

2024



ANNUAL REPORT



INTERNATIONAL
RENAISSANCE
FOUNDATION



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Introductory remarks

The Great War brought about significant changes to the coordinate system of Ukrainian society. In an unequal confrontation with a powerful aggressor, survival becomes the number one priority. At the same time, survival is understood not only as physical self-preservation, but also as defending the essence that gives meaning to our lives and actions. At the International Renaissance Foundation, we believe that this core essence is responsible freedom – an inherent quality of the Ukrainian people. The manifestation of this essence in the socio-political sphere is democratic governance, transparency, and citizens' access to decision-making and implementation processes. Only such access generates proper trust and a sense of involvement in the state as a common cause. Without this, the war cannot be won.

The global events of 2024 have shown that democracy and freedom cannot be taken for granted, even in countries with long-standing democratic traditions. Freedom must be defended continuously; otherwise, sooner or later, it will be threatened. Even in relatively peaceful times, populists and potential dictators can open the door to hatred and unfreedom by breaking the moral compass of society.

But we still have to secure a peaceful time. In times of war, when faced with an existential challenge, it is easier to see what is essential and focus on what is most necessary.

We supported the most viable and self-sustaining forms of civic activism and self-organisation, which are helping Ukraine survive. These manifestations



Oleksandr Sushko

The International Renaissance Foundation's Executive Director

are heterogeneous and unequal, but they all represent true examples of civic initiative, which is the basis of a vibrant democracy. We have built bridges between different parts of civil society, between the military and civilians, between the public and the government (including at the highest political level) – and gained invaluable new experience. We have sought to attract new major donors to support Ukrainian civil society initiatives, and we have succeeded.

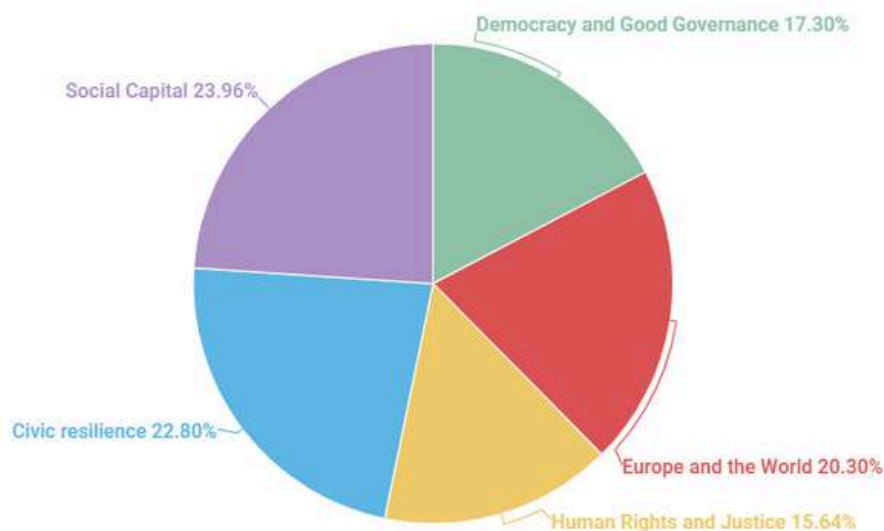
This publication is about our multifaceted experience of interacting with dynamic Ukrainian civil society and building support and partnerships. The wealth of content reflects the diversity and creativity of the people we have been fortunate enough to meet during these turbulent years.

In these dark and bright times, our main message, which we convey through our long-standing competition for veteran and volunteer initiatives, is 'Keep the line'!

Numbers of the year

In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation continued to provide financial support to civil society in Ukraine. The total funding amounted to UAH 592.6 million. These funds enabled the implementation of 427 projects aimed at promoting democracy, protecting human rights, supporting reforms, strengthening community resilience, and addressing other important issues.

The Foundation's partners include 280 organisations from across the country that received financial assistance and expert support. This level of activity highlights the Foundation's pivotal role in bolstering the civil sector during the war.



592,6
mln UAH

of funding for civil
society in 2024.

427
projects

were supported
by Foundation in
2024

280
organisations

were supported
by Foundation in
2024

97
organisations

received funds from
the Foundation for
the first time



Regular support in action: Alexander Soros visited Ukraine twice in 2024.

In 2024, Alexander Soros, the Chairman of the Open Society Foundations, paid two working visits to Ukraine, in May and August. These visits were a clear indication of his ongoing support for Ukraine during the war and his commitment to working with Ukrainian civil society. During each visit, Soros met with government officials, the President's Office, diplomats, and experts to discuss key issues such as resilience, reform, and international support.

In May, Soros discussed Ukraine's economic resilience, ways to support businesses, and the consequences of energy infrastructure being shelled with First Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko and Energy Minister Herman Galushchenko, respectively. Oleksiy Kuleba, the Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, spoke about the security situation in the regions on the front line and the next steps in the process of decentralisation. Conversations with Andriy Yermak focused on preparations for the Global Peace Summit and the implementation of the Bring Kids Back UA initiative.

Conversations with Andriy Yermak focused on preparations for the Global Peace Summit and the implementation of the Bring Kids Back UA initiative. During his visit in August, Soros met with Andriy Yermak again, focusing on energy and food security, as well as the release of prisoners and deportees. EU Ambassador Katarina Mathernova also participated in the discussion, which focused on Ukraine's path to European integration, reforms, and the European Union's support.





Impulse: a programme designed to develop civil society in regions affected by war

In partnership with the East Europe Foundation and with the support of the governments of Norway and Sweden, the International Renaissance Foundation has launched a new multi-year programme to strengthen Ukraine's civil society. The programme aims to support over 100 local organisations working with veterans, internally displaced persons, and young people in affected regions. Its main objective is to equip these organisations with the tools, knowledge and resources necessary for them to actively participate in the restoration of the state and the establishment of a democratic, inclusive society.

The programme focuses on three key areas: developing the organisational capacity of civic initiatives, supporting sustainable, inclusive projects on the ground and strengthening the advocacy role of civil society in implementing reforms. As part of the programme, organisations will be able to access training and grants, join forums and internship schemes, and use online tools to develop their work.

Support tools include the Civil Society Sustainability Index, an online course on the 'Zrozumilo!' platform, small grants for projects focusing on equality, ecology, and inclusion, and the establishment of regional civic activity centres. Particular attention is paid to transparency, environmental friendliness, and gender mainstreaming in organisations' work.

The programme, which is intended to provide a new impetus for strengthening the civil society sector in the context of war and recovery, will run until 2027. The Foundation and its partners believe that a robust civil society is essential for the future democracy and sustainability of Ukraine.

The Foundation and the EU have launched a new three-year project aimed at strengthening civil society on the road to EU membership.



In partnership with the European Union, the International Renaissance Foundation has launched a new three-year project, 'Acceding to the EU Together: Strengthening the Role of Civil Society in Ukraine's Accession to the EU'. The project has a total budget of more than EUR 6 million, most of which will be used to provide grant support to Ukrainian NGOs. This is the third large-scale joint project within the framework of the partnership between the Foundation and the EU Delegation to Ukraine.

The project aims to provide Ukrainian civil society with greater opportunities to influence EU accession negotiations, contribute to public policy reform, and reinforce democratic practices. Particular emphasis is placed on engaging regional initiatives and reinforcing the European integration dimension at a local level.

At least 150 projects are set to receive support through open calls for proposals, training events, networking opportunities, conferences, information campaigns and annual public opinion polls. A separate communication initiative is also being developed to help more Ukrainians understand the essence and benefits of European integration.

The project aims not only to support individual initiatives, but also to strengthen the institutional capacity of the public sector, create sustainable partnerships and ensure active participation of citizens in the transformation processes that bring Ukraine closer to EU membership.

The irreversibility of democratic development

In 2024, our focus was on supporting the development of local democracy, political competition and civic participation, with a particular emphasis on inclusive solutions and involving different groups. We strengthened cooperation between citizens and local authorities, expanded access to resources and opportunities, and supported initiatives that ensure democratic development is irreversible. We prioritise communities that uphold trust, participation and openness in the face of war, using this as a foundation for recovery and a sustainable future.



Why is it important?

The irreversibility of democratic development guarantees stability and public trust in the state, as well as society's ability to withstand internal and external challenges. When people have the means to influence decisions, feel that their voices are being heard and see change happening, they have more faith in each other and in institutions.

In times of war, it is important to preserve and strengthen democracy: to ensure that communities remain united and involved in political life, and that the authorities remain accountable despite the pressure. This forms the basis for recovery, justice, and future development of the country.

Our priorities



Strengthening Local Democracy

Supporting residents' participation in decision-making and the development of self-government.



Inclusive Solutions

Involving vulnerable and marginalised groups in the process.



Political Competition

Promoting transparency and ensuring a level playing field for all.



Civic Participation

Encouraging people to play an active role in public life.



Access to the opportunities

Strengthening the capacity of communities and organisations to influence change.



Establishing a dialogue between the government and civil society

Effective interaction between civil society initiatives and government agencies is essential for strengthening Ukraine's resilience. In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation became a platform for open dialogue, enabling civil society representatives to interact directly with heads of state institutions, advocate important initiatives, and influence decision-making processes.

The Foundation organised a series of meetings between civil society representatives and ministers from the Cabinet of Ministers and officials from the Presidential Office. These meetings covered defence, diplomacy, energy and many other issues.

One example of such interaction was organising a meeting with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in October 2024. During the meeting, civic leaders discussed the role of civil society in strengthening international support for Ukraine and mobilising society to secure victory. Issues raised by the participants included human rights, international advocacy, and the role of civil society organisations in strengthening national cohesion.





Developing local democracy

In 2024, the Foundation provided systematic support for the development of local democracy, which forms the basis for sustainable recovery, citizen participation, and Ukraine's integration into the EU. We invested in training and the exchange of experience, as well as the development of project-based thinking and the strengthening of communities' capacity to solve problems independently. Through our partnerships with local governments, universities and NGOs, we supported dozens of initiatives that empowered communities to become more active, open and adaptable.

Local communities are learning about economic development.

As part of the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities project, communities in the Lviv region participated in the Local Economic Development Tools training programme. Twelve practical projects were developed, particularly in the areas of business support, tourism, communal property management and digitalisation.



A collection of success stories

As part of the Civil Society for Democratisation initiative, a collection of success stories from 25 regions was published. The winning projects covered a variety of topics, ranging from local development to advocating for the rights of vulnerable groups, and showcased the transformative power of civic action during times of war.

КНИГА ІСТОРІЙ УСПІХУ

Громадськість за
демократизацію

Fundraising and working with donors

With the support of the Foundation, an offline 'Education course' was held in Lviv for city council and utility company employees. Participants learned how to submit project applications, prepare pitches and present ideas to international donors. This event helped to develop project management and international cooperation skills at a local level.



Dialogue on Recovery in Eastern Ukraine

As part of the project 'Engaging the public in eastern Ukraine in the restoration of their communities', the Association for Renaissance and Development, in partnership with a number of organisations, held a series of discussions. During a roundtable discussion in August 2024, participants from the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts discussed the challenges posed by the occupation, the relocation of businesses, and the recovery of the local economy. Yulia Volodchenko, an activist, stressed the importance of maintaining communication between local authorities and entrepreneurs, and emphasised the role of civil society as an intermediary in this process.



Regional initiatives for developing local democracy

With the support of the local EMB, a forum on 'Effective Tools for Cooperation between the Public and the Authorities' was held in Zaporizhzhya, with more than 80 civil society activists in attendance. Topics discussed by the organisers included citizen participation in developing the National Strategy for Civil Society Development, supporting IDPs and veterans, and strengthening public participation in decision-making.



Competitions to Support Local Democracy: Community involvement in recovery and participation in decision-making



Resilience, recovery and development of territorial communities

The competition aimed to support initiatives that promote transparent and sustainable community recovery through public involvement. Of the 112 project proposals we received, 13 were supported, including those from the Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Sumy, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zaporizhzhya and Cherkasy regions.

The supported projects covered a wide range of issues, including developing recovery strategies, creating civic platforms, engaging residents in planning, introducing anti-corruption tools, fostering horizontal cooperation between communities and implementing environmentally friendly solutions. For instance, the Ecology-Law-Human NGO is developing a green recovery model, while the Better Regulation Delivery Office NGO is using economic modelling to support the development of the Borodyanska community.

Promoting the development and use of public participation forms.

The second competition aimed to support organisations developing tools for direct democracy, such as general meetings, local initiatives, public hearings, community centres, and advisory councils. Projects in villages, towns and small cities were given preference, as were those that implemented new participatory practices in cooperation with local authorities.

The 13 winners received support for projects to develop the regulatory framework, advocacy, public education, and inclusion of vulnerable groups in participation processes. They include Dzherela, which introduces participation tools for people with intellectual disabilities in Kyiv, Ecosense, which creates a Recovery Council in Zaporizhzhya, and the Centre for Civic Initiatives Ltava, which develops local democracy in Poltava Oblast.

The resilience of Ukrainians in times of war



Social Cohesion in Times of War: What Unites Ukrainian Communities

In September 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation, together with Ipsos, presented a study of social cohesion in Ukrainian communities. Its goal is to understand how different vulnerable groups coexist in times of war: IDPs, veterans, military families, and affected civilians.

The survey covered 51 communities from 14 regions. The results showed that 45% of Ukrainians have a high level of cohesion, while 33% have a low level. The highest level was recorded in the rear and the lowest near the front. Trust in the Armed Forces, volunteers and local authorities are the main drivers of cohesion, while corruption and distrust in state institutions are the main threats.

This research will help us to plan our work with communities more effectively, build trust, avoid social divisions, and find ways to promote mutual understanding. According to Ksenia Shapoval, Director of the Civilian Resilience Programme, the most important thing is to prevent our society from becoming divided by conflict after victory.



For the first time, Ukrainian communities assessed their resilience to military challenges

In 2024, the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities and the International Renaissance Foundation conducted a study examining community resilience in the face of war. The survey covered over 2,600 respondents from 12 communities across seven regions. The researchers identified the most vulnerable social groups, the components of resilience that were lacking, and the impact of trust in local authorities on crisis preparedness. This marked the beginning of the development of a methodology for measuring community resilience nationally.



Ensuring the sustainability of the state in 2024: the results of the Good Governance Forum

In February, Kyiv hosted the Good Governance Forum, 'Ukraine 2024: Dimensions of Resilience'. The event brought together representatives from the fields of defence, business, civil society, culture, and education. Participants discussed topics such as comprehensive resource mobilisation, transitional justice, veteran policy, and the role of business in strengthening the economy. The forum took the form of an open dialogue, in which everyone was able to outline their vision for a sustainable and just Ukraine. It was organised with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the International Renaissance Foundation.

Methodologies without data: why local communities struggle to set priorities

New Energy NGO analysed how Ukrainian communities prioritise reconstruction. The study compared the state's approach with the alternative methodology from TIU, as well as the DREAM digital system. The study's results showed that: – DREAM does not contain most of the necessary data; 55% of the information required by the state methodology is missing altogether. Experts recommend updating the system and automating project evaluation to minimise the risk of corruption. This study was conducted with the support of the Foundation as part of a project with the Krasnopilska community.

How can local communities measure their own level of cohesion?

Together with the Foundation, the Institute of Civil Society has prepared methodological recommendations for communities that wish to assess their level of cohesion. Based on research conducted in two communities, the authors have created an accessible tool that enables local authorities to identify the factors that unite or divide residents. These results will inform policies that address local needs and promote social stability.





Open Government and Integrity

In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation continued its systematic work to combat and prevent corruption, recognising it as one of the key challenges to Ukraine's sustainable development. At a time when public trust is of the utmost importance, the Foundation's activities in this area help to not only detect corruption, but also strengthen the state's institutional capacity by promoting the principles of integrity, openness, and good governance.

Systematic monitoring of government openness

In 2023, the CHESNO Movement conducted a series of studies with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation that systematically demonstrated the openness and accountability of Ukrainian authorities at different levels. The focus was on local councils, parliamentary committees, and electronic petitions as a means by which citizens can interact with the state.

The monitoring of the openness of regional and city councils showed that despite the martial law, most of them demonstrate positive dynamics. The highest scores were given to councils in Vinnytsia, Rivne, Ternopil, Odesa, and Volyn. At the same time, some councils, such as Zaporizhzhya regional and city councils, remain virtually closed to citizens. Problems with the publication of documents, meeting announcements, or minutes – all of this complicates public control and weakens trust in the authorities.



Parliamentary committees have also become more open in their work: most have updated their websites, resumed broadcasts, and introduced new, convenient communication formats. Some committees, such as those focusing on European integration, anti-corruption policy, energy or social policy, have gone above and beyond the basic requirements. However, some still do not publish meeting materials.

These studies are not just statistics. They demonstrate where the authorities are willing to engage in dialogue and where they remain closed to society. At the same time, they help to establish practical pathways towards greater transparency and accountability.

School of Anti-Corruption: a new wave of public investigators

In January 2024, the first edition of the Anti-Corruption School took place – 23 participants from 20 cities of Ukraine became part of the community of anti-corruption investigators. Among them are military officers, journalists, lawyers, activists and volunteers. They received the necessary knowledge and tools to expose corruption and control the spending of public funds.

The project was implemented by five civil society organisations – IZI, StateWatch, CHESNO, FiscalCentre and Anti-Corruption Headquarters – with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. In February, the graduates started their first investigations in their regions.



Assessment of the work of the State Agency for Recovery

In June 2024, the Anti-Corruption Headquarters presented the results of their monitoring of the State Agency for Recovery's work, with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The main conclusion was that reconstruction should be transparent and under public control, even in times of war. With the Foundation's support, the Agency established the Transparency Council, a platform for communication between citizens and officials. Its members include media professionals, activists and bloggers who have acquired the knowledge necessary to monitor budget spending.

Protecting Whistleblowers: A Course for Change

In July, Kyiv hosted the fourth annual 'Whistleblowers of Corruption in Ukraine' conference, which is traditionally supported by the International Renaissance Foundation. The event brought together over 80 participants, including government agency and Armed Forces representatives, anti-corruption NGO members, and international experts.



Not only did the conference outline key challenges, it also launched work on a roadmap for a future comprehensive law on whistleblower protection. This was the first time that the issues facing military whistleblowers and how to protect them had been discussed publicly. This event strengthened public confidence in Ukraine's anti-corruption system.



Budget analysis of communities under occupation

In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation supported the implementation of the analytical project Budgets in Exile, which aimed to study budget processes in communities in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts that were temporarily occupied after the full-scale invasion began.

The project was carried out by the civic partnership 'For Transparent Local Budgets!' in collaboration with the NGO 'Siverskyi Donets Crisis Media Centre'. The project aimed to analyse how public funds, particularly in the healthcare sector, were allocated and spent in communities that had lost physical control over their territory.

The study identified 15 healthcare facilities operating in relocation that had entered into 21 valid contracts with the National Health Service Ukraine (NHSU) and had provided services worth over UAH 142 million. Although all of these facilities were officially registered in the occupied territories, they actually operated in other regions of Ukraine.

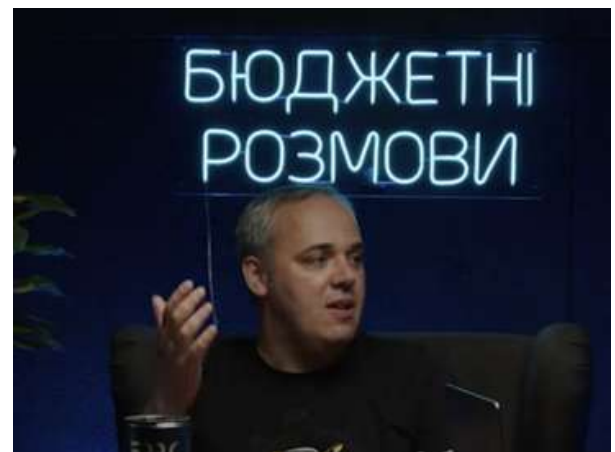


'Budget Talks': a podcast about the money issues that affect us all.

In 2024, the Centre for Fiscal Policy Research launched the Budget Talks podcast, which offers simple yet in-depth conversations about public finances. The podcast helps listeners to better understand how the state budget works, how our taxes are spent, and why this matters. The podcast was created with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

Co-hosts Victor Maziarchuk (Chairman of the Centre) and Roman Slobodian (public finance expert) discuss topical issues with ministers, MPs, experts, and the military. Topics covered include social policy, procurement, decentralisation, the cost of the war and its financing.

The podcast features real stories, analytics, and explanations of complex issues in simple terms. Guests have included Daryna Marchak, Oleksandr Solontai, Nadiya Bihun, Yaroslav Zheleznyak and Oleksandr Yabchanka. Each episode is not just a conversation about numbers, but also about the meanings behind them. You can listen to the podcast on audio platforms or watch it on YouTube. It is ideal for anyone who wants to understand how the country functions in difficult times.



Truth, security and trust: supporting information policy



In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation continued to support initiatives promoting the development of independent media, information security, and deeper dialogue between government, society, and journalists. Its work focuses on fostering critical thinking, combatting disinformation, and creating local content that addresses the genuine needs of communities.

‘Editorial Office’: a film and discussion about the power of local media.

The documentary-fiction film ‘Editorial Office’, directed by Roman Bondarchuk, provided an opportunity to discuss the state of local media in the context of war. Special screenings of the film were held in ten cities across Ukraine, followed by public discussions with journalists, editors, and experts. The film focuses on the struggle for truth in the face of fake news, pressure and disinformation. Audiences recognised their own cities in the film, and post-screening discussions became platforms for sharing experiences. The project was supported by the Foundation in collaboration with USAID.



Dialogue between government, media and civil society

The roundtable, organised by the Aspen Institute Kyiv, featured a closed discussion between government representatives, members of the media and civil society, and communication experts. Participants sought to strike a balance between security restrictions imposed during martial law and the need for openness in information sharing. The key question was how to maintain trust in Ukraine's information policy both domestically and internationally. The event was supported by the Foundation in partnership with the EU.



‘Information Security of Bessarabia’: Voices from the South

In August, the Institute for Central European Strategy held a public discussion in Odesa on the state of the information environment in the southern part of the Odesa region. The discussion covered the isolation of Budzhak communities from all-Ukrainian media, the dominance of Russian-language content, and the influence of foreign broadcasters. Participants emphasised the need for Ukrainian-language content, educational initiatives, and cultural event support in the region.



Voices of the Frontline: Radio Essays from the Military

The Voices of the Frontline project, created by the Radio Kultura team, features authentic accounts of Ukrainian soldiers, both male and female. They voiced their own essays about their experiences of war, including themes of fear, courage, love and loss. The radio essays were created in challenging circumstances: the texts were written on the front line, edited remotely, recorded in a studio and converted into an audio format. The project is changing how society views veterans.



‘Anti-Panic Defence’

The Anti-Panic Defence project is a series of radio programmes on Radio Culture that analysed fake news, manipulation and information attacks spread during the war. A team of journalists and psychologists examined each case from the point of view of its impact on consciousness and explained how not to succumb to panic. Thanks to its in-depth analysis and accessible presentation, the project became popular among listeners and won the Ivan Franko Award in the category ‘Best Work in Radio Broadcasting.’ The project was supported by the International Renaissance Foundation.



Systemic changes to the criminal justice system.



The International Renaissance Foundation is working systematically to develop the criminal justice system in Ukraine. This work focuses on human rights, accountability, integrity and humanity at every stage of the process, from initial police contact to court sentencing. By supporting the implementation of innovative solutions and facilitating discussion and training on changes, the Foundation and its partners are building a fairer and more effective law enforcement system in the context of war and the country's transformation.

Custody Records in Zaporizhzhya



In October 2024, the Custody Records system, which electronically records actions involving detainees, was launched at the Zaporizhzhya District Police Department. This is an important step towards guaranteeing human rights and ensuring the transparency of police actions. Video recording and monitoring of all stages of interaction with detainees reduces the risk of abuse and fosters trust in law enforcement. The project was implemented with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.



Custody Records in Irpin



Following the restoration of the war-ravaged police station in Irpin, the Custody Records system was implemented. This represents not just a rebuild, but a reinvention of the department's work according to new, people-centred standards. The system records every step, from arrest to detention, to ensure the safety of detainees and police officers alike. It is another step towards justice, where reliable safeguards against violations are provided by procedures and control.



Training of intern prosecutors

In July, the initial training for trainee prosecutors began at the Prosecutors' Training Centre of Ukraine. One of the first modules is the 'Professional Ethics of a Prosecutor' course, which was developed by the Centre of Policy and Legal Reform and JustGroup with the support of the Foundation. The training focuses on integrity, responsibility and self-governance, equipping a new generation of prosecutors to serve the public on the basis of ethical principles and the rule of law.



AI in Justice: The First Large-Scale Study in Ukraine

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and the European Union, the Dnistrianskyi Centre conducted a study on the potential of using artificial intelligence (AI) in the criminal justice sector. This study marks the first time that data has been collected on how judges, prosecutors, lawyers and other legal professionals assess the prospects, risks and challenges of incorporating AI into their work. Particular attention was paid to how technology could assist the justice system, from document preparation to analytics and decision-making.



How to restore the legal profession after de-occupation

In January 2024, the challenges of rebuilding the legal profession in liberated areas were discussed. Experts, human rights defenders and lawyers debated the potential liability of lawyers who had practised under occupation, as well as the necessity of impartial mechanisms to evaluate their activities. The ZMINA Human Rights Centre organised the event with the support of the Foundation and the EU.



A digital shield for citizens: the Cyber Brama project website.

The Cyber Brama project website was launched in April 2024 to raise public awareness of cybersecurity. The site offers practical advice on how to behave safely online, explaining how to protect yourself from fraud, cyberbullying, fake news and propaganda. There are also separate sections devoted to cybersecurity in education, everyday life, and during war. The project is a collaboration between the cyber police, the NGO MINZMIN, EUAM, Yedynka, the EU and the International Renaissance Foundation.



The platform also includes a cyber news section, a glossary of key terms, and a social media and apps guide. Citizens can report cyber threats directly via the website. What makes the project unique is its practical focus: the resource has been adapted for a wide audience and has already attracted more than 300,000 people. It forms part of Ukraine's broader digital resilience strategy, which aims to counter hostile IPSO and destructive online influences.



JustConf2024 Conference

In November 2024, Kyiv hosted the 'JustConf2024: Common Sense in Action', bringing together criminal justice practitioners, human rights defenders, academics, and civil servants to discuss challenges within the justice system and share innovative ideas. The focus was on humanity in criminal proceedings, transparency, the role of data and digital tools in the justice system, the challenges of transitional justice, and professional ethics. Particular emphasis was placed on how values, empathy and common sense should inform the future model of Ukrainian justice in the context of, and following, the war.



The conference provided a platform for considering new approaches, ranging from data visualisation to increase trust in the system, to discussions about the limits of criminalising activities during the occupation. Participants discussed ways to make the system fairer, such as independent expertise and public accounting of the costs of criminal proceedings.



Resilience of civil society organisations



In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation provided consistent support for projects focused on the institutional development, resource recovery, and resilience of civil society organisations across Ukraine. At a time when the country was still experiencing full-scale war, it was crucial to support the civil sector in retaining its teams and rethinking its role in the country's post-war recovery and democratic development.

NGO Sustainability Index

In September 2024, the Ukrainian Centre for Independent Political Research presented the updated 2023 Civil Society Sustainability Index, supported by the International Renaissance Foundation. This study is a continuation of the USAID international initiative and allows for a comprehensive assessment of the state of NGO development in Ukraine. It identifies strengths and threats and formulates a vision for future steps.

The index considers the legal environment, organisational capacity, financial sustainability, advocacy potential, public image and service delivery capacity.



Financial advice for NGOs

In March, the Institute of Leadership and Management at the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) held a series of free online consultations for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on accounting and financial reporting. Expert Olha Ivankiv helped participants to understand the complexities of financial management, and based on the most common enquiries, she prepared an open webinar.

Implemented as part of the On the Cloud initiative with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, this project demonstrated the relevance of financial literacy for the sector. The simple, clear format of the consultations helped dozens of organisations better navigate reporting and taxation rules – a critical skill for effective fund management in times of instability.

Mentoring programme for NGOs from Warm City

In 2024, the Warm City civic platform implemented a large-scale mentoring programme for civic, charitable and youth organisations from all over Ukraine, with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. This programme was developed as a practical extension of Warm City's online course on Prometheus, which provided a valuable opportunity for organisations seeking systemic development.



Participation in the programme was free of charge and consisted of two stages. The first stage was a three-day offline school in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, where participants could communicate with the Warm City team in person and take part in intensive workshops on institutional development.

The second stage was long-term mentoring, which lasted until the end of August. Participants worked with a mentor to set and achieve individual goals. Online lectures with leading public sector experts were also held during this time, enabling participants to combine in-depth practice with up-to-date knowledge.

Winter Recovery School for sector leaders

The third Winter School of Recovery took place in February 2024, organised by the UCU Institute of Leadership and Management with the support of the Foundation. The programme, which took place in the picturesque city of Yaremche, combined training, experience exchange and psychological support practices. The school was designed for leaders who keep their organisations afloat in times of war and support other communities.

Participants worked on topics such as team communication, restoring internal resources, leadership in a crisis and mental health. The school became a place not only for learning, but also for rejuvenation, fostering trust, and providing inspiration. The Foundation covered all costs, enabling organisations with limited resources to participate.



The Ministry of Defence and the public: exploring the reform of the defence sector in times of war

In June 2024, the conference 'The Ministry of Defence and Civil Society Partnership: Cooperation, Achievements, Challenges' took place in Kyiv. Organised with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative, the event provided a platform for dialogue between the Ministry of Defence, civil society organisations, and international partners. Participants discussed the progress of reforms in the defence sector, as well as joint steps to strengthen democratic civilian control over the army.

The First Deputy Minister of Defence, Ivan Havryliuk, emphasised that Ukraine must continue to implement reforms even in the midst of war, as this is necessary for Euro-Atlantic integration and for strengthening its defence capabilities. His counterpart Stanislav Haider emphasised that effective transformation can only be achieved through systematic dialogue between the government and civil society, as well as collaborative policy development.

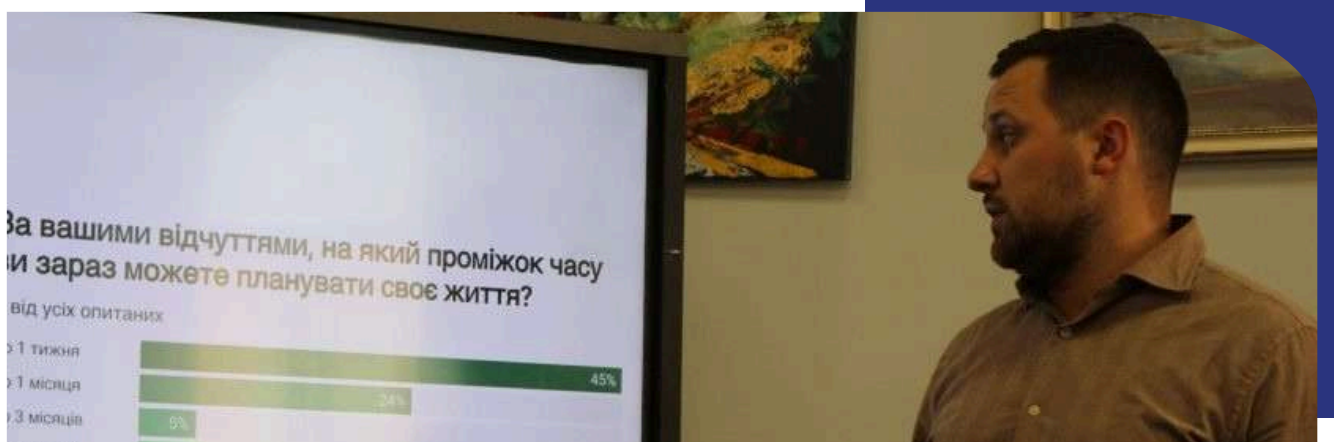


The conference covered several key topics, including transparency in resource management, civil service development, and a new personnel policy. Yuriy Dzhyhyr presented steps to minimise political influence on the Ministry of Defence's internal audit, and Liudmyla Darahan reported that, following the implementation of the Law on National Security, over 80% of the ministry's employees had become civilians. Natalia Kalmykova, in turn, spoke about launching recruitment centres and changing approaches to military appointments.



Particular attention was paid to digitalisation as both a component of the reform and a prerequisite for gaining a technological advantage on the battlefield. Kateryna Chernohorenko revealed that millions of Ukrainians have already used the Reserve+ app, and a new Army+ app is set to launch soon to streamline daily administrative tasks within the army. These steps are all part of a broader process to modernise, democratise and make the army more accountable.

Surveys as a Tool for Understanding: How can communities better hear their people?



In 2024, the Foundation funded a number of sociological surveys to help communities better understand the needs, moods and concerns of their residents, enabling them to take specific action in response. These surveys formed the basis for dialogue between the authorities and citizens, enabling the development of policies and solutions based on real data.

Voice of Odesa: the mood of the big city

As part of the 'Communities in Action: Everyone's Voice Counts', the NGO Culture of Democracy conducted a large-scale survey in Odesa. Over 1,000 residents took part in the survey. The results revealed an increase in anxiety, anger, and depression, as well as hope for change. The data also revealed a high level of informal civic engagement, such as volunteering, making donations and signing petitions. This enabled the city authorities to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by Odesa residents and take these sentiments into account in their work.



Security as a basis for trust: three communities

As part of the 'Sense of Security, Social Cohesion and Dialogue Practices' project, implemented by the Legal Development Network, a survey was conducted in the communities of Kolomyia, Turbivka and Shevchenkove. The research data enabled local teams to implement various interventions, including health awareness campaigns, media literacy and anti-fraud training, the creation of youth spaces, the development of the employment system, and support for veterans. These actions responded to requests from the community and increased trust in local authorities.





Responsibility Award: recognising partnerships that are transforming Ukraine.

The International Renaissance Foundation is a partner of the Responsibility Prize, an annual initiative that recognises strong partnerships between civil society organisations, the government, the media, businesses, and other sectors.

For the third time, the Prize brought together examples of responsible interaction that emerged in the context of a full-scale war, ranging from supporting the army to preserving historical memory and community development. Winners included Ukraïner with its Brave Cities project, Docudays with its War Archive and Zaloga Chornomortsy with its TT Shelter initiative.

The award is organised by the Bohdan Hawrylyshyn Family Foundation, with institutional and financial support provided by the International Renaissance Foundation. This collaboration highlights the shared commitment to fostering a culture of responsible partnership, where change is evident not only in reports but also in people's lives.



Equal opportunities for victims of war

In 2024, our work focused on ensuring that all those affected by the war had equal opportunities in life, recovery and development. This included internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, families of the deceased or missing persons, individuals whose homes were destroyed and communities that had experienced conflict. We supported the deinstitutionalisation process, the development of social services and mental health services, and the restoration of human capital. We helped communities find new ways to promote inclusion, mutual support, and a dignified life in the aftermath of war.



Why is this important?

Providing equal opportunities for all those affected by the war is essential for achieving a just and sustainable recovery. The impact of war on individuals can vary greatly: some may lose their homes, while others may lose their loved ones, their health, or their ability to work.

Public policies often exclude the most vulnerable groups, such as internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, families of the dead or missing, children in institutions, and survivors of community conflicts.

This concerns dignity, justice, and equal access to support and opportunities.

Our priorities



Support for IDPs

Ensuring that internally displaced persons can adapt and be fully included in the life of host communities.



Inclusion of vulnerable groups

Supporting people with disabilities, the families of those who have died or gone missing, and children in institutions.



Deinstitutionalisation

The development of community-based services as an alternative to residential institutions for both children and adults.



Mental health

Increasing access to psychological support and developing communities of practice.



Conflict resolution

Supporting dialogue within communities to reduce tensions and develop a culture of peaceful coexistence.



Working with internally displaced persons

The war has forced millions of Ukrainians to flee their homes and begin new lives in other parts of the country. Providing decent conditions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) is a task that is both humanitarian and strategic. This involves not only meeting basic needs, but also fully including IDPs in economic, social and political life. The resilience of Ukrainian society today, and the country's recovery tomorrow, depend on this

Strengthening the voice of IDPs in decision-making processes

In August 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation announced a competition to support initiatives that promote the involvement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in community decision-making. This is an important part of civic integration, helping IDPs to adapt to new living conditions and feel involved in local development. The competition formed part of the Civic Resilience programme, which aims to ensure that communities are open to the needs of all residents.

The competition received 60 applications from various regions of Ukraine. Nine winners were selected based on the results of the evaluation – organisations that received funding to implement their projects. These include initiatives from the Vinnytsya, Poltava, Kirovohrad and Cherkasy regions, as well as the Donetsk region and the city of Kyiv. They will work on economic projects.

'Communities for All': Nine Initiatives that Strengthen the Voice of IDPs in Decision-Making

The projects will help internally displaced Ukrainians integrate more easily into their new communities, influence decision-making processes, and establish a lasting connection with their place of residence. They will also promote cohesion within communities and strengthen local democracy. In the near future, the Foundation will start working with the winning organisations to launch the projects.





Results of the Rokady project: legal support and training for communities

From July 2023 to April 2024, the Rockada Charitable Foundation implemented a comprehensive legal aid and community training project, funded by the International Renaissance Foundation. The project focused on internally displaced persons and communities in eight western regions of Ukraine. The foundation's lawyers provided 2,700 consultations and supported complex cases involving the restoration of documents, the registration of war victim status, pension recalculations, and social benefits.

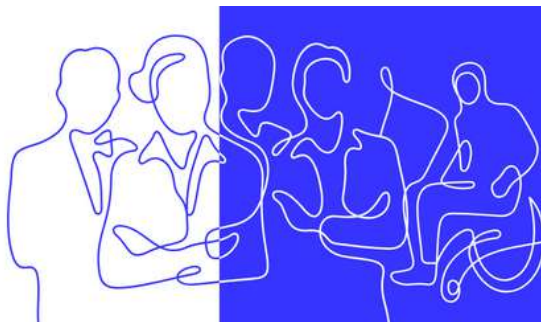


Over 2,000 participants took part in the educational component of the project. A total of 153 training sessions, planning meetings and workshops on grant writing, communications and project management were delivered to eight dozen communities and IDP councils. As a result of this training, over 50 grant applications were submitted, some of which have already received funding. Notably, the Vyzhnytsya community was awarded €10,000 to improve urban spaces.

The project also contributed to forming new NGOs, activating IDP councils, and developing partnerships with government agencies, educational platforms, and international donors. According to project manager Bohdana Synyakevych, the initiative's strengths lie in its flexibility, its ability to respond quickly to challenges, and the life-changing support it provides.



How to make the invisible visible: inclusion in the labour market



The Invisible Talent Market project, implemented by the Happy Monday platform with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, aims to support individuals who are often overlooked by employers, including internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, and Ukrainians aged 40+. It focuses on overcoming discrimination in the labour market, changing candidates' perceptions of their own capabilities, and developing inclusive business approaches.

The project includes workshops, booster sessions and training for job seekers and employers; an online conference called 'Work Without Limits'; and a catalogue of the best examples of inclusion in Ukrainian companies. The project aims to raise the visibility of talented individuals from vulnerable groups, help them find employment, and assist businesses in finding motivated employees during periods of staff shortages. This contributes to the creation of a fairer and more inclusive labour market in Ukraine.



New settlers in Mykolayiv Oblast: how communities integrate IDPs through participation and training

The 'Integration of Internally Displaced Persons into the Life of the Berezanska, Voznesenska and Koblivska Communities' project helped dozens of new settlers to feel part of the local community. With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and the EU, participants in ideation and training sessions developed 15 initiatives, five of which have already been implemented. In Voznesensk, for example, IDPs restored small businesses and set up greenhouses for growing vegetables and herbs. Grants helped them purchase the necessary equipment, machinery, seedlings and irrigation systems to start or continue their own business.

A key part of the project involved establishing effective public councils within the communities. The Voznesensk council has already developed its own democratically agreed strategy. The council has also developed recommendations for local programmes, including those relating to housing, microgrants, psychological support, and advocacy campaigns.

Finally, participants from the three communities took part in a tour of local support, education and service centres. This project has set an example of how engagement, education and small grants can support IDPs and empower them to drive local development. It was confirmed that community recovery begins with supporting every person who lives in the community.

Learning a new profession: finding a way to stability



The 'School of Regional Development Activists 2.0' project, implemented by the NGO 'Regional Development Agency of the Tavrian Association of Territorial Communities' with the support of the EU and the International Renaissance Foundation, was created for internally displaced persons who wish to acquire new skills, find employment or establish their own business. Participants from six Ukrainian regions (Cherkasy, Vinnytsya, Kirovohrad, Odesa, Mykolayiv and Kherson) are taking part in a ten-day training programme covering management, fundraising, business planning, social entrepreneurship and non-violent communication.

The programme combines theoretical classes with practical sessions in local communities, where participants study attitudes and issues in the area. The project is aimed at individuals who wish to contribute to the economic development of their new community and participate in the recovery process. Thanks to the Foundation's support, participants gain the knowledge, motivation and support they need to become economically independent.



The support hub in Chernihiv is helping internally displaced persons (IDPs) and local women.

The St Olha's Women's Hub Day Centre for Psychosocial Services opened in Chernihiv in January 2024. Created by the NGO Eleos-Ukraine with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the space aims to support internally displaced persons, women, veterans, and military families. The hub offers free consultations with psychologists, social workers and educators.

It has become a safe space where IDPs can receive psychological support and assistance to help them adapt to their new surroundings. With separate rooms for children and professional staff, the hub helps women and children restore their resources, find support, and regain a sense of stability in their new community.



The biggest challenges facing IDPs in Khmilnyk

A study in the Khmilnyk community revealed that the primary issue for IDPs is financial hardship, forcing people to cut back on essential items such as food and medicine. Another challenge is housing: most people rent without a contract and live in constant fear of eviction. Above all, IDPs need advice on state and international payments, subsidies, and other legal matters.

'Together-fest' in Novovolynsk



From 29 to 30 March, Novovolynsk played host to Together Fest, a two-day event for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and local residents. Organised as part of the European Renaissance of Ukraine project, the event was supported by the EU and the International Renaissance Foundation. At the community library, participants watched a documentary and discussed the challenges of integrating IDPs. They also proposed creating a shared platform for communication and support. According to those who attended, the meeting marked the beginning of closer cooperation and a sense of shared responsibility.

The second day of the festival focused on creativity and emotional wellbeing. During the workshops, children made patriotic souvenirs and women painted using the fluid art technique. This allowed them not only to express their emotions, but also to meet people from different regions of Ukraine who now live in the community. According to the participants, such events prevent them from becoming isolated, and help them to find support and make new friends.



A large-scale study has revealed that Ukraine is critically short of housing for IDPs.

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Cherkasy Human Rights Centre conducted a large-scale study of 721 communities which revealed that the housing crisis facing internally displaced persons is worsening. Only a few communities have specialised housing programmes, and most of these are underfunded. Even temporary facilities are problematic: school and kindergarten premises are being used as crisis housing, despite not being adapted for this purpose.

Experts are calling on communities to take a systematic approach: to set up funds for social, temporary and crisis housing; to seek international assistance; and to amend legislation on the conversion of non-residential premises into residential ones.



Social hostel in Konotop

A social hostel for internally displaced persons (IDPs) has opened in the Konotop community, providing comfortable accommodation for 19 people. Currently, 15 IDPs, including children, live there. The hostel is fully furnished and equipped with appliances, a kitchen, a recreation area, showers and washing machines. The hostel was opened with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and CARE Deutschland e.V. as part of the 2022 grant programme.



Deinstitutionalisation reform

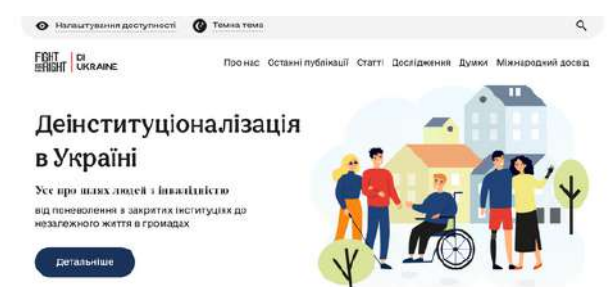
The Foundation supports changes that enable children, people with disabilities and the elderly to live with their families or in similar settings instead of in boarding schools. This is a matter of human dignity and equality of opportunity, as well as a way of overcoming the Soviet approach to 'care'. Implementing this reform also tests the maturity of communities, as it requires them to take responsibility for the most vulnerable, create support services for them and include them in community life.

A resource on deinstitutionalisation, titled 'Platform for a Decent Life', has been launched.

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Fight For Right NGO has created the first independent platform on deinstitutionalisation in Ukraine: diukraine.info. The platform aims to dispel the misconception that deinstitutionalisation means 'evicting people to the street', and instead promote the right of every person to live in the community with freedom, support and choice. The platform compiles information on international standards and examples of solutions, as well as stories of people who have experienced the residential system.

During the launch event, human rights activists emphasised that tens of thousands of people with disabilities are still forced to live in closed institutions. This is contrary to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the values of European integration. The launch of the platform should stimulate public discussion and influence the development and implementation of the deinstitutionalisation strategy currently being prepared by the Ministry of Social Policy.

'Fight for Right' is a call to action, encouraging communities, experts, officials and people with disabilities to join the discussion, share knowledge and implement change. Everyone has the right to live at home, not in a closed institution.



From boarding school to community: how the League of the Strong is helping to implement the deinstitutionalisation reform.



Implemented by the League of the Strong NGO with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the project aims to bring Ukraine closer to European human rights standards, particularly with regard to the right of people with disabilities to live in the community. The team is studying international best practice and working with communities to introduce supported living, which allows people to live independently with accessible support instead of being isolated in residential institutions. One example is the Training Apartment initiative, where people with disabilities can learn essential life skills such as cooking, cleaning and personal care for the first time.

Deinstitutionalisation reform is not just about changing the social protection system; it is also about restoring people's dignity and freedom of choice, and enabling them to live the life they want. The League of the Strong emphasises that Ukraine's residential care system does not prepare people for independent living; instead, they are transferred from children's institutions to adult ones without any opportunity for change. This is why it is important to develop community-level models such as supported living. This is not only humane, but also fulfils the

Instead of boarding schools, the public and the Foundation are forming a new policy.

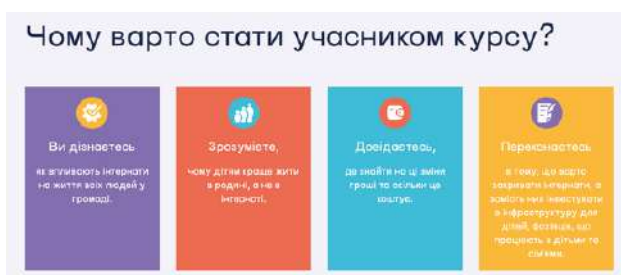
The Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy, together with the International Renaissance Foundation and civil society, has begun developing a deinstitutionalisation strategy. This key document will determine the abandonment of residential institutions and the development of supported living for people with disabilities and the elderly. This reform is a prerequisite for Ukraine's European integration, with NGOs playing a pivotal role. The discussion of the document was joined by Fight For Right, Right to Protection, Good Bread for the Good People, the League of the Strong, UNICEF and educational and human rights initiatives from different regions.

The Renaissance Foundation is actively supporting this process, acting as a partner in consultations with civil society. Thanks to public involvement, meaningful proposals have been developed, ranging from the need for digital tools for people with disabilities, to training for boarding school staff and preparing residents for community life. The discussions about the strategy proved that the public sector has the vision, experience and partnerships to implement a real and humane reform.



Online course: 'Boarding schools in Ukraine: why reform is needed'

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Ukrainian Child Rights Network has launched an online course called 'Institutional Care: Why a Different Approach is Needed'. The course aims to dispel myths about boarding schools and demonstrate why the current system of institutional care is detrimental to children. The course emphasises that even the most well-intentioned volunteer work cannot replace the urgent need for reform to enable children to live in family environments instead of closed institutions.



Roadmap for Change: How NGOs Plan to Protect Children

Thirty-three organisations, all members of the Ukrainian Child Rights Network, joined forces to create a Roadmap for Ensuring Children's Rights. The resulting document sets out a strategic vision for avoiding the institutionalisation of children and ensuring they are raised in a family environment. Experts from the International Renaissance Foundation, which is supporting the initiative as part of the 'Take Back Ukraine for All Children' project, also contributed to the development of the roadmap. The key focus is on establishing community-based social services to prevent a return to the outdated system of boarding schools.

Starting a strategic dialogue: from boarding houses to community-based support



In May, Kyiv hosted the first strategic session dedicated to reforming care for the elderly and people with disabilities. This initiative was led by the Ministry of Social Policy and supported by the International Renaissance Foundation. The discussion focused on deinstitutionalisation, specifically how to transition from residential care to supported living, enabling individuals to reside in their communities with access to essential services.

The International Renaissance Foundation is supporting this process as part of Ukraine's commitment to the EU, and as a step towards establishing a fairer social system. During the session, experts emphasised the right of every person to a decent life, independence, and participation in community life. This is why the reform is based on developing accessible social services and respecting human choice.



The MSEC Reform Project: The Path to Dignity, Transparency and Digitalisation

In partnership with human rights organisations and with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the League of the Strong has initiated a profound reform of the system of medical and social expert commissions (MSECs). The reform is based on ten changes that should make the process of establishing disability more transparent, convenient, and fair for individuals. These include providing a clear list of required documents, digitising the procedure, ensuring the participation of specialist doctors, and limiting the scope for subjective and discriminatory decisions. The government has already adopted four of the proposals.

The problems with the MSEC are not new: there are confusing procedures, subjective assessments and a lack of transparency. Most importantly, people are treated unequally. This is confirmed by surveys conducted by the League of the Strong. One of the main issues was the different lists of documents required by various MSECs, which made life much more difficult for disabled people. The amendments adopted to Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution No. 1317 have established a single list of required documents and have already simplified the process.

The International Renaissance Foundation has supported the advocacy and analytical work of NGOs in this area. As Ksenia Shapoval, Director of the Civil Resilience Programme, explains, the changes go beyond simply altering the procedure; they represent a broader transformation aimed at restoring human capital and creating conditions that enable people who have experienced trauma or acquired chronic diseases as a result of the war to live and work with dignity.

The project showed that qualitative changes are possible when the state and the public work together. Thanks to the active position of the partner organisations and the support of the Foundation, it was possible to influence the formation of state policy and lay the foundation for further steps: full digitalisation of the process, creation of multidisciplinary teams and protection of the rights of people with disabilities at the level of practice.



Forum on the Rights of People with Disabilities: Steps Towards European Rehabilitation

In December 2024, Kyiv hosted the National Forum on the Rights of People with Disabilities, 'On the Road to the EU', organised by the International Renaissance Foundation in partnership with several international organisations. Participants discussed how to make rehabilitation more accessible, effective and patient-centred, and the need for systemic changes. The Minister of Health, Viktor Lyashko, emphasised the importance of developing centres of excellence for rehabilitation, introducing a multidisciplinary approach, and expanding outpatient care. Particular focus was given to the involvement of social workers and the development of human capital.

When Silence Hurts: How the State Hears the Families of Missing Persons



The Warrior's House, a space for veterans, hosted an open discussion between the families of missing persons and Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk. These meetings provide an opportunity for families to ask important questions directly of government officials regarding the search for bodies, confirmation of death, and legal and psychological support. This initiative was organised by the First Women's Veterans' Space 'Rehab', supported by the International Renaissance Foundation.

A Step-by-Step Guide for Families When a Person Goes Missing

The guide, 'Algorithm of Actions: What to Do When a Person Goes Missing in Connection with Military Operations', helps families navigate difficult situations. It contains key information on where to apply, how to register a person as missing, the potential legal consequences, and how to receive financial support. It was created by the Coordination Centre for Legal Aid Provision and the Rehab Veterans' Space, with support from the International Renaissance Foundation and the free legal aid system.

Training that transforms the way families of missing persons are supported.



A three-day training course on 'Working with Families of Missing Persons' has concluded in Lviv Region. During the course, 23 professionals from the public sector and local government gained the knowledge and skills required to support families searching for their loved ones. The event was organised by the First Women's Veterans' Space 'Rehab' in partnership with the Coalition of Veterans' Spaces and the Warrior's House, and was supported by the International Renaissance Foundation. Similar training events are taking place in other regions as the need to support the families of missing persons remains critical.

The programme included practical exercises based on real-life cases, discussions about legal procedures and action algorithms, and training in providing psychological support and ensuring information security. Participants gained a clear understanding of how to support families from the moment of notification of a disappearance, through to the return of a defence lawyer or the legal registration of a missing person's status. The organisers emphasise that such training strengthens local teams and creates a support network that prevents families from being left alone with their troubles.



A step-by-step guide for families of fallen defenders in difficult times.



In collaboration with government agencies and with the backing of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Ukrainian NGO Women's Power has produced a booklet to help the families of deceased soldiers navigate the bureaucratic process. Containing answers to frequently asked questions, it provides guidance on how to apply for benefits, where to access psychological and legal support, and which documents are required to receive social guarantees. This resource will be useful for both the families themselves and the professionals who support them.

The booklet consists of ten clear action steps and contains the contact details of institutions and NGOs, as well as information on the psychological effects of loss and the signs to look out for. The material was created based on real requests received by the Psychosocial Support Service for Military Families hotline. Printed versions will be distributed in CCCs and JCCs, social protection structures, and veterans' spaces, while an electronic version is available to download online.



'Blanket of Care': psychological support for the parents and wives of fallen soldiers.



The Blanket of Care programme has been launched in Dnipro and Kamianske, providing group meetings for the parents and wives of fallen soldiers. These safe spaces are designed to provide emotional support and a place to share experiences and find resources to help overcome grief. The initiative is being implemented by the NGO Eleos-Dnipro in collaboration with the psychological support space ProZHYTY, with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. Meetings will be held in Dnipro and Kamianske, as well as online, but registration is required.

Psychosocial support in Sumy: helping the families of fallen defenders.

The NGO Veteran Space of Sumy Region has launched the Psychosocial Support for Families of Fallen Defenders of Ukraine project. The programme includes individual counselling, group sessions, legal assistance, and art therapy to help with emotional stabilisation. Services are provided both in person and online. Implemented with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the initiative aims to provide long-term assistance to families who have lost loved ones in the war.

Resilience.Help is a psychological support platform for educators and others.

Created by the Smart Education NGO with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Resilience.help platform has been helping teachers, school psychologists and anyone else interested in mental health support in times of war for over a year. It contains practical tools, proven psychotherapeutic techniques, educational materials, articles and training sessions – everything you need to support yourself and your students in crisis situations. The platform team collaborates with leading scientists and psychologists to ensure users receive high-quality, evidence-based information.

'When a Person Cries': the first guide to emotional support for non-psychologists.

The manual When a Person Cries, created by the Free Choice NGO team with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, is designed to help people who work with individuals in crisis on a daily basis, but are not psychologists. It provides simple and accessible guidance on how to respond to tears, anxiety, anger, and shock in a way that does not harm either yourself or the person experiencing difficult emotions. The manual contains basic rules of emotional hygiene and recommendations for gentle communication and self-support exercises, which are especially important for social workers, educators and volunteers.

Forum on Grief Therapy: an international exchange of experiences and support for specialists



In September 2024, Ivano-Frankivsk played host to the second International Forum on Grief and Loss. The event brought together psychologists and psychotherapists from Ukraine and 12 other countries to discuss effective ways of supporting those who have lost loved ones, homes and normal lives due to the war. The International Association of Grief and Bereavement Psychologists organised the forum with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

Over the course of two days, participants attended lectures delivered by leading experts, took part in practical workshops, shared experiences, and reviewed the most effective international practices. Each participant received a set of forum materials and recordings of the speeches, as well as a certificate of participation. The event provided an opportunity for professional development and for Ukrainian and foreign mental health experts to establish new connections.



Recommendations for the register of damages: how to make compensation for destroyed housing fair



The think tank Institute of Legislative Ideas, in cooperation with the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, conducted a study on how to ensure the effectiveness of the International Register of Damage for Ukrainians who have lost their homes due to the war. The document analyses the obstacles that victims face when recording their losses, and the factors that should be considered when designing a system for submitting and reviewing applications to the Register. These include issues relating to property documents, access to information, technical barriers and the complexity of providing proof.

The study formed part of the Efficient Reparations Now project, implemented with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and USAID. The authors emphasise that the registration process must be straightforward, transparent, and flexible in order to accommodate the unique circumstances of occupied, de-occupied, and conflict-affected areas. This is essential for ensuring fair restoration and compensation for those affected by Russian aggression.

Guidelines for submitting a loss claim to the International Register of Losses for Ukraine

In response to Russian aggression, the Register of Damages Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine (RD4U) was set up as part of a future international compensation scheme. Its purpose is to document and organise information on the damage caused to Ukraine, its citizens and legal entities. The register is already operational: new application submission rules are being approved and new applicant categories are being introduced.

This guide is based on the official Registry documents available on its website (<https://rd4u.coe.int/uk/documents>) and aims to provide victims with clear and concise information on filing a report and the subsequent steps.

The publication was produced by the think tank Institute of Legislative Ideas as part of the Efficient Reparations Now project. The document was prepared with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The material reflects the authors' views and does not necessarily represent those of the International Renaissance Foundation.



Research into labour slavery in Ukrainian penal colonies.



In September 2024, the Kharkiv Human Rights Group and the NGO Prisoners' Protection of Ukraine presented the results of a large-scale study examining the working conditions of prisoners in correctional facilities. The study revealed that the majority of prisoners are engaged in arduous physical labour without labour contracts, social guarantees or decent pay, and with no prospect of parole. Some work up to 14 hours a day, seven days a week, with 'two hours of colony improvement' counted as part of their working day under Article 118 of the Criminal Executive Code. This is a gross violation of labour law and brings the situation closer to modern slavery.

During a roundtable organised by the Ombudsman's Office and supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, experts from various government agencies and NGOs discussed how to prevent such abuses with the NGO 'Ukraine without Torture'. They proposed amendments to legislation to ensure compulsory labour contracts, accessible pensionable service, labour pay in accordance with the Labour Code, and the right to work for people with disabilities.

This study signals to the state that its current practices violate the Constitution and Ukraine's international human rights obligations.

Social Services in Ukraine: Improving Accessibility and Quality in Times of Crisis



In August 2024, the Agency for Legislative Initiatives presented an in-depth analytical study of the state of social services in Ukraine. The study focuses on the issues faced by communities, particularly in de-occupied and frontline areas, and how these issues can be resolved. The study is based on an analysis of legislation and international experience, as well as 30 in-depth interviews and 12 focus groups. The authors identified several systemic challenges, including the low capacity of service providers, staff shortages, cumbersome financial procedures and inflexibility in adapting services to particular regions.

The participants discussed ways to make the social sector more sustainable. They called for a comprehensive update of legislation, the introduction of human-centred approaches, support for local authorities in providing services and the involvement of NGOs and charities. Particular attention was paid to the needs of those in frontline and de-occupied territories, where residents often lack access to basic services.

This study formed part of a project implemented by the ALI with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. As well as identifying problems, it offers concrete solutions that could inform a new strategy for developing the social protection system.

Strengthening the psychosocial support system in the Poltava region.



Between July and August 2024, over 250 social workers and healthcare professionals from Poltava Oblast underwent training in the Professional Competencies in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support programme. These training sessions formed part of the 'Humanitarian Solidarity: Support for Vulnerable Groups in the Context of Armed Conflict', which was implemented by the Light of Hope charity in partnership with Poltava State Medical University and with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

Participants learned to recognise the main mental health conditions, conduct basic assessments and apply self-help techniques, as well as how to work with stigma. Particular attention was paid to the interaction between the social protection and healthcare sectors, developing an interdisciplinary approach and preventing professional burnout among service providers. According to the project's manager, Maria Bondarenko, this knowledge is critically needed in the context of a full-scale war when the number of people in vulnerable situations, as well as the workload of professionals, is increasing. Yulia Yushchenko, Regional Coordinator of the Mental Health Programme, emphasised that these training sessions contribute to the development of a contemporary MHPSS system that addresses the genuine requirements of the community and the challenges of the present era.

Finding solutions for harmony in communities: the experience of mobile teams



In December 2024, a public discussion was held on the conflict management tools developed and tested by mobile teams of specialists in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Ternopil, and smaller communities in these regions. The event formed part of the 'Initiative to Support Interaction and Conflict Management in IDP Assistance Sites' project, implemented by the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union in partnership with the Ukrainian Dialogue Community of Practice since April 2022, with support from the International Renaissance Foundation and EU funding.

During the discussion, the methods used by the mobile teams in their work with conflicts were presented. These methods include dialogue facilitation, psychological support, mediation and adapting interventions to the specifics of each community. The mobile teams were supported by a methodological team comprising experienced psychologists, conflict resolution specialists and facilitators. The project not only helped to reduce social tensions within communities, but also built trust, resilience, and cohesion within local communities that had been under considerable pressure due to the war and internal displacement. This initiative has made a significant contribution to developing a practical culture of non-violent interaction in challenging situations.

Effective mechanisms of accountability for international crimes

Our work ensures that international crimes committed during Russia's aggression against Ukraine are not overlooked. In 2024, we supported the documentation of crimes and assisted initiatives working with victims, prisoners of war, and the families of the deceased. We also promoted the involvement of international mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, in investigations. We also supported the development of national justice and memory policies, as well as sanctions advocacy and compensation mechanisms. Justice cannot be postponed.



Why is it important?

Without justice, neither the people nor the state can truly recover. The basis for dignity, trust and reconciliation is established by revealing the truth about war crimes, punishing the perpetrators and recognising the rights of victims.

Ukrainian society has the right to protection and a fair response for every life lost, home destroyed or monument damaged. This is why we support the documentation of crimes and the development of national and international justice mechanisms, including Ukraine's participation in the International Criminal Court.

Our priorities



Documenting crimes

Supporting the collection of evidence, testimony and recording of violations of international law.



International and domestic justice

Facilitating investigations, engaging with the ICC and developing effective accountability mechanisms.



Returning prisoners of war

Facilitating the return of defenders and civilians in captivity.



Compensation for victims

Promoting solutions that provide redress for individuals and communities.



Memory policy

Preserving the truth about the crimes and honouring the victims through memorial and educational initiatives.



Moving Towards Justice: a contest to support the documentation of war crimes and assist victims.

The International Renaissance Foundation has announced a contest called 'Protection of victims of war crimes and assistance in bringing perpetrators to justice' as part of its Human Rights and Justice programme. The competition aims to support the efforts of civil society organisations that assist war victims, document war crimes and provide support to victims, while also contributing to the development of a solid evidence base for investigations and prosecutions.

Priorities for the contest included providing legal aid to victims, documenting crimes against civilians, the environment, and cultural heritage, and supporting victims' initiatives and research into Ukrainian and international justice mechanisms. Non-profit organisations registered under Ukrainian law were invited to participate.

The contest generated significant interest, with 48 project proposals submitted for consideration, nine of which were supported. Winners included organisations specialising in human rights, analysis and advocacy, with experience of working on war crimes. These included the Media Initiative for Human Rights, the Crimean Tatar Resource Centre, the Kharkiv Human Rights Group and the Rafael Lemkin Society, among others.



Their projects include documenting crimes in different regions, collaborating with international organisations, advocating for victims, providing legal support, helping victims to organise themselves, and developing justice strategies. These initiatives all share the same goal: to preserve evidence, support victims and achieve justice.

The International Renaissance Foundation would like to thank all the organisations that submitted their proposals, and emphasises the importance of continuing efforts to protect human rights, bring perpetrators to justice, and record the truth about the war.





Documenting war crimes

War crimes documentation projects play a crucial role in establishing the truth, ensuring justice and preventing impunity. These projects capture evidence of crimes while eyewitness accounts, material traces and information about the events are still available. This work lays the groundwork for future trials, international recognition of the aggressor's crimes, and the restoration of justice for victims.

Analytics for Justice: Documenting Crimes Against Civilians and the Military

The Media Initiative for Human Rights (MIPHR) is implementing a large-scale analytical project that goes far beyond fact-finding. Its goal is to systematically document war crimes, analyse the scale of violations and convey the truth to Ukrainian society, international partners and human rights structures. The project covers numerous topics: from abductions of civilians in the occupied territories to deaths in captivity, torture, illegal detention, deportations and fabricated trials.

The MIPL has collected testimonies from over 120 former prisoners of war who describe torture, isolation and denial of medical care. At least 184 deaths of Ukrainians in captivity were recorded, including after the explosion in the Olenivska penal colony. Special attention is paid to the issue of abductions of civilians: more than 500 such cases have been identified in Kherson region alone.

Documentary filmmakers discovered that, following abduction, people are frequently deported to Russia, where they are tortured and subjected to mock trials. All the information collected forms the basis for bringing the perpetrators to justice. The International Renaissance Foundation is supporting this project as part of a broader strategy to strengthen civil society's capacity to defend human rights and combat impunity.



Documenting crimes against archives as part of the fight for justice.



The project, 'The Past for the Future: Accountability for War Crimes Against Archives', implemented by the NGO Foundation for the Support of Basic Research with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, helps archivists in affected areas record Russian crimes against archival heritage. Participants in the training programme were archivists from the southern and eastern regions of Mykolayiv, Odesa, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Kharkiv and Sumy. Experts taught them how to document war crimes against archival institutions in accordance with international humanitarian law and how to use this data for investigations, prosecutions and the return of exported materials.

The project provides comprehensive training for archivists working in war zones, covering topics such as the analysis of crimes against archives, basic legal principles, practical documentation tools, and ethical approaches to information collection and preservation. Participants gained theoretical knowledge and worked in groups, discussing real-life cases. According to Tymur Korotkyi, coordinator of the Office of the Prosecutor General's International Humanitarian Law Unit, archive workers recognise the importance of archival heritage in the war of memories and are motivated to record the damage caused by the aggressor.

Freed but not protected: the rights of the Kremlin's civilian hostages

In 2024, the NGO 'Association of Relatives of Political Prisoners of the Kremlin', with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, implemented an important analytical project on the problems faced by civilian Ukrainians who fell into the hands of the Russian occupiers. These are people who were returned from illegal detention but not released as part of official prisoner exchanges. There are thousands of them. However, the Ukrainian state still lacks clear mechanisms to support them.

The project involved an in-depth study of the legal and social difficulties these citizens face upon returning home. Human rights activists collected practical case studies, identified gaps in current legislation and proposed systemic changes. In particular, the law on the protection of illegally imprisoned persons needs to be updated, the work of the specialised commission needs to be improved, and transparent and fast procedures for recognising deprivation of liberty need to be created. Presenting the research findings provided a platform for professional dialogue between relatives of hostages, lawyers, academics, and government officials. The project has impelled the development of fair policies for the thousands of Ukrainians who are still without proper protection.

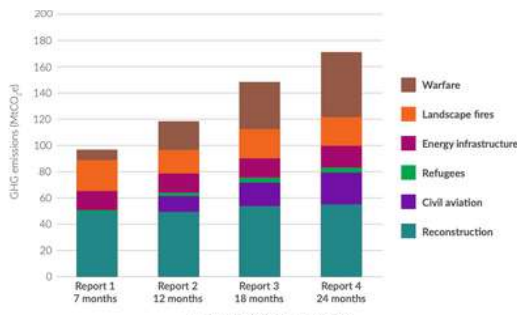


'My Own Home': Stories about the Loss of Housing and the Struggle for Justice



The My Own Home platform documents housing destruction resulting from the war and helps people apply to the Register of Damage. To date, more than 600 stories from victims, including those from the temporarily occupied territories, have been collected. With the Foundation's support, the team is developing special projects, video interviews and an online guide offering legal advice to assist those who have lost their homes. The project also examines how other countries have compensated for property losses during war.

The climate price of war: \$32 billion in two years.



With the support of the EPAIU initiative, administered by the Foundation, researchers have analysed the impact of the war on the climate for the fourth time. During the two years of the full-scale invasion, Russia caused over \$32 billion worth of environmental damage. The report covers military emissions, disruption to the energy system, fires, increased weapons production, and other factors. This study attempts to quantify the global environmental cost of war.

The Mariupol Drama Theatre: a spatial archive of memory



The Centre for Spatial Technologies has created the Spatial Archive, an online study of the attack on the Mariupol Drama Theatre. Based on hundreds of hours of testimonies, 3D models and visualisations, the archive provides a comprehensive overview of the incident. Supported by the Foundation and the EU, the project documents the crime and its consequences. Two analytical reports – one legal and one technical – prove that the bombing of the theatre was most likely a war crime.

The Hound: a browser for investigations



With the support of the EPAIU initiative, administered by the Foundation, researchers have analysed the impact of the war on the climate for the fourth time. During the two years of the full-scale invasion, Russia caused over \$32 billion worth of environmental damage. The report covers military emissions, disruption to the energy system, fires, increased weapons production, and other factors. This study attempts to quantify the global environmental cost of war.



Energy and economic security: Systemic analytics on sanctions

Blocking Russia's access to the small modular reactor market

In 2024, with the support of the Foundation, DiXi Group analysed the threats posed by Russia's penetration of the global small modular reactor (SMR) market. The report focuses on the world's dependence on Russian HALEU fuel, which threatens global energy security. The report outlines the Russian Federation's ambitions, the positions of key countries, and recommendations for sanctions and localisation of production.

Assessing the effectiveness of sanctions in the energy sector

Throughout the year, DiXi Group published quarterly monitoring of energy sanctions. The focus was on oil exports, LNG projects and secondary US sanctions. The report for the fourth quarter of 2023 revealed that sanctions had reduced Russia's profits, yet also emphasised the necessity of enhancing compliance monitoring mechanisms.



Systematic monitoring of foreign businesses leaving Russia.

Throughout 2024, the KSE Institute conducted a large-scale analytical project called SelfSanctions with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. This project has become the most comprehensive source of information on the behaviour of foreign businesses in the Russian market since the start of the full-scale invasion. The database covers more than 3,900 companies from 106 countries and tracks their level of engagement with Russia, ranging from complete withdrawal to complete disregard for the war. It is updated monthly.

As well as recording presence or withdrawal, the project team analyses the financial performance of companies in detail, including revenues, capital, assets, tax payments and the number of employees in Russia.

The KSE Institute runs a Telegram bot and a mobile app that allow users to scan a barcode to find out whether a brand or company has left the Russian market. This tool is part of a civic pressure campaign, helping consumers to make informed choices.

'Culture as an Outpost of Resistance': An International Conference on Heritage Protection



The international conference, 'Protection of Cultural Heritage and Counteraction to Cultural Erasure in Armed Conflict: New Challenges and Ukraine's Experience', took place in Kyiv. It was organised by the Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies. Participants discussed ways to counteract Russia's deliberate destruction of Ukrainian monuments, strengthen the national system of cultural heritage protection, and use international experience to document and prosecute crimes against culture.

High-ranking officials, international experts, and representatives of cultural institutions attended the discussion, including Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin, Acting Minister of Culture Rostyslav Karandziej, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Iryna Borovets, and UNESCO representatives.



Justice for Heritage: United for justice, united for heritage.



At the end of February, the international conference 'United for Justice, United for Heritage' took place in Kyiv, bringing together more than 400 participants from all over the world, including government officials, prosecutors, cultural figures, and human rights activists. Together, they sought answers to the question of how to document large-scale crimes against Ukrainian cultural heritage and bring the perpetrators to justice. Since 2022, Russia has damaged or destroyed over 900 heritage sites and looted more than 40 museums.

The International Renaissance Foundation partnered with the event. Participants at the conference decided to create a state register of destroyed and damaged cultural heritage sites, which will form the basis for future reparations. Attendees included Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin, representatives of the International Criminal Court, Eurojust, and the governments of allied countries.



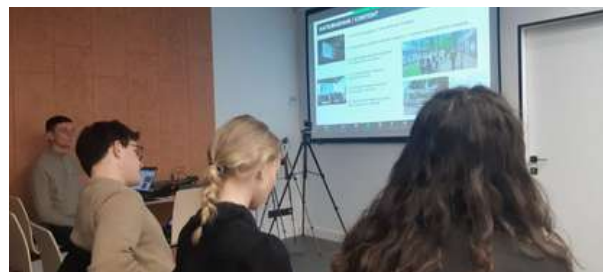
The ICC's focus on the environment: how to promote accountability for Russia.



With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and the EU, an international working meeting was held on 20 February 2024 to discuss ways to increase the involvement of International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors in investigating war crimes that have caused significant and lasting environmental damage in Ukraine. Participants – experts from the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the Hague-based Environmental Security Institute (ESI), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Office of the Prosecutor General – discussed various legal strategies, including the use of Article 8(2)(b)(IV) of the Rome Statute. Proposals included a Moot Court, a Mock Trial and a mock tribunal, which would facilitate the development of legal arguments and draw international attention to this category of crimes.

ICC prosecutors have opened public consultations on the preparation of an analytical document on environmental crimes. This document will inform a systematic approach to investigations and contain references to the Rome Statute, international agreements, and case law. Meeting participants agreed to use this process as an opportunity to take a clear position on including ecocides in the ICC's jurisdiction and to coordinate efforts to prepare proposals, appeals and analyses.

Countering the ideological influence on deported children.



In February 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation gathered more than 70 experts at a meeting within the Ukraine Accountability Collaboration Platform to discuss the illegal re-education and ideological processing of Ukrainian children taken to Crimea, Russia or Belarus. These actions are considered part of the aggressor's criminal policy. The participants discussed the possibilities of bringing the perpetrators to justice through criminal proceedings and sanctions mechanisms.

Discussion on the establishment of an international tribunal in London.

On 5 February, a conference was held in London to discuss the establishment of a Special International Tribunal to try the leadership of the Russian Federation. Supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, the event brought together high-ranking officials, including Ukraine's Minister of Justice and Prosecutor General. This proposal forms part of President Zelenskyy's peace formula and has already garnered significant international backing, including from the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), NATO, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Effective tools for achieving economic resilience, recovery and cohesion.

In 2024, our focus was on supporting the development of effective tools to help communities withstand, recover from and unite in the face of war. This entailed bolstering economic resilience, fostering local development, championing green transformation and overseeing the reconstruction process. Our activities were also greatly influenced by inclusive approaches to planning, demographics, migration, education and resource pooling through partnerships between universities, businesses and civil society.



Why is this important?

Resilience, recovery and cohesion form the basis of Ukraine's future after the war. Without strong, economically active and united communities, neither recovery nor security will be possible. It is therefore crucial to establish new, sustainable and inclusive development models.

This applies to the local economy, governance and social ties between people. Working in this area provides communities with the tools they need to develop, taking into account the needs of everyone affected by the war, including those returning to de-occupied territories. This is how a new quality of life emerges after victory.

Our priorities



Economic resilience of communities

Supporting initiatives that develop the local economy, employment and entrepreneurship in times of war.



Recovery and development of territories

The focus is on promoting the reconstruction of infrastructure, housing and services in a sustainable and equitable way.



Green transition

Integrate environmental solutions into the renewal of environmental development initiatives.



Inclusivity and cohesion

Involvement of different groups of people in planning changes in communities, strengthening trust between people.



Monitoring and knowledge

Analysis of recovery processes, development of solutions for the de-occupied and frontline territories.



Resilience Lab: building the capacity of CSOs to support communities

In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation launched the Resilience Lab programme in partnership with the German development agency Brot für die Welt. The programme aims to strengthen NGOs and support their work within communities. Fifteen organisations were selected to participate in the programme, receiving mentoring support and training in areas such as financial management, advocacy, project design and interaction with local authorities.

The second stage involved developing their own projects aimed at increasing community resilience. Fourteen organisations received institutional support to implement their initiatives as a result of the competition. These include Baba Yelka, Needed Here, the Centre for Assistance to IDPs and Veterans, Zmist Poltava and Green Grove, as well as other teams from various regions of Ukraine.

During the September conference and subsequent workshops, participants discussed the challenges their organisations face, shared their experiences, and explored new working methods. Topics that aroused the greatest interest included effective advocacy, strengthening cooperation with local authorities and strategic development. The reflection walk format and the involvement of experienced trainers brought a fresh perspective to the training.



Representatives of the organisations, including both young and experienced teams, noted that participating in the Lab helped them to better understand their needs, form a clear development vision and strengthen internal processes, from fundraising to communication strategy. For many organisations, this is their first experience of systematic institutional support, and they are already seeing tangible results.

The programme will run until the end of 2025. Participants emphasise that the knowledge gained, the support of mentors, and the opportunity to exchange experiences with other teams enables them to strengthen their own organisations and become more effective in serving their communities.





Green recovery

A green recovery involves long-term sustainability for communities, the environmentally responsible rebuilding of infrastructure, energy-efficient solutions, the restoration of natural resources, and the creation of safe, healthy environments. This approach does more than just return us to the 'pre-war state'; it helps us to build a future that takes into account climate change, environmental needs, and the quality of citizens' lives.

Contest for environmental solutions for Ukrainian communities

The International Renaissance Foundation organised a contest called 'Green Recovery and Sustainable Development of Territorial Communities', which aimed to integrate environmental considerations into the recovery processes of Ukrainian territorial communities. The contest supported initiatives that combined reconstruction with environmental priorities, such as energy efficiency, biodiversity conservation, waste management, and climate change adaptation. The emphasis was on communities that had been destroyed.

A total of 47 project applications were received from 17 regions of Ukraine, and 13 of the best ones, demonstrating consistency, analytical basis and readiness to implement the results in practice, were supported.

Winners include projects that aim to develop environmental strategies, implement energy planning, create maps of environmental damage, analyse the environmental impact of hostilities, and develop waste management approaches. All of these initiatives aim to ensure that the public and the authorities make joint decisions about the future of their territories, making them greener, safer and more sustainable.



Despite the war, experts are calling for environmental information to be made public

On 18 December, SaveDnipro organised a roundtable discussion on access to environmental information during the war, supported by the EU and the International Renaissance Foundation. Participants presented a study showing that only 38% of environmental data in Ukraine is publicly available. Experts believe that restrictions on access to such data during wartime are unjustified, and are calling for the delayed law that would harmonise Ukrainian legislation with EU standards to be cancelled. They also proposed improving the terminology, providing technical capabilities for data publication, and opening state registers.

Public rating of openness of environmental data

In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation partnered with the European Union to support the development and presentation of the Environmental Data Openness Ranking, which was prepared by SaveDnipro in collaboration with the Ministry of Digital Transformation. The ranking covered 209 datasets from 74 government agencies, enabling us to evaluate the extent to which the authorities comply with their obligation to publish environmental information. This promoted transparency in the environmental sector, particularly with regard to monitoring air and water quality and waste management, which aligns with the Foundation's priorities concerning openness and environmental safety.

Ukraine is reforming its waste management system: challenges and first results



The International Renaissance Foundation held a large-scale discussion on the progress and prospects of waste management reform in Ukraine. Participants, who were representatives of ministries, local governments, NGOs and businesses, stressed that the reform is essential despite the war. Not only does it bring Ukraine closer to EU standards, it also enables the country to respond to new realities, particularly the huge amount of destruction generating new types of waste.

The main challenges include a lack of community infrastructure, inadequate analytics, financing difficulties, and the need for legislative support. Communities play a crucial role: they are responsible for implementing sorting practices, establishing records and conducting educational work. Lviv, as a pilot community, is already demonstrating positive results, having saved millions of hryvnia and developed a separate collection system thanks to the efforts of the service administrator.



War and climate: how Ukraine is shaping a new agenda



The International Renaissance Foundation's EPAIU Environmental Initiative hosted a discussion on Ukrainian activists' participation in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP). Participants stressed that the full-scale war is destroying nature in Ukraine and affecting global climate processes through emissions from hostilities, infrastructure destruction and large-scale forest fires. This is why the international community must recognise that Russian aggression poses a threat to global climate security.

The Ukrainian delegation's participation in the COP provided an opportunity to advocate for accountability of the aggressor, raise awareness of ecocide, and seek international support for Ukraine's environmental restoration. Civil society representatives called for closer coordination with the government to establish a unified and coherent position at such forums. Ukraine has an opportunity to become a leader in documenting environmental damage caused by the war and in shaping a new global climate justice framework.



In Cherkasy, IDPs preserve the nature of the embankment



The Bakhmut-based NGO Association 'Renaissance and Development' implemented a project in Cherkasy to preserve the environment of the city's waterfront. With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation's Environmental Initiative, the team set up information stands about the region's ecology, rules of conduct in natural areas, and unique species of flora and fauna. The project also involved scientists, the community, and city authorities. The initiative has become an example of successful integration of IDPs and involvement of citizens in environmental protection.

The residents of Mykolaiv assessed the state of the environment in order to plan a green recovery.

As part of a project supported by the Foundation, SaveDnipro conducted a large-scale study of Mykolaiv's environmental challenges. This study was unique in that citizens were closely involved: residents helped to collect data and identify priorities for the city's green recovery. The results have been compiled into a report that will inform further public participation in shaping environmental policy at a local level.



Economic resilience for Ukraine's recovery

What jobs does post-war Ukraine need?

The discussion 'Vision 2033: What Jobs Does Post-War Ukraine Need?', organised by the International Renaissance Foundation and the Association of International Employment Companies, took place in Kyiv. Representatives of the Trade Union of Ukraine, government agencies, academics and public figures attended the discussion. Topics covered included employment during the war, prospects for labour market recovery, the role of the military-industrial complex, and priority industries for the economy, as well as government policy on job creation.

Participants agreed that planning for in-demand professions after victory is necessary now. This will help to use resources efficiently and reduce unemployment. The government, businesses and educational institutions should play a key role in this process. The results of the discussion will inform Ukraine's vision for economic development over the next decade.

For first time businesses have identified a shortage of employees as a major problem.

According to a monthly survey by the Institute for Economic Research, staff shortages became the main obstacle for Ukrainian businesses for the first time in September 2024. 61% of businesses reported suffering from a shortage of employees due to mobilisation and emigration. Skilled workers are in particularly short supply, but unskilled workers are also becoming harder to find.

Although the business activity index has increased, companies are complaining more and more about staffing difficulties. Expectations for recruitment are deteriorating, and the proportion of companies planning to make staff cuts is growing. The survey shows that businesses do not see the state as their ally – most consider it to be either a regulator or an obstacle. The survey was conducted as part of the European Renaissance of Ukraine initiative, supported by the EU and the International Renaissance Foundation.

Ukrainian Energy Security Dialogue 2024: Against the Darkness – Together



The 2024 Ukrainian Energy Security Dialogue brought together over 200 participants, including government representatives, business leaders, community members, and experts from Ukraine, the EU, and the US. The resilience of the energy system was discussed, given that it has survived over 1,600 missile strikes and lost over 50% of its generation capacity. The focus was on protecting critical infrastructure, stopping the transit of Russian gas, dealing with cyber threats, and preparing for Ukraine's long-term integration into the EU's energy system.

Participants shared their experiences of achieving energy independence through measures such as installing generators, developing solar generation, decarbonisation, and hydrogen production. Zhytomyr, for instance, has reduced its CO₂ emissions by 36% and inaugurated a distinctive bioenergy plant. However, communities continue to face a shortage of specialists, funding, and strategic planning.

A separate panel focused on aligning climate goals with security requirements. Government and EU representatives stressed that Ukraine is already part of the European energy community and that developing renewable energy is key to a sustainable future. Participants agreed that modernisation, decarbonisation and a strong partnership with the international community are the keys to Ukraine's path to the EU.

The DiXi Group is assessing the risks to Ukraine's energy sector this winter.

Throughout 2024, the DiXi Group think tank conducted regular studies on the state of Ukraine's gas and electricity infrastructure. These were presented in November at the Energy Security Talks event, which was supported by the International Renaissance Foundation. Analysts modelled several winter scenarios, taking into account attacks on energy facilities, weather conditions, capacity reserves, and imports. Most of the scenarios predicted energy shortages in the evening and at night in the event of severe frosts.

The Ukrainian experience of resilience during the war was presented at the World Bank Forum.

During the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF in Washington, DC, representatives of the RRR4U consortium, which is supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, presented examples of Ukraine's economic and energy resilience during wartime at the Civil Society Forum. They explained how the country had managed to maintain public services, attract financial assistance from donors and continue reforms. Key factors included developing alternative energy sources, increasing transparency, digitalising processes and streamlining procedures, all of which strengthened partners' trust. Participants also discussed the World Bank's PEACE mechanism, which has mobilised over \$50 billion in aid. According to the speakers, Ukraine's approach could serve as a model for other countries facing crises.

Transparency in the extractive industries: supporting EITI in times of war

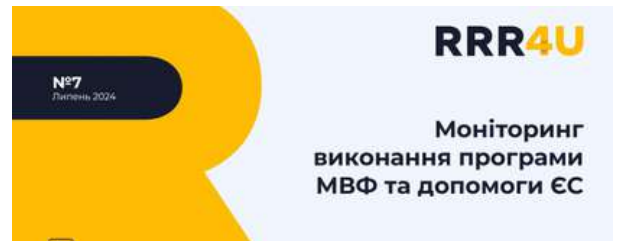


In 2024, the 9th National Report of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was presented with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, covering the first full year after the outbreak of large-scale war. Despite challenging conditions, the state ensured the collection and publication of key data on the activities of 11 extractive sectors, including uranium ores, which are important for energy security. The report contains information on production volumes, payments to the budget and the impact of the war on the industry. In 2022, Ukraine lost more than UAH 55 billion in GDP, and its growth rate fell by more than 15%.

Ukraine continues to develop the EITI Electronic Portal to provide access to reporting and data in an open format. Even under martial law, the average level of information disclosure in accordance with the international standard is maintained. During the presentation, the experts emphasised that the EITI in Ukraine is not only a transparency standard, but also an effective anti-corruption mechanism that fosters investor confidence and openness within the extractive sector.



RRR4U's annual analysis of monitoring reforms and international financial assistance.



Throughout 2024, the RRR4U consortium of Ukrainian think tanks, supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, regularly monitored Ukraine's compliance with the IMF programme and the Ukraine Plan under the Ukraine Facility. This work enabled us to track the progress of reforms, including the adoption of key legislation, and to evaluate the effect of fulfilled commitments on the country's macro-financial stability. The monitoring confirmed progress in IMF programme reviews, an openness to reforms and a high level of responsibility towards international partners.

Despite these positive developments, experts identified a risk of insufficient fiscal deficit coverage due to additional defence financing requirements. The reports propose solutions to reduce this gap, ranging from changing the tax structure to raising revenue from frozen Russian assets. Thanks to RRR4U's systematic work, monitoring has become a tool for transparency, accountability, and dialogue with donors – all of which are critical to supporting Ukraine during the war.



Assessing the resilience of Ukraine's power system

As part of the 'Improving Energy Security for Tomorrow' project, which is supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, DiXi Group analysed the passage of three autumn-winter periods, both before and after the full-scale invasion. The analysis focuses on the state of Ukraine's energy system, including thermal, hydro, nuclear and renewable generation. Despite massive attacks, the occupation of some thermal power plants (TPPs) and significant grid damage, the power sector managed to keep the system running and Ukraine continued to move towards energy independence. The analytical monitoring records not only the scale of losses, but also the effectiveness of repair campaigns, the amount of stabilisation assistance received from partners, and the strategic steps taken to prepare for new challenges.

Setting economic priorities for 2025

The International Renaissance Foundation supported a dialogue between the government, businesses, and experts on key economic priorities at the 'Restoring the Country: Economic Results 2024, Priorities 2025'. Participants discussed business incentives, export support, war risk insurance, and access to finance. There was much attention paid to mine clearance, support for industrial innovation, and taxation issues. Proposals for improvement included updating regional development strategies, reforming the system for blocking tax invoices, and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises. The conference provided a platform for agreeing on further joint actions.

Shaping a new migration policy for Ukraine



With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the study 'Analysis of Migration Policies of States: Guidelines for Ukraine', which formed the basis of an expert discussion on future strategies in this area. Participants at the roundtable stressed that, in the context of war and a demographic crisis, migration policy must form part of a comprehensive strategy for Ukraine's economic recovery. They discussed the need to preserve human capital and create conditions that allow Ukrainians to fulfil their potential, while also attracting foreign specialists with the necessary skills.

The study examines effective policies in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, where migration is directed according to labour market needs. Ukrainian experts also emphasised the importance of open public dialogue on labour immigration, in order to avoid prejudice and develop a shared vision of its benefits for the country. This presentation formed part of a broader initiative aimed at updating Ukraine's migration policy to reflect new realities and challenges.





Local development

Communities understand their own needs and challenges best. They are the first to respond to crises and look for solutions, and they can implement changes quickly. Investing in local initiatives helps rebuild infrastructure, create jobs and foster trust between people and the authorities. This strengthens local resilience and ensures that national recovery is more effective and equitable.

A contest that strengthens communities' resilience

In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation held a competition called 'Resilience, Recovery and Development of Territorial Communities', in partnership with the European Union. The competition aimed to support initiatives that promote transparent community recovery, strategic planning, public participation, and cooperation with local authorities. A total of 112 projects were submitted for the competition, 13 of which received funding.

Grants were awarded to organisations working with local communities to update development strategies, implement anti-corruption tools, increase capacity for attracting donor funding and improve interaction between residents and local authorities.

A series of final meetings were held in autumn, during which the organisations presented the results of their projects. Foundation representatives, together with grantees, visited several communities, including Dmytrivska, Borodyanska, and Makarivska, where new strategic documents had been created. The meetings provided an opportunity to discuss achievements and challenges, and to exchange advice with organisations that are just starting to work in communities.



Training programme for communities: public-private partnerships and mobility

The sixth training programme for 12 communities from various regions has begun in Kyiv. Topics covered include public-private partnerships, infrastructure solutions, and transport and mobility development strategies. The programme was organised by the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities at KSE, with support from the International Renaissance Foundation. It was developed based on a preliminary study of community needs, responding to the demand for strengthened management capacity in times of war.



Research on community resilience: what enables communities to survive in times of war?

With the support of the Foundation, the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities conducted a large-scale study in 12 communities from different regions of Ukraine. The aim was to identify needs in three areas: resilience, development, and recovery. The study found that frontline communities demonstrate a higher level of resilience, but there is a nationwide shortage of quality shelters, IT training and communication capacity. Trust in the authorities and civic participation were also found to be important factors.

Conference in the Cherkasy Region: How Communities Can Plan for Recovery



In October, a conference was held for representatives of 11 communities from three regions implementing projects supported by the Foundation. They discussed the challenges of strategic planning, lack of staff, support for IDPs, and institutional capacity. They presented practical cases on finding solutions: from housing programmes to partnerships with foreign communities. They also shared their experience in setting up project offices and engaging young people.

Exchange of experience: Cherkasy Region hosts communities from neighbouring regions

As part of the Strategic Planning Challenges conference, delegations from the Chernihiv and Kyiv regions visited the city. Participants discussed security challenges, population outflow, the need for social infrastructure, how to mobilise resources, and staff shortages. The importance of engaging communities in strategic planning, working with internally displaced persons (IDPs) and sharing regional experiences was stressed. The outcome was a resolution containing practical recommendations on how to plan community development in challenging circumstances.

Experience of the de-occupied territories: how to work carefully and effectively



The Ukrainian Peacebuilding School Association presented the results of two studies on working with communities after liberation from Russian occupation. The first study analyses the challenges faced by the public sector in the Kherson region following its liberation. To better understand how relationships are built, trust is restored and assistance is organised in times of crisis, the authors conducted interviews with activists, government officials and donors.

The second study, 'Roadmap for Working with De-occupied Communities', is a practical guide for those helping liberated territories. Based on the experience of the Kharkiv and Kherson regions, the document focuses on conflicts, social capital and the importance of working carefully with local residents and avoiding the imposition of ready-made solutions. Both studies were supported by the International Renaissance Foundation and the European Union as part of the European Renaissance of Ukraine project.



'Safety Advisor': awareness saves lives



The Security Advisor project, implemented by the Association of Community Advisors of Ukraine with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and the EU, helps community members prepare for potential threats. The handbook contains action plans for crisis situations, information on shelters and 'points of invincibility', and advice on physical, digital and mental safety. The project covered seven regions and became an important resource for local residents, particularly in the Borodyanka community. In addition to printed and electronic versions of the guide, a visual poster containing contact details for support services was created.

Energy efficient communities: knowledge for recovery

An intensive training course aimed at improving energy efficiency was held for community representatives in Rivne. The Alliance of Ukrainian Universities organised the training as part of a joint project with the International Renaissance Foundation. Over the course of three days, more than 20 community representatives studied topics such as energy management, switching to local fuels, water management, waste management and climate change adaptation. The event provided communities with practical knowledge and encouraged further cooperation with universities to promote sustainable development and energy independence.

Digital educational spaces for children in rural communities

Three modern digital educational centres for children have opened in the villages of Tarasivka, Hoholeve and Rudnia in the Velykodymerska community. This was made possible thanks to the support of the International Renaissance Foundation as part of the 'Comprehensive Solutions for the Restoration of the Velykodymerska Community' project. The centres are equipped with computers, tablets, drones, microscopes, telescopes, books, and creative materials. Based in local schools, they are open to all interested children. This investment in education and psychological support for schoolchildren during wartime is a valuable initiative.



Kropyvnytskyi has set development priorities until 2030

For the first time in its history, Kropyvnytskyi has approved a Development Strategy for 2030, which was developed with the participation of over 200 residents and experts. The document sets out the key tasks for the coming years, including the development of education, healthcare, culture, infrastructure, innovation, business support, environmental improvement and inclusion. Priority projects include providing housing for IDPs, introducing an electronic ticketing system for public transport, modernising parks and creating a city museum. One of the projects related to national and patriotic education will be funded with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

The peripheral communities of Polissya have received their own development strategies

In the Zhytomyr region, the communities of Bronyky and Yarun have developed their development strategies up to 2027. The project was implemented by the Bohorodchany District Community Development Agency with the support of the EU and the International Renaissance Foundation. More than 400 residents took part in the process. The success was not only the creation of strategic documents incorporating an environmental assessment, but also the training of local officials in project management.

A recovery plan for the Novobilouska community following the occupation.

Having survived the initial occupation at the start of the large-scale invasion, the Novobilouska community in the Chernihiv region has developed a robust recovery plan for 2027. With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the community has compiled a list of dozens of specific actions, ranging from the construction of shelters in schools and the reconstruction of heating systems to the reclamation of landfills, the removal of explosives and the construction of wells. Taking into account security, social, demographic and economic aspects, the plan aims to create a safe, comfortable and promising environment to encourage the return of residents and promote community development.





Human-centred recovery

What we are talking about when we talk about recovery

The word 'recovery' is often associated with restoring destroyed cities, bridges and schools. However, at the International Renaissance Foundation, we recognise that this is only one aspect of a wider recovery process. Recovery is not just about physical infrastructure. First and foremost, recovery is about creating conditions in which Ukrainians can grow, study, work and rebuild their lives.

For the Reconstruction Fund, recovery involves systemic transformation, including institutions, relationships, trust, access to services, security, the environment and inclusion. Most importantly, this process cannot be postponed until after the war. Without the human dimension, even the best infrastructure projects will be meaningless because there will be no one left to use them. This is why a human-centred approach is our strategic priority. This involves investing in education, social spaces, professional development, entrepreneurship, wellbeing, and justice.

Recovery is also about resilience. It's about having the strength to not only survive the war, but also to grow and develop.

We support organisations working in communities, helping them to grow stronger, share their experiences and develop local solutions that can be scaled up. This is all part of the Foundation's extensive systemic work, implemented through programmes, initiatives and partnerships.

Recovery is also an opportunity to emerge from the crisis stronger than before. Now is our chance to make the country more open and fairer, and closer to its people and Europe. That is why we are already working to make it happen.



Contest to support community resilience: 14 projects awarded grants

The International Renaissance Foundation held a competition called 'Supporting Civil Society Resilience and Strengthening Social Ties in Communities'. The competition aimed to strengthen cooperation between active communities that play a key role in societal cohesion during times of war. A total of 145 project proposals were submitted to the competition. Fourteen initiatives were selected for funding, totalling over UAH 17 million.

Winners included organisations from Kharkiv, Odesa, Druzhkivka, the Carpathian region, Kherson, and other communities. Their projects cover a wide range of topics, including supporting young people and veterans, engaging with women and LGBTQ+ communities, developing local leadership, integrating internally displaced persons (IDPs) and building community partnerships. Some projects focus on education, employment, mental health and innovative community development approaches.

The contest has become a tool for bolstering public capacity in the face of ongoing war-related challenges. Supported initiatives should bolster solidarity networks and empower communities to respond more effectively to local needs, thereby enhancing social resilience nationwide.



Research into how communities adapt to war.



Socioinform conducted a study on the resilience and recovery of communities in the context of a full-scale war, at the request of the International Renaissance Foundation. The study analysed how communities adapt, the factors hindering their development, and the needs of local governments and civil society. The capacity of a community is affected more by the activity and foresight of local authorities, the quality of communication with NGOs, and strategic planning than by geographical proximity to the frontline. Civil society plays a leading role in mobilising resources, supporting vulnerable groups, and promoting human-centred solutions. However, it currently requires systematic financial, organisational, and informational support.

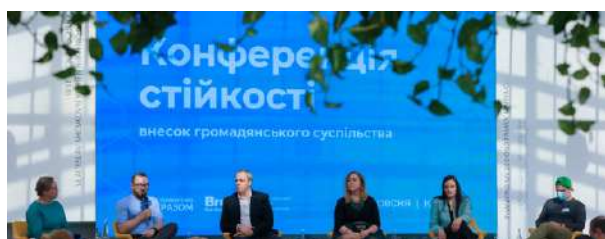
Full recovery is impossible without coordinated cooperation between the state, donors, local authorities and CSOs. This requires a clear national-level recovery policy, local-level strategic planning, and donor flexibility. Successful recovery is based on decentralisation, a systemic approach, localisation of solutions, and the real involvement of citizens in decision-making within their communities.

Communities that hold on: A Resilience Conference



On 27 September, Kyiv hosted the Resilience Conference: 'Civil Society Contribution', organised by the International Renaissance Foundation as part of the Resilience Lab programme. The event brought together over 150 representatives from civil society organisations, local authorities, donor agencies, and experts from across Ukraine. Participants discussed how civil society can contribute to community resilience in the context of protracted warfare, what a strategic vision of recovery should entail, and the most effective current practices.

Particular attention was paid to economic resilience, with discussions focusing on social entrepreneurship, job creation and the fair distribution of resources between government and non-governmental organisations. A key element of the programme was the presentation of the study 'Restoring Ukraine: Priorities, Risks, Inclusion', which the Foundation conducted with the Socioinform agency and the support of the European Union. Conference participants shared practical examples, analysed the challenges faced by communities and outlined areas of action together to strengthen cooperation between CSOs, donors and local governments.



A Vision of Resilience: How Civil Society Sees Ukraine's Recovery



During the Resilience Conference in September 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation presented the study 'Vision of Resilience'. The document is the result of a series of expert discussions, offering a harmonised vision of the key challenges and directions of Ukraine's recovery from civil society. Topics covered include economic and social resilience, community support, working with veterans, integrating internally displaced persons, environmental issues, and preparing for accession to the European Union. Particular attention is paid to how civil society can strengthen its role in policymaking, transparency, and interaction with the authorities.

The Resilience Vision offers strategic guidelines for future reconstruction based on the principles of people-centredness, participation, and good governance. While not a technical plan, the document serves as a guide to shared values for all key stakeholders, including parliament, the government, local authorities, businesses, donors, and communities. The goal is to establish a shared approach to recovery that considers the needs of individuals, the particularities of communities, and Ukraine's international obligations.

A platform for investment in environmentally sustainable construction.



At a side event held during the International Conference on Ukraine's Recovery in Berlin, participants emphasised the importance of investing in Ukraine's energy sector immediately, rather than waiting until after the war. In the face of limited resources and constant attacks, participants stressed that it is critical not only to repair, but also to create a modern, decentralised, green energy system. Representatives from government, the European Commission, businesses and NGOs presented financing instruments and a vision for the transition to sustainable energy. They stressed that projects are already in place and that the time to act is now.

How to make recovery transparent

The NGO New Energy has prepared an analytical document showing that the system for prioritising reconstruction projects needs to be reformed. Despite changes having been made, the process still relies on subjective decisions and manual management. The brief sets out steps to automate the process, thereby minimising corruption risks and ensuring the fair distribution of funds. This development formed part of a project implemented in the Krasnopilska community with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

Communities as drivers of recovery

Dobrobat conducted an extensive study of the needs of communities in the Chernihiv and Kyiv regions. By surveying residents, local authorities, businesses and the public sector, we were able to build a detailed picture of exactly what needs to be restored and in what sequence. The results showed that people want a return not only to pre-war conditions, but also to qualitative changes. The greatest needs are housing, roads, and critical infrastructure. This study formed the basis for further parliamentary hearings and recommendations for the country's development.



A recipe for resilience in times of war

At the Civil Society Policy Forum in Washington, D.C., representatives from Ukraine and international institutions discussed how the country has managed to maintain economic stability in the face of war. The country's ability to survive and move towards the EU has been enabled by transparency in public procurement, a stable banking system, fiscal policy reforms and international assistance. The panellists concluded that Ukraine's experience could be useful for other countries facing major external shocks.





Alliance of Universities helps communities become stronger

The project, 'Strengthening the Capacity of Communities to Rebuild Through Pilot Interaction with Universities', helps communities to better understand their needs and to build effective solutions in difficult wartime conditions. The Alliance of Ukrainian Universities team has developed a universal assessment methodology that considers the views of the authorities, residents, businesses, NGOs, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and military families.

In 2024, the universities conducted a large-scale study in 12 communities. According to residents, the most critical issue is sustainability. This includes a lack of adequate shelters, contingency plans and power backups, as well as problems with IT systems. Communities also experience interruptions to medical and educational services and poor internet and mobile communications.



The initiative is being implemented with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The Alliance intends to continue supporting communities, helping them to recover and develop, and sharing its methodology and experience with other regions of Ukraine.

This study enabled the communities to gain an insight into their own situation from the perspective of their residents and identify areas for improvement. The collected data helps establish cooperation between various groups, ranging from local authorities to businesses and activists. Universities are engaging experts and international partners to help communities find solutions.



A guide to community-university partnerships

Together with twelve communities in Ukraine, the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities has created a practical guide entitled *How Universities and Communities Can Collaborate*. This publication is the outcome of a year of collaborative efforts within the Community Capacity Building project, encompassing needs assessments, training sessions, mentoring programmes, and the development of local initiatives. The guide contains tools for building partnerships, methodologies for analysing community needs, examples of successful projects and recommendations on adapting cooperation to local conditions. The document is publicly available and will be useful for communities and universities seeking to establish sustainable relationships.

Water for Zelenodolsk: wells as an element of resilience

The Zelenodolsk community in the Kryvyi Rih region, which was affected by the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station explosion, is implementing a project to arrange an alternative water supply. Thanks to its participation in the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities project, the community has developed a plan to drill ten new wells, which will provide drinking water to all settlements. This will provide more than 18,000 residents with drinking water and reduce the community's dependence on external sources. The project is being carried out in collaboration with the Dnipro Polytechnic National Technical University.



Safe kindergarten in Marhanivka



A project has been developed in Marhanets to overhaul and equip the Olenka Kindergarten No. 10 shelter, allowing 240 preschoolers to return to full-time education. The community's educational infrastructure has been severely damaged by shelling, so providing a safe shelter is essential for its recovery. With the support of the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities, the community has received training in project management and fundraising and has prepared a comprehensive action plan. The project also includes play, learning and recreation areas in a safe environment.





Planning for the recovery of eastern Ukraine's occupied territories

Even though the date of their return is still unknown, it is important to start planning for the restoration of the occupied territories now. After de-occupation, these regions will undergo complex processes: they will need to rebuild infrastructure, establish the work of the authorities, repopulate the area and provide basic services.

Shaping a vision of the future for Donetsk and Luhansk regions

The International Renaissance Foundation has supported an analytical initiative aimed at developing a strategy for the institutional restoration of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions following their liberation. The project brings together experts, government representatives, local authorities and civil society to generate ideas that will facilitate the effective restoration of the region and rebuild trust in the state.

The team of researchers is working on several key topics, including the restoration of government bodies, the engagement of specialists, the administrative and territorial structure, and the mechanisms for citizen participation. The focus is on encouraging people to return to the region, as without them a sustainable future is impossible. The materials developed will form the basis of government policies, international assistance and active public discussion.

Participants in the initiative emphasise that, although the future is uncertain, we must prepare for it today. After all, having a clear vision for the development of the East will encourage IDPs to return, prevent people from becoming disheartened by the occupation and convince the world that the region has a future.



Public administration after de-occupation

This study analyses how the government system should function in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions once they are under Ukrainian control again. The authors consider various ways of organising public administration at all levels, from regional to local. Particular attention is paid to territorial communities, since these will form the basis of the new local government.

New administrative-territorial structure

This study focuses on how the region's map should change in light of the new conditions. The destruction of cities, population decline and changes in logistics routes all require a rethink of the configuration of communities and districts. The authors propose specific ideas for a renewed, realistic territorial structure.

Reintegration scenarios at a national level

At the 'From (De)Occupation to Open Democratic Governance' conference, participants discussed scenarios for the return of temporarily occupied territories and their future institutional structures. They emphasised the need for immediate preparation, including forming personnel reserves and developing policies, strategies and mechanisms for interaction between the authorities, civil society and citizens. Representatives of the Renaissance International Foundation presented the results of their research into the key challenges of reintegration, focusing on four areas: the authorities, personnel, the ATU and

Human resources in the region

This study collects data and analytics on staffing in the Donetsk and Luhansk regional authorities. The authors are seeking answers to the question of where to find professional managers who can restore the work of the local administration and make it effective. This involves attracting new specialists and encouraging those who left due to the war to return.

Local democracy during the transition period.

The study focuses on how citizens can participate in rebuilding Donbas, even during the transition period when power in these territories will be centralised. It discusses tools that will enable people to participate in decision-making processes, increase transparency, and rebuild trust in the state. This is an important factor in encouraging people to want to live in and develop the region after the war.

public participation. The Future of the East platform has evolved into a virtual space where this work can continue and new participants can be engaged in discussions.



Strengthening civil society through hub networking



In February, the International Renaissance Foundation convened a gathering of civil society hubs from across Ukraine. The meeting aimed to address challenges related to human and social capital, facilitate the exchange of experiences, and pinpoint areas for growth. The event was attended by representatives of over 30 organisations, ranging from volunteer initiatives and veterans' spaces to hubs working with displaced persons, activists, and local communities. Participants discussed topics such as fatigue, burnout and motivation, as well as new forms of interaction that can help maintain resilience in times of war.

The event provided an opportunity to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in the hubs' work. A study on the resilience of the public sector was presented at the event and confirmed that teams are best held together by a healthy climate, mutual support and a clear understanding of their mission, as well as resources. Hubs no longer simply coordinate initiatives – they have become spaces of strength, learning and interaction, and sometimes even places of recovery.



Networking that brings people together: regular meetings of volunteers and activists



Supported by the International Renaissance Foundation and the Action Office, monthly volunteer networking events in Kyiv have become a unique platform for activists, volunteers, artists and public figures from all over Ukraine to meet. Since June 2022, over 40 meetings have been held in Kyiv and 10 in Lviv, with more than 2,000 participants in total. These events offer opportunities for networking, inspiration and real cooperation, helping to find solutions to common challenges and strengthen civil society.

The networking initiative has become a regular space for sharing experiences, providing emotional support, and launching new projects and partnerships. Thanks to the Foundation's support, the events now feature guest speakers and discussion formats, and attract new participants from various fields, ranging from education to support for the Armed Forces of Ukraine.



The Power of Culture: Identity, Knowledge, Creativity

In 2024, we championed culture as a source of strength, renewal and unity. Through literature, art, cinema, science, education and new media, we helped to shape Ukrainian identity, preserve memory and discover new meanings. We paid particular attention to initiatives that strengthened the bond between generations, developed critical thinking, and showcased Ukraine as a modern, multifaceted and free nation to the world. After all, culture is not just about heritage; it is also about the future.



Why is this important?

Culture is fundamental, not secondary. It shapes our perception of ourselves, the world and our cause. In times of full-scale war, culture becomes a means of preserving identity and a tool of resistance. Through books, films, music, education, art and blogs, we show the world who we are, why we cannot be ignored and why freedom matters to us.

Culture also provides strength. It helps people to restore their inner resources, find meaning, cope with loss and talk about difficult subjects. At the same time, culture shapes our vision of the future: who we will be after the war, what we want to preserve and how we want to live going forward. If we want to build a strong, responsible and open society, we must invest in culture, knowledge and creativity today.

Our priorities



Education

Developing critical thinking and values through modern educational approaches.



Art and memory

Support for cultural projects that reflect on war and preserve national memory.



Books and texts

Strengthening Ukraine's voice through literature, publishing, and public initiatives.



Media and creativity

Supporting bloggers, artists, and films that tell the world about Ukraine.



Access to culture

Promoting access to culture and knowledge for everyone, regardless of their location, age or experience.



A culture that fosters an open society

Culture is the foundation of trust, empathy and dialogue. Through culture, we understand each other, form shared values and learn to see the world through others' eyes. In an open society, it is important to have spaces where people can speak honestly, listen to each other, express themselves, and engage in discussion. Therefore, we see creating sustainable cultural platforms and supporting an ecosystem of interaction as an investment in critical thinking and the power of democratic change.

Coalition of Cultural Activists: Uniting for Change

The Coalition of Cultural Activists is a community of experts who work to strengthen the cultural sector and influence public policy.

In 2024, one of the coalition's key achievements was an advocacy and communication campaign, conducted in collaboration with the Institute of Legislative Ideas. This campaign aimed to ensure transparent elections to the Supervisory Board of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation. Acting as the voice of the cultural community, the coalition called for open processes and active public participation.

Thanks to the joint efforts of the Ministry of Culture, experts, and civil society, the Supervisory Board now comprises reputable and authoritative cultural figures.

The International Renaissance Foundation also supported the creation of a special platform to encourage public engagement. The Foundation believes that cultural institutions should operate transparently and in the interests of the community. This is why we supported this process – to demonstrate that, even during wartime, society is capable of defending the quality of government decisions. Strong institutions are a key part of resilience. This demonstrates that culture is central to the future of the country, not secondary.



NYCamp: a camp that grows alongside the teenagers of Donetsk region



In 2024, the Carpathian Mountains played host to the second NYCamp arts and education camp, an initiative of the New York Literary Festival founded by Victoria Amelina. More than 20 teenagers from the Donetsk Oblast took part in the camp, having won or been nominated in an essay competition on the theme 'Deoccupation of the Future'. Young people from New York, Bakhmut, Svitlodarsk, Zvanivka and other cities had the opportunity to work alongside renowned artists and explore literature, music, acting and art therapy.

The camp provided a safe, trusting environment where teenagers could be themselves, share their experiences and aspirations, and collaborate on creative projects, all while receiving support. Supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, NYCamp continues Victoria Amelina's mission to support children in towns on the front line through culture and education. Some of the participants are now returning to the project as volunteers, and the festival also provides educational grants for winners of the essay competition.



ForkFest: culture as a bridge to southern Ukraine



The Ukrainian culture festival ForkFest was held for the second time in southern Ukraine in 2024, this time in Chornomorsk. Due to restrictions in the border area, the organisers were forced to move the event from Vylkove, but they preserved its spirit and scale. Four days, four locations, 12 music bands, literary discussions, film screenings, workshops, and a book fair brought together hundreds of participants and visitors. The International Renaissance Foundation partnered with the festival for the second time, supporting a platform for lively discussion and rethinking of the Ukrainian South.

Participants discussed decolonisation, cultural isolation, the prospects for the Odesa region, memories of the war, and spoke about the Ukrainian South as a region of strength, resistance and potential. A special moment of the festival was the evening dedicated to the memory of writer Viktoriya Amelina, who stood at the origins of both NYCamp and a new cultural sensitivity in Ukraine. ForkFest proved that culture can unite the country, even in the most difficult conditions.



'Wandering Starobilsk': Culture as Support and Memory



In 2024, as part of the 'Travelling Starobilsk' project, a team of librarians and cultural managers from the Luhansk Regional Library organised a series of art events in various Ukrainian cities. Implemented with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the project began in Kropyvnytskyi and comprised six interaction formats, ranging from literary anti-lectures to art therapy workshops and public discussions.

This cultural initiative provided support for displaced persons from Luhansk and expressed gratitude to the communities that welcomed them. Participants listened to speeches by military writers, discussed the integration of internally displaced persons, and took part in poetry evenings, exhibitions, and musical performances. Following Kropyvnytskyi, 'Wandering Starobilsk' travelled to Novovolynsk, Yarmolynetsy, Chortkiv and Kyiv.



The Protasiv Yar Festival – continuing the work of Roman Ratushny

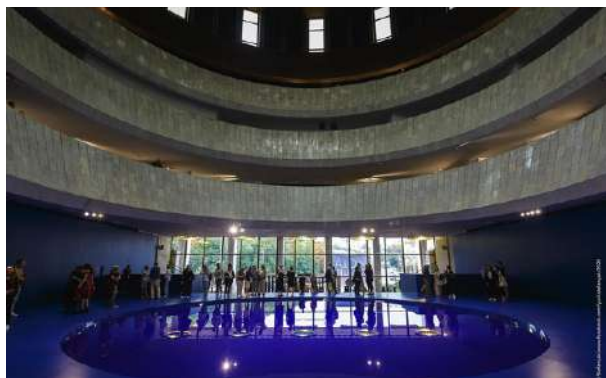


In the summer of 2024, Kyiv hosted the second Protasiv Yar Festival, a cultural event held in memory of the social activist and scout, Roman Ratushny. The events took place on the lawn of Protasiv Yar, a place for which Roman had fought with all his might. The programme included concerts, readings, lectures, film screenings, and discussions about human rights, democracy, historical memory, and the power of community.

Attracting over 2,000 participants, the festival was organised by the NGO 'Protect Protasiv Yar', the Protasiv Yar community and the NGO 'Publishers' Forum', with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The festival continued Roman's legacy of protecting public spaces and encouraging community involvement in their future. The festival demonstrated that a cultural initiative can serve as both an act of remembrance and a platform for public dialogue.

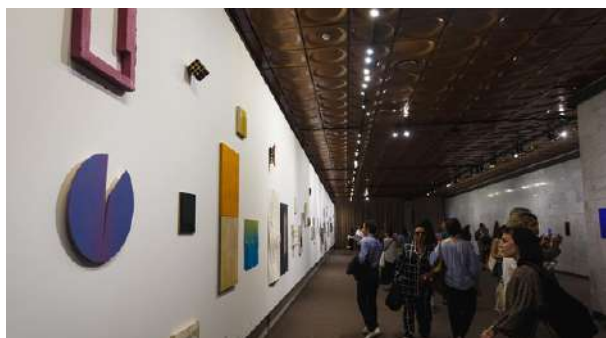


The Silvaši Circles: Five Floors of Ukrainian Abstraction



In September 2024, the Ukrainian House opened a major retrospective exhibition of the work of Tiberius Silvashi, one of Ukraine's most famous abstract artists. Entitled 'The Circles of Silvashi', the exhibition spans five floors of the building, each revealing a different theme, period or mood in the artist's work. It features pieces from museum collections in Europe, the United States, and Ukraine, as well as from private collections. The project was implemented in collaboration with the Ukrainian Museum of Modern Art.

Thanks to the carefully conceived concept of the five 'circles', visitors can observe the evolution of the artist's style, the influences that shaped it, and his contribution to the development of the visual language of abstraction in Ukraine. This large-scale approach makes the retrospective a unique phenomenon in the Ukrainian museum scene, and the Foundation's support has made it accessible to a wide range of visitors.



'AFLOAT': Kherson art against occupation and oblivion



In January 2024, the 'AFLOAT' exhibition opened at PEN Ukraine in Kyiv. It was created by the Totem cultural centre in Kherson with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The project focuses on art that keeps people afloat, both literally and metaphorically. It focuses on the stories of Kherson residents who, despite occupation, loss and constant shelling, continue to create and preserve their city. The exhibition features drawings, sculptures, photographs, texts and videos that recount the city's story through the personal experiences of its artists and residents.

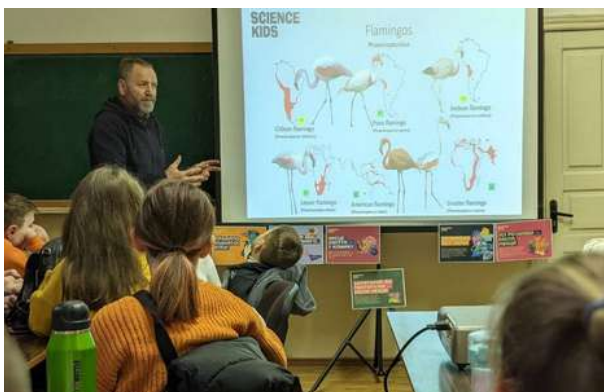
The exhibition has become both a place of remembrance and a space for reconnecting. Visitors came to remember the deceased, such as the writer Volodymyr Vakulenko and the poet Viktoria Amelina. They read poems by Oleksandr Gunko, listened to music and viewed photos of destroyed buildings replaced by artistic creations. The exhibition's atmosphere – warm, sad and sincere – demonstrates the importance of culture, even – and especially – in times of war. Support from the Foundation made it possible to preserve and convey these stories, as well as strengthening the sense of community among Kherson residents scattered across the country.

Science Kids: science for children – interesting and accessible



Science Kids is a project by the NGO INSCIENCE that makes science friendly for children. The team builds a community of young curious minds instead of pushing lessons on a whole class. Kids aged 7–13 meet scientists, do simple experiments, play quizzes, and ask many questions. The online lecture series started during the war to connect Ukrainian children in Ukraine and abroad. Sessions last about two hours and include a short talk, a Kahoot quiz, and open Q&A. Videos are then posted on YouTube so families can rewatch and comment.

The project also runs local hubs in Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Odesa, and Kharkiv, with trained coordinators who prepare speakers and support children after tough nights of shelling. The approach is STEM-based: show links between disciplines, do hands-on tasks, and teach critical thinking.



Podcast ‘Ukrainian Sky’: Astronomy through Ukrainian Optics

To celebrate International Astronomy Day on 23 May 2024, the ‘Ukrainian Sky’ podcast was launched. Created by scientist Lyudmila Marchenko, it was supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, the Democratic Initiatives Foundation, and the Ukrainian Institute. The podcast was one of the winners of a competition for projects promoting Ukrainian cultural heritage. Each five-minute episode explores Ukrainian folk knowledge, the contributions of Ukrainians to the field of astronomy, and the traditions that connect us to the stars.

The podcast materials are already being distributed through a network of European planetariums and are available to listen to on streaming platforms. The project promotes a deeper understanding of how Ukrainian culture is integrated into the world's scientific heritage, inspiring us to share our story in a way that is both scientifically accurate and accessible.





Scholarships for Video Bloggers: Amplifying the Voice of Ukrainian Identity

In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation announced the third instalment of its scholarship competition for video bloggers working at the intersection of historical memory, decolonisation and cultural resistance. This time, the competition focused on overcoming Russian imperialism and shaping national identity through video content. Thirteen channels received funding ranging from 100,000 to 150,000 hryvnia, including: Zagin Kinomaniv, Local History, Tokar.ua, Kulturtrigger, OLDBoi, Historical Truth and more.

The foundation supports video bloggers because they have become an important source of knowledge about Ukrainian history, culture, and struggle, both past and present. During this time of great war, video content plays a special role in strengthening Ukrainian identity, debunking myths, and countering enemy propaganda.



This competition forms part of the Foundation's wider strategy to establish a sustainable ecosystem for Ukrainian-language video content. Previous scholarship recipients, such as Istoryia bez mifiv (History Without Myths), Tvoia Pidpilna Humanitarka (Your Underground Humanitarian Aid), and Geek Journal, have already demonstrated how bloggers can influence public opinion, dispel colonial narratives, and encourage people to reconsider their national identity.

Supporting these channels means supporting critical thinking and pro-Ukrainian perspectives, as well as amplifying the voices of those who help millions of viewers to discover Ukraine's true, complex and proud history.



I am staying: stories of resilience and action



The project 'I'm Staying', created by the Centre for Social Initiatives 'Perspective' with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, tells the stories of Ukrainians who continue to live and work in frontline, de-occupied and rear communities despite the war. Consisting of six documentaries, it features individuals starting businesses, supporting others, saving museums, leading communities and preserving the memory of the war, even in places where fighting took place not long ago.

The stories were filmed in various regions of Ukraine, including Mykolaiv, Chernihiv and Sumy. Each series reveals unique examples of responsibility, cooperation, and everyday civic heroism. It is a film about human resilience, love for one's homeland, and the strength to stay when leaving would be easier. The project is broadcast on public television channels and is also available online.



The National Union of Cinematographers won a court case against the Cabinet of Ministers

In April 2024, the National Union of Cinematographers of Ukraine won a court case against the Cabinet of Ministers. The court ruled that the government's decision to grant the State Film Support Council members additional powers without holding a competition was illegal. This was an important victory for the entire cultural community, which had come together to advocate for transparency and legality. The case was also supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, as it concerns key principles of an open society: accountability, legality, and equal access to state support.

Testimony from the trenches: Oleg Sentsov's Real in Karlovy Vary

Oleg Sentsov's documentary film *Real*, which was shot by chance during combat on the south-eastern front, premiered at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival. Shot without staging, script or special effects, the film shows the war through the eyes of a soldier. This Ukrainian-Croatian co-production was supported by several international partners, including the International Renaissance Foundation. It is not just a film, but a living testament to resistance and courage, showing the world the truth about the war in Ukraine.





Education as a guarantee of change

Teacher Academy: a new model for training modern teachers

The Teaching Academy is an innovative educational initiative designed to transform teacher training in Ukraine. Launched in partnership with EdCamp Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science, the OECD, and other international educational organisations, it was established at V. Karazin Kharkiv National University. The project's primary objective is to enhance the quality of teacher education and nurture a new generation of educators who enter the profession with a deliberate choice, profound knowledge, and practical skills.

The project focuses on traditional university students studying subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology, history, and mathematics. In their fourth year, they can undertake teaching practice in real school settings. If they wish, they can then enrol on a Master's programme in Education combining online lectures, offline modules in Kyiv, and practical work in schools. This approach enables students to assess their suitability for teaching and gain experience and support before making a final decision about their career path.

The academy also addresses the issue of low employment rates among teacher training university graduates. Currently, many young people are unable to pursue careers in their chosen fields due to a lack of

quality practical training and a lack of confidence in their abilities. This is where the project comes in: instead of abstract theory, students can look forward to lively interaction, mentoring from experienced teachers, community support, the latest educational methods and psychological preparation for the challenges of school life.



Writing essays: a new tool for modern schools

Thanks to the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the National Project: Writing Essays, a collection of texts with worksheets for students which are already being used in over 2,500 schools across Ukraine. The materials include literary and journalistic texts, exercises and space for notes, as well as a modular writing training system. Developed by the Smart Education NGO in collaboration with Ukrainian and international partners, the resource is designed to help schoolchildren learn to write high-quality texts.

'How Education is Adapting to the Challenges of War': Research Findings and New Support Tools



The results of Ukraine's first study of students' socio-emotional skills (DoSEN) were presented at the "Resilience Point 2024," National EdCamp. While the military experience strengthened traits such as stress resistance, emotion control, and optimism in children, it also weakened curiosity, self-confidence, and empathy. Despite the challenging conditions, the study included almost 5,000 children from 19 regions of Ukraine. These results emphasise the need for systemic support for students and the adaptation of education to the new reality.

The event also featured a presentation of the national BELIEVE platform – an innovative tool for overcoming educational losses which is already being used by students from all regions of Ukraine. The platform enables students to enhance their understanding of core subjects through gamification. EdCamp brought together 77 speakers from 10 countries and featured more than 40 events, becoming a platform for new solutions in education during wartime. The event was also supported by the International Renaissance Foundation



The BELIEVE platform provides digital support for schoolchildren who have experienced educational setbacks.

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, BELIEVE, a digital platform for students who have lost some of their knowledge and motivation to learn due to the war or pandemic, has been launched as a pilot project in Ukraine. The project involves 2,000 students in Years 7, 9 and 11, including children from vulnerable groups such as IDPs, children from de-occupied territories and the children of military personnel and fallen soldiers. The platform helps users to improve their Ukrainian, English and maths skills, develop life skills and emotional resilience and work with a coach. The project's goal is to not only return knowledge, but also to provide psychological support to children in the face of the ongoing crisis.

NUS research: How the war affected reform, and what improvements are needed.

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the NGO Smart Education conducted a large-scale study of the challenges of implementing the New Ukrainian School reform in Years 5 and 6. Sociological research and interviews with teachers revealed significant issues with textbooks, programmes, formative assessment and communication of the reform itself. Almost half of the teachers were unable to explain the essence of the reform clearly, and some were forced to take courses at their own expense or simply purchase certificates. Nevertheless, teachers appreciate the NUS approaches and recognise positive changes, such as greater interaction with students, a more flexible approach to learning and a new role for teachers.



Literature as a tool for change

The International Renaissance Foundation believes that literature and books are powerful tools for social change. We believe that books can encourage critical thinking, reinforce democratic values and encourage dialogue within society. This is why the Foundation assists publishers, authors, libraries, cultural organisations and the media in creating and distributing high-quality Ukrainian literature.

The Chitomo Prize honours individuals from the book industry

The Chitomo Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Book Publishing was established in 2023 by Chitomo Media to honour the individuals and teams shaping the world of Ukrainian books. Established in 2023 by Chitomo Media, the prize recognises the professionalism, creativity, and influence of publishers, authors, libraries, bookshops, bloggers, and cultural managers. In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation, which has supported the development of the Ukrainian book market for over 30 years, became the award's general partner. Nominations are open for both publishing innovations and reading promotion, and winners will receive a cash prize of \$3,000.

The Foundation's support is a continuation of its long-term efforts to strengthen the literary landscape, ranging from the initial translation of humanitarian classics and the establishment of independent publishing houses to the development of educational programmes and the sponsorship of festivals. The Chitomo Prize also recognises the contribution of the cultural community in times of war, in promoting truth, creating a shared sense of purpose and building societal resilience.



The first Land of Poets festival in Lviv



In November 2024, Lviv hosted the Land of Poets festival for the first time. This large-scale literary and musical event brought together over 2,000 visitors and more than 100 participants from Ukraine and Europe. With the slogan 'Poets create a nation', the festival featured performances of poems, songs and voices that shape and protect Ukraine's cultural identity. Performers included Mariana Savka, Yuriy Andrukhovych, Kateryna Kalytko, Ivan Malkovych, Yaryna Chornohuz, Dmytro Lazutkin, Vasyl Makhno and many others. Poetry was performed alongside music, theatre, cinema and the living voices of those lost to the war.

The festival paid special attention to preserving memory: the Voices of the Poets' Land audio zone featured poems by deceased authors, while actors read poems by poets who had died on the front line. The event also had a charitable element, with fundraising taking place for scopes for the 225th Assault Battalion and for books for the library of the Snihuriv community. The festival was held with the financial support of the International Renaissance Foundation, which consistently supports literature as a tool of resistance, memory, and unity.



How to promote Ukrainian literature in the world



In December 2024, the Ukrainian Book Institute gathered authors, publishers, and managers for a strategic conversation on how to promote Ukrainian books abroad more effectively. The focus was on the experience of participating in the Frankfurt Book Fair and other international events. Andriy Kurkov, Halyna Kruk, Olena Huseynova, Mariana Savka, Yulia Orlova and others shared practical advice, including the importance of personal contact between the author and the publisher, submitting to international awards, participating in literary events and cooperating with independent bookstores.

The event was organized jointly by the Goethe-Institut in Ukraine and the Dialogue Art Council with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The Foundation regularly supports projects that not only develop Ukrainian book publishing, but also build sustainable partnerships around the world. The focus is on promoting the Ukrainian voice through translations, public events, institutional cooperation, and strengthening Ukraine's professional presence on global platforms.



Frankfurt Book Fair 2024



In October 2024, Ukraine made a strong statement at the 76th Frankfurt Book Fair, one of the world's largest book forums. The national stand brought together 30 Ukrainian publishing houses, which presented over 300 books for international licensing. The programme included over two dozen events featuring Ukrainian authors, poets, publishers, intellectuals, and diplomats. The theme, 'Reclaiming the Voice', attracted a lot of attention from visitors and journalists, with events including readings of poems testifying to the war experience, reflections on the role of culture in times of resistance, and discussions about contemporary Ukrainian identity.

Financial support for Ukrainian participation was provided by the International Renaissance Foundation, in partnership with the Goethe-Institut and other institutions. For the Foundation, this is a logical continuation of its systematic support for book publishing, translation, and cultural diplomacy. The Ukrainian stand not only hosted presentations, but also served as a platform for negotiations, new agreements and solidarity. It was opened by leading German cultural figures and was designed based on the works of Pavel Makov. Ukraine's presence at the fair is about more than just books. It is about a confident, relevant and irreplaceable voice in the European space.

The power of collaboration at Lviv BookForum



In October 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation will once again be joining the Lviv Book Forum, Ukraine's largest literary festival. As well as the general partnership, the Foundation held a separate event entitled 'Civil Society Collaboration: The Power of Resilience and What We Need'. Panelists Alim Aliyev, Olesya Ostrovska-Liuta, Inna Pidluska and Serhiy Zhadan discussed how civil society is holding the line not only at the front, but also in culture, education, the media and public spaces.

Book Arsenal 2024: a dialog on the brink

At last year's Book Arsenal, the International Renaissance Foundation supported the focus topic 'Life on the Edge' and took part in a special discussion as part of the Kharkiv Literary Museum's programme. The event, which featured the Foundation's Executive Director, Oleksandr Sushko, was titled "(Un)safe Gazing: What Visions of the Future Do We Need?..." – was an exploration of how to avoid losing sight of the future in the face of the present.

Participants in the discussion talked about imagination as a resource for recovery, culture as a source of support, and the responsibility of the intellectual community in the face of uncertainty and threats. For the Foundation, supporting such events represents an investment in meaning, community, and the capacity to think strategically, even during the most challenging of times.

'Book from Home': Ukrainian books in Latvia



The Foundation supported the 'Book from Home' project, which saw more than 900 books from 16 Ukrainian publishing houses donated to Ukrainians in Latvia. Books for children and adults were given to libraries and cultural centres. This initiative helps to preserve identity, spread the Ukrainian language and support those who have been forced to flee their homes.

Books for the hubs of Luhansk region

At the beginning of 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation and the Ukrainian Book Institute donated 2,000 Ukrainian books to 30 humanitarian hubs in Luhansk Oblast. The books include fiction, non-fiction and children's literature. These books help maintain a connection with culture and create a shared space for reading and recovery within communities affected by the war.



'Lace': contemporary literature for every city



In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation continued to provide systematic support for the 'Lace. Literary Readings in Ukrainian Towns', which is implemented by PEN Ukraine. The project aims to make contemporary Ukrainian literature accessible in small towns and district centres, where access to cultural events is often limited. Throughout the year, the initiative hosted numerous events across various regions, from Rivne to Odesa, where authors from across the country engaged with local residents.

The Foundation supported the Lace project and PEN Ukraine's volunteer literary trips. These included a large-scale trip in spring to the Odesa region with Ukrainian and French writers, as well as book donations to libraries, meetings with readers, poetry readings and discussions about war, memory, hope and the power of words.



Reintegrating and empowering veterans

In 2024, we continued to support the reintegration and empowerment of veterans. This involves not only adapting to life after returning from the front line, but also ensuring the full participation of veterans in social, economic and political life. We contributed to the development of veteran policies and supported projects focusing on rehabilitation, mental health, employment and legal protection. We also helped the families of soldiers and prisoners of war. Our focus is on individuals who have experienced war and who deserve a decent future in a peaceful society.



Why is it important?

Veterans are people who have sacrificed a lot. They defended the country, so upon their return they should receive support to help them regain their health, find employment, adapt to civilian life and fulfil their potential.

Without this, we risk losing their trust and their potential, including their experience, leadership and strength. Caring for veterans and their families is about respect, justice, and shared responsibility for the future. Societies that support their defenders become stronger and more resilient.

Our priorities



Policies for veterans

Supporting state and local decisions that take into account the needs and experience of veterans.



Rehabilitation and mental health

Programmes for the restoration of physical health, particularly following captivity.



Employment and education

Assistance with employment, retraining, education and entrepreneurship.



Families of veterans

Supporting families of military and prisoners of war as an important part of the veteran community.



Social reintegration

Involving veterans in community life and supporting their initiatives.



'Keeping the Line' contest: providing systemic support for veterans' initiatives

In partnership with the European Union, the International Renaissance Foundation held a large-scale competition called 'Keeping the Line', which aimed to develop the veterans' movement and strengthen the capacity of NGOs working with veterans. Out of the 148 projects submitted, 23 organisations won: 12 within the framework of the European Renaissance of Ukraine initiative and an additional 11 with funding from the Civil Resilience programme. The total budget for the competition was UAH 12 million.

The winners are organisations from various regions of Ukraine that implement diverse initiatives, such as creating veteran spaces, supporting families of fallen soldiers, assisting LGBTQI+ military personnel, running awareness campaigns, providing legal aid and psychological support, and facilitating professional adaptation and rehabilitation. Together, these projects form a holistic ecosystem of support for veterans, covering key areas of their lives, from legal and psychological support to civic engagement and the development of new communities.



In November, a public presentation of the projects was held in Kyiv. This event provided a platform for dialogue, cooperation and the exchange of experiences between organisations and donors. Topics discussed at the event included legal regulation, addiction support, communication between the state and veterans, and the potential of veterans' initiatives to effect real change. Representatives of organisations such as Legal Hundred, Return to Peaceful Life and Space of Opportunities emphasised that veterans' policy requires the active involvement of the public sector to complement and sometimes push the state to make the necessary decisions.





Reintegrating veterans

Many military personnel face difficulties when returning to civilian life, including alienation, psychological trauma and misunderstanding from society. Systemic support in the form of education, employment opportunities, psychosocial assistance, entrepreneurship development, and active participation in community life helps to restore the dignity and inner strength of each veteran.

'The Way of the Veteran': a practical guide to readjusting to peaceful life.

The guidebook summarises the key legal and practical information necessary for discharge from service, including details on benefits, social guarantees and interaction with the authorities. It was created in response to requests from thousands of military personnel and their families who, after discharge, are faced with bureaucratic complexities and a lack of information.

The guide was created based on requests received by the Ukrainian Veterans Fund's hotline. It contains step-by-step instructions for dealing with various life situations, such as discharge due to health reasons or age, or following captivity. It also provides recommendations for families of missing or deceased soldiers. Its simple language allows readers to quickly navigate the process of obtaining their rights and guarantees, thereby reducing the risk of additional stress during the transition period.

The presentation of the guide in Kyiv brought together government agency representatives, international organisation representatives, civil society initiative representatives, and veterans themselves. They all unanimously supported the idea that The Veteran's Way should not just be a publication, but a reliable guide to the support system. The guide will be available in print at all CCCs and JVs, as well as online, enabling it to reach a wide audience across the country.



Communities to veterans: training in Mykolayiv

The city of Mykolayiv hosted a two-day event called 'Communities to Veterans', which brought together over 40 community leaders and 25 specialists from various communities in southern Ukraine. The event aimed to share experiences and train local government professionals to work with veterans. It was organised by the All-Ukrainian Association of Communities in partnership with the NGO Space of Opportunities, and supported by the International Renaissance Foundation.

Participants learned about implementing veterans' policy, the role of local authorities, and cooperating with the Ministry of Veterans and businesses. Training sessions covered topics ranging from employment to psychological support.



Authorized police officers on veterans' issues

Kyiv hosted a discussion among experts on training police ombudsmen to work with veterans. Representatives of the National Police, free legal aid organisations and veterans' organisations attended the event. Participants discussed the challenges of police interaction with veterans and effective communication strategies.

The main idea is to establish a clear mechanism for police officers with combat experience to become commissioners responsible for working with veterans. The next step is to develop a training programme for these specialists.

Community Support Center: Assistance to communities in veteran policy



The Community Support Centre, a new initiative by the NGO "Space of Opportunities", in partnership with the All-Ukrainian Association of Communities, has been launched in Ukraine with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. The Centre provides expert assistance in creating programmes, opening veterans' spaces, introducing the role of veterans' support specialist and facilitating communication between the government and veterans' communities.

Specialists at the Centre provide analytics, counselling and training to local leaders, helping communities to develop individualised approaches to working with veterans. A key tool is a chatbot that identifies community needs, redirects enquiries and provides basic advice. This significantly speeds up communication and makes support available even in the most remote communities.





The third All-Ukrainian Dialogue 'Communities to Veterans'

The Third All-Ukrainian Dialogue, 'Communities to Veterans', which took place in Vinnytsia on 7 June 2024 and was attended by government officials, public figures, veterans, and international partners, was another step towards establishing a comprehensive state policy to support veterans and their families. The event provided an opportunity to identify specific areas of work, ranging from establishing a unified veteran infrastructure to training new professionals, such as veteran support specialists, who can act as a liaison between public services and the needs of veterans upon their return from the front.

A key focus of the meeting was the role of local government in reintegration. As the level of government closest to the individual, communities are actually the first to meet veterans after demobilisation. The initiatives presented by Vinnytsia during the forum, including veteran spaces, the Veteran Administrative Service in Transparent Offices and veteran assistants, demonstrate that local solutions can serve as models at the national level. The Vinnytsya region was rightly recognised as one of the leaders in the field of veterans' policy.



As a partner of the event, the International Renaissance Foundation supported dialogue as a key tool for developing effective solutions. The focus was on the practical implementation of policies based on the real needs of veterans, the joint training of communities and the state, and the empowerment of civil society. According to the participants, such events foster a new quality of interaction based on trust, responsibility and achieving results.



Reintegrating veterans: how communities learn to deal with new challenges



In 2024, the All-Ukrainian Association of Communities partnered with the NGO 'Space of Opportunities' to implement the year-long project 'Reintegration of Veterans: From Effective Solutions for Communities to Effective National Policy'. The project aimed to strengthen communities' capacity to work with veterans, help them prepare for the return of demobilised veterans and create conditions for their successful transition to civilian life. Over 500 local governments participated in the information campaign, 100 community representatives underwent specialised training, and 200 community leaders engaged in intensive information and experience exchange.

Key topics included supporting veterans and their families, creating veteran spaces, introducing the role of veteran support specialist and providing employment and psychological assistance. The project also established the UHHRU Veterans Committee, which brings together over 50 community representatives and professionals to develop strategic solutions and advocate for veterans' policies. It has also become a platform for dialogue between communities, government institutions and veterans' initiatives.

The 'Veteran Hub' in Novovolynsk

The city has launched a project to establish a Veteran Hub, which will provide psychological support and rehabilitation for veterans and their families. The Novovolynsk Union of ATO Veterans initiated the project, having received a grant from the International Renaissance Foundation.

The first meeting has already taken place, attended by veterans, public figures, and city representatives. The mayor emphasised that the hub would be created with the military's wishes in mind and called on veterans to actively participate in developing the space.



Warm City teaches how to work with veterans

The Ivano-Frankivsk-based NGO Warm City has launched a mentoring programme to support civil society organisations helping veterans and their families. Participants attend a three-day training course comprising workshops on fundraising, strategy and social entrepreneurship.

This is followed by online training with mentoring support until the end of August. The programme helps organisations to assess their potential, set goals, and develop strategies. Participation is free, and the organiser covers all logistics and accommodation costs. The project is supported by the International Renaissance Foundation.

Young people and veterans: moving from dialogue to cooperation



The training session, 'Youth and Veterans: Understanding, Interaction, Cooperation', brought together 30 activists from youth centres in the Lviv region. The event provided a platform for sharing experiences, developing joint initiatives and facilitating dialogue between young people and veterans.

It was organised by the First Women's Veteran Space 'Rehab' in partnership with the Department of Youth and Sports of the Lviv Regional State Administration, the Coalition of Veteran Spaces, and the International Renaissance Foundation. Upon completion of the training, participants received certificates and gained a new understanding of how to establish partnerships with veterans within their communities.

Veterans' support specialist is a new support link in communities

A new initiative has been launched in Ukraine to create the role of veteran support specialist. These specialists will help military personnel and their families adapt to civilian life by providing advice on benefits, rehabilitation, employment and legal issues. This position has been made possible through collaboration between the Ministry of Veterans, the All-Ukrainian Association of Communities and the NGO 'Space of Opportunities', with support from the International Renaissance Foundation.

'Brave Faces': when medicine and art restore dignity



The Doctors for Heroes project helps injured military personnel undergo reconstructive surgery to the head and face, enabling them to return to normal life. While these injuries are not always life-threatening, they can have a profound psychological impact. Thanks to the collaboration of doctors, bioengineers and philanthropists, 149 service personnel have already received assistance through the initiative, with 133 undergoing surgery. The Eastern Star Foundation implements the project with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

To raise public awareness of their work and draw attention to the needs of those wounded, the team created a photo exhibition called 'Brave Faces'. The exhibition features military personnel who have sustained severe injuries yet have maintained their dignity. The exhibition is on display in the centre of Kyiv, on the façade of Ukrinform and in the Crimean House. The photos are visual symbols of strength, courage, and the struggle for a decent life after war.





4.5.0 – A War Literature Competition that gives a voice to those who have experienced war

The 4.5.0. War Literature Contest, launched by the International Renaissance Foundation in partnership with the Staryi Lev publishing house, was an unprecedented initiative that provided a platform for exploring the theme of war through literature. The competition was open only to military personnel and veterans – individuals who have experienced combat and sought to express it through words. The competition received 271 entries across four genres: poetry, short stories, essays and diaries. The jury, consisting of writers, military personnel, and volunteers, evaluated the works anonymously, focusing solely on their artistic quality and unaware of the authors' identities.

The results of the competition were impressive in terms of both the number of submissions and their emotional and artistic merit. Winners included well-known authors such as Pavlo Vysebaba and Anton Drobovych, as well as new voices such as Artem Popyk and Alina Sarnatska. For the first time, works by military personnel in the diary genre were recognised – very personal and sincere entries which often remain out of public view. The competition demonstrated that veterans possess not only combat experience, but also a powerful ability to reflect, comprehend and convey truth in artistic form.

The organisers paid special attention to memory, as at least six of the finalists died during the war. Their work will be included in a collection to be published by the Old Lion Publishing House in 2025. This will not just be an anthology, but a document of the era, pieced together from the voices of those who survived and those who did not. For many participants, this was the first time their words had been heard, appreciated and supported in public.

The initiative will continue. A new competition cycle will begin in May 2025. The organisers urge all those who have written or are planning to write not to stop. Recording experiences and talking about the war prevents personal stories from disappearing into statistics and oblivion – this is the power of literature during wartime.





Systemic changes to veterans' policies

Changes to veterans' policy at state level are essential for establishing a fair and effective support system for those defending Ukraine. The outdated approaches of the old model do not reflect the realities of modern warfare or the needs of the military and their families. The International Renaissance Foundation is playing an active role in transforming this system by supporting analytical research, advocacy initiatives, pilot projects in communities and platforms for dialogue between veterans, NGOs and government institutions.

Monetizing benefits

In December 2024, the Ukrainian NGO Mriya and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs presented the concept of monetising veterans' benefits, marking a step towards updating the outdated Soviet system. Primarily, it is a transition from formal benefits to targeted financial support, which will enable veterans to prioritise according to their own needs. Proposals include free transportation and the right to a plot of land.

The project team, supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, conducted extensive research, including studying legislation, conducting surveys, and holding roundtables with the veteran community. This has enabled us to develop a vision for the reform that will not restrict existing veteran rights, but will make the system more efficient and equitable.

The introduction of the monetisation of benefits is not just about economic expediency. It is also about showing respect to those who risked their lives for the sake of the country. The state must move from a reactive to a proactive approach, offering convenient digital solutions and expanding rehabilitation services and support. This transformation builds trust in the government and creates decent conditions for those who protect us



Rehabilitation without barriers: a study by Principle



With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Human Rights Center 'Principle' conducted a study to identify the barriers faced by defence lawyers in the recovery process, and to develop recommendations for the relevant state authorities. The researchers identified several issues, including a lack of rehabilitation opportunities, insufficient time for rehabilitation and a general lack of systematicity in the process.

Of the military personnel surveyed by Principle, 42% said they were unable to undergo rehabilitation or had insufficient time to do so, and almost half experienced difficulties in completing it. This data formed the basis for a more in-depth analysis of the system, which will facilitate the development of practical recommendations to enhance services. This project highlights the importance of showing respect for veterans through decent care and effective public policy, not just in words.



The path of wounded in the MIA system: gaps and solutions



The Human Rights Centre for the Military 'Principle' conducted a study of wounded individuals from the National Guard, police, and state border guard service, supported by the International Renaissance Foundation. The team identified significant issues regarding access to quality care, primarily due to departmental fragmentation and bureaucratic barriers. Until now, the experience of the Ministry of Internal Affairs' military has been neglected – and this study aims to address this.

Analysts point out that most methodological materials and support programmes are based solely on the experience of the Armed Forces, while the needs of other agencies remain unaddressed. The Principle's research is an attempt to address this issue and formulate recommendations for changes to veteran and rehabilitation policy at state level.





Veterans' employment

Employment projects for veterans are critical to their successful reintegration into civilian life. These projects help veterans regain confidence, restore financial stability and find a new role in society after their service. Work is about more than just income; it's also about dignity, self-realisation, and the feeling that your experience is valuable and needed.

UVF research: how to improve employment of veterans

Today, almost a third of Ukrainian veterans are unemployed. This is due to uncoordinated legislation, discrimination in the labour market, a lack of information about rights and benefits, and the absence of special retraining programmes. With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation conducted an in-depth study of these problems and proposed a set of solutions.

Key recommendations include informing veterans of their labour rights, supporting employers in hiring veterans and creating adapted training and rehabilitation programmes. It is also important to provide opportunities for professional development and to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of such measures. The study paid special attention to inclusion: many disabled veterans could work if workplaces were adapted for them.

According to the Foundation's team, the focus is not only on employment, but also on helping veterans to return to civilian life with dignity. Creating a fair system that considers the experience and needs of veterans is a social responsibility that contributes to Ukraine's sustainable development.



Training of tactical medicine instructors



With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the PULSE Charitable Foundation is implementing a project to prepare war veterans for a new profession as first aid and tactical medicine instructors. The initiative aims to train at least 30 specialists who will be able to pass on their knowledge to over 5,000 Ukrainians.

This project helps veterans with their professional transition and also strengthens society's security capacity. The experience gained by Ukraine's defenders at the front will form the basis of a high-quality tactical training system in civilian life.

Career Day in Kyiv

A large-scale careers event for veterans was held in Kyiv, organised by Veteran Hub and Lobby X with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. More than 100 participants had the opportunity to speak with potential employers, attend interviews, receive CV advice, and learn about training and internship opportunities.

The event helped veterans to take the first step towards a new civilian life, particularly in the fields of IT, demining, Mil-Tec, and setting up their own business.

The 'Course' platform: providing work opportunities for veterans through training



The online training platform, Course, which was created with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, helps veterans to acquire a new skill and find employment. After completing the training and passing the test, veterans can attend interviews, receive further training and secure a paid position within a company.

The first employer partners include Kernel, Ukrzaliznytsia, Arterium and Kovalska ICG. Veterans can choose from courses in agriculture, construction, sales and administration, or undertake specialised training to work with drones. Ukrzaliznytsia, in particular, is creating a UAV infrastructure protection unit which will be staffed by veterans who have completed the relevant training through Course. The first course, 'UAV Operator', has already begun, and its graduates will assist Ukrzaliznytsia in recording offences and inspecting stations and facilities during wartime.





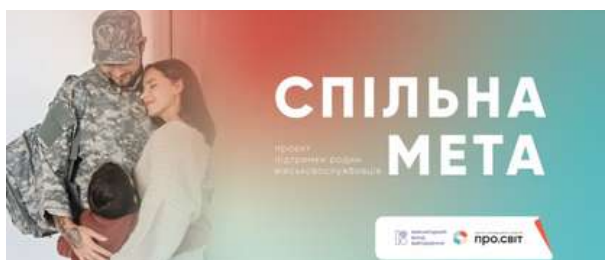
Helping families of veterans

How the school environment can help military families

The NGO 'Pro.Svit', in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science and with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, has created an online course called 'Common Goal: Supporting Military Families'. The course aims to help teachers better understand the needs of children affected by the war and provide them with adaptive psychosocial support.

The course comprises two modules containing theory, practical examples, case studies and expert advice. It is designed for teachers, school leaders, educational centre employees, and anyone who works with children. Participants will learn how to foster an environment of tolerance and mutual respect, as well as how to communicate effectively with children in challenging situations.

This project forms part of a broader strategy to support military families by developing the professional capabilities of educators.



A model programme for communities: how to effectively support military families

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, experts from the NGO Space of Opportunities, together with the All-Ukrainian Association of Communities, have developed a model programme for supporting veterans and their families. This document is designed to help communities implement effective rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that address the genuine needs of veterans upon their return from war.

The programme contains specific tools for creating local initiatives aimed at the physical, psychological, and social recovery of veterans, as well as facilitating their full return to community life. It represents a significant step towards a more comprehensive and effective local veterans' policy, one that not only provides assistance, but also involves veterans in the joint development of society.



Recreational trips for families of defenders

The Novovolynsk community successfully organised a series of recreational trips for military families, including children of fallen and active defenders. Three trips to Truskavets took place in total, with the last one bringing together 56 participants, including 36 children.

The programme combined recreation and leisure with psychological support. Participants visited a dolphinarium and a terrarium, as well as the Krekhiv Monastery. They also took part in pottery and art therapy workshops. A workshop with a psychologist was organised for the children to help them express their emotions through drawing.

Psychological Support After Captivity: A Series of Training Sessions for Military Personnel and Their Families

The International Renaissance Foundation has supported a unique initiative aimed at the psychological rehabilitation of military personnel who have returned from captivity, as well as their families. The project was implemented in cooperation with the charitable foundation Patronage Service 'Angels', the Brain Stimulation Centre clinic and the Bila Tserkva Employment Centre. The psychological training took place in two stages, comprising theoretical lectures on the nature of trauma and practical exercises designed to restore emotional connections and communication.



First training for psychologists on counseling military families

The Museum of the Revolution of Dignity in Kyiv hosted Ukraine's first training session for psychologists dedicated to working with military families. The Yarmiz Center for Adaptation and Rehabilitation organised it with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. Over the course of three days, participants received training in couples counselling techniques in wartime and discussed topics such as emotional security, attachment and love in times of loss. Due to the positive feedback received, the organisers are already planning a new training course, as there is huge demand among specialists.

Military personnel and their families worked in groups, sharing their experiences and learning to cope with anxiety, emotional barriers, and the effects of PTSD. As a result of the course, participants reported improvements in their emotional state and a reduction in psychological stress, as well as a restoration of trust within their families. This project is a prime example of how professional and compassionate support can help people overcome the most challenging of circumstances.



The Lobby X platform helps defenders choose their path



Since 2022, the International Renaissance Foundation has supported the Lobby X platform, which has become a unique recruitment tool for the Armed Forces. Created in response to the Armed Forces of Ukraine's need for professional, motivated personnel, this social enterprise connects candidates and units directly. Candidates choose a position and a team, submit a CV and are interviewed, with representatives of the unit accompanying them throughout the mobilisation or transfer process.

Lobby X ensures transparency for both parties: unit commanders can post vacancies, receive feedback, select candidates and communicate directly without going through a bureaucratic system. Current vacancies are available on the platform from combat and rear units of the Armed Forces, the National Guard, the State Border Guard Service, the Security Service, the DIU, the police, and other formations. The General Staff guarantees recruitment through the platform in accordance with the official procedure.



Context: war. Military writers at the Via Carpatia 2024 Forum



In November 2024, Kyiv hosted the first Context: War Literary and Artistic Residency as part of the Via Carpatia Forum, bringing together dozens of military writers. The event saw combatants who create literature directly from the frontline come together with readers, journalists, students and children. Over the course of three days, participants read and discussed their works and shared their experiences of pain, dignity and inspiration.

The residency's programme included public readings, an open mic, meetings with young people, discussions and reflections. Participants included Olena Mokrenchuk, Serhiy Pantiuk, Bohdan Nazarenko, Myroslav Otkovych, Roman Droniuk, Ruslan Leskiv, Andriy 'Kelt' Humeniuk and Lidia Ilkiv. Their works are not just poetry or prose; they are documents of the era – the voices of war that sound sincere and strong and unite people.



'Do you hear me? Plus. Plus': support for military personnel with hearing loss



Since the start of the full-scale invasion, the number of servicemen who have lost or partially lost their hearing due to explosions, injuries, and the conditions they have served in has increased. The NGO 'Feel' is implementing the 'Do you hear me?' Plus. Plus' The project is aimed at rehabilitating such soldiers. The initiative provides free hearing aids, personalised diagnostics, and psychological and pedagogical support involving sign language teachers, speech therapists, and psychologists.

The project also has a preventive component. Specialists from NGO 'Feel' distribute tactical sound filters (earplugs) to the military to protect their hearing during combat operations. At the same time, the organisation promotes knowledge about hearing hygiene and the proper selection of devices, as well as raising awareness of the importance of sign language. For those who cannot benefit from hearing aids, the organisation runs free online sign language lessons which have already become popular among veterans and their families.

The organisers strive to create an inclusive environment in which the military community can communicate, work and be heard without feeling isolated.

Legal support for wounded soldiers in a few clicks

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Human Rights Centre 'Principle' has launched a pilot scheme offering wounded soldiers free legal advice via a Telegram chatbot. The service is aimed at soldiers who have encountered difficulties obtaining wounded status, receiving payments, passing military medical commissions (MMCs), and navigating other legal procedures. Consultations are provided by volunteer lawyers who underwent special training organised by the Centre in 2023.

Using the service is simple: just follow the @pryncyp_bot link on Telegram, select the "wounded soldier," option and ask your question. If the automated response does not provide a satisfactory answer, the chat will be transferred to a professional consultant. For more complicated cases, lawyers will refer you to partner organisations that can provide legal support. This is an important step towards ensuring that wounded defenders have access to justice and are not overwhelmed by bureaucracy.



Ensuring progress in EU accession negotiations

In 2024, we played an active role in supporting Ukraine's progress towards European Union membership and strengthening its ties with the Euro-Atlantic community. We supported systemic reforms that bring Ukraine closer to EU standards and engaged citizens in the European integration process at the local level. We backed think tanks, civil society organisations and initiatives focusing on enlargement policy, interregional relations with EU countries and neighbouring states, building expert capacity, and raising public awareness of the advantages of integration.



Why is it important?

This encompasses the rule of law, quality public services, justice, freedom, and respect for human rights. This choice becomes even more important in times of war as a means of opposing authoritarianism, corruption and impunity.

EU membership offers protection, development and stability, all of which Ukrainians are fighting for every day. For this path to be successful, the participation of everyone is required, from local communities to national institutions.

Наші пріоритети



Reforms

We support changes that bring Ukraine closer to EU standards.



European integration in communities

We promote the adoption of European approaches in everyday life at a local level.



Engaging citizens

We support initiatives that explain the benefits of European integration.



International partnerships

We are developing cooperation with EU countries and neighbors to share experience and solidarity.



Analytics and advocacy

We are strengthening experts and NGOs that promote Ukraine's European course.



European integration in practice: the roles of business and the state

The “Ukraine on the Road to the EU,” conference, organised by the European Business Association in October with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, provided an important platform for dialogue between businesses, the government, and EU partners. Participants discussed the potential impact of European integration on specific sectors, including customs, finance, logistics and agriculture.

They shared their expectations for the upcoming EU accession negotiations, emphasising that European integration should be both formal and practical, providing real benefits adapted to Ukrainian conditions. A particularly valuable part of the conference was the presentation of the EBA White Paper, which sets out legislative changes that would facilitate Ukraine's economic recovery and integration into the EU internal market.



White Paper: A roadmap for economic European integration

In October 2024, the European Business Association released an updated White Paper, created with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and the EU. The document provides a detailed analysis of the challenges faced by Ukrainian businesses in key areas and offers practical solutions to align with European legislation.

The recommendations cover tax reform, energy, the environment, agriculture, human resources and pension reform. Particular attention is paid to promoting investment, combatting smuggling, and implementing the principles of the 'green transition'. The White Paper has become a valuable resource for the government and parliament in their efforts to strengthen Ukraine's European future.



Supporting Ukraine in the EU: Political Solidarity and Strategic Decisions

In November 2024, the Foundation supported an international online briefing organised by the Istituto Affari Internazionali think tank. The discussion focused on the unity of EU member states in supporting Ukraine, sanctions policy towards Russia, the management of frozen assets belonging to the aggressor, and the new challenges to European integration in the context of a change in leadership at the European Commission.

During the event, Deputy Prime Minister Olha Stefanishyna emphasised that EU enlargement should be a response to geopolitical challenges. She highlighted Ukraine's role in driving this process forward and expressed gratitude to Italy for its support. The parties also discussed the President's Victory Plan, the engagement of civil society in reforms, and the new opportunities available to Ukraine in terms of European defence and industrial policy.

Systematic monitoring of European integration reforms

Throughout 2024, the RRR4U consortium has been independently monitoring Ukraine's implementation of EU funding programme terms, particularly through the Ukraine Facility mechanism, with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation.

The purpose of this monitoring is to ensure transparency and public accountability in the implementation of reforms that form part of Ukraine's international commitments. In addition to the monthly analysis, the team provides an in-depth review of specific areas, such as customs or energy sector reforms, every quarter.

Third EU Accession Exchange Forum



The third EU Accession Exchange Forum took place on 19 September 2024. This large-scale international event brought together leading politicians, diplomats, experts, journalists and civil society representatives from Ukraine, the Eastern Partnership countries, the Western Balkans and EU member states.

Participants discussed the new dynamics of the European Union's geopolitical expansion, the successes and challenges of reforms in candidate countries, and the risks of external interference, particularly from Russia. They also addressed the financial, institutional, and security aspects of future expansion. Particular attention was paid to Ukraine's role in driving this new wave of enlargement, and to the experience it could offer other countries.

The forum provided a platform for sharing European integration practices and ideas for the future of the expanding European Union.



Providing expert support for European integration to the Parliament.

In 2024, the NGO Euro-Atlantic Course implemented another stage of the project to provide analytical support to the Parliamentary Committee on Ukraine's Integration into the EU, with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. Experts assessed the draft laws to determine their compliance with EU law and Ukraine's obligations under the Association Agreement.

Throughout the year, the project team analysed over 90 legislative initiatives spanning various sectors, including energy, the environment, social protection, and tax and customs policy. This kind of systematic support helps strengthen the institutional capacity of Parliament and ensure the quality of European integration reforms.

Marketing on the lookout for health

In 2024, the Ukrainian Marketing Association implemented the project 'Regulation of Food Marketing for Children and Adolescents: Harmonisation on the Way to the EU', with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and the European Union. This initiative was developed in response to the challenges posed by the aggressive promotion of unhealthy food to young people. Experts studied the best European practices, held professional discussions and prepared recommendations for implementing voluntary and regulatory restrictions on the advertising of foods high in salt, sugar and fat. The project aimed to promote legal harmonisation and encourage public discussion about the responsibility of businesses, the state, and marketers for shaping children's eating habits.

Customs reform for the EU

During the year, the NGO 'Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting' provided in-depth analytical support for Ukrainian customs reform in partnership with the International Renaissance Foundation. The focus was on developing strategic recommendations for reforming the customs service in line with European Union norms and practices, digitising procedures, adapting legislation, and supporting integrated border management.

The IER's analytical team collected the key expectations of businesses, the government, and European partners; conducted a series of studies and public discussions; and presented their vision for a customs service that is fully integrated into the European system.

Eurosapiens: a platform for dialogue on the path to the EU

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the Eurosapiens communication project was launched in 2024. This is a YouTube series of interviews with the architects of European integration in the Baltic States and Central and Eastern Europe. The series is presented and authored by Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Chair of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on EU Integration.

The project aims to demonstrate how other countries have navigated the path to EU membership, highlighting the challenges they faced and the pivotal decisions they made. The first guest was Hugues Mingarelli, the former EU Ambassador to Ukraine. Conversations focused on fundamental conditions for European integration, such as the rule of law, justice reforms, human rights protection and democracy.



Research into Polish-Ukrainian economic relations on the road to EU membership.

In 2024, the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting (IER), in cooperation with the Warsaw Entrepreneurship Institute (WEI), will implement a large-scale analytical initiative entitled 'Ukraine's Path to the European Union: The Polish Experience'. The project aims to study the key economic areas in which Polish and Ukrainian interests may intersect and give rise to both competition and new opportunities for cooperation.

One of the central themes is an analysis of the state of the transport industry in Ukraine and Poland. In a joint report, experts highlight the challenges facing Ukrainian road transport due to the war, as well as the opportunities offered by integration with EU transport networks. Poland, which has one of the largest freight fleets in Europe, shared its experience of adapting to European standards and modernising infrastructure. Separately, the researchers emphasised the need to modernise Ukrainian border crossing points, digitise customs procedures, and develop joint training programmes.

At the same time, the project covers other critical areas, such as energy, food, pharmaceuticals, construction and woodworking, and provides comparative analyses and recommendations. For instance, the energy report advises Ukraine to speed up its transition to green energy and to consider Poland's experience of diversifying energy sources. As part of the project, several conferences and public discussions were held, including a large-scale event in April dedicated to the strategic partnership between Ukraine and Poland in the context of European integration.

This work has both practical and diplomatic value, helping to establish a common language for businesses, experts, and politicians in both countries. The project is being implemented with the support of the Open Society Institute and the International Renaissance Foundation.



The Ukraine–Poland Forum: Dialogue at a Key Moment for European Integration

Held in Lviv on 14–15 June, the 16th Ukraine–Poland Forum was another step towards deepening the dialogue between the civil societies of both countries. Organised by the International Renaissance Foundation and the Stefan Batory Foundation, this regular event brought together experts, politicians, diplomats, and representatives of civil society organisations to discuss Poland's role in Ukraine's accession to the EU. It took place shortly after the European Parliament elections and the adoption of the negotiating framework with Ukraine.



The participants discussed the strategic challenges and opportunities that Ukraine is facing on its path to EU membership. They discussed Poland's support in areas such as harmonising legislation, accessing European funds, and adapting to the single market. However, concerns in Polish society about competition with the Ukrainian agricultural sector and transport companies require a factual dialogue between experts from both countries, rather than an emotional one.



The discussion focused on Ukrainian migrants in Poland and their influence on public sentiment and political decisions in both countries. At the same time, the discussion covered the controversial issues of the new Polish migration policy and Ukrainian mobilisation changes. The forum provided an important opportunity to discuss these topics calmly and reasonably.

The discussions that took place during the forum will continue in the form of analytical publications. The interdisciplinary expert group format, which brings together Ukrainian and Polish participants, will be developed further as a strategic thinking platform in the context of Ukraine's European integration.

European integration in communities

Ukraine's European integration is being promoted not only by government structures, but also by communities that are already working according to European standards. The Samotoivsky district of the Krasnopil community in the Sumy region is one example of this, demonstrating that proximity to the Russian border is not an obstacle to moving towards Europe.

As part of the 'Supporting Mechanisms for the Joint Reconstruction of the Krasnopil Community in Sumy Region' project, implemented by the NEW Energy NGO, local residents participated in inclusive development training, visited Kyiv, and developed three project ideas. These ideas focus on intergenerational cooperation, inclusive active recreation and language education for children, all of which align with European values.

Via Carpatia 2024: Strategic Partnership between Ukraine and Poland



In 2024, the Via Carpatia Forum took place in Kyiv for the first time, rather than in the Carpathians. This event brought together experts, politicians, diplomats, military personnel and members of the media from Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Japan and other countries. Discussions focused on security, defence, energy, countering disinformation, and rebuilding Ukraine. Key topics included joint action in wartime, supporting Ukraine's European integration, and reinforcing Poland's role as a logistical and political partner.

The forum provided a space for dialogue between parliamentarians and civil society representatives from both countries. Thanks to the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the event received extensive coverage in the Ukrainian and international media. Key highlights included the establishment of joint working groups to support Ukraine's recovery and the sharing of experiences in decentralisation and defence analytics. The forum concluded with the presentation of the Stanislaw Vincenz Award to director Rostislav Derzhypilsky in recognition of his humanitarian service and contribution to regional development.



Re: Open Zakarpattia 2024 – Reforms, Good Neighbourliness and Multiculturalism



The fifth Re:Open Zakarpattia forum, held in 2024, provided a platform to discuss key reforms during wartime and European integration. Topics covered included good governance, the rule of law, protecting the rights of national minorities, ecology, security in Central Europe and the role of regions in reconstruction. The event attracted over 250 participants from various regions of Ukraine, Europe, the United States and the Balkans. Among the attendees were ministers, diplomats, MPs, military personnel, journalists, and opinion leaders.

The International Renaissance Foundation supported the forum, recognising its importance for the development of Zakarpattia – a region that exemplifies multicultural cohesion and openness to change. The event showcased how border regions can act as pilot sites for reforms that can then be implemented nationwide. Re:Open Zakarpattia is about trust, dialogue and partnership for a shared European future.





Strengthening relations with the North Atlantic Alliance

Public opinion of NATO among Ukrainians: a study

With the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, the New Europe Centre conducted a large-scale survey on Ukrainians' security preferences. The results confirmed that the majority of citizens consider nuclear weapons or NATO membership to be the most effective means of ensuring security. Significant support was recorded for Ukraine's gradual accession to the Alliance for the first time – a model in which Article 5 would apply to the whole state, even if part of it were temporarily occupied.

The survey also revealed growing scepticism about negotiations with Russia without real security guarantees, as well as a moderate willingness to make certain concessions during negotiations – provided that sovereignty, language and the army are not compromised. Over 70% of Ukrainians support NATO accession as the most realistic and desirable strategy. This public demand clearly signals to Ukrainian politicians and international partners that Euro-Atlantic integration is a priority.

Ukraine – NATO: strategic dialogue in London

On 26 June 2024, London played host to the international conference 'On the Road to the NATO Washington Summit', which was organised by the Centre for Defence Strategies, the CEO Club London and the Centre for Geopolitics. Supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, the event was an important step in the public discussion of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration ahead of the NATO summit in Washington. Participants included renowned international experts, as well as representatives from governments, defence agencies, diplomatic circles, the media, and civil society.

The main topics of discussion were strategic challenges for NATO, Ukraine's role in the collective security system, the need for long-term security guarantees, and countering Russian aggression. The speakers emphasised that Ukraine's accession to NATO would be a logical continuation of its European integration and would lay the foundations for a new security architecture in Europe. Ukraine is already playing the role of the Alliance's eastern shield, defending not only its own territory, but also the stability of the entire region.

Participants stressed that it is now critically important to view Ukraine's NATO membership as part of a broader transformation of Western security policy.



**FOREIGN POLICY
AND SECURITY.**

OPINIONS OF UKRAINIAN SOCIETY

International support for a just and sustainable peace

Our focus was on bolstering international support for Ukraine in its quest for justice and lasting peace. Through cultural diplomacy, interethnic dialogue, partnerships with countries in the Global South and global advocacy, we strove to amplify Ukraine's voice beyond Europe and the United States to the rest of the world. We backed initiatives that dispel imperial narratives, clarify the nature of Russian aggression, showcase Ukraine's vision for peace, and foster international solidarity grounded in justice, dignity, and the decolonisation of knowledge.



Why is this important?

Russia's war against Ukraine has challenged the global values of freedom, human rights and equality between nations. In order to achieve a just peace, Ukraine requires not only military and economic support, but also a deep understanding from the international community.

This is particularly pertinent for countries in the Global South, where Russian or colonial narratives frequently prevail. In order to build dialogue and explain the essence of the Ukrainian experience through culture, diplomacy, and knowledge, it is important to speak the languages that are heard in these regions. Only in this way can we create a global community that values peace and justice.

Our priorities



Cultural diplomacy

Supporting projects that tell the world about Ukraine through culture and art.



Global advocacy

Working with international partners outside Ukraine to promote Ukraine's vision of peace and justice.



Dialogue with the Global South

Developing partnerships and explaining the causes of war in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.



Decolonisation of knowledge

Supporting initiatives that undermine imperial narratives about Russia.



Interethnic dialogue

Promoting mutual understanding with communities outside Ukraine that have also been affected by war.



Cultural diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy is a form of soft power that enables a country to communicate with the rest of the world through art, identity and values. In times of war, it becomes particularly significant: through culture, we can convey the truth about Ukraine, its history, and its resistance.

The International Renaissance Foundation systematically supports cultural diplomacy, collaborating with government and civil society initiatives. The Foundation assists cultural managers and artists in representing Ukraine abroad and supports the translation of Ukrainian authors' works, as well as mobility, participation in international festivals, and the creation of exhibitions and residencies.

Ukrainian Studies at Berkeley: Three Million Dollars for Development

The Open Society Foundations, including the International Renaissance Foundation, have awarded a \$3 million grant to establish a comprehensive Ukrainian Studies programme at the University of California, Berkeley. UC Berkeley is one of the most prestigious universities in the United States, with a long tradition of Slavic studies. The new programme will provide systematic teaching in Ukrainian language, literature, culture and history, and will support research and the development of a professional academic community.

Interest in Ukraine has grown significantly in US academic circles since the start of the full-scale war, and Berkeley's support will help maintain and increase this interest at an institutional level.

The programme has the potential to become one of the leading centres for Ukrainian studies in North America. It will include innovative projects such as technology partnership hubs with Ukraine and work towards establishing a Centre for Ukrainian Studies.



The play 'Caligula' was a sell-out in Avignon

The Ivan Franko National Theatre's production of *Caligula* was a revelation for European audiences, packing out one of the world's most prestigious theatre festivals in Avignon. Staged as part of Ukraine's 'Pavilion of the Future', it received support from the International Renaissance Foundation and the EU. The French press praised the high standard of acting and direction, and professional theatre programmers have shown interest in future collaborations with Ukrainian theatre.



Ukraine through literature: an anthology at Viadrin

The German University of Viadrina presented an English-language anthology entitled 'The Existence of Ukraine in Literature: History, Philosophy, Culture'. This publication contains literary, philosophical and cultural texts from the 12th to the 21st century, and aims to introduce European audiences to Ukrainian culture.

This project was made possible through the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, in partnership with Kyiv National University and the European University Viadrina. The anthology is already being used in educational programmes and has become an important contribution to the development of Ukrainian studies abroad.

'The Female Face of War': Ukrainian Poster in Mexico



An exhibition by Ukrainian artists entitled 'The Female Face of War' has opened in the Mexican capital, using poster stories to tell the experiences of women during full-scale war. The project was implemented with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation in partnership with Sunseed Art, Resilient Ukraine, the Ukrainian Embassy in Mexico and the French Institute. The exhibition is an important step in cultural diplomacy, as it introduces audiences far from Ukraine to the realities of war through art and personal stories.



The immersive world of Taras Shevchenko

In 2024, the 'Immersive World of Taras Shevchenko' exhibition was a highlight for Ukraine on the international stage. As part of the Ukrainian House Volia Space's cultural programme at the Olympic Games in Paris, the project was presented to a global audience. Combining multimedia technologies, music and stories, it presented Shevchenko's work to a modern audience in an emotional way. Following its showing in Paris, the exhibition was also presented at the Munich Security Conference in Germany.



Thanks to Canadian-Ukrainian cooperation, the project brought together producers, artists, museum curators and technical partners with a common goal: to preserve and share cultural heritage under threat from the war. The International Renaissance Foundation supported the project as an important cultural diplomacy tool that fosters a deeper global understanding of Ukraine.



Ukrainian Days in Tartu

In November 2024, the Estonian city of Tartu hosted Ukrainian Days: Ukraine! UNMUTED was a two-day programme bringing together discussions, performances and presentations of contemporary Ukrainian culture. The Lviv Institute for Cultural Strategy organised the event with the support of Tartu 2024, the European Union, the Ukrainian Institute and the International Renaissance Foundation.



The focus was on discussions about the challenges faced by cultural communities in times of war, and the role of art in preserving survival and identity. Of particular note was the performance by choreographer Maria Bakalo, which drew on personal stories, war artefacts, and collaborative activities with the audience. Participants also presented a collection of essays entitled 'UKRAINE! Unmuted', as well as an updated website for the Ukrainian Cross-Section project, which documents contemporary art. These projects have become an important part of the cultural dialogue between Ukraine and Europe.





Working with the Global South

In the global struggle for truth about the war and support for democracy, it is crucial for Ukraine to engage in dialogue with countries in the Global South. Many of these countries remain outside the main information flows about Russian aggression, or are influenced by Russian propaganda. Engaging with these countries through cultural diplomacy, educational initiatives, and analytical projects enables Ukraine to convey its perspective, foster solidarity, and dispel myths that impede global support. Such cooperation also opens up new opportunities for partnerships and expands the scope for Ukrainian ideas and experience to have an influence.

New horizons for global Ukraine

In 2024, the International Renaissance Foundation launched the 'New Horizons of Global Ukraine' competition to support Ukrainian organisations in establishing ties with countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. The competition aims to amplify Ukraine's voice in regions where Russian propaganda is still prevalent or where reliable information about the war, Ukrainian culture, democracy and partnerships is lacking. A total of 72 applications were received for the competition, and 21 projects were selected, ranging from analytical and educational to cultural and communication initiatives.

Winners include projects advocating Ukraine's position on the African continent and creating educational programmes.

The focus will be on regional studies, strengthening cultural exchange, researching new markets for Ukrainian businesses and running joint communication campaigns with countries in the Indo-Pacific region. This is Ukraine's first large-scale competition aimed at systematic work with the Global South, opening up new opportunities for Ukraine's strategic global presence.



Awareness through experience: the In Solidarity With Ukraine project

Supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, the In Solidarity With Ukraine programme has become a bridge between Ukraine and the countries of the Global South. Writers, journalists and human rights activists from India, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina and Hungary travelled to Kyiv, Bucha, Irpin, Yahidne and other locations to witness the war's consequences first-hand, meet Ukrainian cultural figures and share their experiences with their readers and viewers. They took part in public discussions, shared their countries' experiences, and talked about the challenges of war and solidarity.



These visits deepen foreigners' knowledge of Ukraine and help Ukrainians to understand themselves better in a global context. Members of the delegation admit that what they saw changed their perceptions of war and the culture of resistance. For some, this has resulted in new books, documentaries or media coverage. All participants have become ambassadors of Ukraine, telling the world about its struggle, pain, and hope.



Thanks to In Solidarity with Ukraine, the international audience is receiving deeply emotional testimonies, rather than dry statistics or news reports. The programme demonstrates that culture, memory and human experience are powerful tools for fostering international solidarity.



Ukraine and Latin America: a new level of strategic communication

The Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine presented the public section of the new communication strategy between Ukraine and Latin American and Caribbean countries. This three-year document provides a clear action plan for strengthening ties, combatting disinformation, and promoting the Ukrainian narrative in the region. It focuses on intergovernmental cooperation, cultural diplomacy, media interaction and supporting civil society.



The presentation was supported by the International Renaissance Foundation, which continues to help the government develop strategic communications with countries in the Global South. Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Verkhovna Rada, civil society organisations and experts in international politics presented the new strategy. All of the speakers emphasised that Latin America is not only a promising partner, but also a key focus of Ukrainian diplomacy in an ever-changing world.



Ukraine strengthens international coalition for the return of abducted children

In May, with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation, a Ukrainian delegation visited Chile and Argentina as part of the Stolen Voices campaign, which is part of the presidential plan Bring Kids Back UA. Ukrainian representatives met with government officials, diplomats, human rights activists and the public to convey the truth about Russia's crimes against Ukrainian children – forced displacement, deportation and attempts at assimilation. The President's Commissioner for Children's Rights, Daria Gerasymchuk, emphasised that over 19,000 cases of child abduction have been documented, but only a few hundred children have been returned.

Both countries expressed their willingness to support the international coalition working to return children to Ukraine. In Argentina, Ukrainian teenagers who survived captivity and forced displacement spoke before Congress, calling on them to join the fight. In Chile, the delegation gave a presentation to human rights activists and the media. Such trips allow Ukraine to strengthen partnerships, build global support and emphasise that child safety is a challenge not only for Ukraine but for the whole world.





Unfold Ukraine to Global South: journalists from around the world see the consequences of war with their own eyes

The 'Unfold Ukraine to the Global South' project, implemented by the Ukrainian Crisis Media Centre with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation and the Open Society Foundations, opens Ukraine up to the media in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Through a series of press tours, journalists can witness the realities of war, learn about Russian crimes and speak with Ukrainian officials, artists, activists and human rights defenders. They will visit hospitals treating wounded children, destroyed cities where residents are rebuilding their lives, and public discussions dedicated to combatting disinformation.



There is also a focus on learning about the stories of children abducted by Russia, de-occupied villages and cities, and Ukrainian cultural and humanitarian initiatives. Press tours help media professionals from the Global South to develop their own understanding of the war, free from Russian propaganda. Participants see Ukraine as it is: a resilient, open and determined country in its struggle. Upon returning home, participants become ambassadors for Ukraine, sharing the truth with their audiences.

The project also includes discussions on the geopolitical situation, the global impact of Russian disinformation, the importance of international solidarity and potential areas of cooperation. 'Unfold Ukraine to the Global South' is part of Ukraine's efforts to strengthen dialogue with Global South countries to gain greater global support and defend the principles of just peace together.



Advocacy for international support



A contest that strengthens Ukraine's global presence

As part of the European Renaissance of Ukraine initiative, the International Renaissance Foundation held a competition entitled 'Strengthening Ukrainian Voices for International Support for Ukraine'. The competition aims to empower Ukrainian organisations to influence the international discourse on Ukraine, raise awareness of the war, defend the interests of our state, and establish new partnerships in Europe.

The foundation supports initiatives that convey the truth about Ukraine at the European level through advocacy, cultural events, journalistic materials and international cooperation. The competition provides another means of ensuring that the voices of Ukrainian civil society are heard in the world capitals that matter most to us.



#StopEcocideUkraine

In September 2024, rallies protesting against Russia's environmental crimes in Ukraine were held in several European capitals, including Vienna, Brussels, Paris, The Hague and Strasbourg. These rallies were organised as part of the #StopEcocideUkraine campaign launched by UAnimals.

Participants, both Ukrainian and foreign, demanded that Russia be punished for burning forests, poisoning bodies of water, killing animals and mining natural areas. Posters and speeches called for an end to ecocide, support for demining and ensuring that Russia is held accountable for its crimes. The campaign brought people together around the idea that environmental safety is a cause that unites the whole world.



Ukraine's VR installation at COP29: 'The Nature of War Through the Eyes of the World'

At the COP29 global climate summit, the Ukrainian pavilion was one of the most emotional. Thanks to the collaboration of SaveDnipro and UAnimals, with the backing of the International Renaissance Foundation, over 700 conference attendees from across the globe experienced the impact of Russian aggression on Ukrainian nature via a VR installation.



The 360-degree video, complete with spatial sound and based on real photos and footage, immersed guests in scenes of devastation, from ruined cities to destroyed forests and ecosystems. This powerful, immersive experience evoked tears, shock and deep empathy, even among influential guests such as ministers and diplomats. The project became more than just an artistic event; it was also a powerful advocacy tool. Its creators presented visitors with specific proposals for holding Russia accountable for environmental crimes and for supporting the restoration of nature in Ukraine.



Sustainable Development Forum

The fourth International Forum on Sustainable Development took place on 24–25 October 2024 in Kyiv and The Hague, bringing together over 700 participants from Ukraine, the EU, international organisations, and businesses. These included representatives from the Ministry of Economy, the National Bank, and international financial institutions such as the IFC, EBRD, UNDP and GIZ, as well as the International Renaissance Foundation. The first day in Kyiv focused on economic growth, attracting investment, European integration, ESG transparency, and the role of donors in the country's recovery. The second day in The Hague focused on partnerships for post-war recovery and integrating circular economy principles.



The focus was on implementing the National Energy and Climate Plan, financing the green transition and combining the efforts of the state, businesses and international partners. The forum provided a valuable opportunity to discuss sustainable development tools that would integrate Ukraine into the European economy and strengthen its sustainability.



'How to Make Friends for Ukraine': A Practical Guide to Communication in the World

In collaboration with The Ukrainians Media, the Lviv Media Forum team presented an online project entitled 'How to Make Friends for Ukraine' – a collection of practical stories and advice from individuals who promote Ukraine's voice abroad on a daily basis. The project brings together the experiences of seventeen figures from various fields, including culture, politics, business, charity, human rights and the media, who know how to find common ground, even in indifferent or sceptical environments.

The authors describe the project as an attempt to explain how to communicate with foreigners effectively. It includes specific tools, inspiring case studies and profound reflections. The idea for the project arose after the 2024 Lviv Media Forum – in response to the question of what to do when simply saying 'support Ukraine' is no longer enough.

ЯК ЗДОБУВАТИ ДРУЗІВ ДЛЯ УКРАЇНИ:

досвід 17 амбасадорів української точки зору



The project was implemented with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation as part of an initiative to promote Ukrainian voices around the world. It has already become an informal guide for those who wish to communicate about Ukraine convincingly and effectively at an international level.

Civil society appeal to world leaders

In October 2024, representatives of prominent Ukrainian civil society organisations called on the international community to develop a shared strategy to counter Russian aggression. The statement emphasised that the aggressor had a clear strategy, whereas the free world was still lacking in unity. The authors of the appeal stress that the time has come for democracies to transition from cautious steps to decisive action in order to bring about a just end to the war.

Prepared at the initiative of the International Renaissance Foundation and signed by several influential organisations, the document expresses Ukrainian civil society's readiness to participate in formulating a strategy encompassing military, political, economic and diplomatic support. They see Ukraine's victory as a prerequisite for long-term peace and security for the entire democratic world.

Advocacy for Ukraine's recovery

In June 2024, Oleksandr Sushko, the Executive Director of the International Renaissance Foundation, wrote a column for Euronews to mark the Conference on the Reconstruction of Ukraine in Berlin. In the article, he urged EU countries to provide immediate support and invest in both infrastructure and the resilience of Ukrainian society.

Sushko believes that Ukraine's recovery should serve as an example of an effective partnership between the government, local communities, and the public sector.

Building Good Neighbourliness: How the Foundation Promotes Interethnic Dialogue

Interethnic dialogue is an important part of Ukraine's journey towards Europe. In regions inhabited by ethnic minorities such as Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians and Slovaks, historical tensions and mistrust often persist. Addressing these issues strengthens the country's internal unity and improves relations with neighbouring states.



The Foundation supported the Re:Open Ukraine initiative of the Central European Strategy Institute, which is a dialogue platform where representatives of national communities, experts, local authorities, and activists discuss shared challenges and opportunities. The project covers the Zakarpattia, Bukovina and Odesa regions, which have several features in common, such as their border location, high ethnic diversity and vulnerability to Russian disinformation.



Re:Open Ukraine encompasses both public and private work, ranging from discussions and media projects to closed meetings with government officials and policy change recommendations. Particular attention is paid to showcasing the success stories of national communities, such as their participation in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, volunteering and local initiatives. This shapes a new vision of national communities as full participants in the country's development.

The project helps to build trust, reduce tensions in sensitive regions and strengthen Ukraine's positive image as a multinational, open and democratic state. In the long term, this will accelerate European integration based on mutual respect and good neighbourliness.





Research on the Russian regime and national movements

To effectively counter Russian aggression, Ukraine must defend itself and develop a deep understanding of the nature of the Russian regime and the potential of national movements within the Russian Federation. This is why the International Renaissance Foundation supports analytical research into the nature of the Russian regime and the potential of national movements within the Russian Federation. This serves as a tool for intellectual resistance and practical work for the future, aiming to weaken the aggressor and strengthen the international coalition in support of Ukraine.

The 'Fictitious Russia' Study

The Institute for the Transformation of Northern Eurasia has published an analytical study revealing the true nature of the Russian political regime: it is totalitarian, postmodern and aggressive. The team of researchers used mainly Russian sources – specifically, academic rather than propaganda-based – to provide a more accurate description of the logic and myths on which the Kremlin system is based. The authors emphasise that the Russian Federation's main weapon is not only its missiles, but also the myth of its greatness. It is this myth that must be debunked and destroyed in the information field.

The study, 'Fictitious Russia: Imitation of Greatness and Power' is the first large-scale attempt to define modern Russian imperialism in Ukrainian terms. It provides an in-depth analysis of Putin's regime, the culture of mass manipulation, propaganda strategies and the latest forms of totalitarianism. The study's findings have formed the basis for subsequent expert discussions and legislative initiatives aimed at countering threats from the Russian Federation.

Research on national movements in the Russian Federation

Another project focused on the potential of national movements within Russia to destabilise the imperial structure. The brochure 'National Movements in Russia: Impact on the Internal Situation and the War with Ukraine', created by the Prometheus Centre in cooperation with the Parliamentary TIC, demonstrates how the Kremlin manipulates the republics and stokes internal conflicts, as well as showing how the oppressed peoples are resisting.

The publication formed the basis of a discussion at a roundtable event, where experts, politicians and researchers emphasised that Ukraine can and should support the indigenous peoples of Russia in their fight for freedom. This involves more than just moral support; it also requires political action, from parliamentary resolutions to drafting laws that enshrine this position. Engaging with national movements is a component of a geopolitical strategy that contributes to decolonisation and the establishment of long-term peace in the region.



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Oleksandra Obereňko
manager



Oles Lisnychuk
analyst



Kateryna Lukashevych
event coordinator



Anna Tsymbal
communications assistant for the
Resilience Lab programme



Diana Kovalyova
communications coordinator
for the Impulse Project



Myroslava Serhiychuk
FPV-drone operator

Finance Department



Vira Savchuk
chief accountant



Olga Nadtochiy
deputy chief accountant



Oleksandr Shkulipa
accountant

Project management department



Gennady Derkach
head of department



Julia Gordonna
financial manager



Yaroslava Shulyak
financial manager



Svitlana Myakushko
registrar

Human Rights and Justice Programme



Roman Romanov
programme director



Yaryna Lakish
programme coordinator



Veronika Rudkovska
programme coordinator



Iryna Smolenska
programme coordinator

Democracy and Good Governance Programme



Oleksiy Orlovsky
programme director



Tetyana Kukharengo
programme manager



Dina Narezheva
менеджерка програми



Svitlana Kopotun
coordinator of the Impulse project

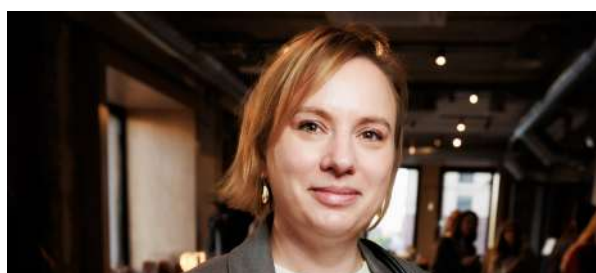


Yulia Olkhovaya
programme coordinator

The Europe and the World programme



Dmytro Shulga
programme director



Olga Kvaschuk
programme manager



Olena Romanova
programme coordinator

Social Capital Programme



Grigory Baran
programme director



Radoslava Kabachiy
programme manager



Lyudmila Grigorieva
programme coordinator

The Civic Resilience Programme



Kseniya Shapoval
programme director



Olga Galchenko
programme manager



Victoria Stokratyuk
programme manager



Anastasia Matveeva
programme manager



Khristina Soltsiak
programme assistant

Western representative office



Oksana Dashchakivska
head of the representative office



Roman Nakonechny
representative office assistant

IT Department



Oleg Nezdemovsky
head of department



Andriy Konoplyanikov
technical support coordinator



Oleksandr Sytnyk
database administrator

Non-staff employees



Yulia Babi
assistant to the executive director



Oleksandr Bryagin
legal advisor, analyst at the
Armed Forces of Ukraine



Serhiy Nadtochiy
head of Infrastructure Operations
and Development Department



Yevgeniy Linnik
legal advisor



Vitaliy Bezvorotny
Fund receptionist, military serviceman



Board of Directors of the International Renaissance Foundation

The International Renaissance Foundation's Board consists of public figures who have achieved outstanding success in promoting an open society. They are independent of the Foundation, do not receive salaries and adhere to conflict of interest prevention regulations.

As of 2023, the Board comprises: Volodymyr Yermolenko (Chairman of the Board), Alim Aliyev, Olena Halushka, Mykhailo Honchar, Pavlo Klimkin, Oleksandra Matviychuk and Lyubov Tsybulska



**VOLODYMYR YERMOLENKO,
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**

Ukrainian philosopher, writer and journalist. President of the Ukrainian PEN and director of analytics at Internews Ukraine. Also one of the initiators and editor-in-chief of the UkraineWorld initiative.



**OLEKSANDRA MATVIYCHUK,
MEMBER OF THE BOARD**

A human rights activist and chair of the board of the Centre for Civil Liberties, won the Nobel Prize in 2022 and the Vasyl Stus Prize and Defender of Democracy Award.



**PAVLO KLIMKIN,
MEMBER OF THE BOARD**

A former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, as well as a statesman and diplomat. Co-founder of the Centre for National Resilience and Development. Member of the Supervisory Board of the Come Back Alive Charitable Foundation.



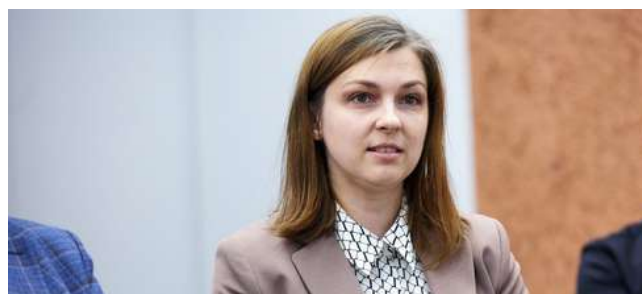
**LYUBOV TSYBULSKA,
MEMBER OF THE BOARD**

Former head of the Centre for Strategic Communications and Information Security at the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, journalist, expert in strategic communications.



**MYKHAILO HONCHAR,
MEMBER OF THE BOARD**

President of the Strategy XXI Global Studies Centre, expert on international energy and security relations, editor-in-chief of the Black Sea Security magazine.



**OLENA GALUSHKA,
MEMBER OF THE BOARD**

Co-founder of the International Centre for Ukrainian Victory (ICUV), head of the international relations department at the Anti-Corruption Centre. Former member of the Kyiv City Council.



ALIM ALIYEV, MEMBER OF THE BOARD

Deputy Director General of the Ukrainian Institute, journalist, human rights activist, manager of educational and cultural projects. Co-founder of the CrimeaSOS and Crimean House public organisations.

Auditor's report

INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION

Summary Financial Statements

As at 31 December 2024 and
for the year then ended

INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION

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INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION
SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2024

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

(in US dollars)

	31 December 2024	31 December 2023
ASSETS		
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, equipment and intangible assets	1,546,209	1,524,352
CURRENT ASSETS		
Inventories	78	-
Prepayments	75,813	1,553
Receivables	4,265,456	6,600,997
Cash and cash equivalents	8,056,197	2,926,994
	12,397,544	9,529,544
TOTAL ASSETS	13,943,753	11,053,896
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE (EQUITY)		
FUND BALANCE (EQUITY)	3,019,572	2,661,014
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accruals	5,267,194	7,083,633
Deferred revenues	5,302,627	1,091,582
Provisions	354,360	217,667
	10,924,181	8,392,882
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE (EQUITY)	13,943,753	11,053,896

On behalf of the Board of Directors:


Oleksandr Sushko
Executive Director

14 May 2025


Natalia Sanhikova
Finance Director

14 May 2025

**INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION
SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2024**

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

(in US dollars)

	Year ended 31 December 2024	Year ended 31 December 2023
CONTRIBUTION INCOME		
OSF income	15,425,582	17,223,101
Third parties funding	2,641,650	2,817,934
	18,067,232	20,041,035
EXPENSES		
OSF related expenses	(15,644,566)	(17,182,471)
Third party related expenses	(2,641,650)	(2,818,391)
	(18,286,216)	(20,000,862)
(Deficit)/Surplus of contribution income over expenses	(218,984)	40,173
OTHER INCOME (EXPENSES)		
Other expenses	486,809	(655,893)
Foreign exchange gain/(loss), net	90,733	(48,584)
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	358,558	(664,304)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	358,558	(664,304)

On behalf of the Board of Directors:


"Відродження"
Oleksandr Sushko
Executive Director

14 May 2025


"Відродження"
Natalia Samukova
Finance Director

14 May 2025

INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION
SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2024

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

(in US dollars)

	Year ended 31 December 2024	Year ended 31 December 2023
Cash flows from operating activities		
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	358,558	(664,304)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation/amortization	204,894	171,326
Foreign currency exchange (gain) loss, net	(467,382)	(133,755)
Decrease (increase) in receivables	2,335,541	(2,623,101)
Decrease (increase) in prepayments	(74,260)	(1,553)
Decrease (increase) in inventories	(78)	-
(Decrease) increase in deferred revenues	4,328,196	1,030,943
(Decrease) increase in accruals	(1,351,512)	4,729,467
(Decrease) increase in other liabilities and provisions	136,693	35,742
Cash used in operating activities	5,470,650	2,544,765
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of property, equipment and intangible assets	(226,751)	(250,348)
Cash used in investing activities	(226,751)	(250,348)
NET DECREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	5,243,899	2,294,417
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR	2,926,994	814,916
Effect of movements in exchange rates on cash held	(114,696)	(182,339)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR	8,056,197	2,926,994

On behalf of the Board of Directors:


Oleksandr Sushko
Executive Director

14 May 2025


Natalia Sannikova
Finance Director

14 May 2025

**INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION
SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2024**

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE (EQUITY)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

(in US dollars)

Fund balance (equity) as at 31 December 2022	3,325,318
Surplus for the year	(664,304)
Fund balance (equity) as at 31 December 2023	2,661,014
Surplus for the year	358,558
Fund balance (equity) as at 31 December 2024	3,019,572

On behalf of the Board of Directors:



Oleksandr Sushko
Executive Director

14 May 2025



Natalia Saanikova
Finance Director

14 May 2025

INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION

SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

NOTES TO SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1. BASIS FOR PREPARATION

These summary financial statements are derived from the audited financial statements of International Renaissance Foundation as at and for the year ended 31 December 2024 prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards, and comprise the summary statement of financial position as at 31 December 2024, the summary statements of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, changes in fund balance (equity) and cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes.

The Foundation maintains its underlying accounting records in US Dollars ("USD"). Management identified the USD as the functional and presentation currency. Accordingly, all currencies other than USD are treated as foreign currencies.

2. UKRAINIAN OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND GOING CONCERN

The Foundation is exposed to the economic and financial markets of Ukraine, which display characteristics of an emerging market. The legal, tax and regulatory frameworks continue development, but are subject to varying interpretations and frequent changes which together with other legal and fiscal impediments contribute to the challenges faced by entities operating in Ukraine.

On 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation launched a full-scale military invasion to Ukraine. The ongoing war has led to significant civilian casualties, massive dislocation of the population, damage to infrastructure, electricity outages, and overall significant disruption to economic activity in Ukraine. This had a detrimental and long-lasting impact on the political and business environment in Ukraine, including on the ability of many entities to continue business as usual. In response to the military invasion, the President of Ukraine introduced the state of martial law, which is currently extended until 09 May 2025.

In 2024 and 2025, active military actions remain intense, albeit concentrated in eastern and southern Ukraine, with the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the major parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia regions still under occupation. In addition, since October 2022, the Russian Federation started missile and drone attacks that impacted power grid as well as other critical civilian infrastructure all over Ukraine.

Given the ongoing war and its impact on the current macroeconomic situation, there are expectations that growth will slow down due to the ongoing war. Real GDP increased in Ukraine in 2024 up to 3.4%, and annual inflation rate in 2024 is 12.0%, which is higher than the forecasted 9.0%. In 2024, the NBU cut its key policy rate from 15.0% to 13.5% despite rising inflationary pressures. The budget balance continues to show a significant deficit, driven by defense and national security expenditures.

The overall outlook is subject to significant risks, primarily stemming from the heightened uncertainty resulting from war and potential delays or shortfalls in external financing.

With the beginning of war, the NBU introduced certain administrative restrictions on currency conversion transactions and capital movements, including restrictions on interest and dividend payments abroad. Due to these restrictions the Ukrainian hryvnia (the "UAH") lacks exchangeability and is not freely convertible.

After invasion, all global rating agencies lowered Ukraine's ratings. As at 31 December 2024, the ratings are as follows:

- Fitch: long-term foreign currency issuer rating is RD and long-term local currency issuer rating is CCC+;
- Moody's: long-term foreign and local currency issuer rating is Ca;
- S&P: long-term foreign currency issuer rating is SD and long-term local currency issuer rating is CCC+.

INTERNATIONAL RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION
SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2024

NOTES TO SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

In the current circumstances, the Foundation continues its operating activities. In conjunction with its going concern assessment, management concluded that it is reasonably possible that the Foundation will be able to continue as a going concern based on the following considerations, among other things:

- Although it is extremely difficult to forecast the duration of war, the Foundation assumed that the war will continue for the following year. The Foundation concluded that it has sufficient confirmed financing from its donors to conduct full-scale operating activity during this period;
- The Foundation retains necessary human resources to operate at full-scale currently and in the foreseeable future;
- The Foundation's major assets, such as property and equipment, are located in Kyiv and are not damaged;
- The Foundation has diversified sources of funding and cooperates with different donors, in particular during 2024 the Foundation received funding from OSF as well as other 4 donors (international organizations) under various programs;
- As at the date of the financial statements, the Foundation's management does not intend to suspend or liquidate the Foundation's activities in Ukraine.

However, as at the date of these financial statements have been authorized for issue, military activities in Ukraine continue to develop. Prolongation of military activities may result in the Foundation's inability to continue its full-scale operating activities, caused by potential significant reduction of the Foundation's financing provided from donors, as well as there may be insufficient human resources necessary to conduct the daily operating activities of the Foundation. The above events or conditions indicate the existence of a material uncertainty that may cast significant doubt about the Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern, and therefore it may be unable to realise its assets and discharge its liabilities in the normal course of business.

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and do not include any adjustments that would be necessary if the Foundation was unable to continue as a going concern.

Whilst management believes it is taking appropriate measures to support the sustainability of the Foundation's business in the current circumstances, a continuation of the military activities in Ukraine could negatively affect the Foundation's results and financial position in a manner not currently determinable, including its ability to continue as a going concern. These financial statements reflect management's current assessment of the impact of the Ukrainian business environment on the operations and the financial position of the Foundation. The future business environment may differ from management's assessment.

3. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

Subsequent to 31 December 2024, no events that would require adjustment to, or disclosure in, these financial statements have occurred.

On behalf of the Board of Directors:


 "ВІСНОВ" ІНТЕРНАЦІОНАЛ
 Ідентифікаційний код 03358819
 Oleksandr Sushko
 Executive Director

14 May 2025


 "ВІСНОВ" ІНТЕРНАЦІОНАЛ
 Ідентифікаційний код 03358819
 Natalia Sannikova
 Finance Director

14 May 2025



МІЖНАРОДНИЙ
ФОНД
ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ

РІЧНИЙ ЗВІТ 2024

