UKRAINE RESPONSE

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2024 AND FINAL REPORT 2022–2024

NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID
actalliance

Norway

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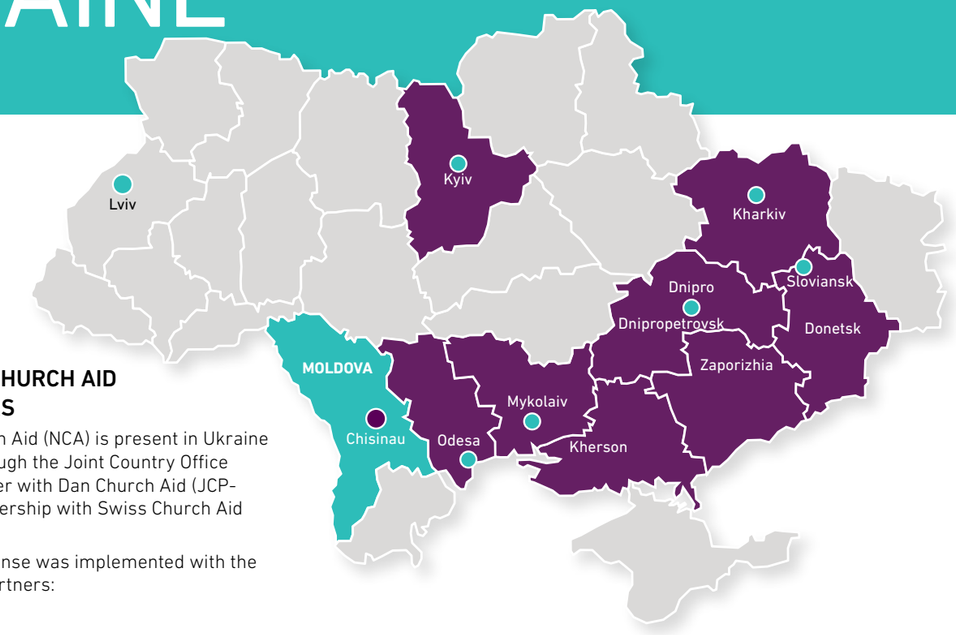
Auhenia collecting water from one of the drinking water points in Mykolaiv city. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

UKRAINE



NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID AND PARTNERS

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) is present in Ukraine and Moldova through the Joint Country Office in Ukraine together with Dan Church Aid (JCP-UA) and the partnership with Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER).

In 2024, the response was implemented with the following local partners:

Ukraine:
Insight
Southern Development Strategy (SDS)
UA Mental Health (UAMH)
Youth of Ukraine (YoU)
Faith Hope Love (FHL)
The Way Home Foundation
Green Landiya

Moldova:
Public Association CASMED
Casa Mariorei

The response is present with offices in Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Dnipro, Kyiv, Sloviansk, Lviv and Chisinau

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

COUNTRY/PROVINCE (OBLAST)		HROMADAS
Ukraine	Kyiv	Kyiv, Irpin
	Kharkiv	Kharkivska, Balakliiska, Kulynychyvska, Bohodukhivska, Valkivska, Vilkhivska Iziumska
	Donetsk	Slovianska, Oleksandrivka, Bilozerska, Dobropilaska
	Kherson	Beryslaska, Posad-Pokrovske, Vysokopillia, Mylove, Kherson, Bilozerka Nadezhdivka
	Dnipropetrovsk	Dnipro, Marhanets, Pokrovkse, Tsarychanka, Petrykivka, Magdalynivka
	Mykolaiv	Partyzanske, Koravelove, Kiriakivka, Nechaianka, Lukashivka, Novobuzka, Inhulska, Pliushchivka, Kazanka, Vysunsk, Pryvilne, Novokhrystoforivka, Novomykhailivka, Sofiivka, Pavlo-Maryanivka, Shchaslyve, Shevchenkove, Kotlyareve, Chervonyi Yar, Zaichivske, Lymany, Snihurivska, Kobleve, Inhulka, Pisky, Mykolaiv, Mishkovo, Pogorilove, Sapietna, Snihurivska, Shevchenkivka
	Odesa	Odesa, Biliaivska, Rozkvitska, Podilska, Stepanivska, Kodymska, Rozdilnianska, Vyhodianska, Teplodarska, Zaharivska, Baltska, Konoplianska, Znamianska
	Zaporizhia	Zaporizhzhia, Ternuvate
Moldova		Chisinau, Balti, Falesti, Edinet, Floresti, Glodeni, Telenesti, Stefan Voda, Basarabeasca, Soroca, Comrat

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

Since Russia launched its full-scale war in February 2022, the situation in Ukraine has been characterised by intense fighting, shifting frontlines and frequent drone and missile attacks on cities. Millions of Ukrainians have fled from their homes in Eastern and Southern Ukraine and are now internally displaced or they have left the country. Thousands of civilians, including children, have been killed and injured. Hospitals, schools, apartment buildings and individual homes have been destroyed, and people remaining in frontline areas have sometimes lived for weeks without access to food, water and heating all while under the threat of bombardment.

The disruption of livelihoods, vital social services and prolonged displacement has caused a massive humanitarian and protection crisis, including a mental health crisis marked by elevated stress, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder levels. It has been estimated that two thirds of Ukrainian women had been exposed to some form of Gender-based Violence (GBV) before the war and that the risk increased sharply after the full-scale invasion[1]. A study commissioned by NCA in 2024, found that the war has led to significant changes in gender roles, with women taking on new responsibilities and additional caregiving roles, often without the help and support of a partner and other family members.

Electricity, heating plants and water supply infrastructure have been systematically targeted by shelling, and this has increased in 2024. The Central Heating Plant (CHP) in Mykolaiv that supplies heating to 160,000 people, where NCA and partners have been working with repairs and replacement of destroyed equipment both in 2023 and 2024, was targeted several times during 2024. Despite of extensive damage, the plant managed to continue to supply the residents of Mykolaiv with heating throughout the 2024–2025 winter season.

The response in Ukraine is characterised by significant risk, especially for activities that are conducted close to the frontline where shelling poses a threat to the safety of staff members, local partners, contractors and rights-holders. In February 2024, a team from HEKS/EPER was attacked by Russian drones during a needs assessment in Eastern Ukraine, leaving two persons dead and four injured. After this incident, HEKS/EPER with support from NCA, conducted a complete revision of their security framework.

In September, fragments of missiles caused extensive damage to NCA and DCA's joint country office building in Kyiv. Since this happened during nighttime, the building was empty.

Moldova faced significant challenges as it hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees, placing immense pressure on the country's limited resources. High inflation and energy insecurity exacerbated the situation, making it increasingly difficult to provide adequate support to both refugees and vulnerable local populations.

This report provides an overview of the results and activities carried out by the NCA response in 2024, including reflections on the programme period from 2022 to 2024. In 2024, NCA continued to build on the achievements and progress made in the previous years. The response has continued to address key priorities of the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine: protection of vulnerable local populations still living close to the frontline or being internally displaced, protection against GBV, provision of mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) and WASH services, including repairs of heating centrals and other civilian infrastructure. The response includes Moldova where humanitarian assistance is provided for both Ukrainian refugees and vulnerable Moldovan host communities. The response has been planned, implemented and monitored in partnership with national or local authorities and national organisations and cluster coordination structures, complementary to assistance provided by other actors. Seven Ukrainian and two Moldovan national organisations have been local implementing partners for parts of the response, while some activities are self-implemented. The response has aimed to ensure inclusivity in programme design and implementation, seeking partners that target specifically vulnerable rights-holders, such as organisations focusing on gender equality, LGBTQI+ inclusion, rural community development, the socially disadvantaged and people living with disabilities.

Damage to the joint Country Office building in Kyiv. Photo: Norwegian Church Aid

1 Gbvaor.net: Gender-Based Violence in Ukraine. Secondary Data Review, 27 April 2022

NCA UKRAINE RESPONSE PROGRAMMING IN THE CONTEXT

PROTECTION PROGRAMME

(GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT)

Throughout 2024, NCA's response ensured that GBV survivors accessed lifesaving, specialised services appropriate and relevant to their immediate needs, and that at-risk groups accessed quality MHPSS focused on healing, empowerment and recovery. In Ukraine, the NCA response was actively involved in UN coordination clusters and the Inter-Agency Regional Refugee Response Plan, engaging in the Protection National Cluster, GBV Sub-Cluster, and MHPSS Sub-Cluster. NCA's response through HEKS/EPER co-chaired the GBV Case Management Sub-Cluster, enhancing sector priorities, addressing gaps, and improving coordination. This leadership role fostered service harmonisation and capacity building within the sector.

NCA collaborated with various national and local authorities, including the Ministry of Health and Regional State Administration Offices, coalition and interest organisations, such as the National Youth Council of Ukraine, the Coalition ILGA, women's organisations, including women living with HIV+, disabilities, Roma women, and LGBTQI+ initiatives like Kyiv Pride and 100% life HIV prevention. Events with institutional stakeholders, including panels with the Prosecutor's Office and Ombudsman's Office in Kyiv, enhanced legal accountability and improved survivor access to trauma-informed services.

A key achievement was the collaboration with Ukraine's state programme addressing perpetrators of GBV, which included a Perpetrator Intervention Programme training social service workers on effective interventions for domestic violence, covering legal, psychological and rehabilitative aspects.

In Moldova, NCA's partner participated in the Refugee Coordination Forum and collaborated with 49 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). They followed UNHCR's GBV Policy and Moldova's National Programme for Preventing Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, contributing to the Refugee Response Plan's GBV priorities.

At the Safe Space for Women and Girls in Odesa, Iryna uses art therapy as a tool for processing trauma from the war in Ukraine. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS – 2024

In 2024, NCA and partners provided lifesaving, specialised GBV and MHPSS services to 11,983 survivors in Ukraine and Moldova, including women, girls, men and boys who have received psychosocial care. 10,147 women and girls have used Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) for recreational or psychosocial sessions. WGSS serve as community therapeutic environments, offering interventions focused on physical, mental health, and social factors. These spaces create a non-judgemental and empathetic atmosphere where women and girls can share experiences, receive practical advice, and build a sense of community, promoting recovery and resilience.

The services provided by WGSS are designed to enhance social skills, provide vocational training and offer counselling or group therapy sessions. The structured activities within WGSS were essential in developing strong connections and supportive communities, thereby improving the wellbeing of women and girls and reducing the need for referrals to specialised services. Compared to the targets for 2024, there were significant overachievements for many indicators, with results far surpassing those of 2022 and 2023. Notably, more women than anticipated used the WGSS, which is an open, needs-based service providing opportunities for socialisation.

In 2024, the two GBV shelters supported by NCA provided protection and support to 76 survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV), including emergency shelter, food, medical examinations, legal aid, psychosocial counselling, and basic needs support. Additionally, NCA provided medical support to 123 survivors needing examinations after sexual or physical violence. Legal support, interactive sessions, and advocacy initiatives were also provided to help survivors and at-risk women and girls, including LGBTQI+ community members facing discrimination, highlighting the need for inclusive policies. Through the response, NCA also established and regularly verified updated referral pathways for GBV services, including healthcare, PSS, legal assistance, and basic needs support.

From 2024, the MHPSS response included the "Help the Helpers" component, providing trauma therapy materials and training to personnel under high stress, such as Vodakanal workers, firefighters and police officers. The Mykolaiv CHP, targeted by Russian missiles several times, was one of the workplaces that benefited from this support.

NCA distributed 5,155 dignity kits and/or emergency cash assistance to reduce GBV risk for women and girls in need, particularly those affected by displacement and incidents of violence. Post-distribution monitoring (PDM) with 626 recipients showed high satisfaction rates for the quantity (99.5%), quality (98.9%), and contents (99.5%) of the dignity kits. Among the most valued items were washing powder (21.2%), power banks (16%), and menstrual pads (15.2%). These findings highlight the kits' effectiveness while also suggesting areas for improvement, such as expanding hygiene items and access to power sources. Emergency cash assistance of up to 3,600 UAH was given to 16 GBV survivors to mitigate risks and support recovery. The SOPs for cash assistance were developed based on inter-agency and sub-cluster standards. Outreach activities were also conducted by partners' mobile teams in Odesa, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv conducting systematic visits to collective and transit centres.

Kateryna receives a dignity kit in a village outside Odesa. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

GBV AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN MOLDOVA

Irina Smirnov, psychologist that conducted community meetings and awareness GBV sessions for refugees from Ukraine and local communities in Ciorescu, Moldova. Photo: Maxim Ciorbă/HEKS/EPER

In response to the displacement and vulnerabilities caused by the war, a significant initiative focusing on GBV awareness has emerged, championed by a Moldovan psychologist Irina Smirnov. Recognising the critical need for psychological and psychosocial support, especially for women experiencing domestic violence, Irina has spearheaded community-based workshops and therapeutic group activities.

These gatherings, echoing traditional Moldovan social circles called "șezători," provide safe spaces for women to connect, share experiences, and access psychological support. Irina Smirnov emphasises that many women initially do not recognise their experiences as GBV, often accepting such treatment as a social norm. Her efforts through group activities, therapeutic art workshops, and open dialogues have begun shifting this perspective, empowering women to recognise abuse and seek assistance.

This project has facilitated friendships and mutual support networks between Moldovan and Ukrainian women, creating solidarity through shared experiences and collaborative empowerment. Smirnov stresses the importance of breaking the cycle of GBV by raising awareness and supporting women in their journey toward emotional recovery and independence.

Victoria's Journey: Finding a Second Family

When the war broke out in Ukraine in February 2022, Victoria and her husband swiftly left their home in Odessa, equipped only with a small suitcase and a profound sense of uncertainty. Their escape to Moldova marked the start of a remarkable transformation. Welcomed warmly by a Moldovan family who generously opened their home for three months, Victoria experienced firsthand the power of compassion and human solidarity. She recalls, *"We packed the essentials and left immediately. The kindness we found here transformed our fear into hope"*. Today, the Moldovan family is much more than a temporary refuge – they have become a second family, deeply cherished and appreciated.

Initially uncertain about their future, Victoria quickly became involved in community activities that provided crucial psychosocial support and legal assistance. She participated in GBV awareness activities and benefited from sessions with a lawyer to address legal issues due to her displacement situation. To reduce GBV risks faced by vulnerable and displaced persons, several cycles of sessions have been organised to provide women with possibilities of meeting and forming a new community enabled by a safe environment. Among the sessions, Victoria attended Financial Literacy courses, integrating awareness-raising discussions about financial dependency and GBV. Through these activities, Victoria gained deeper insights into recognising GBV and the available support mechanisms, significantly enhancing her awareness and empowering her to support other women around her.

As of December 2024, Victoria feels deeply integrated into her new community. She highlights the comfort and sense of belonging she and her husband have found in Moldova, appreciating the friendliness and genuine warmth of the Moldovan people. This experience has inspired her husband to embrace the local culture, including learning Romanian and seeking citizenship, signifying their commitment to this new chapter in their lives.

The stories of refugees from Ukraine, such as Victoria, coupled with the outstanding work carried out by qualified professionals to address GBV cases and risks, illustrate the profound potential for healing and renewal when compassion and support converge. They showcase Moldova's spirit of hospitality, and the resilience of individuals determined to rebuild their lives, underscoring the transformative power of community solidarity and awareness.

HANNA AGAPITOVA

Just six days into the war in Ukraine, the worst thing that could happen to Hanna happened. Her son, Serhii, had joined the Ukrainian forces to defend their town of Voznesensk in southern Ukraine, and now he was no longer answering his phone.

"I asked everywhere for him, and finally I was told to try down by the river, where there had been fighting for a bridge. I went down there, and there I found my son's body," says Hanna.

Hanna takes out her phone and shows a surveillance video on it. The video shows a narrow street and a beetroot-coloured gate. Behind the gate, Serhii is hiding from a tank on the other side of the river.

"Look," Hanna says calmly, *"in a few seconds my son will die."*

Sure enough, everything on the screen turns to grey dust in a powerful explosion, and her son is gone.

Hanna spent two days collecting all the parts of her son's body in the yard behind the beetroot-coloured gate. She shows where she found his legs, head and heart. She put all the parts of her son in a sack on her back and carried him away from there to bury him.

"He died the day before his 23rd birthday two years ago," she says softly, continuing: *"and today (April 16, 2024, ed.) it is exactly one year since my daughter died of a heart condition."*

Photo: Rasmus Gravesen/DCA-NCA

Photo: Rasmus Gravesen/DCA-NCA

The pain of losing two of her three children – and the traumatic memories of spending two days, while the war raged and the bombs fell around her, collecting her son's body parts in a sack, have naturally left a deep mark on Hanna.

"For almost two years I have not received any help to talk about my trauma. No psychologists or therapy. It all costs money, and I cannot afford it," she says.

The first time Hanna had the opportunity to process her trauma was in January 2024, when she attended a group therapy session held by NCA.

"At first, I was sceptical about whether it would work. I attended sessions where we talked freely about what we had experienced and received training in breathing techniques and methods to calm ourselves. I learned to focus on my happy memories of my son," Hanna says.

Through 11 sessions, Hanna has shown clear progress in her mental health, explains Olga Boginska, who holds group therapy for NCA.

"The biggest need for those who do not live right next to the front lines right now is psychological help. Everyone needs it. So many people live in fear. And so many hide their trauma. We need to talk about it, just as I needed it," Hanna explains.

Art therapy is one of the activities offered at Green Landiyas Women and Girls Safe Space in Kharkiv. Photo: Håvard Hovdhaugen/ HEKS/EPER

In Moldova, three awareness videos were produced and published during the 16 Days of Activism campaign, each delivering a distinct message. These videos were strategically designed to raise awareness on GBV, with content tailored to different aspects of prevention and response. The campaign achieved exceptional engagement on Instagram and Facebook, reaching a total of 1,087,065 individuals. This remarkable achievement was driven by targeted social media campaigns, strategic community engagement, and the involvement of influencers and bloggers, further amplifying the campaign's reach and increasing awareness and engagement with key messages on GBV prevention and available support services.

Efforts for localisation within the GBV and MHPSS sector continued in 2024 with the inclusion of one additional local partner in Kharkiv (Green Landiya) and the establishment of two new partnerships in Mykolaiv (Rokada) and Sumy (League of Modern Women) in preparation for 2025. A key part of the response is capacity building of local staff, local partner organisations and local service providers, empowering them to adequately respond to the dramatic increase in the demand for MHPSS services. The overwhelming reach reported under outputs 4.4.1 and 4.5.2 clearly demonstrates the tremendous demand for strengthened expertise in GBV and MHPSS among national and local service providers, serving as an example of how NCA's response is effectively contributing to fill a gap in the response to the unfolding mental health crisis in Ukraine.

Throughout the year, NCA conducted various training and capacity building initiatives. These included a four-day "Basics of Trauma Therapy" training for psychologists and social workers, and a CPSS (CETA) training for six MHPSS supervisors, certifying 28 participants. Feedback indicated increased confidence in handling trauma cases and applying cognitive-behavioural techniques. Additionally, two Psychological First Aid (PFA) training sessions in Kyiv trained 45 participants from various sectors, covering core principles, acute stress responses, ethical considerations, communications, and referral processes for mental health support. These structured training initiatives significantly enhanced the capacity of mental health professionals, social workers, and frontline responders, equipping them with vital skills in trauma therapy, crisis intervention, and PFA, leading to improved effectiveness in addressing trauma and crisis situations.

To further build the skills of GBV caseworkers, NCA facilitated a five-day training on "Integrating Therapeutic Interventions into GBV Case Management" (ITI). This NCA-developed toolkit aims to build the knowledge of caseworkers on psychological techniques and mental health symptoms, providing practical skills for dealing with survivors experiencing flashbacks or sleeping problems. Consequently, GBV staff can deepen their therapeutic skills. The training incorporated art therapy, such as body maps and journey maps, which are narrative and art therapy techniques. Lifeline, another narrative therapy technique, was also trained, where flowers, rocks and strings are used to tell an individual's life story.

The Women Rise Toolkit, a PSS framework and best practice guidance for GBV programmes was translated and adapted to ensure relevance for Ukrainian women and girls. This adaptation was crucial for improving effectiveness and increasing service use. Collaborating with GBV partners and translators required significant time and effort to ensure cultural appropriateness, which delayed training and piloting. However, training was eventually conducted to build technical skills for psychologists and social workers, enhancing their ability to support survivors and women in difficult situations.

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS – 2022–2024

From the outset of the response in 2022, it was evident that Ukrainian service providers were highly skilled. However, needs assessments revealed that many lacked experiences in addressing the traumas of war. Capacity building for 2,323 GBV and MHPSS service providers throughout the programme period has led to significant increases in knowledge, skills and confidence across key areas, including understanding GBV in emergencies and implementing GBV response interventions, such as GBV case management. Focusing on operational tools, practice, ongoing technical support and capacity building efforts resulted in enhanced knowledge, confidence and skills. Investment in preparedness, including training and pre-positioning key material like dignity kits, ensured that trained staff could effectively deploy and respond to evacuation orders in Kharkiv, providing services to GBV survivors and women at risk. Additionally, capacity building for stakeholders and key community structures has contributed to a better understanding of GBV risks and skills, such as safe referrals. This effort has helped establish referral protocols, linking survivors to GBV support services.

The war has significantly increased the need and demand for quality mental health assistance, highlighting the vulnerabilities of Ukraine's current mental health system. Ukrainian CSOs and key local authorities have mobilised to provide support to those in need, often requiring support themselves. First-line responders experience exhaustion and fatigue, coupled with limited resources allocated for well-being, underscoring the urgent need for tools like "Help the Helpers" to address their well-being. Recognising the importance of the well-being and prevention of burnout among GBV and MHPSS staff, the programme established routine supervision sessions focusing on case consultations, burnout prevention, trauma-informed care, and advanced therapeutic techniques to support their emotional well-being and service quality.

Attitudes towards mental health services, perceived social norms, and stigma significantly influence Ukrainians' intention to seek mental health support. NCA has throughout the period, trained and built the capacity of partners and stakeholders to combat mental health stigma through education, increasing understanding and empathy by learning about conditions, their causes, and symptoms. More importantly, NCA has worked to correct myths and misunderstandings in the communities, promote mental health awareness, and change health-seeking behaviour. Community awareness and building key skills, including effective communication among service providers and stakeholders, have facilitated and increased access to MHPSS services for survivors and women and girls at risk. During the programme period 1,176 individuals have accessed specialised MHPSS through referrals, and 15,571 individuals have received psychosocial care.

During the programme period, NCA expanded the GBV and MHPSS response, creating more entry points for GBV survivors to address the increased needs and incidents of IPV. Gradually, NCA and partners established a total of seven WGSS, three women's shelters, and five mobile teams to provide integrated services to vulnerable communities, especially in hard-to-reach areas. The five mobile teams, consisting of caseworkers and psychologists, operate in remote areas to ensure access for marginalised communities to information and GBV response services. WGSS offer a supportive environment where women and girls can access services, participate in activities, and receive psychosocial support, and 12,006 women and girls accessed services through WGSS during the programme period.

In response to the increased incidents of economic violence observed in case management, NCA has initiated empowerment activities to support GBV survivors facing financial constraints, thereby broadening their options. These activities not only enhance their confidence but also provide opportunities for employment or engagement in income-generating activities. The rising cost of living has led to a higher demand for commodities such as dignity kits and cash assistance, as well as information sessions on GBV and MHPSS offered by NCA. A total of 7,680 women and girls have received dignity kits and/or cash and voucher assistance during the period. There is a growing need to improve the accessibility of these services. Simultaneously, services that assist women and girls in generating their own income are becoming increasingly popular, mitigating economic hardship and indicating increased empowerment and evolving gender norms.

While NCA's GBV and MHPSS programme has not reduced the incidents of GBV in the community, it has provided survivor-centred GBV specialised services and PSS. NCA-trained service providers offer individualised, ongoing assistance to help survivors recover from traumatic incidents and receive help based on their needs and choices. Community awareness efforts spread clear messages of zero tolerance for all forms of GBV and inform survivors of their rights and the support services available to them, encouraging survivors to step forward knowing they are not alone, and that supportive, non-judgemental resources are available. Throughout the programme period, NCA reached 42,844 individuals with outreach activities.

In Pavlo-Maryanivka NCA partners constructed a new 15m³ water tower to cover the domestic water needs of the community. Photo: Ioannis Georgiadis/ Norwegian Church Aid

WASH PROGRAMME

In 2024, NCA's WASH implementation strategy in Ukraine continued to focus on enabling local community support groups, duty bearers and affected communities to repair, re-start and maintain critical water, sanitation and district heating services through close cooperation, support and coordinated efforts within the WASH Cluster. NCA and partners' regular and proactive coordination in WASH Cluster meetings on national and sub-national level (in the Southern and Eastern hubs) ensured that NCA's response was fully aligned with sector priorities and that there was no duplication. Participation in relevant technical working groups (TWGs), namely the Vodakanal and District Heating TWGs ensured that the response complied with national technical standards and relevant regulations.

NCA and its partners cooperated closely with the Vodakanals, the public municipal water utility companies in Ukraine, responsible for the operation and maintenance of the country's water and sanitation infrastructure. The Vodakanals have experienced significant loss of material, equipment and machinery, loss of income due to inability to effectively collect fees, and more significantly death, loss and injury in their workforce. Amidst ongoing armed conflict, deliberate attacks on WASH infrastructure and extensive contamination from unexploded ordnances, Vodakanal personnel risk their lives and struggle to keep WASH and other basic services going for the affected population, particularly close to the frontline. NCA and its partners participate in the joint efforts within the WASH Cluster for the effective support of the Vodakanals, which is coordinated by the Vodakanal TWG.

The primary challenges encountered by NCA WASH staff and its partners stemmed from operating in a context of active conflict and insecurity. Access to frontline areas was frequently restricted due to ongoing hostilities and road closures. The turnover of international WASH staff during the last quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024 led to delays in identifying project locations. Additionally, NCA and partners faced difficulties in recruiting and retaining male Ukrainian WASH staff, as they were subject to conscription. This issue also impacted contractors and suppliers, causing further delays.

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS – 2024

In 2024, 266,537 people were reached through coordinated and complementary WASH assistance, in more than 30 communities across three oblasts (Mykolaiv, Kherson and Donetsk). This includes 5,468 through hygiene promotion activities, 12,000 with sanitation, 245,922 with water interventions, including district heating, and 4,418 with material for menstrual hygiene

management (MHM) and incontinence support. Detailed analysis and breakdown per different activities is provided below.

NCA's response carried out repairs in the water supply system, including the reconstruction of water towers, in seven rural communities (Pavlo-Maryanivka, Shchaslyve, Shevchenkove, Kotlyareve, Chervonyi Yar, Zaichivske, and Lymany) and one IDP collective shelter in Mykolaiv oblast (Mishkovo-Pohorilov). In addition, a borehole was drilled and equipped, and a water tower was installed in the war affected community of Nadezhdivka in Kherson Oblast. In Mykolaiv Oblast, NCA repaired the water towers in two communities (Kobleve and Inhulka) and rehabilitated the water network in one community (Pisky), with additional provision of equipment and tools. These coordinated efforts across Mykolaiv and Kherson Oblasts are anticipated to significantly enhance the resilience and functionality of rural water supply systems, ensuring reliable access to clean water for drinking and domestic use for 30,856 individuals. Without improved and clean water supply, rural communities resort to consuming water from unsafe sources, such as shallow wells, exposing themselves to disease, or from distant sources, exposing themselves to personal safety risks. The repair and reconstruction of water towers and networks in multiple communities will mitigate the impact of disrupted supply chains caused by the ongoing conflict. Additionally, drilling a new borehole and installing water tower in Nadezhdivka in Kherson will provide sustainable and alternative water source, thereby address the immediate needs of the population and reinforce the long-term stability of water infrastructure.

NCA strengthened local capacities to respond, maintain and carry out preventive repairs through the donation of tools, equipment and machinery to 11 Vodakanals in communities across Mykolaiv and Kherson oblasts. The Vodakanals that received support were selected following extensive assessment of their capacity and needs, and handover of tools, equipment and machinery was carried out following relevant official procedures and accompanied with capacity building. For monitoring and accountability purposes, and as a standard procedure, NCA's WASH team followed up closely with the targeted Vodakanals, to ensure that all items have been received, stored and utilised as intended. The donation of tools, equipment, and machinery to the Vodakanals is anticipated to empower local water authorities to maintain and operate the systems more effectively, and to swiftly respond to attacks to infrastructure with emergency repairs, ultimately contributing to improved health outcomes, reduced waterborne diseases, and enhanced quality of life for the affected communities.

NCA partners reached communities living close to the frontline in Donetsk Oblast (Ocheretyne and Bilozerske) and worked together with the water authorities to establish drinking water points and develop alternative water supply sources. This was achieved through the drilling of two new boreholes and the establishment of water distribution points with water purification systems with Reverse Osmosis, which is necessary to remove both pathogens and salinity that is present in the groundwater. The installation of water purification systems will ensure the provision of safe drinking water to 7,933 individuals, reducing health risks related to water contamination.

NCA's partner identified and carried out essential repairs and maintenance on 11 drinking water points in Mykolaiv, including water pumping and disinfection systems. This activity has significantly enhanced the city's access to free, clean drinking water. These water points now provide 24,633 residents with safe and potable water, free of charge, enhancing overall public health, reducing the risks of waterborne diseases, and alleviating the financial burden of purchasing bottled water. This is especially crucial for elderly and retired individuals, whose income during wartime barely covers their most immediate needs. The reliable supply of clean

Water treatment units with reverse osmosis for distribution of drinking water in public water points in Mykolaiv. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

DRINKING WATER POINTS IN MYKOLAIV

Through NCA's response, eleven drinking water points in Mykolaiv were repaired and maintained in 2024. The drinking water points are spread across Mykolaiv, where citizens can collect drinking water for free. All stations are located in places where many people either live, work or are – for example, near a school.

The drinking water points pump out up to 13 cubic meters of water per day. For many citizens of Mykolaiv, this is the only way to get water without having to pay for water in plastic bottles or at pay stations.

Previously, the citizens of Mykolaiv had clean water in their taps, but today the water can often only be used to flush the toilet, as the quality is so poor. This is due to frequent bombing of the water infrastructure and the floods resulting from the explosion of the Kakhovka dam in 2023.

Photo: Rasmus Gravesen/DCA-NCA

Photo: Rasmus Gravesen/DCA-NCA

Yurii
Yurii comes two to three times a week to collect water at one of the drinking water points maintained by NCA. He says that the water supply at home is barely usable for anything other than toilet water.

"My water is the same colour as Cola-Cola," he says, laughing softly.

One of the reasons Yurii comes to the free drinking water station is that it is an opportunity to refill his water reserves easily and without paying.

"It is really easy for me to come here and fill up the car with water. I don't have to drive all over town just to get water."

water also supports daily activities, contributing to the well-being and quality of life for the urban population.

NCA carried out critical hydromechanical repairs and upgrades at the CHP of Mykolaiv city, which has been subjected to multiple attacks since the start of the war and suffered heavy damages during the flooding that was caused by the Khakova dam destruction. The main activity planned for 2024 included the provision of three industrial size water pumps, that would replace existing pumps that have either been eroded due to saline water intrusion due to the flooding, and the emergency operations in 2022, or malfunction due to old age and lack of maintenance. These pumps are critical for the functionality of the CHP. This activity was hindered due to logistical reasons and was completed in February 2025.

Despite this deviation, NCA's response successfully provided critical support to the CHP through various activities. These included the purchase and installation of ultrasonic flow meters and the emergency provision of tools, material and equipment, enabling the CHP to maintain its operations and continue providing district heating services throughout the winter of 2024. The installation of the flow meters significantly optimised CHP operations and improved financial management by enhancing the accuracy of water intake measurements. This led to a reduction in water consumption estimates by over 35%, which in turn reduced operational costs, increased pump efficiency, and improved system stability, while also lowering water and energy consumption.

NCA partners undertook repairs to the WASH system and facilities at a Children's Hospital in Mykolaiv oblast, including the construction of accessible sanitation facilities for children living with disabilities. In addition, NCA installed an industrial washing machine and donated personal hygiene material to Sapietna Psychiatric Hospital, in Mykolaiv Oblast.

The impact of these efforts in healthcare facilities is multifaceted. Firstly, repairing the WASH system and facilities at the Children Hospital will enhance the hospital's ability to maintain hygiene standards, preventing infections and improving patient outcomes. The construction of accessible toilets and showers for children living with disabilities will enable the hospital to provide more inclusive healthcare services. Installing an industrial washing machine at the psychiatric hospital will ensure efficient and thorough cleaning of hospital linens, reducing the risk of contamination and promoting a safer and more dignified environment for both patients and staff.

The distribution of hygiene materials addresses the unique needs of psychiatric patients, who require additional support for maintaining personal hygiene, including those who suffer from incontinence or are unable to maintain personal menstrual hygiene. This initiative contributed to the overall health and well-being of 24,598 vulnerable individuals, ensuring they receive the high-quality care and support they need in a clean and safe setting. Frontline healthcare workers and cleaning personnel will also benefit from these activities, as their working conditions and capacity to provide services are improved.

NCA's response carried out repairs to the sewer system in Snihurivska city and installed solar system for the undisrupted operation of the sewer pumps. These improvements were designed to reduce the risk of sewage overflow, contamination and environmental pollution, thereby promoting public health and safety for 12,000 residents. By ensuring continuous pump operation through solar power, the initiative also supports environmental sustainability and resilience against power outages, contributing to better living conditions and long-term economic savings for the community.

In Snihurivska NCA partners implemented repairs in the communal sewage system and installed a 30KW solar power system for the sustainable operation of the pumps. Photo: Ioannis Georgiadis/ Norwegian Church Aid

SUPPORT TO THE CENTRAL HEATING PLANT IN MYKOLAIV CITY

NCA has supported the Central Heating Plant (CHP) in Mykolaiv through various WASH activities including repair of pipelines, ensuring the plant's ability to maintain operations throughout the winter season both in 2023 and 2024. According to the Director of Mykolaiv CHP, without restoring the pipelines, the CHP would not have been able to provide heating to 160,000 residents of Mykolaiv city.

"This is the main trunk line that supplies heat to the city, and without this trunk line, the CHP will not work at all, so it can be openly said that all 160,000 residents are supplied with heat through this main trunk line. The damaged pipes at the intersection of Pogranichna and Sadova street were urgently needing restoration, and we quickly realised that it would not be possible to keep operating the heating plant moving towards a new winter season without comprehensive repairs. Essentially, half of the city is serviced by this section, including five large hospitals with emergency units and 24-hours treatment facilities. Additionally, about 25 schools and daycare centres are served."

After the repair work, many residents and social institutions noticed improvements in heating quality already during the first months of winter. For example, Olexander Demianov, Director of the municipal non-profit enterprise City Emergency Hospital of Mykolaiv, noted that the repair of the heating network instills confidence that the hospital can count on CHP for heating through the winter. Residents of the building at 265 Central Avenue also noticed improvements in the heating. According to Evgenia Ryabova, the Head of the residential cooperative (OSBB) of the building, the repair of the main heating network at the corner of Pogranichna and Sadova will positively affect not only her building but also all the buildings connected to this network. Evgenia commented on the timely repair of the pipelines ahead of the winter season:

"Everyone who works here is a civilian. None of us are used to war, but it is us the missiles are aimed at. We work on critical infrastructure that provides heat and electricity to people. That is why we are a target," says Valeriia. Photo: Rasmus Gravesen/DCA-NCA

"We followed the project and stayed informed. It was a very large project, and I told the residents that all this concerns us too. We were happy to see that you chose the time very well. It did not affect us because the work was done when there was no heating yet, during the summer and autumn. You did everything so timely that it did not affect us."

Psychosocial support groups in Mykolaiv CHP

The employees of the Mykolaiv CHP have gone from being ordinary employees to what can be called frontline workers during the Ukrainian war. This is because the critical infrastructure is a very frequent target for airstrikes with drones, rockets and missiles. The CHP has been hit by heavy airstrikes several times.

Therefore, special attention is being paid to the employees at the plant by NCA psychosocial support specialists. The employees have been offered the opportunity to participate in ten group sessions, where NCA specialists talk to the employees about their experiences and feelings, while advising on good coping strategies for dealing with stress and discomfort. The sessions are often well attended, so two separate sessions are offered at the same time.

Psychosocial session by NCA employee Olga at The Central Heating Plant. Photo: Rasmus Gravesen/DCA-NCA

Repair of a water supply system break in Borozenske village, Khersonska oblast. Photo: DCA-NCA

The NCA response distributed hygiene and WASH NFIs to vulnerable groups in hard-to-reach areas (Donetsk, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv Oblasts), where markets are not functioning, and cost of relevant products has skyrocketed. The distributions included items for MHM and incontinence. The distributed quantities were designed to meet household needs for three months. These distributions benefited 5,468 individuals with full WASH NFIs and supplies for three months, as well as 820 women and girls with MHM items and 1,500 individuals with incontinence NFIs. Thanks to the flexibility in NCA's agreement with Norad, NCA was able to allocate additional funds that enabled the procurement of more hygiene kits, significantly expanding the reach of hygiene promotion activities.

These distributions were critical in ensuring that vulnerable groups, such as the elderly who were left behind, could maintain basic hygiene standards, and practice dignified personal hygiene measures. Ensuring access to these essentials helped prevent the spread of diseases and reduced health risks associated with poor sanitation and hygiene practices. This was particularly important for women and elderly individuals who faced additional challenges in maintaining personal hygiene. Moreover, the distributed quantities, designed to meet household needs for three months, offered a buffer period during which recipients did not need to worry about sourcing these items, thus providing them with a sense of security and stability. This allowed individuals to focus on other critical aspects of their lives, such as recovery and rebuilding efforts.

The feedback received through the PDM survey demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the assistance provided. 99.36% of survey respondents were satisfied with quality, quantity and contents of family hygiene kits provided, 99.35% of survey respondents were satisfied with the quality and quantity of adult diapers and 98.9% of women and girls reported to be very satisfied with the quality and quantity of menstrual pads.

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS – 2022–2024

The conflict in Ukraine has caused extensive damage to WASH infrastructure. In addition, strikes aimed at electricity infrastructures have severely impacted WASH installations, particularly disrupting water supply due to inconsistent power availability.

Displaced individuals who fled conflict zones without their belongings have urgently required basic hygiene items. Elderly individuals and people living with disabilities, who were left behind in conflict zones or collective centres, were unable to travel to obtain essential hygiene supplies and needed assistance. NCA have addressed these needs by distributing hygiene and sanitary items to people on the move and those living in collective centres. Given the dynamic nature of the conflict, NCA initially took a cautious approach to repairing critical infrastructure to ensure staff safety and avoid investing in installations that could be immediately destroyed again. As more areas were liberated and the situation became more stable, NCA began preparing for repairs of destroyed infrastructure by providing WASH technical expertise to support programme design, planning, and implementation.

Leveraging on the ongoing capacity development of local partners and increasing understanding of the operational context in the country throughout the 2022–2023 period, the type of activities implemented in 2024 were geared more towards sustainability and solutions with long-lasting impact for the targeted populations. For example, in Donetsk, the 2023 response included water bottle distribution and generator delivery, while in 2024, advanced solutions like drilling boreholes and installing water points with reverse osmosis systems were implemented, accompanied with support to local duty bearers to run these systems, ensuring long-term benefits for the communities. The donation of tools, equipment, and machinery to 11 Vodakanals in Mykolaiv and Kherson oblasts has strengthened local capacities to respond, maintain, and carry out preventive repairs.

Raisa is still living in her bombed house with a rocket in her former sleeping room in a village outside Mykolaiv. NCA has renovated the gas system in the village. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

MULTIPURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE AND WINTERISATION PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS – 2024

In 2024, NCA's response successfully assisted 3,267 individuals with multipurpose cash or winterisation support. This included providing multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to 900 individuals, offering winterisation support to 867 people in Donetsk and Mykolaiv Oblasts, and delivering voucher assistance to 1,500 Ukrainian refugees and vulnerable Moldovans in Moldova.

Recipients of MPCA received two transfers of 10,800 UAH each, covering a six-month period. The PDM revealed high levels of satisfaction with the MPCA activity overall, with 99.6% of recipients reporting they were 'very satisfied' and 100% expressing high satisfaction with the amount of cash received. This highlights the programme's effectiveness in addressing the specific challenges faced by these communities amidst ongoing conflict, providing essential financial support to those in need.

Survey participants listed their top spending priorities as: food (74.58%), medication (57.97%), rent or shelter (49.15%), healthcare (41.02%) and heating materials (40.34%). These priorities indicate that recipients primarily used their cash assistance to cover essential needs, reflecting widespread financial vulnerability. Healthcare expenses remain a significant burden, especially for the more than one-third of recipients over the age of 64, who require ongoing medical support.

In Moldova, NCA's partner conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of refugees from Ukraine and their hosts in Moldova through a survey of over 1,400 respondents. Both hosts and refugees reported significant needs for material assistance, particularly for food and essential items. NCA's partner received 585 completed surveys from host communities in Moldova, assessing their social vulnerability and basic needs. Notably, 463 respondents stated that they do not receive support for hosting refugees, 239 reported having chronic illnesses or disabilities, and 193 resided in rural areas. Furthermore, 538 respondents expressed a desire for material assistance in the form of vouchers for food and essential items.

The analysis included data from 1,016 surveys completed by refugees from Ukraine in Moldova, with 698 refugees identifying food as their greatest need, and 870 indicating a need for vouchers for food and essential items. To address these challenges, the programme implemented MPCA through a voucher system, reaching 1,500 refugees and host community members in meeting their household needs. This intervention reduced protection risks and indirectly supported local markets. Each person received 2,000 MDL (104 EUR) in vouchers. The amount provided was based on the minimum expenditure basket of 2,154 MDL.

In 2024, support included distributing solid fuel briquettes to 867 recipients in Donetsk and Mykolaiv. Locations and quantities were decided based on recommendations from the Shelter Cluster. Each household received 3.42 metric tons of solid fuel. According to the PDM survey 99.6% of recipients expressed high satisfaction with the amount of assistance provided, 100% were satisfied with the quality of the briquettes and none of the respondents reported any issues using the briquettes, affirming their high quality and convenience.

The survey revealed insightful data on the adequacy of the fuel provided. Specifically, 80.45% of participants stated that the solid fuel they received covered 'all' or 'most' of their household needs for the winter season, which is defined by the Shelter Cluster as lasting six months, from mid-October to mid-April. Conversely, 19.55% of participants reported that only some of their solid fuel needs could be met. Reasons provided by the respondents for the fuel insufficiency included: larger housing (12.27%), specific household needs, such as elderly members, people with disabilities, or small children requiring warmer room temperatures (7.72%) and colder weather conditions (2.27%).

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS – 2022–2024

MPCA has been prioritised as a modality for affected people to meet their emergency needs since the outset of the response and has allowed NCA and partners to respond quickly to spikes in humanitarian needs. In 2023, NCA and partners swiftly aided 1,200 individuals directly affected by the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam. From 2023, the response extended to Moldova, where 2,033 refugees and vulnerable Moldovans received voucher assistance. From 2024, the intervention in Moldova targeted people affected by changes in UNHCR's cash assistance eligibility in January 2024, including refugees without Temporary Protection status.

This support has not only enabled recipients to receive assistance promptly but has also empowered them to address their prioritised needs with dignity. Despite the ongoing conflict, banks and markets have largely remained operational, allowing recipients to make effective use of cash grants to address their urgent needs. By facilitating the local economy, the intervention has produced a ripple effect, benefiting the broader community. The tangible results underscore the programme's crucial role in alleviating distress and fostering resilience amid challenging circumstances.

As the conflict intensified in 2022, the destruction of electricity and heating infrastructure created an urgent need for winterisation support. Many displaced individuals had fled their homes during warmer months with limited belongings, anticipating a swift return. However, they soon faced new risks during the winter season. To address this, it was decided to quickly provide in-kind winterisation support through winter clothing kits for the most affected and vulnerable communities. In 2022, 843 individuals received these winter clothing kits. Distribution continued in 2023, aiding a total of 3,000 recipients with winter clothing and sleeping bags. In 2024, 867 recipients were provided with solid fuel for heating throughout the winter. Starting from 2023, NCA's primary contribution to alleviating winter hardships has focused on ensuring heating supplies, as detailed in the WASH chapter.

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

DEVIATIONS

Key deviations in 2024 included an overachievement in training sessions due to high demand, increased distribution of dignity kits in response to identified gaps, and delays in the manufacturing of pumps for the CHP in Mykolaiv due to logistical challenges.

GBV AND MHPSS

There was an overachievement of individuals participating in training sessions due to the high demand and adaptation of the programming. Active participation from NCA, partners, and stakeholders, invited through the national sub- cluster, contributed to the higher-than-expected number of trained individuals. In Moldova, additional training sessions were conducted in Russian to accommodate non-Romanian speakers. The increased demand for training reflected a growing interest from various sectors, including law enforcement, healthcare, and social services, all of which play a critical role in addressing GBV. The trainings of the professionals allowed for quality services and care to women and girls at risk and survivors which is demonstrated by the high satisfaction communicated by survivors.

In Ukraine, NCA's response increased capacity for outreach activities with the establishment of a new mobile team in Kharkivska oblast, which enabled more frequent outreach visits to collective and transit centres. Additionally, the intensive outreach efforts conducted by NCA, utilising mobile teams to conduct systematic visits, contributed to the higher-than-anticipated reach.

In response to a significant gap in coverage identified in Kharkivska oblast and communicated by the sub-cluster in the east, there was an increased demand for evacuation emergency support. NCA utilised savings from lower costs on the first batch of dignity kits to procure additional supplies. Furthermore, a top-up towards this activity enabled the purchase of an additional 2,000 dignity kits. This increase in the number of distributed kits enhanced safety and dignity outcomes for more women and girls than initially planned, thereby amplifying the project's overall impact.

WASH AND DISTRICT HEATING

The primary deviation involves a delay in the manufacturing of pumps for the CHP. The supplier encountered delays in obtaining special parts needed to complete the process due to their size, complexity, and the operational conditions of the CHP (e.g., water with high salinity). Additionally, escalating conflict in Southern Ukraine and increased risk of conscription for the supplier's staff, caused further delays impacting access and the supply chain. The pumps were ultimately manufactured and delivered at the end of February 2025. In retrospect, the dialogue with the local partner on timely delivery could have been more frequent. However, the delay was due to the shortage of specific rare parts vital for functionality of the pumps to fit the Ukrainian context, leaving few options to seek other providers.

One of NCA's local partners achieved cost-savings during procurement by adjusting the technical design following specialist inspections. The changes involved reducing the number of pressure and temperature converters from four to two. These savings were used for additional WASH activities, such as installing a solar power system at the Snihurivka sewage pumping station, repairing facilities at the Mykolaiv Children's Hospital, and adding a water tower in Shchaslyve village.

Despite adhering to all required coordination protocols within the WASH Cluster system and with local authorities, the location for the planned borehole drilling in Kalynivske village, Kherson, had to be changed due to duplication with another organisation's activities, resulting in a minor delay. Consequently, the project was relocated to Nadezhdivka village in Kherson.

After completing the tender process, the costs for procurement and delivery of tools, equipment and machinery to the Vodakanals were slightly reduced. These resources were allocated to increase the number of hygiene kits delivered to the Mykolaiv Children hospital, and a donation of ad-hoc emergency repair material to the Mykolaiv CHP.

The original target of individuals reached with access to sanitation facilities and a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene was not fully achieved. This discrepancy was mainly due to an overestimation of the population size in the catchment areas of the rehabilitated infrastructure. The assessments, conducted with local authorities and coordination clusters, relied on prewar population data and projections, which did not fully account for the significant displacements caused by the ongoing war. As frontlines shifted and security dynamics evolved, many communities were forced to relocate, leading to reduced population density in areas where WASH facilities were installed.

Despite the lower-than-expected number of individuals reached, the quality and effectiveness of the WASH interventions were not compromised. To address similar challenges in the future, the planning process will include enhanced coordination with local stakeholders and real-time demographic assessments to better anticipate population changes and mitigate potential deviations.

Victor is getting adult diapers for his mother, during a distribution of hygiene material. His mother is living with disability and not able to pick them up herself. Photo: Håvard Hovdhaugen/HEKS/EPER

KEY DEVIATIONS AND EXPERIENCES THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAMME PERIOD

The primary aim of NCA's response throughout the programme period was to provide protection, humanitarian aid, and lifesaving assistance to those affected by the war in Ukraine, based on their needs and aligned with humanitarian principles. Overall, NCA's efforts have reached 633,228 people in need with protection, WASH services, MPCA and winterisation support. Additionally, 42,844 individuals, including women, men, girls, and boys, have benefited from outreach activities aimed at preventing GBV risk. Furthermore, 2,686 local staff members, personnel from local organisations, social workers, GBV case workers, and healthcare providers have participated in various training programs. These trainings covered financial management, procurement policies, HR management, field-based accountable monitoring, PSHEA, and the provision of psychosocial support, GBV case management, and referral of GBV survivors.

NCA's humanitarian assistance to Ukraine evolved significantly over the three-year period, although it was not initially planned as such. Beginning in March 2022, NCA's response focused on addressing the immediate humanitarian needs resulting from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The response was incorporated into NCA's portfolio under the Strategic Partnership Agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 2022 and 2023. While the 2022–2024 agreement was formalised only in 2024, the grants for 2022 and 2023 were retroactively included under this agreement, in coordination with Norad.

As the situation on the ground continued to shift rapidly, flexibility and adaptive programming proved essential. The first year of operations was marked by dynamic conditions, with changing frontlines and significant population displacement. In response to these challenges, NCA and its partners implemented adaptable programming to meet evolving needs effectively. During the 2022–2024 period, significant adjustments were made to address emerging needs. Initial efforts focused on distributing hygiene kits and water bottles to meet immediate demands. By 2023, the scope of activities expanded to include drilling and installing new water points, as well as providing essential materials and equipment like water pipes, cables, and pumps to Vodakanals, the primary entities responsible for operating and maintaining water systems. Repairs to district heating infrastructure, particularly heating plants damaged by Russian aerial attacks, became a priority. Additionally, support was extended to communities affected by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in 2023.

In parallel, greater emphasis was placed on providing mental health and psychosocial support—not only to survivors of GBV but also to individuals traumatised by the ongoing conflict, particularly frontline workers. Other challenges addressed during this time included ensuring safety and access, managing staff turnover, and overcoming recruitment difficulties for WASH roles, which were complicated by language barriers and the conscription of local workers.

In the basement of the Love of Christ church in Mykolaiv, we find Takhmina and her son Miran. She came to the adapted basement in the church where NCA, together with the local partner and congregation, has established a refugee shelter with beds, kitchen, showers and activity room for children. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

IMPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS ON PROGRAMMING

Restrictions on humanitarian access posed challenges but did not significantly hinder the overall impact of the programme. Following the tragic incident involving HEKS/EPER in February 2024, safety procedures were thoroughly reviewed, including the distance to the frontline. In June, new access SOPs were introduced, emphasising strict situational awareness and consistent implementation of safety and security protocols. These measures ensured that project activities proceeded as planned without major disruptions to the programmatic schedule.

The overall security threat and high risk of shelling affected the ability to deliver services to affected people, especially in Kherson oblast. The number of local contractors in Kherson decreased, and NCA security protocols reduced interventions in these areas due to life-threatening risks to staff and partners. Air raids, including ballistic and drone strikes by Russian forces, delayed the installation of new materials and reconstruction work at the CHP in Mykolaiv. Finding contractors willing to work at the CHP was challenging, resulting in internal CHP staff handling the implementation themselves. To support and mitigate the associated risks, NCA provided PSS and implemented increased safety measures.

The risk of conscription of local Ukrainian males aged 25–65 severely impacted access and mobility of the male labour force, including staff, local partner staff, and contractors, especially in Mykolaiv oblast. The government set up unexpected military raids and roadblocks where all males were stopped for document and military status checks. This challenge was addressed by limiting travel and using female staff when possible.

In Moldova, humanitarian access in the targeted project areas remained open and stable. However, the mobility of refugees between Moldova and Ukraine presented challenges in reaching individuals within the humanitarian framework. Frequent cross-border movement complicated the identification of beneficiaries, registration, and needs assessment, while also hindering stable monitoring and coordination between aid providers and refugee communities. To address these challenges, local partners enhanced coordination with the Territorial Subdivisions of Social Assistance to improve outreach to refugees and host families, ensuring timely and effective assistance delivery.

IMPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES ON PROGRAMMING

Throughout the programme period, the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, independence, and humanity were upheld in all phases of the response.

Humanity: The response aimed to address human suffering, protect life and health, and ensure respect for human beings by keeping services open and accessible for those in need. Locations and activities were selected based on recommendations from UN coordination mechanisms and in cooperation with local authorities to ensure that the most urgent needs were covered first and to avoid duplications and gaps. The seven WGSS supported by the response were open for all women and girls who came to the centres. Additionally, mobile services were provided for women and girls in contexts where safety, distance, or other circumstances made it difficult for them to travel.

Repairs and maintenance of WASH installations were implemented strictly according to recommendations from the WASH cluster, ensuring coordinated and complementary WASH assistance. In some cases, additional repairs were necessary due to new attacks and destruction, such as the repairs of the district heating network in Mykolaiv, which sustained severe damage following multiple targeted aerial attacks. The Mykolaiv CHP, which provides heating for 160,000 residents in Mykolaiv, remained operational throughout 2024 and continues to function thanks to the ongoing support from this programme.

Impartiality: To ensure that the assistance was provided based solely on need, the response focused on building the capacity of local partners to ensure impartial access to humanitarian services. Local partners, often closest to those affected by war, played a crucial role in our humanitarian efforts. They received comprehensive training emphasising the importance of impartiality in service delivery, regardless of gender, religion, class, political beliefs, nationality, or race. This approach was vital for building trust within the Ukrainian society, especially related to MHPSS and specialised GBV services. Through this programme period, our protection specialists conducted workshops, events, outreach activities, and training sessions to strengthen the capacity and quality of programmes for our local partners. These interventions increased awareness, reduced stigma, and improved access to impartial services for all.

Neutrality: During the design and planning phase of all project activities, the response has focused on neutrality by selecting activities based solely on humanitarian needs identified through needs assessments and recommendations from respective cluster leads. This approach has also emphasised local input and ownership by ensuring participation of local communities and governing structures from the onset. In practice, this involved making field visits to local communities recommended by the clusters at an early stage and meeting with local village councils, often those with the best oversight of local needs. By directly interacting at the local level, the response ensured close alignment with local needs and avoided interference with political agendas.

Independence: Procurement and funding procedures were conducted in accordance with professional standards, preventing the influence of subjective motives of staff and organisations on these processes. Assistance was provided based on assessed needs and humanitarian principles without undue pressure or influence from external factors.

RISK MANAGEMENT

During the programme period, NCA has further developed its strategic and operational risk management systems to reduce potential harm and risks to vulnerable communities, staff, infrastructure, and financial resources, including the endorsement of a risk policy by the NCA Board, and introducing a new reporting system on higher level risks at the beginning of 2023. The risk management framework is inspired by the internationally recognised COSO standard for enterprise risk management and seeks to balance the aims of assisting more people in severe need and maintaining exposure to risks at an acceptable level.

Global security staff at NCA have conducted various assessments of the Ukraine response's security management systems and updated NCA's security policy and crisis management plans. Furthermore, NCA's financial controller for Ukraine has carried out reviews of the response's internal controls and compliance with NCA's internal procedures.

In 2024, NCA carried out a comprehensive update of its operations manual. This update aimed to align processes, enhance user-friendliness, and clarify responsibilities. It also includes guidelines and requirements for Head Office follow-up on how Country Offices implement NCA's procedures.

Careful risk assessing at all stages of project implementation, utilising various measures including documentation, collaboration, planning, monitoring and learning from experience helped to minimise risks encountered during implementation. Monthly reports from NCA's partners in the Ukraine response have included reporting on external and internal risks. The external risks include changes in the security, political, financial, and regulatory environments, and their impact on the response efforts and local partners' access to rights-holders, restrictions on civil society space, limitations on banking and the availability of funding. Internal risks reported include compliance with donor and NCA requirements, turnover of key staff and breaches related to information technology and data protection. The reports are accompanied with a monthly meeting where risks and mitigation measures are part of the agenda.

In Moldova, the project's Feedback, Complaints, and Response Mechanism (FCRM) was systematically integrated into all activities, functioning as both a monitoring tool and an adaptive management mechanism. FCRM materials, including posters, flyers, and business cards, were widely distributed in both Russian and Romanian, to ensure clear and legible messaging. These materials also included Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSEAH)-related information to promote awareness and protection measures.

The FCRM operated through multiple accessible channels to cater to different age groups and preferences. These channels included a telephone hotline, email, QR codes, complaint boxes, face-to-face discussions, and posts on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. This multi-channel approach ensured that everyone had the opportunity to report concerns and access support in a manner that best suited their needs. For instance, feedback from the Pacrovca refugee community led to a geographical extension of voucher distribution, demonstrating the mechanism`s responsiveness. Additionally, positive feedback through FCRM channels further validated the project's effectiveness and adaptability.

Safety Environment

The security situation in Ukraine remained highly volatile throughout 2024, with frequent aerial attacks posing a significant threat to both staff and rights-holders. To address these risks, the NCA response employed a multi-layered access approach. This involved consultations with UN OCHA, UNDSS, INSO and local sources such as village and Hromada heads to understand risks and access impediments and to plan accordingly. Staff were trained in safety procedures and first aid, and they always carry trauma kits.

Conscription of staff members, as well as those from partner organisations and contractors, became an increasing risk throughout the period, especially after Ukraine updated its military mobilisation law in 2024 and intensified efforts for conscription of new recruits. In some cases, conscription impacted the timely implementation of project activities, particularly in Mykolaiv following the deployment of 500 new conscription officers in October. While this challenge was impossible to completely resolve, it was managed by limiting travelling and utilising female staff when possible. Other measures included adjusting implementation plans and timelines, prioritising female applicants, and lobbying for NGO exemptions, which was partly successful. Frequent communication and negotiating with partners ensured sufficient capacity on the team with the contractor, allowing for backup and helping to deliver the agreed results in a timely manner.

Internal Risks and Delays

Internal project risks included challenges with contractors, such as delayed work execution, changes in contractor personnel, and difficulty in finding contractors who met quality, time, and cost requirements. Additionally, there were issues in planning work with suppliers of MHPSS, as well as staff shortages. To mitigate these risks, the project engaged additional mental health specialists, planned MHPSS training programmes, and hired full-time staff, which helped minimise the negative impacts on achieving results.

Financial risks, especially those related to actual costs surpassing the initial budget, were mitigated through regular budget versus actual meetings and thorough monitoring of partner budgets.

Risks for Negative Consequences on Surroundings

Potential negative consequences on the surroundings were carefully assessed and mitigated throughout the programme period. The response employed a "Do No Harm" approach, which involved analysing both the context and the planned interventions to ensure that the assistance provided did not inadvertently exacerbate existing tensions or vulnerabilities within the community. In Moldova, continuous monitoring of project activities and local partners ensured that no new major risks emerged. Identified risks were managed effectively through structured mitigation measures, emphasising social cohesion, financial oversight, and security measures. By maintaining a balanced distribution of resources within voucher assistance – allocating 60% to refugees and 40% to host community members – tensions were minimised, and equitable resource allocation was ensured, fostering community acceptance of humanitarian interventions.

Ruslan in a center for vulnerable people in Mykolaiv. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

Human Rights, including the rights of people living with disabilities

Risks related to security and access limitations occasionally impacted the ability to reach marginalised groups, including people living with disabilities. However, NCA and partners ensured that distribution activities were inclusive, with a particular focus on the needs of vulnerable populations. Across all distribution activities, the response applied prioritisation protocols to uphold equity in assistance delivery. These protocols incorporated vulnerability scoring, giving precedence to individuals with disabilities, single-headed households, and displaced persons. Moreover, the response placed strong emphasis on ensuring that project activities were inclusive and responsive to the needs of marginalised groups, particularly persons with disabilities, the elderly, and other vulnerable individuals. A home delivery mechanism was accommodated through the support of social services for individuals with limited mobility who could not access distribution points.

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Risks related to security and operational delays affected planned activities aimed at promoting gender equality, such as the distribution of dignity kits. However, findings from PDM surveys, including feedback from women and girls, were incorporated into project adjustments, such as the removal of logos from dignity kit bags to enhance privacy and dignity.

Climate and Environment

The environmental risks associated with the distribution of solid fuels were mitigated by gathering feedback from rights-holders to ensure that the quantities distributed were sufficient to meet winter heating needs. The response continued to monitor and adapt to environmental concerns related to fuel distribution to prevent negative impacts on the local environment. A key adaptation was the careful selection of solid fuel—hardwood briquettes sourced from certified and sustainably managed forests. This type of fuel is considered more environmentally friendly for several reasons: it is renewable, biodegradable, and produces lower emissions compared to fossil fuels. Specifically, hardwood briquettes have a lower ash content than softwood, which leads to fewer atmospheric emissions during combustion. In comparison, softwood tends to release more particulate matter due to higher ash levels, and coal results in even higher emissions, posing a greater threat to air quality and the environment. To ensure that the fuel distribution did not result in unintended environmental harm, the project closely monitored feedback through its FCRM, PDM, and Focus Group Discussions. Importantly, no ecological concerns or complaints were reported through these channels, indicating that the communities were satisfied with the fuel provided and had not observed any negative environmental impacts.

← *Art therapy in Odesa. At the Safe Space for Women and Girls in Odesa, art therapy is used as a tool for processing trauma from the war in Ukraine. Photo: Håvard Hovdhaugen/HEKS/EPER*

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

The ACT Alliance Code of Conduct Policy (2016) and NCA's PSHEA and Child Safeguarding (CS) Policy from 2021 are NCA's most important individual ethical commitments.

These policies extend to the NCA response in Ukraine including all staff and affiliated personnel, encompassing temporary staff, external consultants, volunteers, and interns. They delineate a comprehensive set of principles governing behaviour, both in broad terms and in specific contexts relevant to our operations. They serve as a compass, offering guidance on expected conduct, particularly in challenging circumstances.

PSHEA

In 2024, NCA received a total of six complaints related to PSHEA, where one was related to NCA's response in Ukraine. In accordance with its confidentiality standards, NCA cannot disclose details on individual cases. However, a general description of the case received in 2024, including implemented corrective actions, is provided below:

NCA received an alert regarding allegations of sexual harassment involving a staff member from a partner organisation. The complainants explicitly requested that the case not be disclosed to the subject, preventing a formal investigation from taking its ordinary course. As direct engagement with the subject of complaint was not feasible, the partner addressed the issue in general terms, including through awareness-raising sessions.

NCA and partners have conducted trainings with a focus on preventing PSHEA in humanitarian settings. These sessions covered power dynamics in humanitarian work and their impact on vulnerable populations, core PSHEA core concepts and their application in humanitarian response, humanitarian principles, the Code of Conduct, and the responsibilities of humanitarian workers. Participants engaged in case study discussions, examining scenarios of PSHEA-related misconduct. A key focus was on identifying and addressing victim-blaming narratives, which often discourage survivors from reporting abuse. The training also strengthened staff capacity to recognise and report PSHEA incidents, emphasising clear accountability mechanisms, survivor-centred reporting systems, and organisational commitments to zero tolerance for abuse.

Financial Irregularities

In an area with a history of prevalent corruption, the influx of substantial international funds poses considerable risks for financial irregularities. To mitigate these risks, NCA is closely monitoring activities through monitoring visits, regular meetings with local partners, and receiving and discussing monthly reports. Several measures have been implemented to prevent financial irregularities.

- Kick-off meeting with all local partners, including discussions on financial reporting responsibilities
- Quarterly internal workshops to review financial procedures as part of our commitment to strengthen local capacity, including local partners administrative capabilities
- Monthly review of financial partner reports, including all transactions.

In October 2024, a case of suspected fraud/mismanagement involving a local partner was discovered. The partner was responsible for delivering protection services (GBV/MHPSS) with a focus on mobile service delivery, including the distribution of dignity kits. During a PDM, it was discovered that a significant number of dignity kits had not been received by the intended recipients and were not accounted for. The case was reported through NCA's complaint mechanism, which then reported to Norad. Following a thorough investigation, it was decided to terminate the partnership with the organisation in question.

The case highlighted the need for even closer monitoring of local partners. While the NCA response already conducts regular oversight, we have learned the importance of assessing partners' financial management, governance systems, organisational structure, and technical capacities more frequently.

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Throughout the programme period, NCA has systematically integrated the four pillars of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 – participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery - and actively promoted the inclusion of women in all its programming.

The response supported UNSCR 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) by incorporating gender-sensitive approaches into humanitarian response, mental health support, infrastructure recovery, and community protection mechanisms. Aligned with the Protection Pillar, the project provided survivor-centred GBV response services, including specialised PSS for women and girls affected by GBV. MHPSS programmes adhered to the IASC Gender Handbook and WHO GBV Guidelines, ensuring trauma-informed, gender-sensitive services. Women and girls contributed input through surveys and consultations, shaping the design and delivery of mental health and GBV services to meet their needs. Gender-sensitive webinars and consultations on GBV awareness enhanced community and institutional capacity to protect women in conflict-affected areas.

In line with the Prevention Pillar, the project aimed to reduce gender-specific risks through capacity building, awareness-raising, and mental health interventions. PFA trainings, GBV awareness sessions, and trauma therapy workshops enhanced service providers' ability to recognise, prevent, and respond to violence and mental health challenges faced by women in crisis. The creation of multiple safe spaces for women and girls to access PSS and community initiatives contributed to long-term resilience and violence prevention.

By ensuring women's active involvement in humanitarian response, strengthening protection mechanisms for GBV survivors, and fostering gender-sensitive recovery efforts, the programme demonstrated a strong commitment to these principles. For WASH activities, complaint mechanisms and feedback channels for women and girls were established to mitigate GBV risks. Printed materials at project sites included hotline numbers for government services addressing domestic violence. The inclusion of women in local decision-making processes was achieved through collaboration with village and city councils, often led by women, during the design and implementation of WASH activities. NCA's integrated programming approach, which includes gender mainstreaming and GBV awareness training for staff, underscores our commitment to promoting safe and dignified access to services for all, including women and girls.

Through therapy and neurographic art, Oksana began to process her trauma. "It helped me organise my thoughts and create an actionable plan. I could recharge here at the church. I learned that while I can never reclaim my past life, I can reclaim my life moving forward."
Photo: Håvard Hovdhaugen/HEKS/EPER

Marjana and Nikol can happily play, receive shelter, food, psychosocial assistance and a large variety of activities at an activity center for children in Mykolaiv. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/Norwegian Church Aid

COST EFFICIENCY

When the response began in 2022, NCA decided to collaborate with sister agencies and fellow members of the ACT Alliance who were already registered in Ukraine, rather than seeking its own registration and establish an NCA office in Kyiv. NCA seconded experts who took on the technical lead for GBV, MHPSS and WASH programming, and supported logistics, safety management and humanitarian coordination. In January 2024, this collaboration was formalised with the establishment of the NCA and DCA Joint Country Programme in Ukraine, meaning that NCA is fully represented in Ukraine by the JCPUA. The cooperation between NCA and DCA is governed by a global MoU, aiming to use available resources sustainably and efficiently while building joint programmes with enhanced quality and greater impact, well-positioned to adjust to dynamic environments.

During the programme period, the response demonstrated considerable efficiency through local procurement, adaptive management, and strong partnerships, despite financial and logistical challenges. High staff turnover and language barriers were addressed by hiring local staff and deploying technical advisors. While acknowledging that the overall costs of implementing critical WASH infrastructure projects can be significant, their efficiency per beneficiary makes them more economically viable. Additionally, permanent infrastructure projects, which often have a higher reach and support more people than short-term emergency distributions, have a greater impact and reduce the need for repeated interventions, ultimately leading to long-term cost savings.

Protection interventions focused on needs-driven programming to maximise resource efficiency. Other cost efficiency strategies included utilisation of mobile outreach teams in remote areas and exploring cost effective digital technologies for data collection, monitoring, evaluation and service provision.

Empowering local NGOs as primary implementers has also served to build local capacity and reduce overhead costs. A study published in July 2024 by The Share Trust and Refugees International in Ukraine[3] demonstrated that shifting greater funding and decision-making power to local actors can leverage significant resources critically needed to meet humanitarian and development needs.

3 Refugees International: Passing the Buck: The Economics of Localizing Aid in Ukraine (23.07.2024)

Collaboration with local authorities, active participation in humanitarian coordination mechanisms, and collaborations with other actors such as DRC and IRC aimed to avoid duplication of services and maximise resource utilisation. Internal coordination between different departments, such as protection, WASH and Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA), in referrals and service delivery further supported this goal.

Additionally, procurement and logistics strategies were refined to ensure cost effective operations. Bulk purchasing, framework agreements with suppliers, and improved supply chain coordination helped mitigate price fluctuations and ensure the timely delivery of essential items. Local sourcing was used whenever possible, reducing transportation costs and supporting local economies. However, inflation and rising operational costs, particularly increased rents and transportation expenses for distributions, especially winterisation responses, posed significant challenges beyond the control of NCA and partners. Despite these external financial pressures, the teams worked diligently to optimise available resources and maintain cost efficiency wherever possible.

In Moldova, strong collaboration with local authorities and CSOs resulted in significant cost efficiencies. Public authorities and CSOs waived venue rental fees for project activities, reinforcing local ownership and enhancing financial efficiency. The resulting savings were reallocated to high-impact initiatives, including the production and national dissemination of three GBV awareness videos, the establishment of a database, and additional debates with adolescents on violence prevention. Furthermore, three supplementary training sessions were organised for key frontline professionals, such as police officers, medical personnel, social workers, carabinieri, and probation officers, enhancing their capacity to address GBV cases.

SUSTAINABILITY

Throughout the programme period, NCA and partners have made significant strides in designing and implementing project activities with a focus on sustainability and maintenance. This effort is highlighted by three main components: the choice of local partners, commitment to localisation and resource mobilisation and capacity building. From the outset, the response has relied on recruiting local NGO's as implementing partners to support project implementation. We are proud to report on several long-term partnerships at the end of this programme period.

Ensuring sustainability through lasting local partnerships and fostering agency, inclusion, and ownership within communities – often through engagement with local village councils – has been a core commitment. Strengthening local capacity is key to achieving professional and sustainable services from and for the Ukrainian people as part of our commitment to localisation.

A key priority has been to support the institutionalisation of protection services within national frameworks, in line with the Istanbul Conventions. To ensure this, the project collaborated with the Ministry of Social Policy and local protection agencies to align interventions with existing social services, healthcare structures, and legal systems. Additionally, NCA and partners have played a crucial role in strengthening referral pathways and coordination between humanitarian actors, government agencies, and service providers. The development of operational referral pathways ensured that GBV survivors and vulnerable groups had access to interconnected services across protection, health, and PSS sectors. In both Ukraine and Moldova, NCA and partners have supported building the capacity of local actors through specialised training, mentorship, and technical support for social workers, psychologists, case managers, and legal professionals. The trainings and workshops ensure professionals are equipped with the skills needed to deliver survivor-centred, trauma-informed care to survivors of GBV and women and girls at risk.

WASH interventions have continuously worked towards achieving sustainability through effective training, collaboration with local authorities, and community involvement, ensuring long-term maintenance. Local capacities to respond, maintain and carry out preventive repairs have been strengthened through the donation of tools, equipment and machinery to Vodakanals in communities across Mykolaiv and Kherson oblasts.

These initiatives have resulted in improved monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and adherence to humanitarian principles, empowering local organisations. Despite challenges, partnerships have yielded enhanced expertise, coordination, and improved critical infrastructure. Sustainability criteria have been key in the selection of WASH activities, prioritising interventions that promote durable solutions and lasting change for affected communities. This commitment is clearly demonstrated in the water and heating interventions and in the choice of local procurement, ensuring local production and maintenance.

LESSONS LEARNED

GBV AND MHPSS

The ability to adjust strategies, reallocate resources, and expand successful interventions allowed the project to exceed its initial targets. For instance, in 2023, reallocating savings enabled additional awareness sessions on anti-trafficking and GBV prevention. In 2024, increased cost efficiencies led to the development of a secure database for GBV case management. Additionally, the production of three professionally made GBV awareness videos, featuring actors, scripted scenarios, and a paid promotional campaign on social media, national television, and other platforms, demonstrated the effectiveness of high-quality, multi-channel awareness strategies. This highlights that adaptability in programming, based on emerging needs and available resources, leads to a more effective and widespread response.

Enhancing services and impact programmes that actively engage local communities, grassroots organisations, and survivors has proven more effective in increasing awareness, reducing stigma, and improving service accessibility to women and girls at risk and survivors. Strengthening the capacity of local partners through training, mentorship, and financial support was key to ensuring long-term service provision even beyond project timelines. A partner selection process based on capacity, alignment with humanitarian principles, and commitment to gender-sensitive approaches helped ensure quality service delivery and ethical standards.

The expansion of survivor-centred, multidisciplinary interventions, including legal aid, healthcare, and PSS, addressed long-term well-being beyond immediate crisis response. Future initiatives should strengthen integration across sectors, ensuring that survivors receive comprehensive and continuous support. Digital and remote GBV response services expand reach, particularly for IDPs and people in occupied areas, but require investment in online case management and digital awareness campaigns. Increased investment in cybersecurity, training of service providers, and connectivity is key. Future projects should ensure secure and confidential remote service options while addressing digital literacy gaps among vulnerable populations. Protection and GBV needs evolves, and new risks and vulnerabilities continue to emerge, particularly for IDPs, LGBTQI+ individuals, and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Hence, NCA and partners need to ensure that a strong supervision mechanism is in place to ensure that caseworkers have the skills and knowledge to meet these evolving needs.

WASH

One of the key lessons learned for the WASH programme was that annual project cycles do not necessarily align with spikes in needs on the ground. During the 2022–2024 period, Russian forces deliberately attacked power supply and heating infrastructure at the beginning of the winter, which coincided with the last quarter of the annual project cycle. This context required rigorous planning, swift changes in plans, and the need for no-cost-extensions, as the time needed to complete assessment, procurement and implementation processes often exceeded the projects annual end date, December 31st. NCA have typically reserved some funds in the annual budget to address this anticipated spike in needs towards the end of the year and informed Norad of any potential changes as soon as possible, however it was not always possible to predict these events.

In terms of WASH programme implementation, anticipating potential delays in construction due to factors like adverse weather conditions or logistical challenges was crucial. Building flexibility into project schedules, especially when coordinating with local authorities or obtaining necessary licenses, helped mitigate the impact of delays. Early procurement planning was essential, given that large-scale processes can be time-consuming. Regular assessments of logistics and supply chains, including contractor availability, material stocks, and delivery times, were vital in a conflict context. Strategic planning and risk mitigation measures, along with exploring alternative delivery routes or partnerships, ensured timely delivery despite supply line disruptions. The shortage of available construction suppliers also posed challenges to project implementation. To attract more participation in tenders, it was crucial to develop project documentation tailored to the Ukrainian market, including standardised Bill of Quantities (BoQ).

MPCA AND WINTERISATION

Cash assistance has consistently proven effective throughout the project, meeting the prioritised needs of vulnerable populations. However, demographic discrepancies have persisted. In 2023, men received more support than anticipated, while in 2024, women's participation in cash assistance rose significantly, while children's access declined by over 76%. These deviations suggest that cash assistance requires continuous refinement to ensure a more equitable distribution that aligns with the evolving demographic realities of displaced and vulnerable communities. In response, our

Distribution of hygiene kits in Odesa. Danil Pavlov/Norwegian Church Aid

local partner conducted assessment surveys to collect more detailed demographic data and assess the specific needs of rights-holders regarding voucher assistance. This included evaluating the preferred types of vouchers, their accessibility, and their effectiveness in covering essential expenses such as food, hygiene products, and medical supplies.

One key insight from the MPCA programme is the need to reduce the timeline between the assessment phase and registration of rights-holders. It is essential that no more than a week passes between the assessment of a location and the registration of rights-holders. This practice minimises the risk of duplication by other NGOs, which may begin covering the same locations if the timeline is extended.

Additionally, revisions to the CommCare Registration Form have improved data quality by reducing errors during transfer processes. The visualisation of MPCA data through Power BI dashboards has facilitated better access to information and faster feedback loops. Further refinements of these automated systems and tools, with input from field teams and support from MEAL staff, are recommended to enhance data management and responsiveness.

One important learning from the 2024 MPCA programme came from the introduction of a screening criterion to assess household income levels. While this new approach aimed at enhancing the targeting process, the communication surrounding its implementation could have been clearer, resulting in some misunderstandings and perceptions of unfairness. Despite the accountability team's dedicated efforts to address individual inquiries, the experience underscored the value of proactive and transparent communication when introducing new eligibility criteria. In response, the eligibility and vulnerability criteria are being reviewed to strengthen alignment between programmatic decisions, community expectations, and accountability standards.

EVALUATION/REVIEW

Within this programme period, NCA have conducted an evaluation of its WASH-response, and a GBV-study related to its response in Ukraine.

WASH evaluation
NCA commissioned a study conducted by INCAS Consulting to evaluate its WASH-response in Ukraine in 2023. The evaluation showed that supporting central heating systems significantly enhanced the impact of NCA's humanitarian WASH response, particularly amid ongoing attacks on energy infrastructure. Collaboration with local authorities and service providers was deemed essential for achieving sustainability in urban settings. Institutional strengthening proved most beneficial when it is a two-way process, simultaneously building local capacity and enhancing humanitarian access. Balancing smaller-scale activities with larger interventions through local partnerships in the initial phase of the response in 2023 allowed DCA and NCA to swiftly establish operations, build systems and expand its geographical reach.

One of the recommendations from the external evaluation was to improve coherence between WASH and other programmes, such as Protection and HMA. In response, NCA explored ways to create effective synergies across programmes for its 2025–2027 response planning. This included joint needs assessment and exchanging information among teams on WASH and Protection requests made by the target population.

GBV study: Gender Dynamics and Experience of Violence at Home: Deep Dive into Intimate Partner Violence in Ukraine Study Report

NCA commissioned a study conducted by Humanitarian Impact Institute to examine the shifting gender roles, responsibilities, and dynamics in Ukraine amidst the ongoing conflict, and their correlation with IPV. The study also evaluates the relevance and limitations of existing legislation and services aimed at addressing IPV in the context of the war.

The study found that the war has led to significant changes in gender roles, with women increasingly assuming new roles in previously male-dominated sectors both in the community and in the military. Additionally, women have taken on additional caregiving roles, often without the help and support of a partner and other family members. However, these shifts have not resulted in greater political participation or decision- making power for women. The redirection of resources towards the war effort has further marginalised their involvement in social issues. Rural women are particularly affected by compounded challenges such as geographic isolation, fear of social stigma, and limited access to services.

Both men and women acknowledge the multiple forms of IPV, yet awareness of the full scope of violence and the availability of support services remains limited, especially in rural areas. Barriers to seeking help remain substantial, with many survivors reluctant to approach formal support services. The study stresses that addressing IPV in Ukraine requires continued advocacy and policy improvement. Strengthening existing systems is key to addressing these issues. A comprehensive approach that focuses on enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of services, building trust with law enforcement, and raising public awareness is essential to ensuring that all women and girls can live free from IPV and other forms of violence at home, including sexual violence. The study includes key recommendations for various stakeholders to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of GBV services in Ukraine. These recommendations and learnings are being incorporated in NCA's programming for 2025–2027.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK 2022–2024

Outcome 1	Indicators	Results 2022						Results 2023						Targets 2024						Results 2024						Results 2022–24
		girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1)]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1)]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1)]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1)]	TOTAL	TOTAL
Outcome 1 People affected by crisis access life saving integrated protection and assistance appropriate and relevant to their immediate needs	1: % of NCA responses supported by NCA Head Office ERT personnel, humanitarian thematic advisors, humanitarian support functions																									
Output 1.3 Response operations are predictable and effective through NCA surge capacity and emergency supplies"	1.3.1: # of roster members deployed			3	3		**6**			1	5		**6**										3		**3**	**15**
Output 1.5 People affected by crisis meet their prioritised basic needs through multipurpose cash assistance	1.5.1: # of people who are able to meet the basic needs of their households, according to their priorities							1,473	1,518	5,644	3,546		**12,181**	342	338	739	581		**2,000**	107	134	1,525	634		**2,400**	**14,581**
Output 1.6 People affected by the crisis are able to meet their immediate winterisation needs	1.6.1: # of people provided with support for winterisation	145	141	312	245		**843**	512	508	1,109	871		**3,000**							70	77	423	297		**867**	**4,710**

[1)] We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary

RESULTS FRAMEWORK 2022–2024

Outcome 3	Indicators	Results 2022						Results 2023						Targets 2024						Results 2024						Results 2022–24
		girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	TOTAL
Outcome 3 Communities affected by crisis demonstrate improved hygiene practices and access life-saving WASH services appropriate and relevant to their immediate needs	3: # of women, girls, men and boys reached with WASH services	5,268	5,252	11,653	11,133		**33,306**	27,641	21,584	124,645	103,612		**277,482**	36,402	33,398	136,399	113,801		**320,000**	27,125	30,407	116,314	92,691		266,537	**577,325**
Output 3.1 Women, girls, men and boys are enabled to improve hygiene practices and have access to hygiene items to protect against WASH related health risks	3.1.3: % of women, girls, men and boys who report satisfaction with hygiene materials													75%					**75%**	93%					**93%**	**93%**
	3.1.4: # of women, girls, men and boys reached through hygiene promotion activities (distribution of 3 months hygiene kit)	2,984	2,976	6,483	5,085		**17,528**	1,547	1,547	3,367	2,639		**9,100**	342	338	739	581		**2,000**	482	502	2,693	1,791		**5,468**	**32,096**
Output 3.2 Women, girls, men and boys access safe, appropriate and hygienic sanitation services, including environmental sanitation (i.e. excreta management, waste management, vector control)	3.2.1: # of women, girls, men and boys with access to safe, user-friendly and gender appropriate sanitation facilities and/or services	1,262	1,258	2,151	2,742		**7,413**	202	221	780	657		**1,860**	2,200	2,000	8,600	7,200		**20,000**	839	857	5,665	4,639		**12,000**	**21,273**
Output 3.3 Women, girls, men and boys access safe, equitable and sustainable quantity of water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene	3.3.1: # of women, girls, men and boys with safe, equitable and sustainable access to a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene	1,022	1,018	1,741	2,219		**6,000**	24,801	19,816	117,037	99,669		**261,323**	34,202	31,398	127,799	106,601		**300,000**	25,644	28,882	106,140	85,256		**245,922**	**513,245**
Output 3.4 Women and girls of reproductive age, and women, girls, men and boys with incontinence, have access to appropriate hygiene supplies and WASH facilities that support their dignity and well being.	3.4.1: # of targeted women and girls of reproductive age with access to appropriate materials and information ensuring dignified menstrual hygiene management (REVISED)							1,091		2,648			**3,739**	310		980			**1,290**	104		1,151			**1,255**	**4,994**
	Women and girls of reproductive age, and women, girls, men and boys with incontinence, have access to appropriate hygiene supplies and WASH facilities that support their dignity and well being.			1,278	1,087		**2,365**			813	647		**1,460**	320	300	1,660	1,220		**3,500**	160	167	1,703	1,133		**3,163**	**6,988**

[1] We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary

RESULTS FRAMEWORK 2022–2024

Outcome 4	Indicators	Results 2022						Results 2023						Targets 2024						Results 2024						Results 2022–24
		girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	TOTAL
Outcome 4 SGBV Survivors access life-saving, specialised SGBV services appropriate and relevant to their immediate needs	4: # of survivors accessed services	25	25	35	15		**100**	458	251	3,490	454	11	**4,664**	1,920	830	2,966	482		**6,198**	999	498	9,962	511	13	**11,983**	**16,747**
Output 4.1 SGBV survivors access quality, survivor-centred and professional clinical care for sexual violence and all forms of SGBV	4.1.1: # of health care providers in referral health facilities trained on clinical management of rape									49	9		**58**												**0,**	**58,**
Output 4.2 SGBV survivors safely access quality, survivor-centred mental health and psychosocial support focused on healing, empowerment and recovery	4.2.1: # of women, girls, men and boys using MHPSS services (only referal to specialised services)	25	25	35	15		**100**	5	3	271	22		**301**	668	130	666	54		**1,518**	77	38	619	38	3	**775**	**1,176**
	4.2.3: # of GBV staff trained to provide quality, age-appropriate, focused psychosocial support to women and girls						**0**			150	11		**161**			0	0		**0**			68			**68**	**229**
	4.3.1: # of GBV caseworkers trained on quality GBV case management services						**0**			61	41		**102**			102	18		**120**			104	21		**125**	**227**
	4.3.2: % of survivors (who completed feedback survey) who are satisfied with the case management services provided	88%					**88%**	89%					**89%**	80%					**80%**	97%					**97%**	**97%**
	4.3.3: % of locations with updated operational referral pathways (linking multisectoral services)	100%					**100%**	89%					**89%**	80%					**80%**	100%					**100%**	**100%**
	4.3.4: # of women and girls using women and girls' safe spaces to meet their needs (e.g. attending one cycle of recreational /psychosocial sessions)	33		80			**113**	90		1,656			**1,746**	500		1,200			**1,700**	873	204	9,007	63		**10,147**	**12,006**
	4.3.5: # of women and girls receive dignity kits, and/or cash and voucher assistance to reduce GBV risk and promote safety, and dignity and skills training	190		410			**600**	305		1,620			**1,925**	540		1,260			**1,800**	182		4,973			**5,155**	**7,680**
Output 4.4 SGBV programming addresses harmful social norms and systemic gender inequality and informs communities about available services	4.4.1: # of GBV programme staff, including volunteers and community workers, trained on GBV guiding principles and GBV Core Package			1	1		**2**			195	112		**307**			219	40		**259**			490	89		**579**	**888**
	4.4.2: # of women, girls, men and boys reached through outreach activities	104	106	919	293		1,422	1,681	1,103	17,388	4,299		24,471	7,040	1,850	5,270	750		14,910	1,433	698	14,213	602	5	16,951	42,844
Output 4.5 (Ukraine response specific)	4.5.1: # of women, girls, men and boys receiving psychosocial care							453	248	3,219	432	11	**4,363**	1,252	700	2,300	428		**4,680**	922	460	9,343	473	10	**11,208**	**15,571**
	4.5.2: # of staff members trained on providing quality, age appropriate, focused psychosocial support to women, girls, men and boys									168	65		**233**			238	187		**425**			664	82		**746,**	**979**

[1] We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary

RESULTS FRAMEWORK 2022–2024

Outcome 6	Indicators	Results 2022						Results 2023						Targets 2024						Results 2024						Results 2022–24
		girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	TOTAL
Outcome 6 Enhanced protection of children and young people in situations of crisis and conflict	6: # of children and young people reached							102	77				**179**													**179**
Output 6.2 Children are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence	6.2.1: # of children and young people accessing community-supported child-friendly spaces							102	77				**179**													**179**
Output 6.4 Enhanced protection of women and children who are at risk of human trafficking, and organised prostitution	6.4.1: # of community awareness raising sessions focusing on prevention of trafficking							10					**10**													**10**

Outcome 7	Indicators	Results 2022						Results 2023						Targets 2024						Results 2024						Results 2022–24
		girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	girls 0–17 yrs	boys 0–17 yrs	women 18+	men 18+	non-binary [1]	TOTAL	TOTAL
Outcome 7 NCA's humanitarian response operations are environmentally sustainable and in line with humanitarian and accountability principles.	7: % of humanitarian responses that have applied the Core Humanitarian Standards	100%					**100%**	100%					**100%**							100%					**100%**	**100%**
Output 7.3 NCA's humanitarian operations are compliant with financial and procurement policies and guidelines	7.3.1: # of NCA and partner staff trained on financial management, procurement policies, human resource management, and field-based accountable monitoring						**0** [2]			25	26		**51**									169	85		**254**	**305**

[1] We have included a column for persons identifying as non-binary

[2] We do not have the information specific for Ukraine from 2022

Vasyl in the village Partizanske. NCA has renovated the gas system for heating and cooking. Photo: Håvard Bjelland/ Norwegian Church Aid

TOGETHER FOR A JUST WORLD

Norwegian Church Aid works to save lives, build resilience and seek justice. Our support is provided unconditionally with no intention of influencing anyone's religious affiliation.

Norwegian Church Aid is a member of the ACT Alliance, one of the world's largest humanitarian coalitions. Together, we work throughout the world to create positive and sustainable change.

To save lives, build resilience and seek justice is, for us, faith in action.

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