information on how aid is provided. They sometimes discover their eligibility for aid too late and available information often lacks important details like criteria, type of help, and distribution time and location. People also feel uninformed about the specific type of aid they will receive. Older persons have difficulty withdrawing money because they do not understand the money transfer system used by humanitarian organisations.

Do you think aid is provided in a fair way in the settlement where you live now?

mean= 3.14, n= 1681

15	21	15	33	16

Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes, completely

Why do you think you are eligible to receive aid?

Vulnerable category of population   n = 1727

| 43 |

Internally displaced person

| 28 |

Informed by aid providers that I can receive aid

| 27 |

From a region where aid is provided

| 24 |

Other

| 8 |

Results in %

Base: *received aid or applied for aid*

We asked people who received or applied for why they thought they were eligible. Forty-three percent said that the reason was their vulnerability status. Twenty-seven percent said that they had been informed by providers about their right to receive assistance.

> 66
>
> I was told I did not need a certificate as a displaced person; now I've found I actually need one.
>
> *– Internally displaced man, Boryspil (unoccupied), Kyiv oblast*

> 66
>
> People do not know how to withdraw money from the international funds sent via Western Union. Sometimes older people receive their pension through the bank or the post office, so it is difficult for them to understand how to get money in the bank.
>
> *– Older woman, Koriukivka (previously occupied), Chernihiv oblast*

Who is eligible to receive aid?

Vulnerability and eligibility assessments have limited capacity, which excludes certain groups from having access to aid even though they need it. The criteria used for these assessments generally include disability, number of children in the family, availability of housing, ability to work, age, and location. Although government, international, and local organisations use roughly similar criteria, there is no consistent standard. People we spoke with identified several additional groups that need support, highlighting the need for a more inclusive approach to humanitarian aid.

> "Many men are serving at the frontline in the army, so women are burdened by taking care of their families alone. Lack of money and higher prices are urgent problems, and financial aid lets people buy exactly what they need."
> – *Representative of the Association for Democratic Development, Chernihiv*

The criteria for receiving aid that people most often cite are disability and registration as an internally displaced person (IDP) after 24 February 2022.[19] People told us that war-affected people below the pension age and those with no specific vulnerabilities are the main groups excluded from humanitarian aid.[20] IDPs displaced before 24 February 2022 often feel frustrated and excluded because they are not eligible without another vulnerability. Similarly, people who are officially employed, self-employed, or registered as private entrepreneurs, even if their income has fallen significantly or disappeared, are also excluded.

CSO representatives identified several groups who need aid and support:

	Children and young people who lack support and access to education;
	People who have lost their income due to the war but are still officially employed or registered as entrepreneurs;
	War-affected populations in "safe" regions;
	LGBTQIA+ people, particularly couples;
	IDPs displaced before 24 February 2022;
	Persons with disabilities who face barriers accessing aid;
	Non-citizens, including Roma people and asylum seekers;
	Residents of remote or rural communities, particularly in previously occupied regions or close to the frontline;
	People living in institutional care facilities, such as children, older persons, and those with psychoneurological disabilities.

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[19] UNOCHA. 2022. "Ukraine information: UN and partners | Humanitarian Response"
[20] Being considered "young" in respondents' answers refers to being under the pension age.

Official channels most trusted

Many informal social media channels and groups have started since the war began, but most people still prefer to receive information about aid through official and government channels. IDPs receive information while registering for social services or visiting local authorities, whereas older persons in rural or peri-urban communities receive information from official local sources such as social services centres or municipality offices. An older person from a previously occupied community in Chernihiv oblast noted, "Older people often receive information from the postman when receiving their social payments, especially in remote locations in our community."
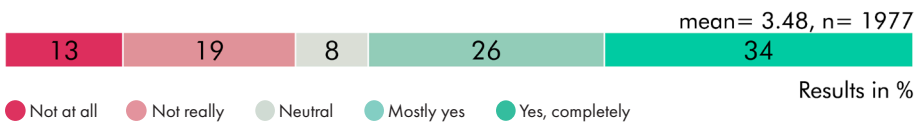
Many focus group participants see local authorities as reliable sources of information and capable humanitarian aid providers at the local level.

One young person from Borodyanka stated the need for "a one-stop shop to receive all necessary information and consultations." People generally desire clear, centralised but tailored information on available aid and opportunities to receive it, and ways to express gratitude to humanitarian organisations, seek clarification, and make specific requests.
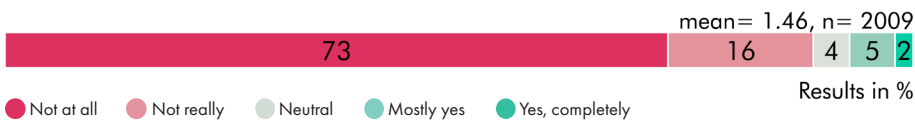
Information is hard to verify, leaving people worried about fraud

Many people (60%) want to know how aid money is spent in their community, but most (89%) do not. People doubt the transparency of aid distribution and fear potential fraud, such as scammers claiming to provide financial help and then hacking bank accounts. Young people know they do not have to share their bank details to receive aid. But older persons mistrust information about financial help and have difficulties verifying information sources; they tend to rely only on official channels and personal communication. They are also understandably afraid of fraud, such as scammers stealing personal data.[21]

Is it important for you to know how aid agencies spend money in the settlement where you live now?

mean= 3.48, n= 1977

13	19	8	26	34

Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes, completely

Do you know how aid agencies spend money in the settlement where you live now?

mean= 1.46, n= 2009

73	16	4	5	2

Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes, completely

Representatives of local organisations underline the need to ensure proper quality control and transparent decision-making about aid delivery in communities. Community representatives are often unaware of the resources and procedures available for humanitarian assistance and support in their communities.

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21 OCHA. September 2022. "Fraud alert: UN warns the Ukrainian citizens and aid organizations about scam schemes using the name of the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund"

❝
It is necessary to improve the interaction of local authorities with charitable organisations because the local authorities know the exact people who need help in the community.

– Older woman, Zdvizhivka (previously occupied), Kyiv oblast

❝
People doubted payments from international organisations; they were afraid it was a fraud.

– Older woman, Koriukivka (previously occupied), Chernihiv oblast

An older woman from Koriukivka, Chernihiv oblast, stated "Often, we see online information about additional aid opportunities; instructions detail the necessary documents and how to get it, but we cannot verify the whether the source is reliable." Another person from Koriukivka noted the disadvantage of sharing information, saying "people are not very accurate when sharing information, which may cause conflicts in the community and with humanitarian organisations."

👥 Recommendations from communities

Increase access to information:

- **Create** physical places in communities where people can register for aid; find relevant and up-to-date information from different aid actors and government agencies; and receive aid;

  "I would prefer a 'one-stop shop' to receive all necessary information and consultations."
  – Young woman, Borodyanka (previously occupied), Kyiv oblast

- **Ensure information is accessible to older persons and persons with disabilities** by creating visual guides with larger letters;

  "I think older people need special ads and visuals, in newspapers and on stands in the community. They are less aware than young people of all the opportunities."
  – Young man, Koriukivka (previously occupied), Chernihiv

- **Use clear language** to explain eligibility criteria and procedures for receiving humanitarian aid;

Ensure information is relevant and reliable:

- Communities seek reliable sources of information, especially for older persons. They recommend using "traditional" channels like local newspapers and paper posters as well as websites and social media (Facebook, Telegram, Viber).

🦺 Recommendations from humanitarians

- **Create a centralised information-sharing system** for all available humanitarian assistance, actors, and eligibility criteria. Include local actors in the design and process. Use local partners and systems to avoid creating a parallel system.
- **Offer face-to-face information sharing** as a complement to digital information.
- **Provide targeted and tailored information** to locate specific types of aid (e.g., medication, legal aid, anti-trafficking) and to serve different kinds of people by clarifying eligibility criteria, types of aid, and targeted groups.
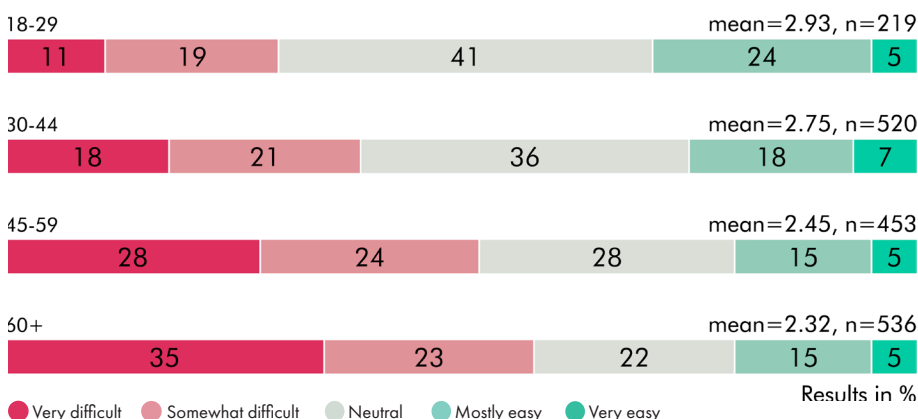
> 66
> There are scammers who claim to provide financial help and then hack people's bank accounts. Sometimes I receive phishing calls from scammers, but I know about these schemes from social media, from TikTok. I know I do not need to share my card number to receive money transfers.
>
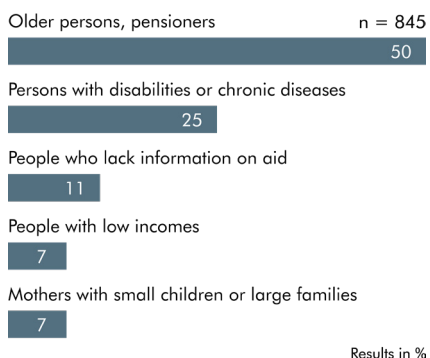> *– Internally displaced young man, Boryspil (unoccupied), Kyiv oblast*

Digital aid works for many, but not for older persons

How easy or difficult do you find it to access aid?

18-29   mean=2.93, n=219

| 11 | 19 | 41 | 24 | 5 |

30-44   mean=2.75, n=520

| 18 | 21 | 36 | 18 | 7 |

45-59   mean=2.45, n=453

| 28 | 24 | 28 | 15 | 5 |

60+   mean=2.32, n=536

| 35 | 23 | 22 | 15 | 5 |

Results in %

● Very difficult ● Somewhat difficult ● Neutral ● Mostly easy ● Very easy

Many affected people (47%) find accessing humanitarian aid a challenge, and this is especially true for older persons and people with disabilities. Only 20% of older persons find access to aid easy, while 58% consider it difficult. A key issue is the lack of digital literacy among older persons, which hinders their navigation of digital registration and queueing systems. Of all older persons we spoke with, 34% did not receive aid despite needing it. Only 27% of older persons have received CVA, compared with 38% of everyone we spoke with.

Who has more difficulties receiving aid and services?

Older persons, pensioners   n = 845

| 50 |

Persons with disabilities or chronic diseases

| 25 |

People who lack information on aid

| 11 |

People with low incomes

| 7 |

Mothers with small children or large families
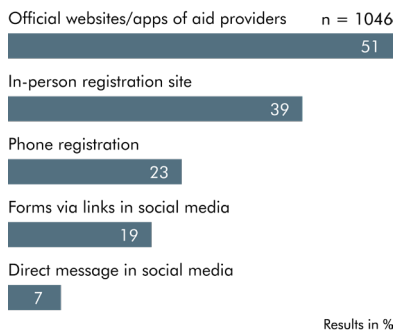
| 7 |

Results in %

Open-ended question, categories were coded based on the respondents' answers

Most people use aid agency websites or apps to apply for assistance. Older persons more often chose in-person registration sites and help desks, while younger people are more comfortable with digital access. The high number of different apps and websites used by the government and humanitarian organisations makes it difficult for people to find the aid they need. This is the main digital access barrier. REACH findings show that people think the biggest access barrier is insufficient information on how to register for assistance and on where to receive humanitarian assistance.[22]

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[22]   REACH. 2022. "Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment"

What channel did you use to apply for aid?

Official websites/apps of aid providers   n = 1046

51	

In-person registration site

39	

Phone registration

23	

Forms via links in social media

19	

Direct message in social media

7	

Results in %

Base: *people who applied for aid*

Many humanitarian organisations have – rightly – focused on making digital channels available in line with the preferences of mainly younger and urbanised people. But the need for in-person communication remains, despite high internet and smartphone coverage in Ukraine, especially among older persons and due to recent attacks on critical infrastructure.

Churches are the heart of many communities

International mission and religious organisations have cooperated with churches to disseminate information about humanitarian aid, as have many local aid providers. It is essential to spread knowledge among older persons in rural areas, who use the internet less and have more trust in the local church and authorities. In rural areas, the church is also a natural public space where people gather, not for religious practices but to receive information and exchange news.

> "In most cases, people cover their needs themselves. If the situation is critical, they go to a religious community or an administrative services centre. We have two churches in our village and a religious community."
> – *Representative of charitable organisation Rokada, Kyiv oblast*

Local churches and other religious organisations provide different communities with food packs, medicine, and cash vouchers from churches, such as vouchers for persons with disabilities to buy food in supermarkets and sometimes clothes.

> "There is also a protestant church in a village in the region, who provide food and clothes for orphanages and disabled people."
> – *Representative of NGO Lider (organisation for persons with disabilities (OPD)), Chernivtsi oblast*

Rural communities left behind

Persons with disabilities or chronic diseases, those with young children, and caregivers face physical access barriers such as long queues and distant distribution sites, although their need for aid may be greatest. People also note that aid is mostly available in cities or bigger communities, especially non-standard aid such as equipment for persons with disabilities, specific medication, or psychosocial support. As a focus group participant in Chernivtsi notes: "In rural areas, Starozhadovo in Chernivtsi oblast for example, there is very little humanitarian aid. In other, smaller remote locations, people receive no humanitarian aid at all, and they especially need psychosocial counselling."

Burnout and insufficient training of those working directly with affected people are significant challenges to effective aid delivery. A representative of Youth Centre NGO Chernivtsi notes, "One of the main problems we have is the burn-out of volunteers and social workers who have no mental health support from their management at all."

> 66
> It is great when humanitarian aid is provided where you live. I once had to go to Chernivtsi and had to spend money on bus tickets and spend a lot of time.
>
> – *Young woman, Storozhynets, Chernivtsi oblast*

> 66
> We redirect people to other organisations, but for persons with disabilities in rural areas this is not possible, especially now that public transportation does not function properly.
>
> – *Representative of NGO Lider (OPD), Chernivtsi oblast*

> 66
> Access issues emerge from international organisations not entering rural frontline communities. They mostly support bigger communities. Our organisation spotted this, so we first support smaller communities, and only then bigger ones.
>
> – *Representative of the Association for Democratic Development, Chernihiv*

> 66
> We have a mental health counsellor for volunteers in the youth centre. However, this support is not yet organised regularly. I am a displaced person myself; I left Donetsk in 2014 and understand how hard it is to work with displaced individuals who have no home and need humanitarian aid.
>
> – *Representative of NGO Youth Centre NGO, Chernivtsi oblast*

Previously occupied territories and frontline communities should not be forgotten

People from previously occupied territories or frontline communities note unique access barriers for newly liberated areas. Logistics have been complicated. A local volunteer and leader of a community-based youth centre from one recently liberated village, Zdyzhivka, said "Right after the liberation, we could not get into the village, because the armed forces of Ukraine had to implement all safety procedures."

Communities have felt completely uninformed of any available support since their areas were liberated from occupation. They often lack internet access, and focus group participants said their smartphones, laptops, and computers were stolen during the occupation. These issues, combined with the constant attacks on energy infrastructure, prevent them accessing digital aid. People request centralised, offline places for registration and information, and help to access digital tools.

> "Registration for assistance ran until 1 April and it was on 1 April that the occupiers left our village. There was no communication and electricity, and we were unable to submit an application or leave for Bucha, Varyanka, or another city to register in person. We were recorded by the village council, but nothing happened."
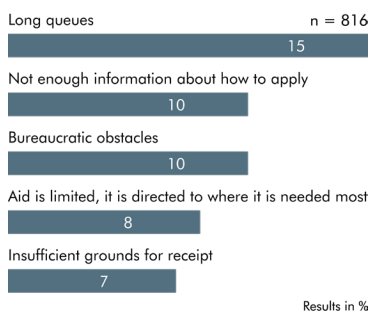> – *Adult woman, Zdvyzhivka (previously occupied), Kyiv oblast*

Since liberation, most people have needed food and medicine. Those in greatest need are low-income families and people whose homes were destroyed and animals killed. Liberated communities need reconstruction materials. "To receive help restoring destroyed housing, a document of ownership rights and a certificate indicating the level of damage is needed," said a young mother from Borodyanka. However, many report that all their documentation was destroyed. People from previously occupied communities in Zdvyzhivka and Borodianka in Kyiv oblast mention psychosocial support as essential.

> "Emotional and psychological help is extremely important – volunteers here helped the children a lot after the shelling and after the occupation; the children were nervous, so psychologists helped them."
> – *Adult woman, Zdvyzhivka (previously occupied), Kyiv oblast*

> "We have plans for how to help previously occupied regions, but not all organisations are ready to plan until a region is deoccupied. Such action plans should already be in development now."
> – *Local aid provider, Zaporizhzhia oblast (close to frontline)*

Affected people mainly suggest structural reasons for community access issues: long queues; lack of information; bureaucratic barriers like difficulty obtaining documents; and discrimination, particularly for Roma, refugees, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Why do you think aid is difficult to access?

Long queues   n = 816
| 15 |

Not enough information about how to apply
| 10 |

Bureaucratic obstacles
| 10 |

Aid is limited, it is directed to where it is needed most
| 8 |

Insufficient grounds for receipt
| 7 |

Results in %

One person we spoke with said, "It was hard to receive refugee status even before the war started, and now refugees cannot apply online via the 'Diia' platform." Another stated, "Stigmatised people (LGBTQIA+, Roma people) face discrimination in accessing humanitarian aid, especially finding accommodation or shelter in safe communities. The LGBTQIA+ community, especially couples, cannot live in shelters from the state or other humanitarian aid organisations. We had a lot of problems in regular shelters with violence towards LGBTQIA+ people." According to someone else, "There were several cases in central Ukraine, in Cherkasy region, when Roma people were rejected by smaller local humanitarian centres without any explanation, sometimes redirecting them to Roma organisations." Humanitarian organisations have also noted these concerns.[23]

From registration to distribution – a need for centralised systems to improve access

Local initiatives, religious organisations, state institutions, voluntary initiatives and CSOs are among the main groups providing aid, together with international aid organisations and the government. The lack of coordination and communication between different humanitarian aid organisations hinders effective and swift access.[24] This leads to unclear provision and distorted information. People complain that they heard of instances where some people apply via multiple channels, and receive aid multiple times, while others miss out because eligibility criteria are not uniform across organisations. Representatives of public organisations at the regional level and in large cities voice complaints about weak coordination as well. People from previously occupied territories find registration processes complicated and, their homes and possessions destroyed, often lack the necessary documents.

> 66
>
> *The procedure of receiving aid was not fast, but it was all right. We had to register, they [humanitarian organisations] helped us do it correctly.*
>
> *– Woman, Boryspil (unoccupied), Kyiv oblast*

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[23] Oxfam International. October 2022. "Roma refugees from Ukraine face Europe's coming winter with added burden of hostility and discrimination"

[24] Disasters Emergency Committee. January 2023. "Options for supporting and strengthening local humanitarian action in Ukraine: A scoping exercise report"

Recommendations from communities

- **Simplify the application process:**

  - In-person aid registration as well as online;

  - Training and support for digital registration, especially for older persons.

- **Understand the barriers faced by persons with psychosocial and physical disabilities;**

- **Standardise verification**: community members find aid access unpredictable, due to instances when some people pre-register but others turn up and still receive aid.

- **Improve distributions**:

  - Manage queues using digital tools, clearer instructions, and in-person support;

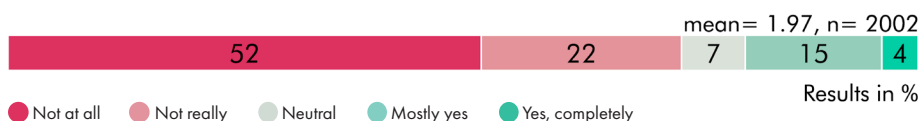 - Transport aid to the homes of persons with physical disabilities.

Recommendations from humanitarians

- **Improve relevancy of aid**: relying on post-distribution monitoring (PDMs) is insufficient to ensure aid is appropriate to community needs. Pre-distribution consultations should ensure vulnerable groups are reached and that aid meets the needs of affected communities.

- **Focus on accessibility and inclusion for vulnerable groups**: include or follow the lead of local actors in identifying vulnerable groups and assessing vulnerabilities in greater detail.

- **Collaborate with and learn from local actors**: integrate local NGOs and community networks in local and national coordination structures and streamline coordination and distribution processes. Learn from the process by sharing best practices regularly.
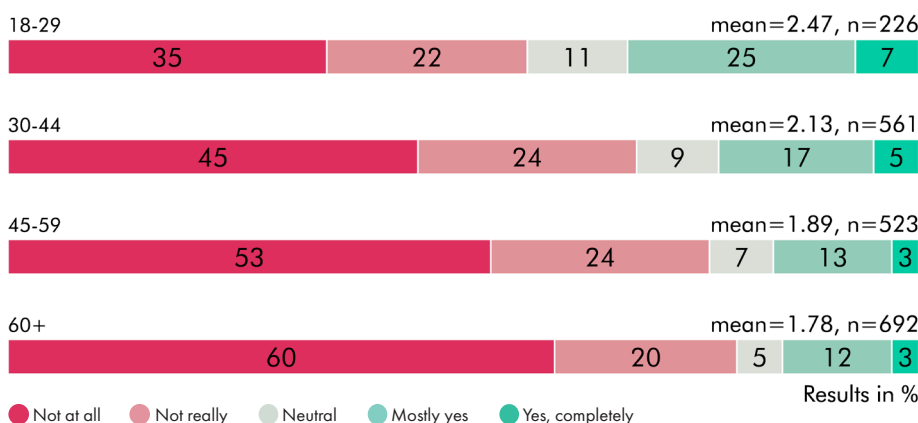
Limited knowledge of feedback mechanisms and when to use them

Do you know how to ask a question, make a complaint, or provide feedback on humanitarian aid or services?

mean= 1.97, n= 2002

| 52 | 22 | 7 | 15 | 4 |

Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes, completely

Three in four people (74%) do not know how to complain or provide feedback about the aid they receive. Only 7% of people have made a complaint, given feedback, or asked a question before. The lack of awareness of feedback mechanisms was particularly prevalent among older persons and those living in rural areas. Only 4% of people over 60 provided any feedback, compared to 11% of people aged 18 to 44.

Do you know how to ask a question, make a complaint, or provide feedback on humanitarian aid or services?

18-29   mean=2.47, n=226

| 35 | 22 | 11 | 25 | 7 |

30-44   mean=2.13, n=561

| 45 | 24 | 9 | 17 | 5 |

45-59   mean=1.89, n=523

| 53 | 24 | 7 | 13 | 3 |

60+   mean=1.78, n=692

| 60 | 20 | 5 | 12 | 3 |

Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes, completely

Focus group participants explained that a lack of information about available channels was the main reason why they have not provided feedback. People from previously occupied communities and locations near the frontline said they were never asked for feedback, and thus never considered providing it. A young person from a safe location said, "I don't even know whom to provide my feedback to, to be honest." Another from a location close to the frontline echoed this sentiment, saying, "I do not know where to send complaints or feedback."

Focus group participants also spoke about difficulties in addressing specific requests or complaints without clear information on feedback channels and tools. One respondent said, "An acquaintance of mine needed funds for his wife's surgery, and he did not know how or where to ask for help."

Of the 7% respondents who do know how to provide feedback, 44% are happy with the response to their feedback. People in need and living in western oblasts were more likely to provide feedback. People who received aid from international organisations are also more likely to know about (24%) and use (11%) feedback mechanisms.

However, even people who are aware of feedback mechanisms face barriers. Many focus group participants said the feedback mechanisms they know of – often hotlines or social media channels – do not work well. Either hotlines are overburdened, or people never hear back. People reported difficulties in contacting humanitarian organisations, with channels unavailable or not working, phone lines dead, and emails unanswered. An older person close to the frontline said, "When we stand in line for the humanitarian packages, we receive phone numbers to call, but we cannot reach anyone." An adult from a safe location said, "I had the phone number of some UN department; I tried for a whole hour, but the line was constantly busy."

One older person from Mykolaiv city near the frontline stated, "I have to call them and let them know it's my turn, but it's hard to contact them. The line is very often busy, because of the large number of inquiries. You have to dial the number 300 times to make the call happen." Another internally displaced person from Boryspil in Kyiv oblast reported, "I once contacted [a national organisation] via Facebook, but they did not respond."

Even if they can reach humanitarians, many were hesitant to provide feedback or complain for fear of aid being terminated. Others do not want to overburden or distract humanitarian staff from important work. Some felt it inappropriate to provide feedback or complain and do not want to appear ungrateful. People seem unaware of their right to provide feedback or make complaints, which CDAC also found in their quarterly snapshot.[25] One participant from near the frontline said, "I think we only have to say 'Thank you;' otherwise, there will be no humanitarian assistance at all." A young person from a previously occupied location said, "It is a charity, people do not do it for money, and it's not appropriate for me to express my displeasure."

Despite these hindrances, some people use feedback channels including phone calls, messages, social media, and personal meetings with local authorities. Many people report bad experiences with providing feedback at some point; they felt disappointed because they were never informed of how their feedback was processed. Only people from safe locations reported that humanitarian organisations proactively requested feedback, either through phone calls or questionnaires.

Preferred channels for providing feedback

Older persons strongly prefer in-person communication for feedback, while focus groups with adults aged 30–59 years prefer email, online forms, and chatbots. Young people (18–29 years old) would rather use social media – specifically Telegram bots

❝

I think usually people tend to complain; when everything is alright, no one provides feedback.

– Young woman, Storozhynets, Chernivtsi oblast

❝

They used to put questionnaires in humanitarian aid boxes when sending them.

– Young woman, Storozhynets, Chernivtsi oblast

Difficulties with proactive feedback collection

Most local NGO representatives say they collect feedback proactively using online forms, in-person conversations, hotlines, or community meetings, but some organisations struggle. Those who do not collect feedback say it is challenging or impossible for the following reasons:

Lack of staff, as collecting feedback requires significant human resources.

Lack of time, especially when large numbers of people make feedback-collection time consuming and thus relatively unimportant for local organisations.

Lack of personal data, sometimes local organisations and volunteers distribute humanitarian aid without collecting personal data. It is this difficult to identify recipients and follow up.

"It is not always possible to gather feedback; for example, when we gave away food packs from the World Central Kitchen with the help of city and military representatives, we had to communicate with thousands of people in a very short period of time."
– Local volunteer and coordinator of community-based humanitarian hub, Chernihiv oblast

Recommendations from communities

- Collect in-person feedback from groups that find digital tools or hotlines difficult to use, such as older persons without digital skills, people from previously occupied communities who do not have smartphones or internet access, and Roma people;

- Inform communities of how feedback is used and report back outcomes, because people want to feel their opinion matters.
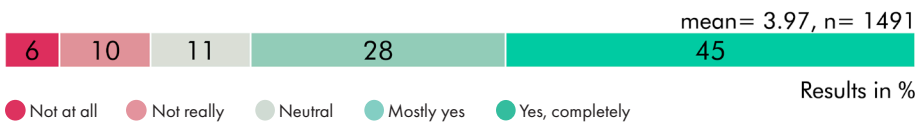
Recommendations from humanitarians

- **Improve coordination on collected feedback to improve learning for the entire humanitarian community**: share feedback, monitor how it is addressed, and connect feedback mechanisms with an intuitive inter-cluster referral system.

- **Ensure feedback mechanisms are inclusive** through multiple feedback mechanisms, for example a hotline and an in-person helpdesk. Clearly communicate these opportunities to communities.

- **Provide timely responses to feedback**: people need to know how their feedback and complaints are used.

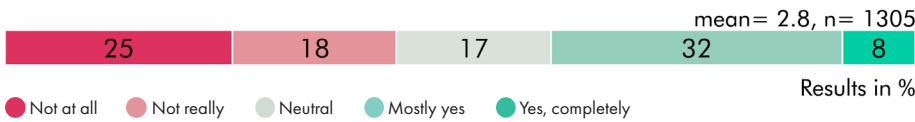- **Continually inform communities of their rights to complain and provide feedback**.

– or email.

Local and international organisations could work better together

Although 73% of people expect humanitarian organisations to ask about their needs before providing aid, only 40% say this is the case. People we interviewed want to be consulted on the type of assistance they receive; the contents of aid packages (especially people with special needs or dietary restrictions); and medication, particularly for chronic diseases.
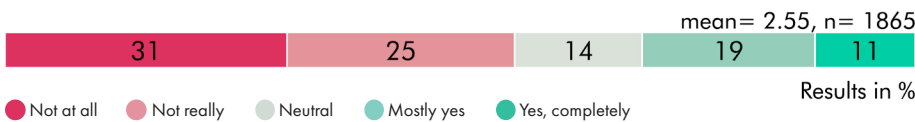
mean= 3.97, n= 1491

6	10	11	28	45

Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes, completely

Do you expect that aid providers ask affected people about their needs before providing aid?

mean= 2.8, n= 1305

25	18	17	32	8

Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes, completely

To what extent did aid providers ask affected people about their needs before providing aid?

Many people say representatives of local aid providers often respond to direct requests from communities, which helps ensure aid is relevant. Early in the response, there was a sense that everything provided was helpful. Over time however, the need for targeted and specific aid emerged. People are willing to participate in needs

assessments. Many want a single community focal point, to whom they can provide feedback and find information about aid. This would likely help increase people's

mean= 2.55, n= 1865

31	25	14	19	11

Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes, completely

influence: only 30% think people in their area can influence the aid provided to them.

Do you think people in the settlement where you live now can influence how aid is provided?

Bureaucracy hampers collaboration between national and international organisations

Representatives of CSOs and local aid providers mentioned that community participation – specifically for those for whom aid access is difficult, such as stigmatised groups – could improve by engaging with smaller local organisations. They say small organisations with strong community ties are more effective and more flexible than larger, international organisations in meeting specific needs.

However, local entities often lack the resources and infrastructure to assume a strong position between communities and larger, international organisations and donors. Local organisations tend to have limited human and financial resources and complicated

> ❝
> International organisations are extremely burdened by bureaucracy: sometimes it takes several months to approve financial support; thus their support becomes irrelevant with time.
>
> *– Representative of the Association for Democratic Development, Chernihiv*

reporting processes with international partners. CSOs and local organisations emphasised the need for flexibility and better collaboration with larger, international organisations. Many local organisations feel left behind: they do not know how to initiate collaboration with larger partners, especially where they are not yet present, so they see no easy opportunities for cooperation.

Local and international organisations say they have effectively shared needs assessment information with each other to tailor aid to specific needs. People we spoke with said they held regular meetings, including community meetings, to discuss findings and address the needs of IDP-hosting communities. People also perceived rising attention on local organisations from international agencies, recognising the unique advantage of local volunteers in the humanitarian system: close connections with communities. This proximity, they say, can simplify needs assessments, enable effective distribution, and address feedback.

Local government and the United Nations share coordination at the local level. Local actors see a positive role for The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in facilitating local coordination between non-governmental institutions and authorities, where stakeholders can negotiate the distribution of roles and territories for aid provision.

Local stakeholders emphasise that understanding the local context is crucial for meaningful cooperation. They feel that international partners must assess needs and what is achievable in each community, not only for residents, but also local NGOs, authorities, and volunteers.

Cooperation between local and international organisations

⚠ **Issues:**

- Poor adaptation by international organisations to changing needs;

- Exclusion of local NGOs from determining community needs;

- Reporting difficulties for local partners, especially volunteer initiatives with limited staff and resources;

- Difficulty of local NGOs initiating collaboration with international partners;

- Limited local presence of international organisations;

💡 **Good practices:**

- Engaging local NGOs in understanding contexts and needs assessments;

- Local presence to participate in local events and aid distribution;

- Collecting feedback from local partners on aid process and quality;

- Regular exchanges on situation updates and adapted timelines and approaches;

- Supporting local partners with equipment to reduce dependency on electricity schedules;

- Organisational support for local NGO, including:

- Security training and protocol development;

- Gender audits and gender mainstreaming.

> 66
>
> OCHA helped establish local coordination between non-governmental institutions, administrations, and authorities. They engaged local self-government bodies. During coordination meetings, different actors take responsibility for territories and responsibilities.
>
> *– Representative of charitable organisation Rokada, Kyiv oblast*

> 66
>
> I think big organisations should attend more to smaller communities' needs when cooperating with them. They should visit these communities to understand the situation and the infrastructure: is there a mobile connection, is there public transportation?
>
> *– Representative of Youth Centre, Chernihiv oblast*

> 66
>
> We need better cooperation between humanitarian aid providers as we all have different donors and resources; together, we can cover different needs.
>
> *– Representative of Educational and Methodological Centre for the Protection of Human Rights, Mykolaiv (close to frontline)*

> 66
>
> I think international organisations should change the process for approving requests and tendering humanitarian projects as the aid is often needed urgently.
>
> *– Representative of NGO 'MriyDiy', Mykolaiv (close to frontline)*

👥 Recommendations from local aid providers

- Local NGOs believe in-person application processes are more efficient and better in identifying needs. More direct aid provision also ensures better relevance;

  "We work with direct requests, so we do not provide anything irrelevant."
  - Representative of NGO 'Time for us', Chernihiv oblast

- Focus on better coordination between aid providers;

- Conduct community consultations prior to distribution;

  "I suggest better assessing the needs of persons with disabilities through questionnaires and polls and better emphasising special requests."
  - Representative of NGO 'Leader', Chernivtsi oblast

  "We need to be more flexible and realise we need changes. Food packs are not needed much anymore; we have to change our priorities and think about returning to normal life."
  - Representative of NGO 'MriyDiy', Mykolaiv

- Support local NGOs through:
  - Rent for office and storage space;
  - Electricity and heating devices;
  - Internet connections.

- Provide organisational development, such as:
  - Core Humanitarian Standard trainings;
  - Safety and security and support through staff protection protocols;
  - GBV prevention training (mentioned by women's rights organisations);
  - Gender-equality training for post-war situations;
  - Legal consultations;
  - Psychosocial support to aid providers and volunteers;
  - Financial stability support.

  "Currently there is a big need for conflict management and mental health support for volunteers and social workers working with displaced people."
  - Representative of Youth Center, Chernivtsi oblast

🦺 Recommendations from humanitarians

- **Deliver more aid in remote areas**, especially newly liberated areas, through coordination with local organisations.
- **Include local organisations in coordination**, which is necessary to improve participation with communities and local actors.
- **Coordinate community surveys and follow-up to avoid distrust and survey fatigue**. People are willing to participate, but organisations do not always follow their recommendations. A lack of follow-up leads to survey fatigue. Needs are changing rapidly, so frequent needs assessments and more meaningful engagement is essential.

Local aid providers stress the importance of flexible funding to ensure their work is relevant and their organisational needs are met. The constantly changing situation in Ukraine means constantly changing needs. Local providers work in the face of air raids, electricity outages, and disrupted transportation and logistical chains. In these fluid conditions, slow and rigid procedures affect the relevance of aid provided.

Methodology

Research objectives

1. Feed critical perceptions information into response coordination and management in real time

2. Understand the quality and effectiveness of the response, in the eyes of aid recipients and local actors, over time

Research questions

1. To what extent is the humanitarian response accountable to people's needs, priorities, and expectations?

2. How can aid be more responsive to the unfolding needs of the affected population in and around Ukraine?

Qualitative consultations

Design

To prepare the quantitative and qualitative research, we conducted informal, open-ended consultations with citizens in Ukraine and representatives of national NGOs and CSOs. Our aim was to understand the priorities of citizens and local aid providers for humanitarian aid, and to gain a general understanding of what people see as humanitarian aid, and what not. The discussions were broadly guided by discussion guides; however, they remained relatively unstructured.

Sampling

Sampling for the qualitative component was purposive, aiming for a diverse sample of citizens and representatives of NGOs and CSOs.

- CSOs – three interviews:
  - Project Kesher (national organisation);
  - Ship's Land (Mykolaiv oblast);
  - Kyiv Volunteer (City of Kyiv and Kyiv oblast).

- General population, including aid recipients – five interviews through Telegram
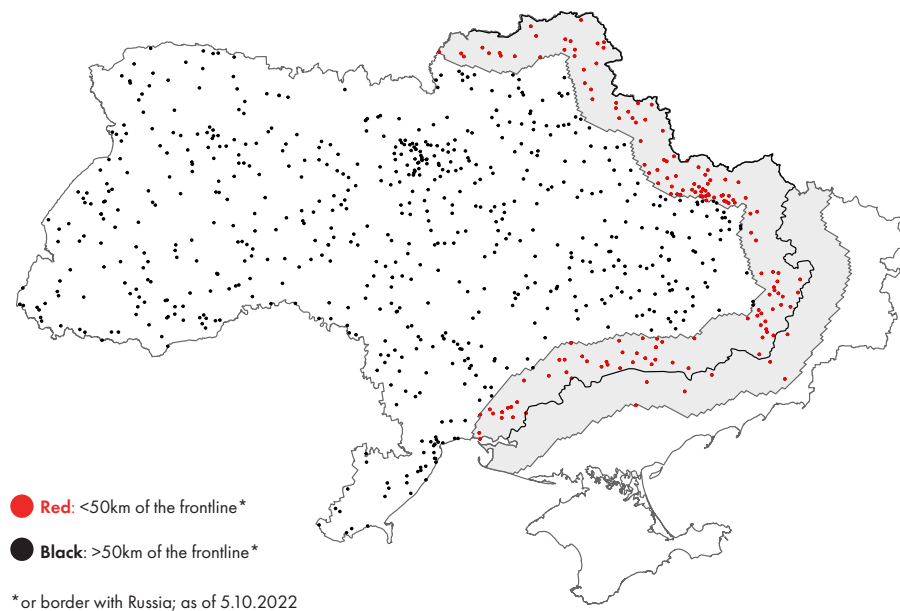
groups.

Data collection and analysis

Two Ground Truth Solutions team members collected data, in Ukrainian and English. Discussions took place via phone or video call. We obtained oral informed consent for all discussions, at the beginning and the end.

Quantitative survey

We conducted a phone survey (computer-assisted telephone interviews) in collaboration with the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) and interviewed 2,023 people in need and aid recipients in Ukraine from 15 September to 2 October 2022.

Target population: Self-identified people in need (18 years or older) and aid recipients.

Survey mode: Computer-assisted phone survey (CATI) using random digit dialling (RDD) method – random generation of phone numbers with validation of active

● **Red**: <50km of the frontline*

● **Black**: >50km of the frontline*

*or border with Russia; as of 5.10.2022

numbers. Proportion of numbers per cell-phone provider/three-digit prefix was created based on the previous F2F-survey conducted by KIIS.

Geographic scope: All of Ukraine (except for the occupied territories as of 23 February 2022). The survey was carried out in 771 settlements in all regions of Ukraine except for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Settlements where the survey was carried out

Sampling approach: Stratified random sample of mobile phones, with the strata being defined by the three-digit main operator's prefixes.

Pre-test: We conducted the questionnaire pre-test with representatives of the target group, that is adults aged 18+ who live in urban and rural settlements in Kyiv and 14 oblasts of Ukraine. The total sample size was 32 interviews.

Languages: We conducted the survey using Ukrainian and Russian questionnaires (the language of the survey was chosen based on the language respondents used to
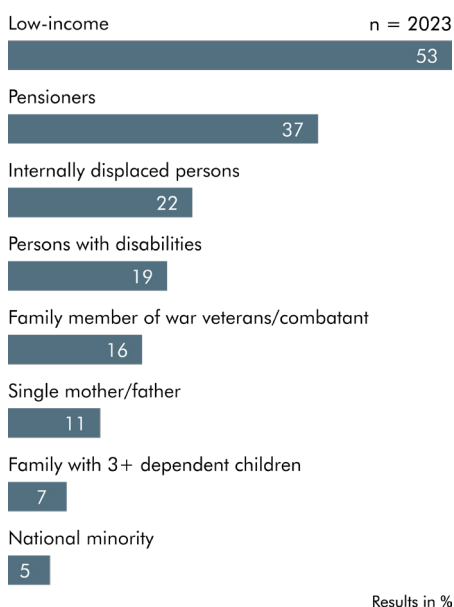
answer the interviewer's call).

Sample size: Total n = 2,983 (including non-recipients of aid and non-people in need); Eligible n=2023.

Fieldwork dates: 13 September – 2 October 2022.

Response rate: 13% (RR1 according to the AAPOR Standard Definitions). Average length of interview: 23 minutes.
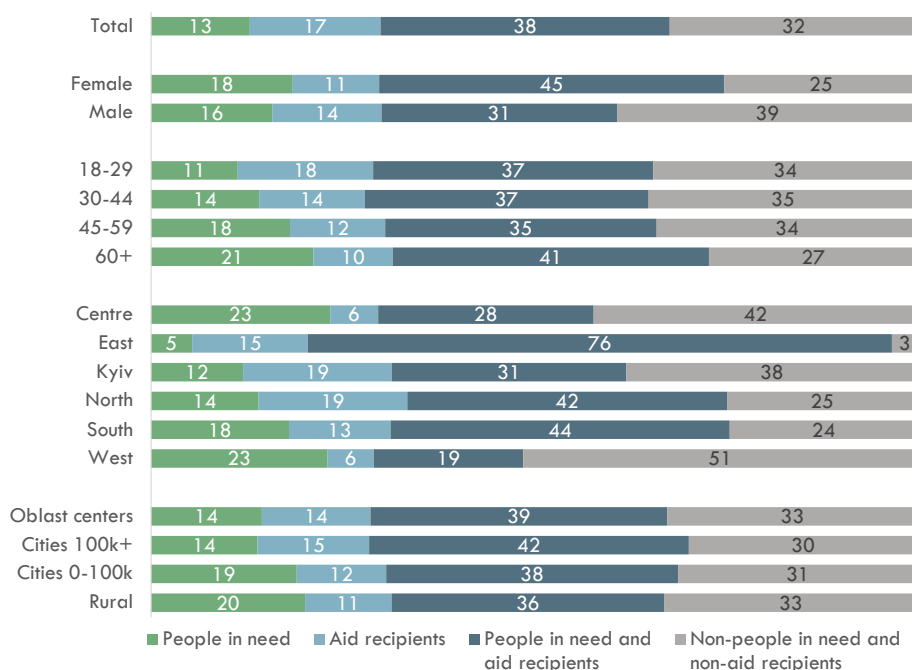
Weighting: By number of SIM-cards and refusals by gender. This approach was chosen because since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian population movements have been multidirectional, fluctuating, and hard to monitor. Under such conditions, it seems methodically appropriate to construct the sample completely randomly, because CATI RDD – due to its closeness to simple random sampling – provides the opportunity to obtain a representative snapshot of a population (active SIM-cards of Ukrainians inside Ukraine in this case).

Sampling error: 2.2% for values close to 50% (with a confidence interval of 95% and design-effect of 1.06).

Low-income   n = 2023
53

Pensioners
37

Internally displaced persons
22

Persons with disabilities
19

Family member of war veterans/combatant
16

Single mother/father
11

Family with 3+ dependent children
7

National minority
5

Results in %

Self-assessed vulnerabilities; respondents could select all categories to which they belong. For IDPs and persons with disabilities, we did not ask for official registration.

Representativity

	People in need	Aid recipients	People in need and aid recipients	Non-people in need and non-aid recipients
Total	13	17	38	32
Female	18	11	45	25
Male	16	14	31	39
18-29	11	18	37	34
30-44	14	14	37	35
45-59	18	12	35	34
60+	21	10	41	27
Centre	23	6	28	42
East	5	15	76	3
Kyiv	12	19	31	38
North	14	19	42	25
South	18	13	44	24
West	23	6	19	51
Oblast centers	14	14	39	33
Cities 100k+	14	15	42	30
Cities 0-100k	19	12	38	31
Rural	20	11	36	33

We received a representative sample of the population of Ukraine aged 18+ living in the territories controlled by Ukraine as of the second half of September 2022. The representativeness of the sample was ensured by using the Random Digit Dialling procedure and weighting by refusals by gender and number of SIM cards (see the sidebar with main demographic distributions in Introduction).

Vulnerable categories

We asked survey respondents if they had any vulnerabilities, and if yes, which ones.

Distributions of eligible (people in need or/and recipients) and non-eligible respondents by the main demographic breakdowns

Limitations

The main limitation is that part of the population, especially in frontline areas, may not have had a stable telephone service at the time of the survey. This group was probably under-covered. However, we conducted the survey before the start of Russia's massive missile attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure from October 2022, so the share of the population without connection was significantly lower than in the following months.

Another limitation is the lack of reliable data on the socio-demographic structure of Ukraine's population at the time of the survey. The significant migration of Ukrainians to European countries, the fact that some regions were under occupation, and the mobilisation and voluntary enlistment of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians into the Armed Forces of Ukraine makes that we could not use data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine as of February 2022 for weighting. Therefore, we decided to use minimal weighting based on the number of SIM cards people use and the refusals by gender, to ensure a sample that was close to nationwide representativeness.

Data collection team

Our data collection partner KIIS engaged 64 interviewers from the KIIS CATI centre and from the regular all-Ukrainian F2F network of interviewers. The interviewers made calls in-home from their mobile phones and entered data on computers to an online database.

Quantitative data analysis

We created cross-tabulations using demographic variables and we conducted regression analyses with 'access to aid' and a 'quality of aid'-composite as outcome variable. This composite variable was created using the questions on information, consultation, fairness, transparency, participation, and aid relevance. There regression analyses helped us identify which demographic characteristics of respondents were associated with responses to these questions while controlling for other variables.

Qualitative interviews

In collaboration with Open Space Works Cooperative (Kyiv, Ukraine), we implemented 18 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 26 key informant interviews (KIIs), both face-to-face and via (video)calls from October until late December with 146 people in total.

Target population: We targeted self-identified people in need (18 years or older) and aid recipients for the FGDs. We considered people who selected at least one aid type to be eligible for the research.

For FGDs we targeted people in three age groups: young people (18–30 years), adults (31–59 years), and older persons (60+).

We interviewed key informant representatives from the following groups:

- Local civil society organisations;
- LGBTQIA+ networks;
- Organisations of persons with disabilities;
- Local volunteers;
- Local aid workers;
- Community representatives, in multi-apartment buildings for example;
- Youth organisations and youth centres;
- Women's organisations;
- Roma representatives.

Geographic scope: For the FGDs, we included respondents from four oblasts, prioritising different types of areas: (1) areas far from the frontline with high numbers of IDPs; (2) previously occupied areas; and (3) areas close to the frontline.

Type of community	Location chosen
Area far from the frontline, community with high numbers of IDPs	Storozhynets community (peri-urban), Chernivtsi oblast

Previously occupied communities	Zdvyzhivka village (rural), Kyiv oblast
	Borodyanka community (peri-urban), Kyiv oblast
	Koriukivka community (peri-urban), Chernihiv oblast
Communities previously or currently close to frontline	Mykolaiv city (urban)

Topics addressed: During the FGDs we addressed the following topics related to community perception of humanitarian aid: information access (information on what assistance is available), access to aid, trust and relationships between aid providers and communities, and feedback mechanisms. In the key informant interviews we focused on community needs and the relevance of humanitarian assistance, gaps and barriers in humanitarian assistance for communities, trends in the humanitarian aid situation, localisation challenges, and recommendations.

Fieldwork dates: 15 October – 15 December 2022.

Data collection team

The Open Space Works Cooperative (OSCW) team facilitated the focus group discussions and conducted the key informant interviews. The OSCW was established as an independent consultant group in 2016. They work together in