

Beyond Survival: Regenerative Organizational Development Support in Wartime Ukraine

Lessons learned in pilot to adapt Organizational Development Support to civil society actors to wartime context in Ukraine



I SEE THE FUTURE.

I mean, we might get hit by the 'Iskanders at this very moment.

But at the same time, I somehow see Ukraine after the war.

I do not know if we are in the future,

but there is Ukraine after the war.

Looking at Women Looking at War: A War & Justice Diary

Victoria Amelina (1986–2023), Ukrainian novelist and a war crimes researcher



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FOREWORD

Markus Lux, Robert Bosch Foundation



In the fifth year of Russia's full-scale war, Ukrainian civil society continues to carry responsibilities that no society should have to shoulder under bombardment. Organizations deliver humanitarian aid, defend rights, support veterans and displaced people, preserve cultural identity, and help prepare the country's recovery — all at once. They do so while navigating trauma, exhaustion, and profound uncertainty.

For me, this study underscores something essential: in wartime Ukraine, organizational development is not a technical exercise. It is a question of endurance and dignity. Institutions must function — but the people within them must also be able to regenerate their strength, clarity, and trust. Resilience alone is not enough if it leads to depletion.

What impressed me most in this process was the degree of self-reflection and agency among Ukrainian CSOs. Even under extreme pressure, they are not only reacting. They are redefining strategy, recalibrating teams, and consciously creating space for renewal. The idea of "Regenerative OD" captures this well: strengthening governance and systems while also restoring the human energy that sustains them.

For us at the Robert Bosch Stiftung, this carries clear implications. If we want civil society to shape Ukraine's recovery in a self-determined way, we must invest in organizations as living systems — not only in projects and outputs. Flexible, multi-year support and trust in locally led change are not acts of generosity; they are prerequisites for sustainable impact.

I invite you to read this report with one guiding question in mind: What does it mean to support institutional renewal under prolonged crisis? Whether you are a funder, practitioner, or civil society actor, I hope these insights encourage you to align your own practice with regenerative principles — and to match solidarity with sustained commitment.

Ukraine's civil society shows that renewal is possible, even under fire. Our responsibility is to ensure that it is not left to do so alone.

Слава Україні!

**Markus Lux,
Vice-President Special Division Ukraine**

FOREWORD

Carole Frampton de Tscharner, PeaceNexus Foundation



I am honoured to write this introduction. The origin of this important piece of work is a conversation between two foundations sharing a desire to express solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Early in the response to the full-scale invasion of 2022, it became clear that, as in many war contexts, large international aid organisations, were given the lead. Hearing about the work being done on the ground by local peacebuilders, engaging their communities as volunteers, on evening, nights, week-ends after they had delivered on ill-designed interventions as “service providers”, we asked ourselves: can we help them reclaim their rightful place at the table? Can our experience in providing tailored organisational development support contribute to ensuring their agency, dignity and expertise is respected?

It was Olga Bentz who turned this shared reflection into a concrete initiative. Drawing on her many years of engagement with Ukraine, she developed the idea and the design, led fieldwork and documented her findings in this research, asking a bold question: can organisational development support, which we have always thought to not be suitable when the context becomes one of day-to-day survival, be accelerated to help local organisations become the direct recipients of international aid – and provide the needed leadership as the experts of their own contexts and the drivers of their own peacebuilding?

This question has guided us for the last two years. The Robert Bosch Foundation and PeaceNexus provided the financial and institutional backing that made this work possible. Olga adapted the framework and tested her hypothesis building a bridge between the realities on the ground and the current global debates. She paired up with Olena Kukhar, who complemented her by focusing on the human dimension. Rarely have I met such dedication; rarely have I seen such an extraordinary combination of competence, compassion and courage.

And the surprising answer is: not only is organisational development support possible in such a traumatizing environment, it is a necessity. When it is shaped by deep listening, tailored to both spoken and unspoken needs of each team, such support can have a transformational impact on the individuals involved and the organisations they lead. Already four out of the five organisations accompanied in this way are now direct grantees of international donors. But beyond that important shift, I hope you will also hear the stories of enormous dedication that have made it possible – extraordinary stories of resilience, healing and hope.

This work has been profoundly humbling. Part of me believes its success is due to the remarkable people that are at its heart. Yet I know that courage and resilience are not limited to Ukraine and so this report is an invitation for us to continue building on this model and shift to funding modalities that support a peace that is truly led and shaped by civil society.

**Carole Frampton de Tscharner,
Organizational Development Lead, PeaceNexus Foundation**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is a collective effort, born from collaboration and shared learning. It would not have been possible without the openness, trust, and commitment of many partners who contributed their experience, reflection, and care.

Our sincere gratitude goes to the Ukrainian CSOs that trusted us with accompaniment of their OD journeys and co-created the learning reflected here: Tetiana Kalenychenko and the Dialogue in Action team; Yana Salakhova and the Theater of Change team; Liana Moroz, Nadia Volkova, and the Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group team; Kateryna Ivanchenko and the Center for Innovative Development team; Tetiana Bilyk and the League of Mediators of Ukraine / Contact Center "In Touch" team, and Sasha Dovzhyk and INDEX: Institute for Documentation and Exchange team.

We also thank the many colleagues and partners who contributed their knowledge, insight, guidance and contacts throughout the process: Markus Lux and Julia Teek, Robert Bosch Foundation; Carole Frampton de Tscherner, PeaceNexus; Olga Nikolska and Nataliia Martynenko, Ednannia; Inna Pidluska and Oksana Dashchakivska, International Renaissance Foundation; Natalia Slynko, East Europe Foundation; Olena Kukhar, Ukrainian Community of Dialogue Practitioners; Daria Rybalchenko, National Network of Local Philanthropy Development / Philanthropy in Ukraine; Liubov Rainchuk, PhilanthropyInUkraine; Mila Leonova, Ukrainian CSO Alliance; Viktoriia Zatsnova, MyCity; Andrii Nimkovych, Razom for Ukraine; Solomiya Maksymovych, Institute of Leadership and Management, Ukrainian Catholic University; Sevda Kilicalp, Philea; Olena Stokoz and Antoine Terien, Ukrainian Red Cross; Anna Ackermann and Olexi Pasyuk, Ecodia; and Anna Valensa, Facilitation Park; Olga Kuharuk, Institute of Social and Political Psychology.

We are grateful as well to Taras Yatsenko, Tvoe Misto; Oleksandr Shevchenko, Restart Agency; and Liudmyla Kryzhanovska, Promprylad Foundation – local partners of the Robert Bosch Foundation in Ukraine who generously shared their experience and perspective.

To all who took part in this journey — Ukrainian and international — we extend heartfelt appreciation. Beyond Survival reflects not only research, but also a community of practice and shared inquiry that continues to grow. It stands as a modest contribution to a broader conversation on how learning, trust, and care can shape the future of civil society support in wartime and recovery.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ukraine's civil society operates in a state of radical simultaneity where survival, recovery, and transformation unfold at once. In this extraordinary context, CSOs have become pillars of national continuity, providing humanitarian relief, defending rights, sustaining social trust and cohesion amid destruction. Yet they do so while carrying trauma, exhaustion, and profound uncertainty.

Beyond Survival: Regenerative Organizational Development Support in Wartime Ukraine captures early lessons from a pilot initiative by the Robert Bosch Foundation and PeaceNexus Foundation that adapts OD support to wartime realities, giving rise to an emerging approach we refer to as Regenerative Organizational Development (Regenerative OD).

We define Regenerative OD as a trauma-aware, human-centered approach to organizational change that combines structural strengthening with care and reflection, enabling organizations to sustain agency, adapt to crisis, and regenerate their capacity for purposeful action. It builds on classical OD principles while explicitly addressing trauma, exhaustion, and the need to balance survival, recovery, and transformation.

In wartime Ukraine, Regenerative OD is not a luxury of a stable environment. It is a structural necessity. It allows organizations to remain grounded in their values and purpose while operating under extreme volatility, to act from clarity rather than depletion, and to convert crisis experience into long-term institutional capacity.

The Research

The findings draw on more than *twenty in-depth interviews, five ongoing OD case studies, ecosystem mapping, and literature review*. Ukrainian and international actors were engaged as co-learners rather than subjects, ensuring that insights reflect lived realities and shared analysis.

The findings are exploratory and based on a limited cohort of organizations intentionally selected for their maturity and leadership; they illustrate emerging patterns rather than statistically generalizable conclusions.

Key Insights

Across cases, *five interrelated patterns of transformation* emerged, all of them rooted in trust as a foundation:

- + **Strategic clarity and focus:** organizations redefined purpose and aligned daily operations with long-term direction.
- + **Team recalibration:** structured dialogue clarified roles, reduced internal friction, and strengthened shared ownership.
- + **Multidimensional learning:** sustainable change required combining technical reform with emotional processing and sensemaking.
- + **People-centered adaptability:** flexibility, empathy, and pacing proved as critical as formal systems.
- + **Protected space for reflection and renewal:** deliberate pauses enabled teams to metabolize stress and restore coherence.

Taken together, these patterns illustrate the regenerative dimension of OD under prolonged crisis conditions.

The Ukrainian OD Ecosystem

Ukraine's OD landscape is diverse and evolving. Established conveners such as *Ednannia, IRF, and EEF* anchor the field, while emerging actors expand its reach. Despite vitality, the ecosystem remains fragmented and largely dominated by technical models of capacity support. Integrating regenerative principles — including care, reflection, and adaptive pacing — will be essential for scaling institutional and human sustainability across the sector.

Early Recommendations

The report offers initial directions for joint exploration:

- + **Funders should invest in organizations** as living systems, provide flexible and multi-year support, and align funding instruments with regenerative principles.
- + **Conveners and intermediaries should rebalance** portfolios toward people-centered and transformational approaches, while strengthening practitioner communities and

shared learning.

- + **Trainers and mentors should integrate** resilience-oriented and trauma-aware facilitation into all OD work.
- + **CSOs should treat OD** as core work, balancing urgent response with strategic renewal and internal care.

The Way Forward

The next phase moves from pilot learning to structured consolidation of Regenerative OD in Ukraine. *Five priorities* stand out:

- 1. Deepen and validate practice** through broader cohorts and longitudinal tracking;
- 2. Strengthen the horizontal infrastructure** of the OD ecosystem;
- 3. Operationalize blended regenerative design** in funding and accompaniment models;
- 4. Align funding architecture** with flexibility and learning;
- 5. Position Ukraine as a contributor** to global debates on localization and institutional renewal.

The goal is not to expand OD in volume, but to consolidate Regenerative OD as a coherent field of knowledge and practice. The experience of Ukrainian civil society shows that renewal under prolonged crisis is possible. The task ahead is to embed this regenerative capacity structurally, so that it becomes sustained practice rather than isolated pilot experience.

GLOSSARY

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report to refer to key institutions and concepts central to Ukraine's civil society and the field of Organizational Development. The list is intentionally concise, focusing on terms that appear frequently or are essential for understanding the analysis. More technical or one-off donor acronyms have been omitted to keep the glossary clear and reader-friendly.

Abbreviation	Full Term
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EEF	East Europe Foundation
IRF	International Renaissance Foundation
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NNDLP	National Network for the Development of Local Philanthropy
OD	Organizational Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ROD	Regenerative Organizational Development
UCU ILM	Ukrainian Catholic University – Institute of Leadership and Management

PART I: WHY THIS RESEARCH?

SETTING THE STAGE

Chapter 1. Introduction: Context and Objectives

OD evolved from traditional capacity-building toward a deeper, human-centered process. While capacity-building often meant technical training, OD is about internally led change that strengthens governance, strategy, and systems while nurturing reflection, care, and resilience. For funders, this shift marks both a strategic investment and an ethical choice: investing in organizations and people, not only projects, and trusting local expertise to lead their own transformation.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine has transformed not only the country's physical and social landscape but also the very ways in which organizations live, work, and sustain themselves. CSOs, often at the heart of humanitarian relief, social care, advocacy, community and infrastructure rebuilding, are now required to operate in extraordinary simultaneity: they must survive, recover, and transform all at once.

This study, *Beyond Survival: Organizational Development Support in Wartime Ukraine*, represents an early attempt to capture lessons from a pilot initiative that sought to adapt OD support to the realities of war. The research was jointly initiated and supported by the *Robert Bosch Foundation* and *PeaceNexus Foundation*, in close collaboration with Ukrainian and international partners. This research was also shaped through close field collaboration with Olena Kukhar, whose work in interviews, facilitation, and accompaniment contributed directly to the insights presented here. It builds on the deep experience of many Ukrainian organizations and individuals who have been developing and delivering OD for years – long before this pilot began. Their thought leadership, generosity, and practice have made this study possible.

We approach these early findings with humility. What follows are first lessons learned from a small but revealing body of experience – not final conclusions. The organizations engaged in this work continue to evolve, experiment, and co-create new models of resilience and care. This research seeks to document their practice, amplify their voices, and create space for dialogue among funders, practitioners, and civil society leaders who are collectively redefining what OD means in wartime.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The central question guiding this study is:



How can outsiders best support Ukrainian CSOs during wartime, and lay the foundations for sustainable recovery and leadership in the future?

METHOD AND LIMITATIONS

To explore this question, the research draws on mixed methods, including:

- + **over 20 in-depth interviews** with Ukrainian and international funders, conveners¹/intermediaries, and practitioners;
- + **five in-depth OD case studies** documenting ongoing organizational change processes;
- + **desk research** situating Ukraine's experience within wider debates on localization, trauma-informed practice, and international development.

The research process was inclusive and collaborative. Ukrainian and international actors were engaged not only as sources of data but as co-learners and co-creators. This approach ensured that findings reflect lived realities, contextual understanding, and multiple voices from the field. More about the methodology is in [Attachment 1](#).

Considering that most of the OD cases are still ongoing, and more organizations are receiving OD support in the research cohort, more evidence will emerge. Yet, it is a conscious choice to share the early lessons based on the first 1.5 years now rather than later, with the hope that even such early lessons might bring value to our partners and allies, broader audience, and ultimately, the people of Ukraine.

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report does not aim to provide prescriptive recommendations. Rather, it offers an emerging evidence base and an invitation to joint exploration. It seeks to honor the innovation already happening within Ukraine's civil society and to support funders and partners in aligning their efforts with this evolving practice.

The findings increasingly point toward what we describe as Regenerative OD as an approach that recognizes that in wartime, institutions must not only strengthen systems but also restore energy, coherence, and human sustainability. This concept is explored further in Chapter 2.

The report is organized in four parts:

- 1. Why this research** – introducing the wartime context, research objectives, and conceptual foundations.
- 2. The Ukrainian laboratory for resilience innovation** – mapping the strengths and fragilities of Ukraine's civil society and OD ecosystem.
- 3. Learning from practice** – presenting OD case studies and patterns of transformation.
- 4. Recommendations and the Next Steps** – offering reflections for funders, conveners/intermediaries, coaches, and CSOs and identifying future directions for research and collaboration.

¹ Convener refers to an organization that plays an intermediary, field-building role within the civil society ecosystem by bringing together funders, service providers, and civil society organizations; designing and administering support mechanisms (such as OD grants, mentoring, and peer learning); setting standards and norms of practice; and enabling learning and coordination, across actors. Conveners strengthen the ecosystem by creating the conditions under which organizations can access resources, knowledge, and relationships necessary for sustainable development and resilience.

Chapter 2. Defining Organizational Development

OD support is more than capacity building. It is a transformative experience that enables leaders to focus on vision and strategy while preparing organizations for sustainable impact. For funders, it is not an optional add-on, but one of the most strategic and ethical choices available.

2.1. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT VS. CAPACITY BUILDING

The notion that strengthening the capacity of individuals and institutions in developing countries is crucial for the success of development policy emerged gradually, with the theoretical debate reaching its peak between 1995 and 2005. Evolution of the capacity building/ capacity development frameworks is described in greater detail in [Attachment 2](#).

For the sake of the current document, we rely on a classical definition of capacity development offered by [OECD DAC](#): “**Capacity development** is understood as the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. The phrase capacity development is used advisedly in preference to conventional capacity building. The 'building' metaphor suggests a process starting with a plain surface and involving the step-by-step erection of a new structure, based on a preconceived design. Experience suggests that capacity is not successfully enhanced in this way.” Definitions used by major development agencies are presented in [Attachment 3](#).

Graph 1. Capacity Building vs. Capacity Development

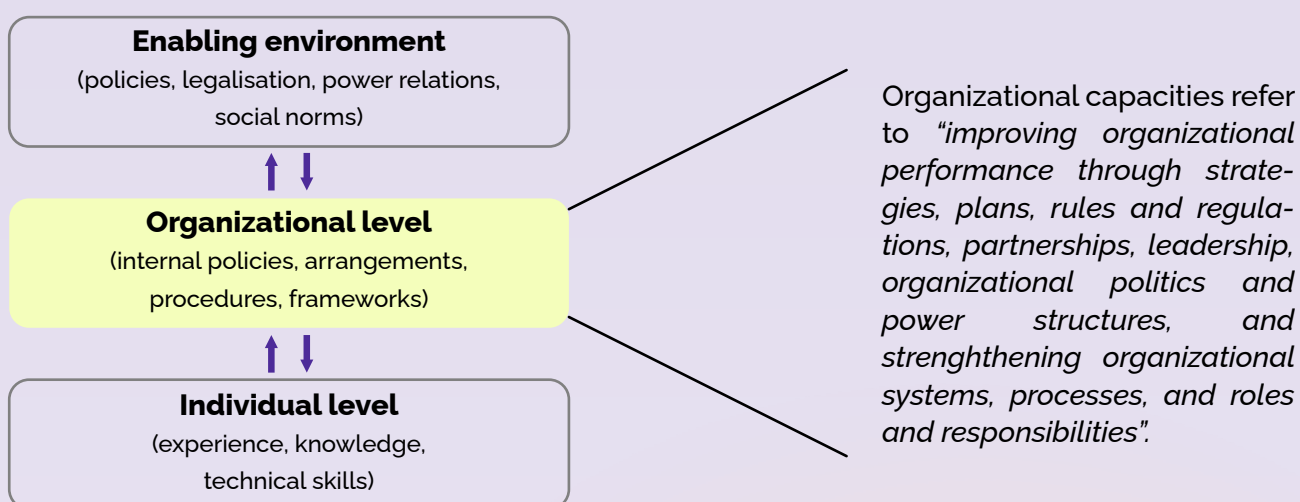
	Capacity Building	Capacity Development
Definition	Often refers to the process of developing competencies and capabilities in individuals or institutions, typically through training and resource provision	A broader, endogenous process led by local actors, enhancing abilities to perform functions, solve problems, and adapt sustainably
Approach	Technical and training-focused	Holistic, participatory, and systems-oriented, emphasizing local ownership
Initiator	Donor of external agency	The local organization or community
Temporal Focus	Short to medium term	Long-term and strategic
Criticism	May promote dependency or ignore local context	Emphasizes ownership, adaptability, and sustainability
Comment	A process that supports only the initial stages of building or creating capacities and alludes to an assumption that there is no existing capacity	A process through which partners obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time

Illustrative real-life examples comparing capacity building and capacity development approaches are presented in [Attachment 4](#).

2.2. FROM CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development frameworks were rooted in the idea of “strengthening” capacities at individual, organizational, and systemic levels. Here Organizational capacities refer to *“improving organizational performance through strategies, plans, rules and regulations, partnerships, leadership, organizational politics and power structures, and strengthening organizational systems, processes, and roles and responsibilities”*.

Graph 2. Systemic approach to levels of capacity



Since the 2010s, the discourse in international development has increasingly shifted from a predominant focus on capacity development toward a deeper emphasis on OD. This shift reflected both conceptual evolution and practical lessons under conditions of complexity, fragility, and crisis.

OD builds on – and goes beyond – capacity development by centering change processes that are internally driven, holistic, and sustained over time. OD places greater emphasis on how organizations learn, adapt, reflect, and evolve rather than simply acquiring new competencies.

In 2017, [UNDP published](#) *Demystifying Organizational Development*, underscoring this evolution. The guide presents OD as a cycle of assessment, reflection, intervention, and adaptation, embedding human rights values, systems thinking, and relational practices into organizational strengthening. The OD model recognizes that technical and structural changes (governance, financial systems) must go hand in hand with relational and cultural dimensions (leadership, trust, reflection, care and wellbeing).

2.3. THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

OD is a broad and complex undertaking, implying change at multiple levels. It borrows from sociological ideas about the complex ways in which organizations are transformed, the multiplicity of factors affecting change, the fluid and dynamic character of the process and the importance of the affected individuals' and organizations' ownership and leadership. Below are common features for OD conceptual frameworks:

- + **Local ownership** of all interventions is considered crucial, and is one of the main elements distinguishing the new approach from traditional views on technical cooperation. Stakeholders in host countries/ representatives of local organizations have to decide on the needs and targets of capacity development; furthermore, they have to design the processes of change and assume leadership for them.
- + Action is required at **multiple levels** to achieve sustainable results, because capacity development operates within an understanding of institutions as relying on individuals' skills and motivations, on one hand, and as embedded in a broader social and political context that shapes any transformative process, on the other.
- + The change achieved has to be **sustainable over time**.
- + **Political and governance factors** play an important role, given the influence they have on the functioning of institutions and on the possibility for reform.

"In times when traditional instruments of long-term planning and strategizing become less relevant for peacebuilding and social transformation work, OD process can offer a welcome opportunity for strategic grounding and reconnection with own compass. Teams simultaneously look inward while working on their organizational topics, and outward, while exploring different ways to engage with their context. So OD is a way for the teams to better cope with their context changes", explains Carol Frampton de Tschärmer, OD Lead at PeaceNexus.

OD frameworks are evolving over time. Recent conceptual developments include [Resiliency+ Framework](#) developed by PartnersGlobal with support by Civicus. It is built on around seven dimensions of resilience: adaptive capacity, connectedness, entrepreneurial mindset, legitimacy, staff commitment and capacity, creative communication, situational awareness.

So OD is about resilience and sustainability. Moving away from linear development models where funding comes from foreign governments, requires both agency in agenda setting and financial agency, both of which were lost in the current funding landscape. OD process could offer a way to re-establish them.

2.4. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT AS A STRATEGIC AND ETHICAL CHOICE FOR EXTERNAL PARTNERS/ FUNDERS

For funders, supporting durable institutional strength of their partners through OD is both smart strategy and ethical responsibility.

A strategic investment: OD support strengthens governance, financial systems, [leadership](#), and staff care, allowing CSOs to adapt and stay effective under pressure. There is an emerging body of [evidence](#) that organizations with OD support are better able to withstand shocks, retain staff, and link urgent response with long-term strategy (see also [link 2](#); [link 3](#)). Stronger organizations are also more reliable partners, making OD a form of risk mitigation for funders.

An ethical commitment: Unlike project-based funding, which often stretches CSOs thin, OD support treats organizations as living systems that need space for reflection, resilience, and healing. In wartime environments, this includes care-centered/trauma-sensitive practice and safe spaces for leaders and teams. Offering OD support signals solidarity: funders value not only outputs but also the wellbeing of people who sustain civil society.

Manifestation of trust to local expertise: Evidence shows that OD is most effective when delivered by local providers and conveners. They combine contextual knowledge with cost-effectiveness, aligning with global calls to #ShiftThePower. Supporting OD locally is both more relevant and more respectful than importing external models.

OD support can help reach **different funders' goals**, including the following:

- + A complement to programmatic funding
- + A response to clear requests from existing partners
- + Reinforcing step before exiting programs/ pre-requisite for core funding.
- + A standalone investment in an organization
- + A way to better understand partners' goals, missions and strategic plans.

Example of a decision-making tree to help identify the partner and the type of support, including OD support, is presented in [Attachment 5](#).

2.5. REGENERATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In this report, **Regenerative Organizational Development** is understood as a:

trauma-aware, human-centered approach to organizational change that combines structural strengthening with care and reflection, enabling organizations to sustain agency, adapt to crisis, and regenerate their capacity for purposeful action.

In contexts of prolonged crisis, OD cannot be limited to strengthening systems, strategies, and governance alone. Organizations are sustained by people, and when those

people operate under continuous stress, uncertainty, and exposure to loss, OD must explicitly integrate human sustainability with institutional performance.

In this study, we refer to this approach as Regenerative OD. It builds on established OD principles of local ownership, internal leadership, and systemic change, while intentionally integrating care, reflection, attention to emotional load, and organizational rhythm. Care in this sense does not refer to therapeutic intervention, but to creating conditions in which organizations can remain coherent, ethical, and effective while sustaining agency and human capacity under pressure.

Regenerative OD assumes that change in wartime unfolds under conditions of **simultaneity**. Organizations are required to respond to immediate needs, process disruption and loss, and make strategic decisions about the future at the same time. In such conditions, purely technical OD interventions risk reinforcing overextension rather than resilience. Integrating care allows organizations to pace change, surface tensions safely, and sustain agency under pressure.

While trauma-informed OD focuses on avoiding harm and resilience-oriented OD emphasizes adaptation, regenerative OD goes one step further. It explicitly addresses renewal: restoring energy, meaning, and relational capacity regenerating the organization's ability for purposeful action.

Chapter 3. Wartime OD: Responding to Radical Simultaneity

The theories of organizational change, trauma, and transformation provide a lens to understand wartime pressures. They show why organizations experience simultaneity, why trauma is both a burden and a driver of change, and how individuals and societies can be reshaped by crisis. These dynamics are playing out in Ukraine's civil society — where survival, resilience, and transformation unfold all at once.

3.1. INTRODUCTION: THE LOGIC OF RADICAL SIMULTANEITY

War does not give organizations the luxury of sequence. During wartime, CSOs are forced to live in three times at once: fighting for survival today, repairing what was broken yesterday, and preparing for the future that must come tomorrow. This is what we call **radical simultaneity**².

It means leaders make life-or-death decisions while also drafting strategies. Staff deliver emergency aid even as they process trauma. Teams run on exhaustion but still try to imagine what the future should look like in five years. The boundaries between crisis management, recovery, and transformation have collapsed. These processes now co-exist, colliding and competing for the same scarce energy. Voices from the field, describing radical simultaneity are presented in [Attachment 6](#).

For civil society, this simultaneity is both devastating and generative. It stretches people and organizations to the breaking point, but it also forces innovation, courage, and the discovery of new ways of working. Under conditions of radical simultaneity, OD cannot remain purely adaptive. It must become regenerative — creating structured spaces where organizations metabolize disruption, renew agency, and consciously choose their future orientation.

3.2. PRESSURES ON ORGANIZATIONS IN WARTIME: A THEORETICAL LENS

To start better understanding organizational changes during wartime, we can draw on established theories of organizational change, trauma, and societal transformation. These frameworks provide the analytical language to interpret Ukraine's experience, while also connecting it to broader global debates.

3.2.1. Organizational Change Under Pressure

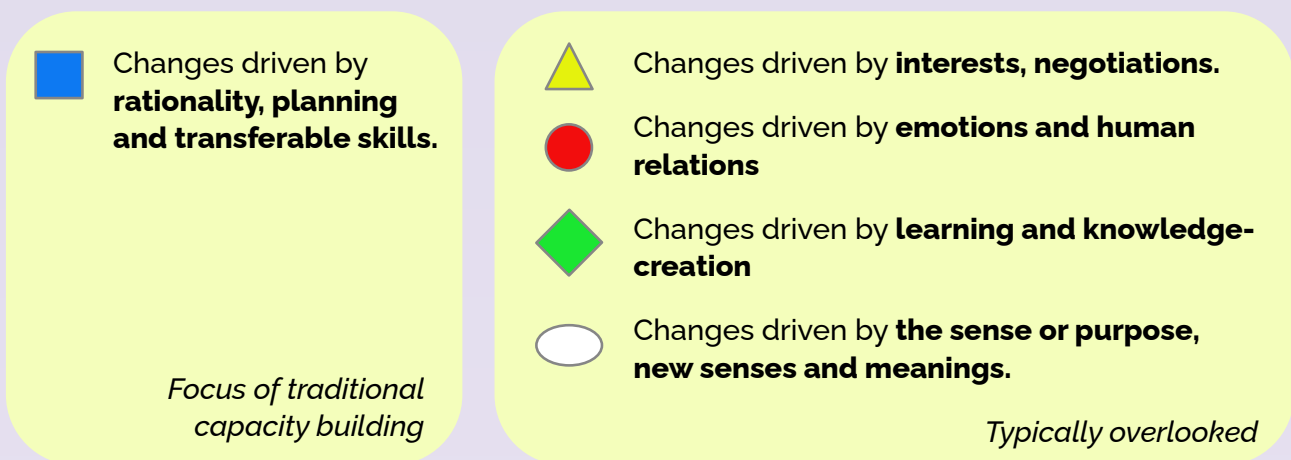
Organizations in crisis settings often experience simultaneous change processes – stabilizing for survival, adapting for resilience, and transforming for the future. [The “Colours of Change” model](#) (de Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003) offers a useful framework:

- + **Blue-print change:** planned, controlled, output-driven – effective for technical fixes but insufficient under high uncertainty.

²The term has been suggested by the Ukrainian participants during an open space follow-up meeting which happened at the side of the Mokuteki training program. Notes prepared and shared by Aljona Kukhar and Natalie Trambovetska.

- + **Red-print change:** human relations, motivation, and cultural alignment – essential when trauma and exhaustion reshape teams.
- + **Green-print change:** learning, reflection, and experimentation – key for adaptive response in complex, fast-changing contexts.
- + **Yellow-print change:** negotiation, building coalitions, navigating power – crucial in polarized, resource-scarce environments.
- + **White-print change:** emergent, self-organizing, unpredictable – relevant for innovation and spontaneous civic mobilization in wartime.

Graph 3. Colorful model (schematic)



Wartime organizations must often operate across all “colors” simultaneously. The challenge is not limiting the change to one mode, but navigating their interplay under extreme stress.

To hold space for these diverse types of change, organizations require multi-layered support that combines structure with empathy. This includes flexible funding that allows for both planned and emergent actions; facilitation and coaching that help teams make sense of shifting realities and maintain psychological safety; and peer learning spaces that foster collective reflection and exchange across organizations. Equally important is leadership accompaniment – supporting leaders in balancing immediate crisis response with long-term transformation. In essence, effective support enables organizations not only to survive and adapt, but also to stay connected to purpose, values, and collective agency amid uncertainty.

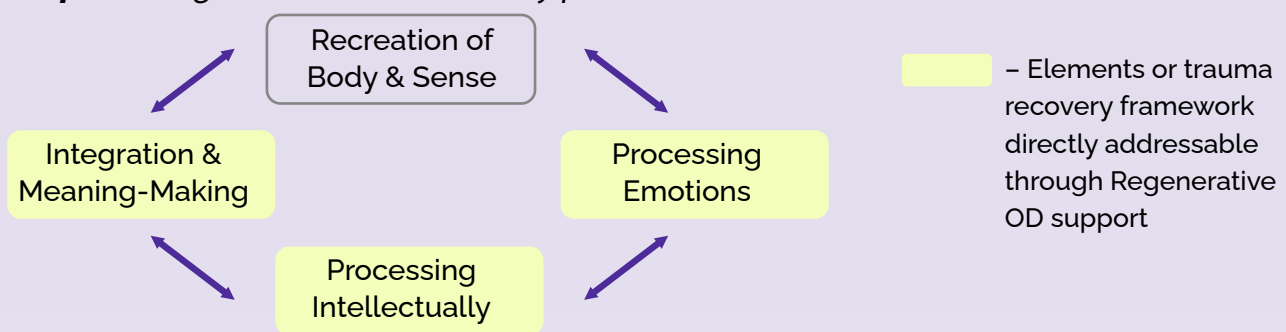
3.2.2. Traumatic experiences and trauma processing

OD has often been understood as a process of strengthening primarily governance, strategy, structures, and systems. Yet, in contexts of war and disruption, this purely technical understanding is insufficient. Organizations are made up of people, and when those people carry the heavy burden of traumatic experiences, OD must become trauma-informed and, ideally, to actively contribute to trauma processing and healing.

Trauma recovery is best understood not as a linear path but as a dynamic process with several interdependent components that reinforce each other. Different frameworks – from *Judith Herman's four-phase model*, to the “*Window of tolerance*” approach, to *Polyvagal theory* – all emphasize that healing requires more than technical fixes. Across these perspectives, four core interconnected elements stand out:

- + Recreation of body and sense,
- + Processing of emotions,
- + Processing of experiences intellectually, and finally
- + Integration and meaning-making.

Graph 4. *Integrative Trauma Recovery framework*



OD can play a direct role in supporting at least three of these components: it creates safe spaces for emotional processing within teams, offers structured opportunities for intellectual reflection on experiences and lessons, and facilitates the integration and meaning-making that allow organizations to translate insights into new strategies and practices. In this sense, OD becomes more than an exercise in capacity-building – it contributes to the collective recovery and resilience of organizations navigating wartime conditions.

Trauma-informed regenerative OD thus has **three essential qualities**. *First*, it provides safe spaces where individuals and teams can engage in honest reflection without fear of judgment. *Second*, it strengthens agency, allowing organizations to set their own priorities and reclaim control in an environment where much has been taken away. *Third*, it ensures flexibility and dignity, adapting to organizational rhythms rather than imposing rigid external templates. In this way, OD becomes a vehicle not only for stronger institutions but also for collective healing and transformation.

3.2.3. Individual and Societal Transformation

There is a set of transformative capacities³ that enable individuals and societies to function in a constantly changing and deeply interconnected world: openness, perspective seeking, sensemaking, an inner compass, and compassion. These are not abstract ideals but practical capabilities for resilience and transformation. They allow

³On the becoming of conscious co-creators, Ekskaret Foundation

people to approach complexity with curiosity, integrate multiple viewpoints, discern meaning and purpose, and act with integrity in relation to themselves and others.

Organizational Development (OD) can serve as an incubator for these capacities. By creating spaces for reflection, dialogue, and experimentation, OD fosters openness and perspective seeking across teams. Strategic accompaniment and peer learning strengthen collective sensemaking, enabling organizations to identify patterns beyond immediate pressures. Inclusive governance reforms and strategy processes help anchor an organizational “inner compass,” aligning day-to-day decisions with deeper purpose and values. At the same time, an emphasis on care, trust, and agency nurtures compassion as a lived organizational practice.

In wartime Ukraine, this connection becomes particularly pronounced. OD processes can and should offer **more than technical fixes**: they create conditions for cultivating the very capacities required to operate under radical simultaneity. At the same time, the experience of war itself intensifies the search for meaning and purpose—prompting individuals and organizations to re-examine what truly matters, why they act, and for whom. When thoughtfully accompanied, OD can help channel this search into coherent direction, shared purpose, and grounded action.

In this sense, OD support goes beyond strengthening individual organizations. It enables organizations and their people to become conscious co-creators of sustainable futures—even under conditions of extreme strain.

PART II: THE UKRAINIAN LABORATORY FOR RESILIENCE INNOVATION

Chapter 4. Civil Society in Ukraine During War

Ukraine's civil society remains one of the strongest in Europe in terms of mobilization, volunteerism, and trust. Tens of thousands of CSOs, charitable foundations, and informal networks form the backbone of national resilience. Yet institutional fragility persists: funding remains short-term, burnout widespread, and trauma largely unaddressed. The sector's dual reality of strength and exhaustion makes OD support indispensable. It helps civic actors convert their war experiences into sustainable structures capable of leading post-war recovery.

4.1. UKRAINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY OVERVIEW

Ukraine's civil society has entered the wartime period not as a fragile sector, but as one of the strongest pillars of the country's democratic reform and resilience. International rankings consistently confirm its robustness: in 2024 *Freedom House* scored Ukraine's civil society at 5.25 out of 7 [in *Nations in Transit*](#); the *USAID/FHI 360 CSO Sustainability Index rated it 3 out of 7 (where lower scores indicate stronger sustainability); and the [CSO-Meter Snapshot](#) gave Ukraine a 4.7 out of 7.0, placing it well above many of its Eastern Partnership peers. These indicators capture institutional strength, but they do not fully reflect the strain under which this strength is currently sustained.*

This institutional strength has translated into extraordinary civic mobilization. As of 1 April 2025, almost **33,000 charitable organisations** (COs), and **106,720 non-governmental organisations** (NGOs) operate in the country, supported by a culture of volunteering and philanthropy. According to the [World Giving Index 2024](#), Ukraine ranked 7th globally, with 77% of adults reporting helping a stranger, 67% donating money, and 37% engaging in volunteering, which is three times higher than the EU average. According to recent [national surveys](#), 74% of Ukrainians reported making financial donations in 2024, and 78% contributed in the form of money, goods, or time — underscoring the scale of internal solidarity even in the fourth year of full-scale war. This scale of mobilization, while remarkable, has also accelerated exhaustion across the sector.

In wartime, these organizations and networks became indispensable actors in humanitarian aid, provision of social services, community resilience, rehabilitation, and international advocacy.

Yet this remarkable strength is accompanied by **deep paradoxes**. On the one hand, civic action has never been stronger; on the other, the institutional sustainability of CSOs remains fragile. Research conducted in 2024–2025 reveals acute vulnerabilities: burnout and trauma are widespread, with over **70%** of Ukrainians reporting symptoms

of anxiety, depression, or [severe stress](#), and 34% of CSO staff [acknowledging burnout](#).

[Financial fragility](#) is equally pressing. Despite the surge of wartime funding, the overwhelming majority is still channeled through international intermediaries: [less than 1%](#) of aid in 2022 reached local CSOs directly. This pattern continues, with local actors shouldering immense responsibilities but lacking predictable, long-term institutional support. *“The hardest expenses to replace (after US funding suspension to Ukrainian CSOs) were those related to institutional support, organizational development...”* notes the authors of a recently published research *Civil Society In Ukraine During Wartime, 2022–2025* by [Ednannia](#).

Civil society’s collective voice has grown stronger in response. Ukrainian organizations have repeatedly called for deeper solidarity and systemic reform in aid relations. In 2022, the open letter [If Not Now, When?](#) addressed international donors bluntly:

*Ukrainian civil society **is not a subcontractor**. We are equal actors who know the needs of our people best. Cut bureaucracy, trust local actors, and invest in long-term sustainability rather than short-term projects.” Three years later, in 2025, the follow-up appeal [Solidarity in Action](#) reiterated the same message in even sharper terms: “Solidarity means even distribution of aid across regions. It means access to decision-making tables, not just implementing decisions made elsewhere. It means investing in sustainability, not convenience.”*

The wartime SWOT analysis of the sector reflects this duality. Strengths include high levels of trust, mobilization, and cooperation across networks, as well as openness to engage with authorities. Weaknesses are concentrated in resource fragility, trauma, and institutional underdevelopment, especially at the local level. Opportunities arise from the unprecedented international visibility of Ukrainian CSOs, the rise of local philanthropy, and the momentum for localization. Threats include the obvious risks of physical destruction and displacement, but also emotional exhaustion, loss of staff, and the depletion of both domestic and international funding sources. See [Attachment 7](#) for more details.

4.2. FATIGUE AND THE PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL STRETCH

Interview findings confirm that while the need for psychosocial and emotional support within CSOs is both acute and widespread, dedicated instruments for trauma healing and mental health support remain limited. Even when such opportunities are offered, uptake is often lower than expected. Open calls for mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS) targeted at local organizations frequently receive fewer applications than anticipated, despite clear indicators of distress across the sector.

A key pattern emerging from interviews is reluctance to seek support for themselves,

particularly among leaders and long-serving team members. Many CSO leaders have been operating for years in a sustained “resilience mode,” holding together their teams, communities, and partners under extreme pressure. In this context, vulnerability is often perceived as a liability rather than a necessity. Combined with constant performance expectations, responsibility for others, and moral pressure to “keep going,” this reluctance places leaders and teams at heightened risk of burnout, depression, and long-term exhaustion.

The lived experience of this dynamic is captured vividly in conversations with CSO representatives. One exchange illustrates how rest itself becomes an anomaly rather than a norm:

Vacation? After you brought up the topic of vacations in our team in the summer, we introduced a system for recording days off and the right to take those days, so my colleagues pushed me to take a week's vacation.

– They forced you, right?

– Exactly, that's the word. I really liked it! I demolished a wall in my house during my vacation.

– What, you demolished a wall? (conversation with a woman)

– Yes, I demolished a wall and an old stove. And I built a new one.

*– (Name), please remind me, this is your **first vacation in a long time**, am I right?*

– Yes, the first in 8 years.”

Other interviewees describe a profound cognitive and emotional toll that accumulates over time, often without visible external breakdown:

*My productivity has declined significantly in recent years. I used to be able to multi-task. Now I find it very difficult to switch from one focus to another. For example, two years ago I prepared a text on methodology and wrote it myself. Today, I needed to remember what was in this text, and I sat for two hours ‘staring’ at it. And this is a methodology that I wrote myself! It's terrible... **I work without days off**, but if that's what you're hinting at, it's always been that way, nothing has changed in that regard.”*

The material and infrastructural conditions of wartime further intensify this psycho-emotional stretch. Power outages, cold offices, displacement, and the blurring of work-life boundaries undermine basic functioning and compound fatigue:

*Our office has no heating, although we can power our computers and the Internet. But it's still uncomfortable to work without heating in winter, so everyone has been transferred to remote work. The power outages in recent months have had a very negative impact: **I feel dull anger and aggression**, because if there is no electricity all day,*

my laptop will only last for 4 hours, and I will have to finish the rest of my tasks at night. I feel like I have completely lost the ability to multitask. Two simultaneous tasks are okay, but if a third is added, I shut down. I had to give up the third project, which I was given 'for growth,' which I was very happy about."

Several respondents point to a deeper cultural shift: practices that were already unhealthy before the war, such as chronic overwork and hyper-busyness, have become unsustainable under prolonged stress:

*It seems to me that if earlier 'routine fires' were the norm, today we are simply **not physically capable** of handling them. If earlier the tendency toward hyper-busyness was part of our internal culture, today we are unable to maintain this standard; something has to change."*

At the same time, organizations continue to operate under implicit expectations of performance and delivery, even as care practices are introduced:

*Well, **after shelling** we are always asked in the morning how everyone is doing; every meeting starts with that. No one is standing there with a whip, but the tasks still have to be completed."*

Taken together, these accounts reveal a critical tension shaping wartime civil society: care is increasingly acknowledged as necessary, yet it is rarely structurally protected. Emotional check-ins coexist with unchanged workloads; symbolic recognition of strain is not always matched by systemic adjustments in expectations, pacing, or organizational design.

This psycho-emotional stretch is not an individual failure, but a structural condition of wartime civic engagement. It underscores the limits of resilience as a personal trait and highlights the need for organizational-level responses. Within this context, OD support can offer more than technical strengthening, when designed as trauma-aware, flexible, and human-centered. It can create protected spaces where exhaustion is named, norms are renegotiated, and organizations begin to recalibrate how care, performance, and sustainability coexist under conditions of radical simultaneity.

Chapter 5. The Ukrainian OD Support Ecosystem

The Ukrainian OD ecosystem is diverse and vibrant. Established conveners such as Ednannia, IRF, and EEF anchor a field that now includes emerging players like Razom and MyCity, network-based organizations, academic centers, and independent trainers. These actors offer grants, coaching, mentoring, and peer-learning opportunities, yet the field relies on traditional frameworks and their technical focus. As a result, the ecosystem may be missing opportunities for deeper transformation toward the next level of resilience and peacebuilding impact. Documenting learning, integrating care/mental health elements, application of more holistic approaches to change are key steps toward a more powerful ecosystem capable of upscaling OD support and catalyzing a systemic change.

5.1. OD AS A PATHWAY TO CLOSE SYSTEMIC GAP BETWEEN GRANTORS AND GRANTEES INTRODUCTION: THE LOGIC OF RADICAL SIMULTANEITY

The Ukrainian OD ecosystem has been profoundly shaped by longer-standing structural dynamics between international and domestic funding actors. A persistent systemic gap exists between the expectations placed on CSOs and the resources and instruments available to meet them. OD support has the potential to play a decisive role in closing this gap.

On the side of grantors, expectations toward Ukrainian CSOs are increasingly ambitious and, in many respects, justified. [*The 2025 study Expectations and Challenges of Grantors in Ukraine*](#) outlines a clear set of aspirations: donors expect local organizations to operate with greater strategic clarity, institutional maturity, transparency, and resilience. This includes optimizing internal processes, strengthening governance and financial management, balancing urgent response with long-term strategy, improving communication, building alliances and consortia, diversifying funding sources, and actively positioning themselves within localization debates. Implicitly, these expectations point toward CSOs acting not merely as implementers, but as autonomous, strategic, and sustainable institutions.

Crucially, **Ukrainian CSOs largely share these aspirations.** Interviews and case evidence show that many organizations explicitly want to professionalize, stabilize, and evolve toward precisely the kinds of institutional profiles donors seek. Leaders articulate a strong desire to move beyond survival mode, reduce dependency on short-term project funding, strengthen internal systems, care for their teams, and reclaim strategic agency. In this sense, the gap between donors and CSOs is not primarily one of vision or ambition.

The core tension lies elsewhere: resources for this transformation are scarce, frag-

mented, and often insufficiently aligned with the type of change required. While donors call for stronger institutions, the dominant funding instruments remain short-term, project-based, and compliance-driven. These instruments reward delivery under pressure but leave little space, time, or psychological safety for deeper organizational change. As a result, CSOs are asked to “become stronger” without being sufficiently resourced to invest in the very capacities that would enable such strength.

Evidence from **recent OD grant calls illustrates this structural mismatch**. Demand for OD support far exceeds supply: *the International Renaissance Foundation* received 470 applications for approximately 30 OD grants in 2025; *the European Endowment for Democracy* received 500 applications for 25 grants in 2024; *the Zagoriy Foundation* reported 234 applications for just 11 grants in 2022. The rapid emergence of new Ukrainian OD conveners, such as *Razom for Ukraine* and *MyCity*, further confirms the scale of unmet demand. These figures do not indicate lack of motivation among CSOs; rather, they signal a system in which the means of transformation are dramatically outpaced by both need and intent.

In this context, OD support functions as a **bridging mechanism between donor expectations and CSO realities**. When designed as flexible, internally led, and sufficiently resourced processes, OD enables organizations to translate shared aspirations into practice. It creates the conditions for CSOs to strengthen institutions without sacrificing care, to professionalize without losing agency, and to meet accountability requirements without hollowing out internal resilience.

Local systemic actors have increasingly recognized OD as a prerequisite for meaningful localization. [The Locally-Led Response Strategy 2024–2029](#) of the Ukrainian CSO Alliance explicitly identifies capacity sharing and institutional strengthening as core conditions for locally led crisis response and recovery. In this framing, OD is not a technical add-on but a strategic investment that allows local actors to assume leadership on their own terms.

Investing more – and more appropriately – in OD support would therefore serve both sides of the partnership. It would enable Ukrainian CSOs to meet donor expectations in ways that are sustainable and humane, while allowing donors to move beyond a cycle of high expectations paired with structurally insufficient instruments. In doing so, OD offers not only a pathway to stronger organizations, but also a model for rebalancing power, responsibility, and trust in wartime aid relationships.

5.2. LOCAL⁴ OD ECOSYSTEM IN UKRAINE

Ukraine has developed a lively and diverse ecosystem of actors providing OD support through a wide range of modalities. This ecosystem includes civil society organizations,

⁴ The purpose of this chapter is to present a structured overview of Ukraine-based locally led OD actors. To maintain this focus, international and multilateral actors have been deliberately excluded from consideration.

academic institutions, independent trainers and coaches, and a group of actors commonly referred to as conveners.

Conveners are organizations that bring together different actors within the civil society support ecosystem to enable coordination, learning, and collective action. They often facilitate grantmaking, peer learning, and knowledge exchange while linking funders, service providers, and CSOs. In Ukraine, conveners frequently act as trusted intermediaries that help translate between international donors and local organizations while strengthening locally led OD support.

Within this landscape, three main groups of OD conveners stand out:

- + **“Matriarchs”** – exemplified by Ednannia, the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), and *the East Europe Foundation* (EEF). These are locally owned, locally led, and well-established institutions with a mission of strengthening civil society in Ukraine. Each has supported more than a thousand of OD cases over more than a decade of activity. They typically operate with major bilateral and multilateral funders, philanthropic donors, and also experiment with crowdfunding. Ednannia, in particular, have been consistently working over decades establishing OD culture among CSOs, creating a market for training and OD-related services and establishing standards; they built a unique marketplace within the ecosystem of registered members, including both CSOs and validated service providers – more than 30,000 members in total – and runs regular OD grant competitions.
- + **Emerging OD actors** – such as *Razom Stronger, MyCity, or R2P*. These organizations began offering OD grants primarily after the start of the full-scale invasion, responding to the unmet demands of their constituencies. Their scale is smaller, with dozens or hundreds rather than thousands of grantees, and their grants tend to be modest in size. They often combine funding with opportunities for networking and peer learning. Their focus is typically narrower, aimed either at their own project grantees or at specific groups such as volunteers seeking to professionalize and establish formal CSOs. For them, OD is usually part of a broader support portfolio.
- + **Network support organizations** – examples include actors like NNLDP and Ecodia. These bodies provide OD sub-grants, organize trainings, and facilitate peer learning and networking for their members as part of their mission to strengthen their networks. A distinctive feature is that they often do not draw a sharp line between OD and care/ MHPSS. Instead, they offer flexible resources that can be applied to either area depending on the needs of members. Big network structures, like Red Cross and Caritas actively develop their local partners, as a core pillar of their operating model.

In addition to conveners, **academic institutions and independent practitioners** also play important roles in delivering OD support.

Among academic providers, *the Institute of Leadership and Management at the Ukrainian Catholic University (ILM UCU)* and *the Kyiv School of Economics (KSE)* are notable. ILM UCU is unique as the only institution which goes beyond trainings offering certified programs tailored specifically to CSOs, while KSE provides standalone training opportunities. Both operate commercially, which limits access for many organizations under current funding conditions. Simultaneously, ILM UCU has pioneered a leadership development program called *the Resilience Clinic*, which offers stipends to participants, thus engaging at the interface between OD and care/ MHPSS.

Independent trainers and coaches also constitute an important part of the ecosystem. They provide a wide range of training and coaching services to CSOs, often offering discounts of around 50% on their commercial rates for CSOs and volunteers, making high-quality learning and support more affordable. There are many more trainers than coaches and mentors in the sector, and the market for training specifically for CSOs has been recently [well-documented](#). Mentors and coaches are a less clearly defined group. Yet, these practitioners have accumulated valuable experience in addressing the wartime realities of OD and leadership, blending OD and care/ MHPSS components. Their insights remain largely undocumented and are rarely consolidated or shared systematically, which constitutes one of the critical research gaps.

Grant-giving organizations appear to be largely maintaining pre-war OD practices, paying only very limited attention to the specific demands of wartime conditions. As a result, a critical link risks being overlooked: the connection between OD support and deeper organizational transformation that could unlock a new level of resilience for organizations, their teams, and their leaders. Adapting OD approaches and instruments to contemporary thinking – including frameworks such as Resilience+ and dignity-based methodologies – offers a pathway to close this gap. Such adaptation could elevate OD support from an auxiliary function to a system-shaping contribution, strengthening civil society's ability to navigate radical simultaneity and to lead Ukraine's recovery in a self-determined manner.

5.3. UKRAINE'S OD ECOSYSTEM THROUGH THE LENS OF GOOD FUNDING PRACTICES

A working group of five philanthropic organizations with extensive experience in OD support has identified a set of [good funder practices](#). These include:

- + Providing core, flexible, long-term funding;
- + Making OD an integrated component of grants;
- + Offering accompaniment and coaching;
- + Supporting local OD providers;
- + Facilitating reflection and learning;
- + Enabling light-touch measurement.

Ukrainian OD conveners generally align with these principles. However, some gaps re-

main — particularly the scarcity of packages that combine OD with care/ MHPSS, which is vital under wartime conditions.

1. Provide core, flexible, long-term funding.

Multi-year, unrestricted funding creates stability and gives CSOs the space to set their own priorities. While OD processes in Ukraine often start from organizational needs, long-term support remains rare. Positive examples include IRF's grant competitions that allow up to three years of OD support, Ednannia's pool of stable partners with ongoing access to OD grants, and NNDLP's consistent multi-year support to members. Transformation would be deeper if funders expanded multi-year OD opportunities, while conveners documented longitudinal results to strengthen the case for such investments. CSOs could also benefit from routinely requesting OD support components alongside project funding.

2. Make OD an integrated grant component.

Embedding OD into project funding normalizes capacity-building and resources areas such as leadership, systems, and team care. Larger actors like IRF and Razom for Ukraine offer OD as a complement to project activities, but this practice remains the exception rather than the rule. Impact and sustainability could increase significantly if OD were systematically included as part of project funding. Conveners and trainers might contribute by diversifying their offerings and producing more evidence of OD's value, while CSOs could reinforce this by consistently asking for OD to complement activity funding.

3. Offer accompaniment and coaching.

Coaching and mentorship foster trust, ownership, and real-time adaptation. Conveners including Ednannia, IRF, EEF, and Razom for Ukraine already provide such support. MyCity found that grantees combining mentorship with training achieved far better fundraising results than those relying on training alone. OD would be more transformative if evidence of the impact of mentorship and coaching were documented more systematically. Conveners and coaches already play an important role, but outcomes could be stronger if this practice were scaled and better captured in learning processes.

4. Support local OD providers.

Working with local providers ensures contextual relevance and sustainability. Ukrainian conveners rely heavily on national experts, and independent trainers often discount their commercial rates to support CSOs. The ecosystem would be more resilient if funders prioritized local providers and networks, trainers consistently adapted their approaches to wartime realities, and CSOs leaned more on local expertise. This would

also help avoid the missed opportunities often associated with externally driven, trauma-insensitive training. Reports of trauma-insensitive training by international consultants highlight the importance of investing in local, trauma-aware provision as the backbone of sustainable OD.

5. Facilitate reflection and learning.

Structured opportunities for reflection enable adaptive leadership and deeper organizational change. While strategic sessions are common, systematic tools such as longitudinal assessments, continuous self-evaluation, and “pause-and-reflect” spaces remain rare. Moreover, most OD still focuses on technical issues, with only a few exceptions — such as NNDLP — blending OD with care/ MHPSS. CSO teams could build deeper resilience if more structured opportunities for reflection, decompression, and sense-making were available. This would allow OD processes not only to strengthen technical capacity but also to contribute to trauma recovery and burnout prevention.

6. Enable light-touch measurement.

Flexible, participatory evaluation encourages experimentation and candid feedback. Ukrainian grant-makers are already known for lighter reporting and faster decision-making than international donors, but evaluation often remains compliance-driven. The impact of OD could grow if evaluation shifted further away from compliance and toward participatory learning. Approaches like [decolonized MEL](#) offer pathways for this, and could be especially relevant in the Ukrainian context where grant-makers already show flexibility.

PART III: LEARNING FROM PRACTICE

Chapter 6. OD during Wartime in Action: Case Evidence

Five Ukrainian CSOs that received OD support from the Robert Bosch Foundation and PeaceNexus Foundation have begun demonstrating tangible changes, and for most of them the OD journey is still on-going. Through a combination of flexible grants and sustained accompaniment, they sharpened strategy, clarified roles and relations, improved communications and fundraising, strengthened governance – all preparing to get to the next level of both impact and efficiency.

6.1. APPROACH TO CASE STUDIES

Five Ukrainian organizations were selected to take part in OD support. One began its journey in September 2024 and has recently completed the process, while four others joined in January 2025 with support continuing through 2026. What is presented here are therefore intermediary results and observations, not final outcomes.

The partner organizations represent a diverse range of peacebuilding sub-sectors: from faith-based initiatives and family mediation, through art in peacebuilding, to human rights, digital democracy, and civic participation. Despite working in different domains, they share **several common features**:

- + Active engagement with and for vulnerable groups
- + Recognition of their role as system changers and catalysts for wider transformation
- + Efforts to influence state policies and institutions
- + Building decentralized, nationwide networks
- + A long history that combines technical expertise with civic engagement, predating the current phase of the war
- + Shared principles of local ownership, inclusion, and professionalism in their chosen fields
- + Strong relationships with international partners while maintaining their own agency and independence

The support model rests on two complementary pillars: a grant and accompaniment. Together, they provide both the resources and the tailored guidance needed to sustain meaningful organizational change.

Graph 5. *Elements of regenerative OD support approach***Elements of our OD support approach**

What we were looking for in local OD partners:

- + Capacity to get to the next level of peacebuilding impact
- + Change energy

What we are offering:

- + OD grant and accompaniment by two advisers (strategy and people-focused)
- + OD grant to be spent on services related to team's, leadership and organizational needs (development and care)
- + Flexible and adaptable
- + Honoring agency of local partners – in big and small choices
- + 20% for overhead/ core funding

De-compression and transformation – organizational and human

- + Creating safe-spaces
- + Enabling agency
- + Acting in a flexible manner

OD grant

The OD grant is designed to put ownership squarely in the hands of the partner organization. Each CSO defines its own priorities and selects the partners it wishes to work with, while advisers remain available to suggest consultants or instruments from their networks if requested. Funding is typically released in two to three phases, guided by a partnership outline that sets out a vision of success, specific change objectives, and the process for reaching them. The timeline is flexible — most organizations move through the cycle in about a year — and the funds can be used for a wide variety of needs, from consultants and facilitators to IT and communications. Importantly, up to 20 percent of the grant may be allocated to core organizational costs, ensuring stability alongside targeted capacity development.

Accompaniment

The accompaniment component is equally critical. Each organization is supported by a duo of advisers — a Strategic Adviser and a People Adviser — who provide ongoing mentorship, coaching, and reflection throughout the OD process. Their roles are adaptive: sometimes acting as mentors or sounding boards, sometimes as critical friends, and at other times simply as trusted witnesses of the organization's journey. The Strategic Adviser brings a systemic lens, helping the organization think through priorities, sequence its change process, and make decisions consciously and strategically. The People Adviser focuses on the human dimension of organizational life, supporting leaders in addressing team dynamics and care. This may involve conducting interviews to capture an honest picture of team needs and guiding leadership in choosing appropriate responses. Together, the two advisers accompany the organization not only in technical

strengthening but also in fostering a healthier, more resilient internal culture. “Talking to each you (Strategy Adviser and People Advisor) create a real safe space for me, where I know, I will be listened to positively and without a judgement. Our conversations happen when it suits ME, when I need them. Then it becomes less scary to ask myself difficult questions...It is such a great support to have someone ready to just listen and react. This “just listen” contains lots of magic. It is the first experience in my life with such a format”, confesses one of the leaders of OD partner organization.

6.2. CHANGE OBJECTIVES AND EARLY INDICATIONS OF PROGRESS

Each OD partner has defined its own development path and change objectives, using its own language. Examples include:

CASE 1

The first partner organization focused its OD journey on strengthening its external profile and internal systems.

Initial situation: At the outset of their OD journey, the organization embodied both extraordinary energy and deep strain. The team was highly active, taking on an impressive range of responsibilities: supporting internally displaced people in their community, addressing urgent needs in their community recently liberated from occupation, facilitating dialogues, delivering trainings and related supervision, sustaining their alumni network, producing pieces of thought leadership, and even engaging in international advocacy in their subject matter area.

The focus was broad and the needs they faced were overwhelming. Yet the resources available were modest. Much of the work rested on voluntary contributions, leaving team members heavily multi-tasking, often balancing multiple roles within the organization while carrying personal and professional responsibilities beyond it. This combination of high demand, wide ambition, and limited resources created a situation of both remarkable commitment and profound overstretch, the very conditions that made OD support not only timely but necessary.

Insights case 1

Clarity Unlocks Voice

- + *Doing more is not the same as becoming more impactful.*
- + *When organizations shift from multi-tasking to focus, their voice becomes clearer — and starts to resonate beyond their immediate context.*
- + *Strengthening internal foundations is not inward-looking; it is what enables outward influence.*
- + *With the right support, overstretched teams can step into roles as visible actors and agenda-setters.*

Change objectives: With OD support, it began designing and implementing an integrated strategy for influencing, fundraising, and strategic communications. At the same time, the organization worked on reinforcing governance and team capacities, for example by drafting internal policies and conducting targeted trainings. A third priority was administrative and financial resilience: introducing digital document flow and building an internal reporting system that would provide greater transparency and efficiency. Together, these objectives reflect the organization's ambition to enhance its voice in the public sphere while also ensuring solid internal foundations.

Their main learning question was How can we shift to more sustainable operations, which allow the team to focus on more complex and more impactful activities?

Where they are now: The partner had transformed from a vulnerable grassroots group into a recognized peacebuilding hub specializing in engagements with faith-based actors. The OD process helped them move from overstretch to focus, from fragility to resilience, and from relative obscurity to national and international recognition.

They gained strategic clarity, re-discovering their mission and even changing their name to reflect this sharper identity. Their institutional resilience grew through upgraded systems and policies that not only withstand wartime disruption but also strengthen their credibility with international partners. With a renewed communications strategy, they achieved visibility as a thought leader in their sector, their voice now resonating far beyond their immediate community.

These shifts brought tangible results: core funding from a philanthropic foundation, stronger alliances with local and international actors, bigger-scale interventions, and a renewed sense of confidence and identity as innovators and knowledge contributors. This new role is exemplified by their recently launched initiative with leading academic institutions and respected international networks — a testament to how far they have come.

We became more conscious about how our organization is functioning from inside. We have continued thinking about it beyond the OD grant duration. We are currently going through a major change in our organizational structure eliminating what was holding us back and building a structure where each team member can strive and live up to his/her potential. It is a big shift", shares the leader of the organization.

CASE 2

Initial situation: At the start of their OD journey, the partner combined high commitment with fragile foundations. For years, a small group of mediators had worked largely on a voluntary basis, helping families navigate conflict. With the escalation of war, demand surged and cases became more complex, shaped by trauma, displacement, and legal uncertainties. The team responded ambitiously by trying to set-up a Contact Center that brought together mediators, psychologists, and lawyers under one roof — a unique model designed to meet kids' and families' needs in a more holistic way.

But the strain was clear. Requests for help multiplied, and the team was heavily overstretched, clear division of roles has further complicated the progress. They could not find funding to rent a space required for the envisioned center despite all the efforts, which was discouraging. While they succeeded in creating a trusted space for families and began building relationships with courts, social services, and other institutions, their internal structures — strategy, fundraising, and communication — were still underdeveloped. Without stronger capacity and long-term resources, there was a real risk that the big systemic change they have envisioned would not materialize.

This combination of vision, trust, history of successfully led social change, and team's exhaustion made OD support both urgent and timely.

Change objectives: With OD support, the partner began working toward greater internal alignment and strategic focus. A facilitated process brought the team together to define shared goals, clarify priorities, and distribute roles more effectively. Alongside this, they started developing a communication plan and brand identity that would help them articulate their value proposition, audiences, and services with greater clarity and confidence. At the same time, the organization invested in strengthening its leadership and team capacity. Through a series of strategy sessions and targeted coaching, team members developed key management skills, while the Executive Director deepened facilitation and communication competences. Recognizing the emotional toll of intensive work, the process also introduced simple measures of care and recuperation to

Insights case 2

Structure Enables Ambition

- + *Vision alone does not build systems — alignment does.*
- + *When roles become clear, energy stops dissipating and starts compounding.*
- + *Creating space for reflection and restructuring is not a pause in action, but a condition for meaningful expansion.*
- + *With internal coherence, even highly ambitious ideas can begin to materialize as real systems.*

support the leadership's wellbeing and continuity. A third focus was on improving external presentation. Drawing on the outcomes of the strategic process, a professional grant writer was engaged to refine the organization's concept and translate it into clear, compelling language for donors and partners. Together, these objectives reflect the organization's determination to align its vision, strengthen its people, and communicate its work with a renewed sense of purpose and professionalism.

Where they are now: With OD support, the partner turned its focus inward — seeking greater clarity and alignment within the team. Over the course of just a few months, they engaged in an intensive, deeply facilitated process that helped them reconnect with their shared purpose, both as individuals and as an organization. Through this journey, they refined their mission, vision, values, and principles; structured their strategic priorities and set clear short-, medium-, and long-term goals; and mapped out a realistic roadmap for implementation. The process also led to a full rethinking of how they worked together — redefining roles and functions within the team, aligning personal goals with the overall strategy, and freeing up leadership to concentrate on more strategic, externally focused work.

As one team member described it,

“As we started the OD process, we never expected our work to reach such a grand scale. Once we distributed roles, the magic began to unfold. I was finally able to focus on key partnerships, and the response was incredible. We now have everyone on board — central authorities, a UN agency, an academic partner conducting a study with 300 families, a school where we will train social workers, and international allies from adjacent fields. Together, we're building a system that doesn't yet exist anywhere in the world.”

Chapter 7. Insights from Practice

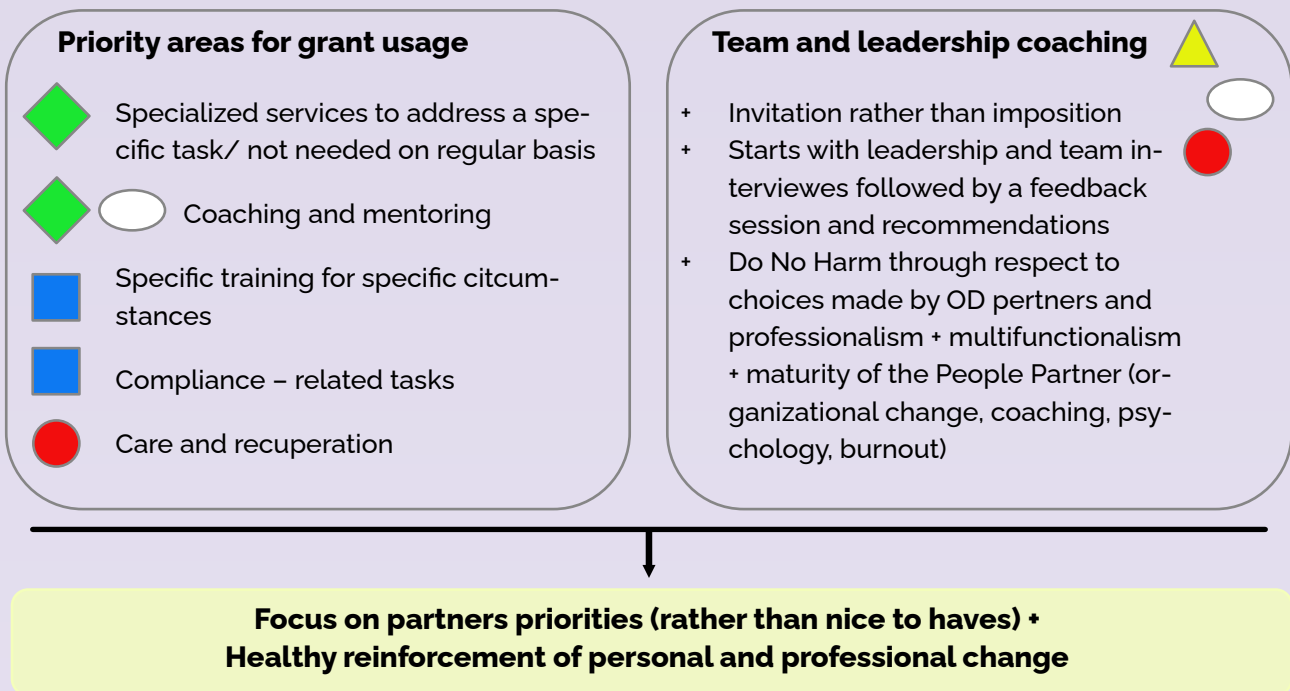
Across cases, five patterns of transformation emerged: clarity of strategy, team realignment, multidimensional learning, people-centered adaptability, and space for healing. Regenerative OD enabled organizations to restore agency and dignity while navigating uncertainty. The research underscores that trust between funders, conveners, and CSOs is not a soft value but a structural precondition for meaningful transformation and effective localization.

7.1. HOW THE GRANTS WERE SPENT

It may be illustrative to observe how CSOs allocated resources within their OD journeys, while acknowledging that the sample is not statistically representative.

When given the choice, OD partners tended to prioritize the following:

- + **Narrow or specific expertise:** The largest share of resources was directed toward skills or services not required permanently within the organization, such as strategic communications, legal revision of foundational documents, or financial function reviews. These targeted inputs helped organizations strengthen particular weak points without overextending internal capacity.
- + **Facilitation and mentorship:** A comparable portion was invested in facilitated processes, from annual strategic sessions to function-specific mentoring. Besides, where appropriate service providers were unavailable, mentorship filled the gap. These processes supported internal coherence and clarity rather than simply delivering technical outputs.
- + **Tailored trainings:** Several partners invested in highly specific capacity needs, such as preparing newly appointed CEO or strengthening key staff members in focused areas.
- + **Internal compliance on their own terms:** All the partners included governance and policy development work in their OD plans. They noted the difference it made when internal systems were developed in alignment with their own priorities rather than solely to satisfy external reporting requirements.
- + **Care and recuperation:** Almost all organizations eventually introduced some care elements into their OD processes. These components often emerged organically once trust deepened, reflecting growing recognition that sustainability required intentional restoration of balance.

Graph 6. How the grants were spent (schematic)

7.2. PATTERNS OF TRANSFORMATION EMERGING FROM OD PRACTICE

The first cycle of OD support has generated a rich body of observations on how Ukrainian CSOs evolve under conditions of war and prolonged uncertainty. While each organization followed a distinct path shaped by its mission, history, and context, several recurring patterns of transformation can be identified across cases. These patterns should not be understood as a linear sequence or a prescriptive model. Rather, they represent interrelated dynamics that tend to reinforce one another when OD support is flexible and internally led.

Across the cases, **five patterns of transformation** emerged:

- + Strategic clarity and focus
- + Clarity and role alignment within teams
- + Multidimensional change processes
- + People-centricity and adaptability
- + Space for processing and renewal

Together, these patterns illustrate how OD can move organizations beyond short-term coping toward deeper institutional and human sustainability.

Strategic Clarity and Focus

Across all cases, strategic clarity emerged as the most powerful catalyst for change. When organizations were able to articulate a clearer sense of purpose, priorities, and systemic role, multiple shifts followed almost simultaneously. Externally, clarity translated into more coherent communication, stronger positioning, and increased credibility. In many instances, this attracted new allies, partners, and funding opportunities that

had previously seemed out of reach. Internally, reconnecting with a shared direction helped teams re-anchor their daily work in meaning rather than urgency, reducing fragmentation and exhaustion.

Clear strategy also functioned as a stabilizing force under volatile conditions. It provided a reference point for decision-making when resources were scarce and demands overwhelming. This enabled organizations to say no, sequence change consciously, and focus energy where it mattered most.

*“Thanks to your support and faith in our team, we managed to go through a difficult but extremely necessary process: **to formulate strategy** of the organization, clearly define our values, principles and mission. Today, we clearly understand why and for whom we work, as we are united by a common mission...”*, shared one of the OD partners.

Clarity and Role Alignment Within Teams

As organizational direction became clearer, internal dynamics often surfaced. Latent tensions, misalignments, and role ambiguities came into view. In some cases, this led to difficult but necessary decisions, including parting ways with team members. In others, it created the confidence to expand teams or redistribute leadership responsibilities more sustainably.

Several OD journeys revealed cultural gaps between leadership and staff. These included differences in energy levels, expectations, and interpretations of responsibility, autonomy, and care. Addressing these differences required structured dialogue rather than technical fixes. Facilitated conversations around values, boundaries, and mutual support helped teams reconnect at the level of meaning rather than merely tasks.

As roles clarified and expectations aligned, a noticeable shift occurred in team dynamics. The change was visible not in short-lived enthusiasm, but in steadier confidence, calmer decision-making, and a renewed sense of shared ownership. These are signals of organizational maturation under pressure.

*“Once we have **clarified the roles**, everything started falling into place. Wonders started happening”*, confessed an OD partner.

Multidimensional Change Processes

None of the observed transformations resulted from knowledge transfer alone. In every case, OD unfolded as a multidimensional process that combined technical learning with emotional processing, relational repair, and renewed motivation. New tools, systems, or strategies became effective only when teams had space to reflect on experience, process loss and fatigue, and rebuild trust.

Structural reform and human renewal were not sequential steps but parallel dynamics.

The effectiveness of one depended on the presence of the other. This multidimensional quality distinguishes regenerative OD from narrowly technical models of institutional strengthening.

People-Centricity and Adaptability

Across cases, people, not structures, proved to be the core source of institutional continuity. When individuals were supported emotionally, intellectually, and relationally, organizations demonstrated a far greater capacity to adapt under pressure. Flexibility, empathy, and deep listening became as critical as formal systems or plans.

Successful OD trajectories were characterized by continuous adjustment to the rhythm and readiness of teams. Rather than following rigid frameworks, practitioners adapted pace, depth, and sequencing in response to emerging needs. This responsiveness reduced resistance, strengthened ownership, and allowed change to unfold organically rather than being imposed.

*Previously, there was a HUGE GAP between me and the result. Thanks to the **flexible approaches and support** we received, it became clearer to us how to build the path. And once we began to see it (the path), it became easier for us. More ideas are emerging, and they are emerging very quickly”,* noted an OD partner.

Space for Processing and Renewal

One of the most transformative aspects of OD practice was the creation of protected spaces for reflection and meaning-making. These spaces allowed teams to slow down, articulate what had been carried silently, and reconnect with purpose amid ongoing stress.

During OD processes, a specific reflective space often emerged where emotional processing and intellectual reflection intersected. Initially, this appeared as tentative experimentation with new ways of speaking, deciding, or relating. With sustained and supportive presence, this experimentation deepened into conscious reflection. Teams began to identify which old patterns or beliefs no longer served them, what emotional weight could be released, and what future they wished to move toward.

This process was not linear. At times, individuals or teams revisited earlier emotional states, which is a natural part of integration rather than regression. When adequately held, these moments became sources of insight rather than derailment. Over time, new ways of being and acting became embodied, resulting in greater balance, confidence, and clarity.

*To be honest, this is our first experience of this kind. What is really valuable is that someone **came and listened to us**. It turns out that this was something we were really missing”,* observed an OD partner.

7.3. TRUST AS A PRE-CONDITION FOR REGENERATIVE OD

OD support has proven valuable for local organizations, yet awareness of its full potential remains uneven. For many Ukrainian CSOs, this was their first encounter with a genuinely developmental process focused on reflection, alignment, and growth rather than compliance.

Years of operating within formalistic and reporting-heavy funding frameworks have normalized a disconnect between lived organizational reality and the narratives presented to donors. This divide, compounded by emotionally distant relationships with some international partners, has fostered skepticism about whether funders genuinely care about institutional health beyond deliverables.

Entering a regenerative OD process therefore requires time and relational investment. Trust must be rebuilt gradually. Space is needed to clarify expectations, co-shape desired outcomes, and establish psychological safety before deeper work can unfold. As one OD partner noted:

"We are so grateful for your understanding and flexibility. Partnership approach in relations with donors is particularly valuable for us nowadays."

Another confirms:

"It (trusting relations with funding partners) inspires, it gives us additional confidence and encourages our self-development."

Where relationships are grounded in openness and mutual respect, transformation accelerates. Direct contact, transparent dialogue about goals and reporting, and occasional in-person engagement humanize the partnership and reduce defensive compliance. These relational conditions are not peripheral to OD; they form its enabling infrastructure.

Ultimately, rebuilding trust through authentic, people-centered collaboration is not only central to effective OD. It is foundational to meaningful localization — where partnership rests on mutual respect, shared learning, and collective responsibility rather than transactional exchange.

PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE NEXT STEPS

Chapter 8. Recommendations for Major Stakeholder Groups

The following recommendations are grounded in early practice and are offered as directions for further exploring Regenerative Organizational Development. They do not prescribe a single model. Rather, they outline structural shifts that can help move from isolated OD interventions toward a coherent regenerative ecosystem capable of sustaining civil society under prolonged crisis during both the full-scale invasion and transition to peace.

Evidence from wartime Ukraine demonstrates that Regenerative Organizational Development is not contingent on stable environments. On the contrary, when designed as trauma-aware and care-integrated, OD remains relevant, meaningful, and transformative even under conditions of sustained violence, low security, and extreme operational pressure. This insight has implications beyond Ukraine and should inform how OD is positioned in other fragile and crisis-affected contexts.

8.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS

Funders play a decisive role in enabling Regenerative OD by shaping the time horizon, flexibility, and relational quality of support. Their funding architecture determines whether organizations remain locked in short-term delivery cycles or gain the space required for institutional renewal and human sustainability.



Invest in OD as core infrastructure rather than as a marginal supplementary activity. The war has demonstrated that project-based funding alone cannot ensure structural continuity or leadership stability. Making OD a mainstream and long-term feature of Ukraine portfolios, either as stand-alone grants or as embedded components within programmatic funding, strengthens governance, leadership, systems, and team sustainability. Actors such as Oak Foundation, Charles Mott Foundation, and Robert Bosch Foundation already demonstrate how it can be done.



Prioritize flexibility and continuity through multi-year mechanisms. Organizations operating under radical simultaneity require predictable time horizons to recalibrate strategically and pace change responsibly. Flexibility should allow for adaptive sequencing of activities, reflection periods, and recalibration of objectives without penalizing responsiveness. Open Society Foundations,

Charles Mott Foundation, Robert Bosch Foundation, and Rockefeller Brothers Fund provide examples of funding models that combine accountability with long-term adaptability.



Embed regenerative principles directly into funding architecture. Wartime realities require more than technical strengthening. Funding instruments should explicitly recognize reflection spaces, leadership accompaniment, team recalibration, and recuperation activities as legitimate components of organizational development budgets. The joint work of Robert Bosch Foundation and PeaceNexus Foundation illustrates how blended OD formats can integrate structural strengthening with human sustainability. Some Ukrainian conveners already mainstream complementary elements such as flexible OD grants, mentoring, communities of practice, and knowledge creation.



Trust and resource local expertise. Ukrainian conveners and practitioners hold contextual knowledge essential for adaptive and trauma-aware accompaniment. Channelling resources through local actors strengthens ownership and long-term ecosystem resilience. Norway and Swedish MFAs funding through Ednannia and the consortium of International Renaissance Foundation and East Europe Foundation, Minderoo Foundation operating its grant program through Ednannia, and Global Giving working through local networks such as the National Network for Local Philanthropy Development demonstrate this approach. Similarly, UBS Optimus Foundation, Robert Bosch Foundation, King Baudouin Foundation, Porticus Foundation, Temerty Foundation, and PKO Bank Polski Foundation have created a joint pooled fund administered by Ednannia.








Encourage learning-oriented evaluation rather than compliance-heavy reporting. Regenerative OD benefits from participatory monitoring frameworks that prioritize qualitative insight, adaptive learning, and honest feedback. Several Ukrainian intermediaries, alongside funders such as Oak Foundation, Charles Mott Foundation, Robert Bosch Foundation, and Global Giving, already apply lighter reporting approaches that support trust-based partnership.

Through these shifts, funders can move beyond strengthening outputs toward enabling sustained institutional renewal. Aligning funding design with regenerative principles transforms OD from an auxiliary support function into a structural pillar of wartime and post-war civil society sustainability. This implies a shift from viewing OD as a stabilization-phase tool to recognizing it as essential infrastructure for operating under conditions of ongoing disruption and insecurity.






8.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UKRAINIAN OD CONVENERS

Conveners occupy a pivotal position in translating regenerative principles into accessible and scalable formats. They are not only grant administrators but ecosystem architects shaping norms, tools, and collective learning.

-  **Transition from predominantly technical OD portfolios toward regenerative formats** that integrate governance reform, leadership renewal, reflective practice, and human sustainability. Blended approaches that combine structural strengthening with facilitated recalibration should become more widely available.
-  **Develop multi-layered OD pathways.** Maintain accessible entry-level grants and training opportunities while also offering deeper regenerative tracks for organizations with a proven track record who are ready to engage in more transformative processes. Such layered architecture supports ecosystem maturity without losing inclusivity.
-  **Strengthen practitioner communities of practice.** Coaches, mentors, and facilitators accumulate tacit knowledge under wartime conditions that often remains fragmented. Structured peer-learning spaces, supervision formats, and cross-convener dialogue can consolidate experience.
-  **Systematically document regenerative practice and translate Ukrainian practice for broader application.** Capturing case trajectories, methodological adaptations, and lessons learned in accessible formats will strengthen national and international recognition of Ukraine's contribution to OD innovation. This includes translating context-specific experience into transferable insights that can inform OD approaches both in Ukraine and the other high-pressure and fragile environments, while preserving the integrity of locally grounded practice.
-  **Serve as bridge-builders between funders and CSOs.** Conveners can articulate regenerative needs clearly, align expectations with realistic pacing, and ensure that funding instruments correspond to organizational readiness and context.




8.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINERS AND COACHES WORKING ON THE GROUND

Coaches, trainers, and mentors are frontline practitioners of Regenerative OD. Their work extends beyond delivering tools; it supports organizations in restoring coherence, agency, and direction under pressure.

-  **Center human sustainability alongside technical competence.** Facilitation should prioritize psychological safety, relational clarity, and reflective depth in addition to strategic outputs. Regenerative practice requires attention to emotional load and pacing.
-  **Integrate governance and renewal in one process.** Technical inputs such as financial systems, communication strategies, or role clarification should be embedded within broader conversations about purpose, energy distribution, and long-term direction.
-  **Adapt methodologies to wartime volatility.** Flexible sequencing and responsive design are more appropriate than rigid workshop-based formats. Practitioners should remain attentive to organizational readiness and avoid overloading teams already under strain.
-  **Contribute to collective learning.** Sharing reflections, methods, and dilemmas in peer forums strengthens the overall quality and coherence of the regenerative ecosystem. Practitioner self-care and supervision are equally important for sustaining high-quality accompaniment.
-  **Maintain clear ethical boundaries.** Regenerative OD is not psychotherapy. Trainers and coaches should apply trauma-aware principles while respecting limits and referring to specialized support when necessary.

8.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UKRAINIAN CSOS

Ukrainian CSOs demonstrate extraordinary commitment under conditions of sustained pressure. Regenerative OD can strengthen their ability not only to continue functioning but to consciously shape their evolution.

-  **Treat Regenerative OD as core work rather than an auxiliary activity.** Strategic reflection, governance strengthening, leadership recalibration, and internal dialogue are not distractions from mission delivery; they enable long-term impact and reduce burnout cycles.
-  **Create internal permission to pause and recalibrate.** Even brief but structured moments of reflection can restore clarity and prevent reactive overextension. Renewal does not require withdrawal from action but intentional sequencing of priorities.
-  **Balance urgent response with strategic orientation.** Under radical simultaneity, organizations benefit from consciously distinguishing between immediate tasks and long-term positioning. Clear direction reduces fragmentation and

protects institutional coherence.



Invest in transparent systems and shared leadership. Strengthening governance structures, financial clarity, and role distribution enhances credibility with partners while preventing overload on individual leaders.



Embed cultures of mutual support and reflective practice. Regular check-ins, dialogue formats, and collective sense-making spaces build trust and reduce silent accumulation of stress. Regenerative capacity grows when care and strategy coexist structurally rather than episodically.

The Ukrainian experience challenges a long-standing assumption in development practice that organizational development is most relevant in stable or post-crisis environments. Instead, it shows that, when adapted, OD becomes most valuable precisely where pressure is highest. This calls for a systematic repositioning of OD within humanitarian, peacebuilding, and recovery frameworks.

Chapter 9. The Way Forward

Much remains to be learned and done. The next phase calls for longitudinal research to track change over time, a more systematic exploration of the human dimension of OD, and shared learning with other war contexts. Five priorities guide the way forward: deepening evidence, connecting the ecosystem, integrating OD with care/ MHPSS, promoting trust-based funding, and linking Ukraine's insights to global debates on localization and humane aid reform. The following directions build directly on the recommendations outlined in Chapter 8 and translate them into a structured consolidation pathway.

The next phase requires moving from pilot learning toward structured expansion of Regenerative OD in Ukraine. What lies ahead is not a new set of activities, but a consolidation process. Five priorities stand out: deepening and validating practice; strengthening horizontal ecosystem infrastructure; operationalizing regenerative design; aligning funding architecture with regenerative principles; and positioning Ukraine as a contributor to global OD innovation.

FIRST, regenerative practice must be deepened and validated.

The initial cohort has demonstrated the feasibility and necessity of Regenerative OD approach under wartime conditions. The next step is to broaden this experience across regions and sectors by engaging an additional group of organizations. At the same time, existing partners should be followed over a period of two to three years in order to observe whether early shifts translate into sustained institutional and human transformation. Such longitudinal follow-up, ideally embedded in participatory research processes led by Ukrainian actors, will help distinguish temporary stabilization from durable renewal and generate stronger evidence for future scaling.

SECOND, the horizontal infrastructure of the OD ecosystem requires strengthening.

Regenerative OD does not operate in isolation. It depends on practitioners, conveners, and learning communities capable of sustaining quality and coherence. Regular reflection forums for OD practitioners working under wartime conditions can help prevent fragmentation and professional exhaustion. A shared knowledge hub documenting methodologies, case evidence, and tools would consolidate learning and reduce duplication. More explicit connections between OD practice and adjacent agendas — including peacebuilding, localization, and leadership development — can further embed regenerative approaches within broader sectoral transformation.

THIRD, Regenerative OD must be further operationalized.

Early practice has demonstrated the importance of integrating strategy, governance strengthening, leadership accompaniment, and care into a coherent offer rather than treating them as separate interventions. The next phase should therefore refine blended OD packages and clarify minimum design standards. Funding instruments can be prototyped to explicitly include reflective space, team realignment processes, and recuperation components as legitimate dimensions of institutional strengthening. Practitioner guidelines will be necessary to maintain ethical clarity and methodological coherence as regenerative accompaniment expands.

FOURTH, funding architecture needs to align more systematically with regenerative principles.

Multi-year and flexible OD funding tracks should be expanded to allow organizations to sequence change responsibly. Integrating OD components into programmatic grants rather than treating them as optional add-ons can strengthen institutional sustainability. Monitoring frameworks will need to shift toward more learning-oriented and participatory evaluation approaches, capable of capturing relational and adaptive dimensions of renewal. Without such alignment, regenerative practice risks remaining marginal rather than structural.

FIFTH, Ukraine's experience should be positioned within global debates on organizational development and localization.

Publishing case-based evidence of regenerative practice under war conditions, engaging in cross-country exchanges with other conflict-affected contexts, and contributing Ukrainian insights to international discussions on structural resilience and humane aid reform can transform local experimentation into global learning. Ukraine's civil society has generated knowledge under extraordinary circumstances; this knowledge deserves recognition and dissemination.

The next stage is therefore not about expanding OD in volume alone. It is about consolidating Regenerative OD as a coherent field of practice that strengthens institutions while restoring human sustainability. Scaling regenerative approaches will require coordinated experimentation, disciplined documentation, and funding models grounded in trust and continuity.

The experience of Ukrainian civil society demonstrates that even in prolonged crisis, organizations can renew themselves from within. The task ahead is to institutionalize this learning so that regeneration becomes embedded practice rather than isolated pilot experience.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Methodology and limitations

Below the methodological choices and limitations that shaped this research are outlined. Given the fluid, high-pressure realities of wartime Ukraine, the study deliberately prioritized depth, relational insight, and learning over representativeness or statistical generalization.

1. Methodology

The methodology reflects an effort to balance rigor with care, combining multiple qualitative methods with a collaborative, co-learning approach that honors local agency and lived experience. This section explains how evidence was generated, how ethical boundaries were navigated, and why the findings should be read as early, context-specific lessons rather than universal prescriptions.

Inclusive and Collaborative Research Approach

This study was part of collaborative research-and-practice initiative supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation and PeaceNexus Foundation. The research process was rooted in co-ownership, openness, and inclusivity, welcoming contributions from a wide spectrum of partners—Ukrainian and international alike. Civil society support organizations, donors, intermediaries, and practitioners, were invited to participate not only as subjects but as collaborators. This inclusive model helped ensure that findings were reflective of on-the-ground realities and informed by a diversity of perspectives.

Positive enquiry orientation

This research adopted a positive inquiry orientation rather than approaching wartime OD primarily through a deficit or problem-solving lens. The focus was on identifying what is already working, emerging strengths, adaptive practices, and sources of resilience within Ukrainian CSOs and the OD ecosystem around them. Interviews and case studies were therefore guided by questions of learning and possibility. This approach was chosen deliberately to honor local agency, avoid pathologizing wartime realities, and surface generative insights that can inform future practice rather than prescribe corrective solutions.

Diversity of methods and data triangulation

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach to explore how OD support is provided to CSOs operating under the extreme conditions of wartime, with a particular focus on Ukraine. Given the complexity and evolving nature of the context, we intentionally used a diverse set of methods to triangulate data, ensure validity, and capture both quantitative patterns and qualitative nuance.

In-Depth Interviews

More than 20 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a wide range of stakeholders involved in OD in Ukraine were conducted. These included funders and donor representatives actively supporting Ukrainian CSOs; conveners and support organizations that coordinate OD-related initiatives; independent and institutional experts and researchers with expertise related to organizational resilience and leadership; OD providers and consultants working directly with Ukrainian civil society actors; selected CSOs.

The interviews aimed to capture different perspectives on what effective OD looks like in wartime, emerging good practices, and barriers to more impactful support.

Case Studies

A key component of the methodology involved six in-depth case studies of OD support provided to Ukrainian CSOs. These case studies include both first-hand experience of the research team in accompanying the OD of five Ukrainian CSOs, covering sectors such as human rights, family mediation, arts for social change and memorialization, faith-based peacebuilding, e-democracy; and also additional case examples shared by our partner organizations, offering a broader cross-section of the field and illustrating diverse OD approaches and outcomes.

These case studies provided critical insight into how OD support is adapted in wartime and how organizations experience and respond to trauma, burnout, and systems-level stressors.

Boundaries of Care-Centred OD and Ethical Safeguards

While this research strongly advocates for integrating care and MHPSS principles into OD work, it does not seek to offer — nor to substitute for — psychotherapeutic or clinical support. Both the research design and the accompanying OD interventions are grounded in a clear do-no-harm ethic. OD processes were facilitated by experienced OD practitioners with a strong background in psychology and trauma-aware practice, enabling them to recognize limits, pace processes appropriately, and avoid over-exposure or coercive depth. At all stages, partner organizations retained full agency in determining whether, how far, and at what pace they wished to engage in individual or collective transformative work. The flexibility of OD timelines further allowed accompaniment resources to be allocated responsively, ensuring that organizations could be supported through difficult phases, moments of uncertainty, and complex decision-making, without being rushed toward artificial closure or predefined outcomes.

Desk Research and Literature Review

We conducted a comprehensive desk review of existing literature and available data

sources to ground our analysis in current knowledge. This included reports and studies on CSO needs and capacities in Ukraine since 2022, documentation and analysis of donor expectations, priorities, and conditionalities relevant to OD support.

This review helped contextualize our findings and assess the extent to which existing OD frameworks are suited—or need adaptation—for active war zones.

2. Limitations

While this research draws on a wide range of data sources, it is not without limitations. Most of the OD cases are still ongoing, and the conclusions are based on early evidence. The focus has also been consciously made on organizations, who work on social cohesion and societal transformation rather than those with a humanitarian agenda. In addition, ongoing burnout and fatigue among stakeholders may have influenced their willingness or ability to participate fully in interviews.

A further limitation of this research relates to the selection of case study organizations. The OD cases examined focus predominantly on relatively strong and mature Ukrainian CSOs. These organizations have a long institutional history that predates the current phase of the war and combine well-developed technical expertise with deep civic engagement. They tend to recognize and actively inhabit their role as system changers or catalysts of broader social transformation rather than operating solely as service providers. Across cases, they also share a strong commitment to local ownership, inclusion, and professionalism within their respective fields, and they maintain a pronounced sense of organizational agency even under wartime conditions.

This profile matters for interpretation. Organizations with such characteristics may be better positioned to benefit from flexible, reflective, and internally led OD approaches, and to translate accompaniment into strategic and cultural change. Consequently, the OD support models and instruments discussed in this report may not be directly transferable to less mature, newly established, or more fragile organizations, including those whose primary orientation is short-term humanitarian response or compliance-driven project delivery. The findings should therefore be understood as illustrating what becomes possible when OD support is paired with a high degree of organizational readiness and agency rather than as universally applicable prescriptions for the sector as a whole.

Despite these constraints, the multi-method approach allowed for a rich, layered understanding of OD support to CSOs in Ukraine and the urgent need for more responsive, context-sensitive models during wartime.

Attachment 2. Evolution of thinking of capacity development

Evolution of capacity development [thinking](#)⁵ was going hand in hand with the evolution from development aid through technical assistance and technical cooperation to capacity development approach. This path is described in a greater detail below.

From Capacity Building to Capacity Development

Development approaches based on *capacity building* were introduced in the 1950s as a response to shortcomings in donor-driven aid and technical assistance. These early efforts often failed: they lacked local ownership, did not produce sustainable change, and relied on rigid, blueprint solutions.

The term *capacity building* appeared in the United States in the 1970s, initially linked to strengthening local governments for fiscal decentralization. Its use grew in the 1990s as development actors reflected on weak results from decades of technical cooperation. The 1993 UNDP report *Rethinking Technical Cooperation – Reforms for Capacity Building in Africa* ("[the Berg report](#)") was pivotal. It identified reasons for failure: donor-centric models, lack of incentives for local staff, and approaches disconnected from real organizational change.

In response, UNDP issued [guidelines](#) in 1998 that defined three levels of capacity: individual, organizational, and the broader environment. Around the same time, the 1996 OECD report *Shaping the 21st Century: [The Contribution of Development Co-operation](#)* called for local ownership and partnership. These debates led to a shift in language: the term capacity development replaced capacity building, emphasizing an endogenous process of change rather than externally imposed solutions.

The 2005 Paris [Declaration on Aid Effectiveness](#) confirmed that capacity development was essential for effective aid, stressing that donors should support — but not control — locally led change. This principle was reinforced in the 2008 [Accra Agenda for Action](#), which emphasized demand-driven approaches, South-South cooperation, and the use of country systems as the default.

A 2006 OECD DAC paper, *The Challenge of Capacity Development – [Working Towards Good Practice](#)*, consolidated the global consensus. It clarified the difference: capacity building ignores existing strengths and relies on predesigned solutions, while capacity development supports locally owned, context-specific change.

European Commission and the Centrality of Change

In 2010–2011, the European Commission issued a [Toolkit for Capacity Development](#), drawing on OECD's framework. It focused on the organization as the main unit of analysis and emphasized that change is at the heart of capacity development. Change was

⁵UNDP Capacity Development Primer

described as internal to people and organizations but influenced by external factors, requiring three elements: drivers of change, a credible process, and a shared vision of the future.

Towards Organizational Development and Resilience

Since the 2010s, discourse has increasingly moved beyond capacity development to OD and, more recently, to organizational resilience. Over time, practitioners and evaluators observed chronic difficulties with capacity development: external interventions often failed to produce sustainable change, particularly under dynamic political or crisis environments. Rigid, blueprint approaches to capacity support often lacked reflexivity, ignored power dynamics, and under-invested in the relational, adaptive, and human dimensions of organizations.

The OECD's "[Seeking Better Practices for Capacity Development](#)" report called for widening definitions of learning and change beyond training and technical inputs, emphasizing the need for continuous adaptation and endogenous learning mechanism. Similarly, [Supporting Partners to Develop Their Capacity](#) (OECD, 2012) highlighted that capacity support must include more than knowledge transfer—it must foster ownership, motivation, and systems-level adaptation.

UNDP's 2017 [Reference Guide for Practitioners: Demystifying Organizational Development](#) also reflected this shift. Networks like [CIVICUS and PartnerGlobal](#) have further advanced frameworks for organizational resilience, linking OD with adaptation to complexity and crisis.

Graph 3. Example of evolution of thinking: UNDP Capacity Development Approach

THE EVOLUTION OF UNDP'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

	THE ASSUMPTION...	THE PRACTICE...	THE RESULT...
FIRST	<i>'Developing countries need money.'</i>	Development Aid developed countries lend or grant money to developing countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater focus on investment and reporting than on results • Mounting debt • Dependence on foreign aid • Projects end when money runs out
THEN	<i>'Developing countries should just model themselves after the developed ones.'</i>	Technical Assistance foreign experts come in to operate their own projects, which they expect to yield similar results to those seen in developed countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects launched, but disconnected from local goals or priorities • Assumes few or no resources available locally • Dependence on foreign experts • Expertise not always transferred from foreigners to locals • The externally driven model may ignore local realities • Idea of 'assistance' highlights unequal relationship between developed and developing countries

	THE ASSUMPTION...	THE PRACTICE...	THE RESULT...
FOLLOWED BY	<i>'Developing countries should partner with developed ones'</i>	Technical Cooperation greater emphasis on training, transferring knowledge, based on national policies and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local expertise enhanced • Projects somewhat more in line with local priorities and goals • Driven by outside forces, opportunities missed to develop local institutions and strengthen local capacities • Expensive
AND CURRENTLY	<i>'Developing countries should own, design, direct, implement and sustain the process themselves'</i>	Capacity Development A focus on empowering and strengthening endogenous capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the most of local resources – people, skills technologies, institutions – and builds on these • Favours sustainable change • Takes an inclusive approach in addressing issues of power inequality in relations between rich and poor, mainstream and marginalized (countries, groups and individuals) • Emphasizes deep, lasting transformations through policy and institutional reforms • Values 'best fit' for the context over 'best practice'; as one size does not fit all

The Role of Philanthropy and Private Funders

Philanthropic [organizations](#) have been pivotal in advancing OD practice since the early 2000s. Foundations such as [Ford Foundation](#) and [Open Society Foundations](#) were early adopters, recognizing that resilient organizations are essential for sustainable civil society. [PeaceNexus Foundation](#) (founded in 2009) made OD one of its core service areas, focusing on fragile and conflict-affected contexts. More recently, [Laudes Foundation](#) and [Porticus](#) have integrated OD and systems change approaches into their strategies. Philea, Association of European Philanthropic Organizations, has established OD [Community of Practice](#).

Unlike traditional bilateral donors, these philanthropic actors often provide flexible, long-term, and adaptive funding. They also shape the field by commissioning research, supporting communities of practice, and funding local intermediaries to deliver context-sensitive OD support. In doing so, they contribute to the localization and decolonization of OD practice, reinforcing the leadership of actors embedded in local contexts.

Key Takeaway

Over the decades, the discourse has shifted: from donor-driven capacity building to participatory capacity development including today's emphasis on OD and resilience. Philanthropic funders, alongside multilateral actors, have played a decisive role in making OD more relational, reflective, and adaptive to complexity, a trajectory highly relevant for Ukraine's wartime and postwar civil society.

Attachment 3. Definitions of capacity development used by major aid donors

UNDP: *Capacity development is the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capacities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. Capacity-building: A process that supports only the initial stages of building or creating capacities and assumes that there are no existing capacities to start from.*

OECD DAC: *Capacity development is understood as the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. The phrase capacity development is used advisedly in preference to the traditional capacity building. The 'building' metaphor suggests a process starting with a plain surface and involving the step-by-step erection of a new structure, based on a preconceived design. Experience suggests that capacity is not successfully enhanced in this way.*

World Bank: *Capacity development (or capacity-building) is a locally driven process of learning by leaders, coalitions and other agents of change that brings about changes in socio-political, policy-related, and organizational factors to enhance local ownership for and the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts to achieve a development goal.*

UNECA: *Capacity development is the process through which individuals, groups and organisations, and societies deploy, adapt, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to define, plan and achieve their own development objectives on an inclusive, participatory, and sustainable basis.*

USAid: *Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) is a USAID model of structured and integrated processes designed to identify root causes of performance gaps in host country partner institutions, address those gaps through a wide array of performance solutions in the context of all human performance factors, and enable cyclical processes of continuous performance improvement through the establishment of performance monitoring systems*

African Union: *A process of enabling individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies to sustainably define, articulate, engage and actualise their vision or developmental goals building on their own resources and learning in the context of a pan-African paradigm.*

The European Commission takes over the OECD definition.

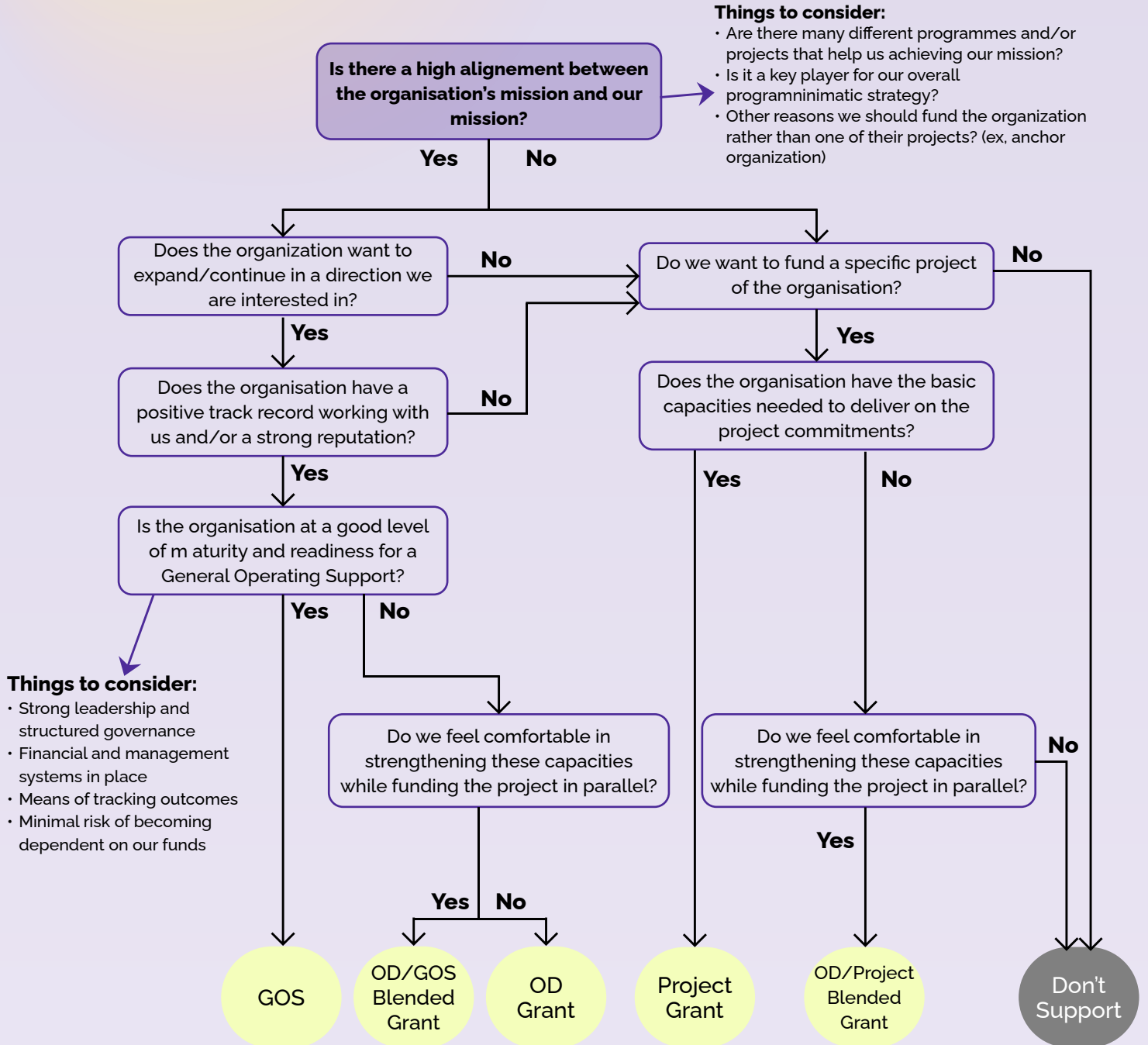
Attachment 4. Example of differences in approach: fundraising and financial stability

	CAPACITY BUILDING	CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
WHAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical fundraising skills training - often generic with minimal adaptation • Introduction to the digital tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support design based on recognition that financial sustainability requires a clear strategy, robust organizational structure, systemic communication • Tailor-made
HOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 days training for multiple participants • Trainer with no exposure to the context of specific participating organizations and often limited experience with the geographic context of the participants • Technical and narrowly defined • Top-down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combination of mentorship, coaching, consulting, where needed-mediation and conflict transformation • Focus on the specific circumstances of the local organization and a specific team • Longer-term and interactive • Accompanier/ external adviser holding space for the transformation and implementation of the acquired knowledge

Sources: [Recommendations for creating organizational development programs for local NGOs](#)

Attachment 5. Example of a decision-tree by Laudes Foundation

DECISION-MAKING TREE TO HELP IDENTIFY THE PARTNER AND THE TYPE OF SUPPORT (LAUDES FOUNDATION)



Acronyms

OD: Organisational Development
 GOS: General Operating Support

Sources: [Funding Organisational Development: a smart investment to multiply impact](#)

Attachment 6. Radical Simultaneity – voices from the field

Adapted notes from a group discussion with consultants, psychologists, and coaches working with CSO leaders in Ukraine, courtesy to Alyona Kukhar and Natalie Trambovetska.

“Ukraine is the state of radical simultaneity.” Kateryna Botanova

The following excerpts come from a group discussion with consultants, psychologists, and coaches working closely with CSO leaders in Ukraine. They capture the raw, unfiltered realities of “radical simultaneity” — the experience of surviving, responding, and transforming all at once. These are not research conclusions, but voices from the field that illustrate the human dimension behind the analysis.

Living in Two Truths

Leaders and teams carry the weight of immediate survival and long-term responsibility at the same time.

- + *“If not me, then who?”*
- + *“I knew I should rest, but I kept working through pneumonia until my brother at the front called and shouted at me to stop.”*

Daily Strain

Systems falter, moral dilemmas multiply, and grief becomes part of the workday.

- + *“Systems don’t work. Yet people keep calling — wives of soldiers who haven’t rotated for two years.”*
- + *“I want to care for the individual in front of me, but he is busy saving the country... how do I choose?”*
- + *“Sometimes you learn about a colleague’s death in the middle of a Zoom call. You keep working, while reading obituaries.”*
- + *“If activities stop, we lose not only impact but also our income and stability.”*
- + *“Volunteers are tired, and beneficiaries too. The energy of the early months is gone.”*

Open Questions

Balancing priorities under constant pressure is less about answers, more about staying alert.

- + *“Can we balance this? It depends — there is no universal answer.”*
- + *“Which priorities do we choose when everything feels urgent?”*
- + *“I catch myself wanting to fix everything quickly — and I know that’s a warning sign.”*

Sources of Strength

Small gestures, peer support, and conscious choices make the burden lighter.

- + *"When we arrive in a village, people meet us with pies. That's why we keep going."*
- + *"Talking to peers in other 'bubbles' helps. You realize — it's hard for them too."*
- + *"I ask myself: is this really my task? If yes, I take it. If not, I make sure the right person does."*
- + *"After shelling, no one is effective. That's situational exhaustion, not yet burnout."*
- + *"We regroup like a school of fish. When one of us is hit harder, others close ranks."*
- + *"When soldiers or widows say, 'rest, live, celebrate,' it suddenly feels legitimate to pause."*
- + *"Humor saves us more often than anything else."*

Ground Truths

Acknowledging fragility and keeping the search for balance alive are themselves forms of resilience.

- + *"We are human, and we can break down. Meltdowns are part of the new reality."*
- + *"There are no universal answers. But as long as we keep searching, we don't get stuck in one paradigm."*

Attachment 7. High-level SWOT-analysis of Ukrainian Civil Society

Strengths

Ukrainian civil society is widely recognized as one of the country's strongest assets in wartime.

- It demonstrates extraordinary mobilization capacity, with tens of thousands of CSO, volunteer groups, and charitable organizations taking on essential roles in humanitarian aid, service delivery, and advocacy.
- The sector enjoys high levels of public trust, ranking among the most trusted institutions in Ukraine.
- Networks of cooperation across sectors and regions have proven resilient, enabling rapid response to crises.
- Civil society actors also show a remarkable openness to dialogue with state institutions, contributing to policymaking and reform even under the pressures of war.

Weaknesses

At the same time, the sector faces serious internal challenges.

- Many organizations remain financially fragile, lacking predictable and long-term support.
- Heavy reliance on project-based, short-term funding undermines stability.
- Widespread trauma, burnout, and staff exhaustion threaten organizational continuity, while the loss of experienced personnel to displacement or military service further erodes capacity.
- Institutional development remains uneven, with smaller or newer organizations particularly vulnerable.

These weaknesses limit the ability of civil society to convert its social legitimacy into durable organizational resilience.

Opportunities

Despite these pressures, the wartime context has opened new possibilities.

- Ukrainian CSOs now enjoy unprecedented international visibility and recognition, strengthening their voice in global debates on aid reform and localization.
- The rise of domestic philanthropy and volunteerism creates a stronger homegrown base of civic engagement, laying foundations for future sustainability.
- Civil society also has an opportunity to shape the principles of localization, positioning Ukraine as a laboratory for innovative, care-centered/ trauma-aware, and community-driven models of OD incl. Regenerative OD.

These dynamics present a chance not only to strengthen Ukrainian organizations, but to influence broader international practices.

Threats

However, significant threats continue to undermine sustainability.

- The most obvious are the direct risks of war: physical destruction, displacement, and the loss of infrastructure.
- Equally dangerous are the less visible threats: emotional exhaustion, chronic stress, and the erosion of civic space due to over-centralization or restrictive practices.
- There is also a looming risk of funding depletion, both domestically and internationally, as global attention shifts elsewhere or donor fatigue sets in.

Together, these threats could erode the hard-won gains of Ukrainian civil society if not addressed through sustained support and investment. This SWOT analysis has been derived from a triangulation of multiple data sources: the quantitative and qualitative findings in [“Activities of Donor and International Organizations in Ukraine”](#) (2022–2024); the *“Civil Society in Ukraine in the Context of War”* [sociological research report](#); the survey and analysis in [“Expectations and Challenges of Grantors in Ukraine”](#) and [“Challenges and Needs of the Ukrainian Non-Profit Sector”](#); as well as insights from interviews conducted for this project and our own field observations. Together, these sources provide empirical grounding for how we understand the high-level strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Ukrainian civil society under war conditions.

Attachment 8. Knowledge Gaps and Further Research

The first cycle of Regenerative Organizational Development (Regenerative OD) in wartime Ukraine has generated promising early evidence. The next phase must focus on translating this experience into operational clarity and scalable infrastructure. Three priorities are essential: strengthening regenerative-aligned MEAL systems, tracking long-term impact, and codifying and expanding the regenerative component of practice.

1. REGENERATIVE-ALIGNED MEAL SYSTEMS

To operationalize Regenerative OD within funders' portfolios, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) systems must evolve. Traditional reporting frameworks focus on outputs and short-term delivery. Regenerative OD, however, aims to influence governance quality, leadership continuity, team sustainability, and restorative capacity — dimensions that require different indicators and learning tools.

MEAL systems should therefore integrate structural and human-centered domains, including internal coherence, clarity of roles, leadership distribution, retention, perceived agency, and capacity to reprioritize under volatility. Participatory formats such as reflection sessions, narrative tracking, and joint funder–grantee learning dialogues should complement quantitative metrics. The objective is to create light-touch, trust-based MEAL tools that make regenerative processes visible without increasing administrative burden.

Strengthened MEAL architecture will enable funders to integrate Regenerative OD more systematically into their strategies and ensure alignment with their broader institutional goals.

2. LONGITUDINAL IMPACT TRACKING

Short funding cycles make it difficult to distinguish temporary stabilization from durable renewal. Longitudinal tracking is therefore critical to assess whether regenerative interventions lead to sustained institutional transformation.

Organizations engaged in Regenerative OD should be followed over two to three years to observe changes. This evidence base is essential for refining funding architecture, improving sequencing decisions, and scaling regenerative approaches across the ecosystem.

3. EXPANDING AND CODIFYING THE REGENERATIVE COMPONENT

By clarifying and formalizing regenerative practice, the ecosystem can scale accompaniment capacity responsibly and attract broader investment in this emerging field.

Further exploration should focus on developing practical design standards and

ATTACHMENTS

methodological guidance for coaches, mentors, and conveners delivering regenerative accompaniment. Clear articulation of regenerative principles will support the expansion of practitioner infrastructure and strengthen the quality and coherence of support offered across organizations.



ODeSA – Organizational Development Support Agency is a think-and-act tank designed to take forward the learning and momentum generated by Beyond Survival: Regenerative Organizational Development Support in Wartime Ukraine. Rooted in wartime Ukraine as a laboratory with global relevance, ODeSA mobilizes resources and partnerships to expand practice, develop practitioners, and translate experience into scalable approaches. By connecting donor advocacy with hands-on accompaniment and knowledge development, ODeSA contributes to building a more coherent ecosystem in which organizational development is understood and supported not as a technical add-on, but as core infrastructure for resilience, agency, and renewal.

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About the author

Olga Bentz is a strategy adviser, organizational development practitioner, and field-builder advancing Regenerative Organizational Development in high-pressure conflict contexts. She works at the intersection of organizational development and peacebuilding, supporting locally led joint action and institutional transformation. She has over a decade of experience working with civil society in Ukraine, including in collaboration with international partners such as the World Bank and UNDP. Her work contributes to shaping new approaches to organizational development that integrate resilience, agency, and human sustainability under conditions of prolonged crisis.

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