

A PATH FORWARD FOR LOCAL HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP IN UKRAINE



OXFAM

INTRODUCTION

Over two and a half years into the war, the continued fighting has created extremely challenging conditions for civilians, particularly in the East of Ukraine.

Aerial attacks, air alarms, power cuts and destruction of critical infrastructure are part of daily life for many people, leaving some with no choice but to leave their homes in search of safety. In some parts of the country, the peak of the humanitarian crisis has stabilized as communities adjust to this new “normal” and plan for recovery and reconstruction.

At the outset of the crisis, international humanitarian actors provided a significant amount of support for those affected by the war, and

while Ukraine is still a priority for the international donor community, funding for the crisis response is shrinking and will likely continue to reduce. Planning for recovery and reconstruction in some areas of the country has begun, but with limited opportunities for people affected by the war and civil society to engage in the decision-making process.

Ukrainian communities and civil society have always been and continue to be at the forefront of responding to the humanitarian needs within their communities. With the international support and the strength shown by Ukrainian civil society in responding to the crisis, it was hoped by many that the response would be a turning point for a humanitarian model that was rooted in local



Graduation Ceremony at Roma Leadership Academy, organized by Towards Dialogue. Photo credit: Towards Dialogue

humanitarian leadership. Instead, despite the number of commitments that have been made by the international community to localize humanitarian responses, **Ukraine risks being a missed opportunity to further the localization agenda.**

Local actors in Ukraine continue to have limited access to direct funding with only 3% of the \$3.6 billion humanitarian budget in 2023 going to these organizations[†]. Ukrainian leadership, and especially women's leadership, is still missing from much of the humanitarian decision-making spaces. Ukrainian civil society organizations, particularly women-led and women's rights organizations, [continue to report](#) an over-reliance on volunteer work, increasing risk of burnout after nearly three years of crisis response, a lack of core funding, and challenges dealing with complex and varying compliance processes.

In response to these challenges, the [Alliance for Ukrainian Civil Society Organizations](#) was founded in 2023 to unite and empower Ukrainian NGOs to ensure effective, locally-led response and sustainable action to respond to the impacts of the war. Over the past year, the Alliance has collaborated with the Government of Ukraine and the international community to develop a 'Strategy for ensuring local leadership in responding to humanitarian crises and setting the foundation for recovery processes in Ukraine.' The strategy, building on a range of existing evidence, identifies the challenges to a more locally-led humanitarian response and the ways in which all humanitarian actors, including INGOs like Oxfam, can better support Ukrainian civil society to respond to the needs and rights of affected communities.

From the outset, Oxfam's response to the Ukraine crisis has been grounded in humanitarian and [feminist principles](#), and has prioritized enabling [local humanitarian leadership](#). Since the escalation of the war in 2022, Oxfam has worked in partnership with **43 organizations** and has reached over **2.4 million people** affected by the war in Ukraine.

Moving forward, **Oxfam's will deepen its focus on local leadership with a vision towards a future where Oxfam no longer has a presence in Ukraine.** In order to truly shift power to Ukrainian communities and organizations, the international community must take a step aside and enable local leadership. The next phase of Oxfam's Ukraine crisis response will prioritize putting principles into action.



Since 2022, Oxfam has worked in partnership with 43 organizations and reached over 2.4 million people

[†]These percentages are calculated based on triangulation between OCHA Financial Tracking Service data and OCHA country-based pooled funds data as of 15 April 2024. See OCHA Financial Tracking Service. [n.d.]. Ukraine Flash Appeal 2022: Coordinated Plan Data. Accessed 17 June 2024. <https://fts.unocha.org/plans/1102/flows>; OCHA. [n.d.]. Country Based Pooled Funds Data Hub. Accessed 17 June 2024. <https://cbpf.data.unocha.org>. A 2022 Humanitarian Outcomes report reported the percentage of humanitarian funding going to national NGOs as 0.0003%, utilizing Financial Tracking Service data as of 23 May 2022. See Humanitarian Outcomes. (2022). Enabling the Local Response: Emerging Humanitarian Priorities in Ukraine, March–May 2022. Accessed 17 June 2024. https://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/sites/default/files/publications/ukraine_review_2022.pdf

A NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION



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From the outset of the crisis, having no prior presence in the region, Oxfam took the decision to create a time-bound humanitarian response to address the overwhelming, urgent and critical needs caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The response would be focused on developing quality partnerships with local organizations to provide support for affected communities, prioritizing their right to protection from the conflict and supporting their needs when that right was deprived. To enable this, Oxfam fundraised through different appeals at the beginning of the crisis and has exclusively used those funds to deliver its Ukraine crisis response.

In the third year responding to the war in Ukraine, **Oxfam is adopting a strategic shift that recognizes the need to take a step back in order to enable greater local humanitarian leadership.** In line with this, we are planning a phased approach that will lead to Oxfam's exit from Ukraine by August 2026. Oxfam will utilize the appeals funding that was made possible by the generosity of supporters in 2022 to fund the response moving forward and Oxfam's phase out.

Oxfam's response moving forward will have an intentional focus on a responsible phase out from the crisis and enhancing our partners' sustainability and leadership. **Over the next year, we will progressively reduce the priority and funding of program implementation and project activities and increase our focus on the factors that will enable partners' resilience and strength over the years to come.**

We will shift focus to strengthening and increasing partners' sustainability. We will jointly develop tailored institutional strengthening plans based on partners' organizational missions and ambitions, to enable greater access to funding and meaningful

participation in decision-making and to ultimately achieve the ambitions they have for serving their communities. The tailored institutional strengthening plans will be fulfilled through a combination of flexible funding for partners to invest in their organization, as well as bespoke support packages across a range of organizational areas, such as fundraising, communications or HR and business support.

We will enable an effective and principled humanitarian response using feminist approaches, that demonstrates leadership among local and national civil society actors especially women-led (WLOs), women's rights (WROs) and right-based organizations (RBOs), resulting in sustainable local and national actors that have the resources, capacity and agency to take an active role in the humanitarian response now and in the future and are better prepared for recovery and reconstruction to support affected populations, especially those at-risk because of diverse identity and intersectional characteristics. We will:

- **Ensure meaningful participation in decision-making spaces**
- **Increase quality and direct funding opportunities**
- **Continue delivery of essential services to affected communities**

Oxfam will continue **strategic partnerships with seven organizations.** These organizations work with some of the most marginalized communities in Ukraine, including Roma and LGBTQIA+ communities, as well as people living close to the frontline and rural communities who have limited access to humanitarian assistance. Based on Oxfam's feminist principles, we have also focused on partners supporting and advocating for women and people of diverse genders, recognizing that gendered needs are often deprioritized and left behind by humanitarian responses.



Oxfam believes that having strong civil society organizations in Ukraine will ensure that communities affected by the war will continue to receive the support they need, now and in the future.

The impacts of the war vary across the country. In some areas, particularly in the east of Ukraine, the conflict continues to drive a humanitarian crisis for many communities. Whereas some community needs have already begun to shift towards longer-

term recovery and civil society organizations (CSOs) have already begun to adapt their support accordingly for affected communities. Ukrainian CSOs are uniquely placed to adapt and respond based on the needs of their communities from providing support at the peak of crisis, to shifting to longer-term recovery needs and preparedness for emergency responses if the conflict dynamics shift again in the future. Oxfam's Ukraine response team will also support partners' to prepare for the

next phase of the crisis response and the evolving context, including resilience and sustainability in the face of a changing funding landscape, preparations for recovery and reconstruction, and retaining the ability to provide emergency humanitarian assistance.

Oxfam will continue to advocate for a shift in the humanitarian system to create an enabling environment for local humanitarian leadership in Ukraine. **We will use our voice to call for an increase in the amount of quality funding available for Ukrainian CSOs and for a recognition of their leadership, increasing their access to and meaningful participation in decision-making spaces.**

Learning will remain at the core of Oxfam's Ukraine response moving forward. As we progress on implementation of the strategy, we are committed to continuously identifying ways to inform and strengthen our approaches to a responsible phase out from a partner-led response. The findings from this learning can not only inform Oxfam's approach in Ukraine, but can be utilized to strengthen how we implement our commitment to local humanitarian leadership globally. We will share our learning with the wider international humanitarian community to strengthen collective progress towards localization commitments and feminist, decolonized approaches.

Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund

Funding WROs and those working on gender equality is vital to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches and responds to the needs of women, girls and gender minorities. In Ukraine, the funding that WROs do receive is rarely sufficient to ensure their work towards achieving gender equality is adequate or sustainable. Oxfam believes that the international community has a responsibility to ensure that the humanitarian response in Ukraine does not undermine or force these organizations into a more precarious position than before the international response to Russia's war against Ukraine.

As part of this next phase of Oxfam's humanitarian response in Ukraine, we will be establishing the Women's Humanitarian Leadership Fund (WHLF) in Ukraine. This initiative is aimed at addressing the underfunding of local WROs by providing flexible funding that allows them to invest on their own priorities. As a sister fund to the **Oxfam GB Women's Rights Fund**, it builds on Oxfam's experience of supporting WROs through a flexible funding mechanism. The WHLF seeks to equip these organizations with increased capacity to respond to immediate needs and strengthen their organizational resilience and sustainability, empowering them to take a greater leadership role within the humanitarian response.

This fund is particularly valuable as it addresses one of the key challenges WROs face: limited access to flexible, sustainable funding that allows them to innovate and grow. By enabling these organizations to direct resources to invest in their own capacity, rather than only to projects, the WHLF supports WROs' role in shaping the humanitarian response and contributing to long-term recovery efforts. In doing so, it aligns with Oxfam's broader commitments to feminist approaches, fostering local leadership and building the capacity of civil society, ensuring that WROs can continue to be at the forefront of humanitarian decision-making and service delivery.

LEARNING AND EVOLVING



LEARNING AND EVOLVING

PHASING OUT OF A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS RESPONSE

At the outset of the crisis in 2022, in addition to our presence in Ukraine, Oxfam established offices in Poland, Romania and Moldova to work with partners on responding to the needs of refugees who were fleeing the war.

In line with Oxfam's strategy for a time-bound humanitarian response to the Ukraine crisis and as the refugee situation began to stabilize, Oxfam planned a staggered phase out from our presence in Romania, Moldova and Poland, with the aim of enabling partners to continue supporting their communities beyond Oxfam's support.



Together with 26 organizations over one and a half years, we reached over 1 million people affected by the war in Poland, Romania and Moldova.

After a year and half of working with partners to the needs of refugee communities in Romania and Moldova, we phased out of Oxfam's presence in 2023. **Together with 13 organizations over one and a half years, we reached over 300,000 people affected by the war.** Learning from the phase-out in Moldova and Romania highlighted that partners needed a number of components for a responsible phase out. Firstly, they required sufficient time to prepare for the phase-out from Oxfam's funding and partnership, with early and clear communication. They also valued tailored plans for each partner to identify the most beneficial support on unique fundraising approaches, sustainability, right-sizing and business support flowing from the phase-out of Oxfam funding.

Building on this learning and in line with our strategy and planned exit, Oxfam began the process to phase out of Poland in 2024. Poland's phase-out plan reflects Oxfam's intentions to end its refugee response by November 2024. A key focus has been increasing partners' agency, focusing on elements like networking and engagement, institutional capacity strengthening, and mutual accountability. We also worked to clarify roles and responsibilities between partners and Oxfam as they shifted during the transition to phase-out.

We spoke to each of our partners to establish a mutual understanding of the phase-out and identify key areas where Oxfam can support their organization even after we are gone. Customized to the needs of each partner, we prioritized activities to strengthen their organizational structure, including mapping potential donors, supporting fundraising, and working on communication and advocacy plans. All our partners have received ongoing support to ensure the successful implementation and completion of their projects, reinforcing our mutual accountability.

In parallel, through our partnership with the NGO Forum “Razem”, we have helped strengthen networks, increased information sharing, provided learning sessions, and improved representation of local organizations at a number of levels in Poland.

Over the past year, capturing lessons from the response has been crucial for ensuring a responsible phase-out, particularly in shaping future programming. An external evaluation of the Poland response was conducted, bringing together all elements of the response since it began. This

continuous learning from the phase-out processes will also help us learn as an organization about how best to support local partners in future responses.

These learnings from phase outs in Poland, Romania and Moldova have all informed the way that Oxfam will approach the next phase of its response in Ukraine. We are already working with partners to understand how to maximize the partnerships to best enable and support their organizations’ resilience and strength into the future.

Recommendations from Poland response evaluation

Following the close of our programs in Poland, we commissioned an independent consultant to help us review the effectiveness of our work there – particularly our partnership approach. As well as helping us reflect on our successes and areas to improve on when setting up an out-of-presence response in other contexts in the future, the review also provided us some valuable lessons to guide our program going forward in Ukraine:

We should continue to focus on marginalized groups, including LGBTQIA+ communities, ethnic and racialized minorities, and survivors of gender-based violence, by partnering with organizations representing and led by these communities. The review found that these partners were very effective at reaching marginalized or vulnerable groups which are too often left out of humanitarian responses. This was because these partners could reach affected communities directly, understand changing needs, and support affected communities over a longer period of time. This is something we have considered in our selection of the seven strategic partnerships we will take forward in Ukraine.

We should build on our efforts to encourage equal partnerships. Oxfam’s attempts to consider the needs and interests of partners, and give them high autonomy over their objectives, activities and ways of working, was seen very positively by most of our partners in Poland. But there are still a lot of areas we can improve – including in recognizing our own limits and being honest about them to partners. This is why, in light of the limits of our funding, we are trying to prioritize areas we can have the most lasting impact and communicate this as early as possible to partners in Ukraine.

Partnerships are neither quick nor easy. The review showed that successful partnerships were characterized by longer-term, continuous and consistent dedication. Partners also have different understandings, requirements and interests in what Oxfam can provide them, so it is important to tailor capacity strengthening activities to the partnership and the context. That’s why for the next stage of our strategy in Ukraine, we are investing in discussions with partners about their needs and plans to create a tailored strategic plan for each partner.




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In June 2024, we held a two-day phase out and learning workshop with partners in Poland. It was an opportunity for Oxfam and partner staff to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past two years together in Poland, as well as to understand how the phase out would work in the

months ahead. Partners told us they appreciated the opportunity to celebrate achievements and progress together, as well as to discuss and look back on the response and see what could be learnt from the partnership experience.

PARTNERS APPRECIATED OXFAM'S...

-  **Flexibility, adaptability and willingness to take feedback on board**, including Oxfam's willingness to adjust budgets, workplans and targets, and to accept feedback and make changes as a result.
-  **Effort put into relationship-building and creating an open and trusting environment**, so that partners felt comfortable expressing criticism and could receive ongoing technical support where they needed it.
-  **Transparent exit strategy** – while adapting to news that Oxfam was exiting wasn't easy, partners shared that they appreciated that we communicated with them early and transparently.

MOVING FORWARD WE CAN WORK ON...

-  **Prioritizing clear, two-way communication from the beginning.** Partners felt that Oxfam didn't always explain technical requirements, like why certain documents or procedures were necessary, especially at the beginning of the partnership.
-  **Listening to partners needs and better recognizing where Oxfam can – and can't – add value.** Sometimes what Oxfam can offer doesn't reflect the full range of partners needs. We need to ensure that we utilize external resources to support partners and to recognize that there is a lot Oxfam can learn from our partners, and work on building our own capacities based on their expertise.
-  **Fostering open communication and transparent information sharing.** When it came to capacity sharing within the partnership, many partners fed back that they found it challenging to identify the opportunities because "we don't know what we don't know." Oxfam should recognize that partners may not always have the context or resources to identify what questions to ask. To enable a more equitable and empowering relationship, Oxfam has a responsibility to be more transparent and proactive in sharing knowledge.

LEARNING AND EVOLVING

PRIORITIZING PARTNERSHIPS AND SHIFTING APPROACHES

In 2023, the Ukraine response commissioned a learning review of partnership approaches to document achievements and challenges implementing a partner-led response. The findings from this review were published in the report [Prioritizing Partnerships: Modelling an alternative international humanitarian response in the Ukraine crisis](#).

The partnership learning review and its findings were pivotal to the design of Oxfam's new strategic direction in Ukraine. The feedback and learnings that emerged from the review have been embedded in our intentions and approaches moving forward. Below are some of the most important learnings from the review.

Flexible approaches

Oxfam's flexible approach to partnerships enabled partners to adapt, respond and reorientate their programs based on the needs of communities they work with. Through adapting approaches to be more flexible, an important learning is that **no one size fits all** when it comes to partnerships. Working together with a partner in one way may not work for another. Tailored, flexible, and adaptive approaches are a critical component of quality partnership.

'We've done a huge amount to move away from standardized ways of working, partly because we used flexible funding and also because of the effort the team put in.'

Oxfam staff member, Ukraine response

Balancing speed with appropriateness

With no prior presence in the region, the review found that Oxfam's Ukraine response and the development of partnerships took time to set up. Once partnerships were established, however, *the model enabled a fast and effective response* that

was able to adapt to the changing needs of communities – focusing on some of the most marginalized. This was due to the strength of the local partners, robust preparations, ongoing capacity sharing, joint planning and relationship building with partners.

Shifting power

For local humanitarian leadership to flourish, a shift in power is needed away from international actors and towards local leadership and affected communities. The review found that Oxfam had taken a number of important steps to address the systemic and inherent power imbalances within partnerships. But despite the professional approach and personal dedication of the Ukraine response team, unequal power dynamics persist, and can be reinforced by Oxfam and other international organizations, even unintentionally. An intentional analysis of the ways that power dynamics may present themselves and challenging how we can shift them is consistently needed to ensure Oxfam lives up to its principles of feminist, decolonized and locally-led approaches.

'We felt we were real partners. We were able to support Oxfam with our recommendations and advice.'

Partner staff member in Moldova

In the report, Oxfam's Ukraine response has outlined a number of commitments based on the findings of the partnership review which are embedded into our strategy and ways of working moving forward. The report also includes recommendations for the humanitarian community working in the Ukraine crisis response. It is hoped that by publishing and sharing our learnings, we can support collective progress on strengthening local humanitarian leadership in the Ukraine crisis response, as well as global learning on progress towards localization commitments.

The partnership learning review will inform Oxfam's approaches moving forward. We are already taking steps to implement the commitments we have made. Based on the findings, we have developed a theory of change for the next stage of our strategy and started to identify key indicators to measure the success of the phase out and localization approaches.

We have also undergone a change management process to ensure Oxfam's Ukraine response team structure is fit-for-purpose to support our partners through the process. We will continue to evaluate our processes and ways of working to ensure that we are living up to our local humanitarian leadership principles and feminist approaches.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Despite the critical role that local actors play in the humanitarian response, their leadership is often overlooked and excluded in decision-making spaces. In addition to adequately supporting their humanitarian service provision, international partners play a vital role in enabling and supporting their meaningful participation in the spaces that determine how humanitarian resources are prioritized and dispersed to ensure that communities receive the most appropriate and effective support to overcome the impacts of the crisis.

A critical component of Oxfam's strategy is to support our partners to access decision-making spaces and to advocate for greater support and funding for these organizations. Moving forward, we will continue to build on our efforts urging the international humanitarian community to live up to its localization commitments and implement the changes that are needed to realize the transformation of the humanitarian system.

Commitments from Oxfam's Ukraine response team based on the partnership review

We will:

- Continuously scrutinize, contextualize and adapt where possible the tools, processes and procedures we use with partners to uphold our commitments towards building and sustaining quality partnerships. We will also bring together colleagues from a range of teams, including partnerships and business support, to identify how we can adapt our ways of working to our partnership model.
- Strengthen our own capacities on feminist and local humanitarian leadership approaches by translating principles into practice for the Ukraine response, including providing guidance and support for our team.
- Work with our partners to identify ways we can support their sustainability and leadership into the future and beyond the partnership with Oxfam.
- Continue to use our voice to advocate for greater local humanitarian leadership and inclusion of marginalized groups across the humanitarian response in Ukraine.
- Design an indicator framework that will enable us to track progress against our ambitions and commitments, based on existing tools, including the NEAR Localisation Performance Measurement Framework and Pathways to Localisation report.
- Establish an anonymous feedback mechanism for partners to comment on how Oxfam is performing as a partner.

NGO Forum spotlight

The NGO Forum ‘*Razem*’ – which means ‘together’ in Polish – is a space for both international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Poland who work with migrants and refugees to collaborate, share experiences, and unite on the issues facing them. *Razem* was established in 2022 through the collaborative efforts of Polish organizations Ashoka and Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH), in response to the escalation of the war in Ukraine.

The Forum has a number of working groups, each dedicated to addressing specific challenges in the humanitarian and refugee responses in Poland. This includes working groups focusing on humanitarian needs at the Poland/Belarus border, empowering Ukrainian refugee-led organizations in Poland, and, more recently, countering and preventing harmful disinformation about migrants and refugees.

Oxfam partnered with *Razem* to help support local leadership in the humanitarian response to the Ukraine crisis and empower local actors to act within humanitarian structures, work together with international NGOs, and amplify the voices of people on the move in Poland. Through capacity-strengthening activities, resource-sharing, and strategic collaboration, Oxfam has supported the NGO Forum to build its leadership role in the Polish humanitarian sector, helping to strengthen the voices of local organizations in the humanitarian response.

Grand Bargain localization study

Oxfam also played a pivotal role in supporting the NGO Forum *Razem* to provide key input into the [Grand Bargain Localization Commitments Poland Case Study](#) in 2024, providing financial, strategic and technical support to the NGO Forum to conduct the case study. The case study aimed to assess how well international actors have responded to the humanitarian needs in Poland in line with their localization commitments in the Grand Bargain agreement, and supported better collaboration between international actors, like INGOs and UN agencies, and local organizations in Poland.

Razem Advocacy Working Group

In 2023, we realized, through discussions with Polish organizations, that many local organizations wanted more space to collaborate – with each other and with international actors – on advocacy to help improve the situation of people on the move in Poland. So, Oxfam supported efforts to establish the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) within the NGO Forum *Razem*, and has acted as a co-chair of the Working Group since its inception. This group provides a crucial space for civil society to prepare and work together to amplify their voices in important policy processes. The working group has collaborated on influencing the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum in Polish law, highlighting the needs of migrants and refugees as Poland takes up the EU Presidency in 2025, providing input for the development of Poland’s new Migration Policy, and calling out the government’s harsh policies at the Poland-Belarus border and in detention centers.

“Your contribution to the group’s work was huge and I have learned a lot thanks to your presence here and the Oxfam training.”

Rita Ster, Advocacy and Communication Specialist at the NGO Forum *Razem* leading the AWG.

While local organizations are leading on the ground, it's also important that their voices are heard on the international stage, where many decisions about the humanitarian response are made. So, we've been trying to support our partners to bring their crucial voices to these discussions.

In March 2024, Anzhelika Bielova, founder of Oxfam partner **Voice of Romni**, travelled to New York to attend the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), where she promoted the rights and needs of Roma women in Ukraine. Anzhelika was invited to a CSW event on Youth Dialogue, but Oxfam was able to support her to stay for the full conference. This gave her the opportunity to connect with Oxfam

staff in America, meet with international NGOs, and attend networking events for local organizations.

'This event made it possible for the first time to highlight the needs of Roma women in Ukraine at such a high level. I consider it very important to involve local women's organizations, because they are the ones who have permanent access to the community, and best understand the problems of Roma women and the initiatives which work best on the ground.'

Anzhelika Bielova, founder, Voice of Romni



Anzhelika Bielova, founder of Oxfam partner Voice of Romni, speaking at the *Commission on the Status of Women* in New York. Photo from the personal archive of Voice of Romni, provided by UN Women

Anzhelika told us how this extra time in New York allowed her to make connections, promote the visibility of her organization, including having an [article](#) written by UN Women about the important work she does with Voice of Romni. The trip also provided opportunities to reach new donors to help the organization continue their work supporting Roma communities affected by the war.

In May 2024, two Oxfam partners presented to the Global Protection Cluster, a network of international actors including humanitarian leaders and donors, in an Oxfam-hosted briefing on “What works in community protection”.

Aliona Pashchenko, from **The Tenth of April**, and Nataliia Kostiv, from **Rokada**, shared their expertise on community-developed and feminist tools which they have been developing and testing to better measure and evaluate the results of their community-led protection activities. These partners told us that this opportunity was a valuable platform not only to share their own experiences on what truly works on the ground, but also to learn about the experience of others and enter into new partnerships.

‘It was a valuable platform for us, allowing local organizations like ours to engage with key international actors and contribute to the conversation on what truly works on the ground.’

Aliona Paschenko, *The Tenth of April*

Localizing WASH assistance in Ukraine

Part of Oxfam’s strategy to make sure people have sustainable access to adequate water, sanitation and health (WASH) services in crises, is to develop strong partnerships with other organizations – including our local partners, local governments, and other service providers. We hope that, through this approach, we strengthen the systems that provide people with water and sanitation to not only minimize the immediate impact of humanitarian crises, but also build communities’ resilience in the longer term.

As part of this strategy, in Ukraine we collaborate with partners to promote public health in communities that have experienced disruption to their ordinary WASH services due to the war. We know the best way to educate on public health is to combine community knowledge (what people know, do and want) with public health expertise (e.g. the cause of diseases, epidemiology) – so the leadership of local actors has been crucial.

Our partners **Voice of Romni, Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv, Rokada and The Tenth of April** have delivered education sessions on topics like women’s health, the importance of vaccines, disease prevention, hygiene, and water pollution, reaching over 5000 people. As part of our locally-driven WASH response, Oxfam has also worked in coordination with local city councils and with **Vodokanal**, a network of Ukraine’s longest-standing municipal enterprises responsible for water supply, to restore access to water to hundred of thousands of people across Ukraine.



Our partners have delivered education sessions on topics including women’s health, vaccines, disease prevention and hygiene reaching over 5000 people



40 WELLS REHABILITATED

by Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv in rural communities across Chuhuivskiyi, Kharkivskiyi and Iziumskiyi raions after falling into disrepair, restoring reliable water sources for 1,295 people.



63 GENERATORS DISTRIBUTED

by Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv in Kharkivska to municipal enterprises to run sanitation and water services.



11 WATER TOWERS REHABILITATED

by Oxfam in rural communities in southern Ukraine which, together with the rehabilitation pipelines and underground water tank, has reached over 190,000 people.



6,773 WATER PURIFYING 'LIFESAVER CUBES'

distributed by Oxfam, The Tenth of April, Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv, Voice of Romni, Rokada, and other WASH Cluster partners to households facing difficulties accessing safe drinking water.

Gender transformative action

We know that in a humanitarian crisis, gender discrimination, violence and other forms of gender injustices are often exacerbated, especially for people who experience intersecting vulnerabilities. This is why Oxfam is committed to feminist approaches in our humanitarian programming.

An important step for us has been to ensure an understanding of the gendered impacts of the war in all our activities. We have also introduced stand-alone gender projects, which are focused interventions with targeted objectives designed specifically to address gender inequality. In Poland, Oxfam supported three of our partners to implement these projects, which targeted vulnerable groups of refugees and host community members, enabling their agency and leadership. These projects explicitly addressed barriers to gender equality, and the learnings from them will help us to work with our partners in Ukraine to pilot similar initiatives.

LAMBDA Warszawa

LAMBDA Warszawa is one of the oldest and largest LGBTQIA+ organizations in Poland. Since the war, they have been supporting queer Ukrainian refugees as well as the existing LGBTQIA+ community in Poland. Between January and July 2024, LAMBDA ran a project to raise awareness of the issues and needs of LGBTQIA+ people in Poland. This included:

- **Awareness raising** activities of the different and intersectional issues LGBTQIA+ refugees and communities in Poland face on a daily basis.
- Fostering cooperation and **promoting leadership of emerging leaders and activists** in the queer community.
- Developing a **guidance document** (or 'toolkit') for how to provide humanitarian support in a way that is inclusive of LGBTQIA+ refugees.

Foundation Towards Dialogue

Foundation Towards Dialogue, a Roma-led organization in Poland working on integration and awareness-raising related to Roma issues, has rapidly expanded their work since the war in Ukraine began.

'You saved my life, thank you! I was alone in a new country, and I thought, that I am the only one in the world, struggling with my gender identity - you showed me, that there are many others like me. Now I have new friends, who became my true family! Thank you!'

Anonymous, LGBTQIA+ refugee

They recognised that Roma women face particular marginalization, and created the **Leadership Academy for Romani women** running from December 2023 to August 2024. The Academy built the resilience and leadership of Roma women, helping them to overcome intersectional barriers and pave the way for them to become leaders in their own right.

'I am strong, beautiful, and smart - this academy made me believe I am worthy!'

Leadership Academy participant

The Academy enrolled both Ukrainian refugees and Polish nationals, supporting them to achieve their personal career aspirations through cultural mentoring and coaching, as well as training in the field of leadership, advocacy, and civic competencies. Recognizing that participants also had childcare responsibilities, and seeking to maximize the benefits of the program, the Academy provided parallel learning opportunities to their children.

Foundation Feminoteka

Foundation Feminoteka is a feminist organization that responds to gender-based violence (GBV) and leads campaigns to change law and society in Poland. In 2022, they scaled up their operations to extend their support to Ukrainian refugees - but they noticed that there was a relatively low uptake of their support for GBV support services by these refugees. To better understand this, Feminoteka launched a **research project to understand how to improve Ukrainian women's access to, and uptake of, specialist GBV services.**

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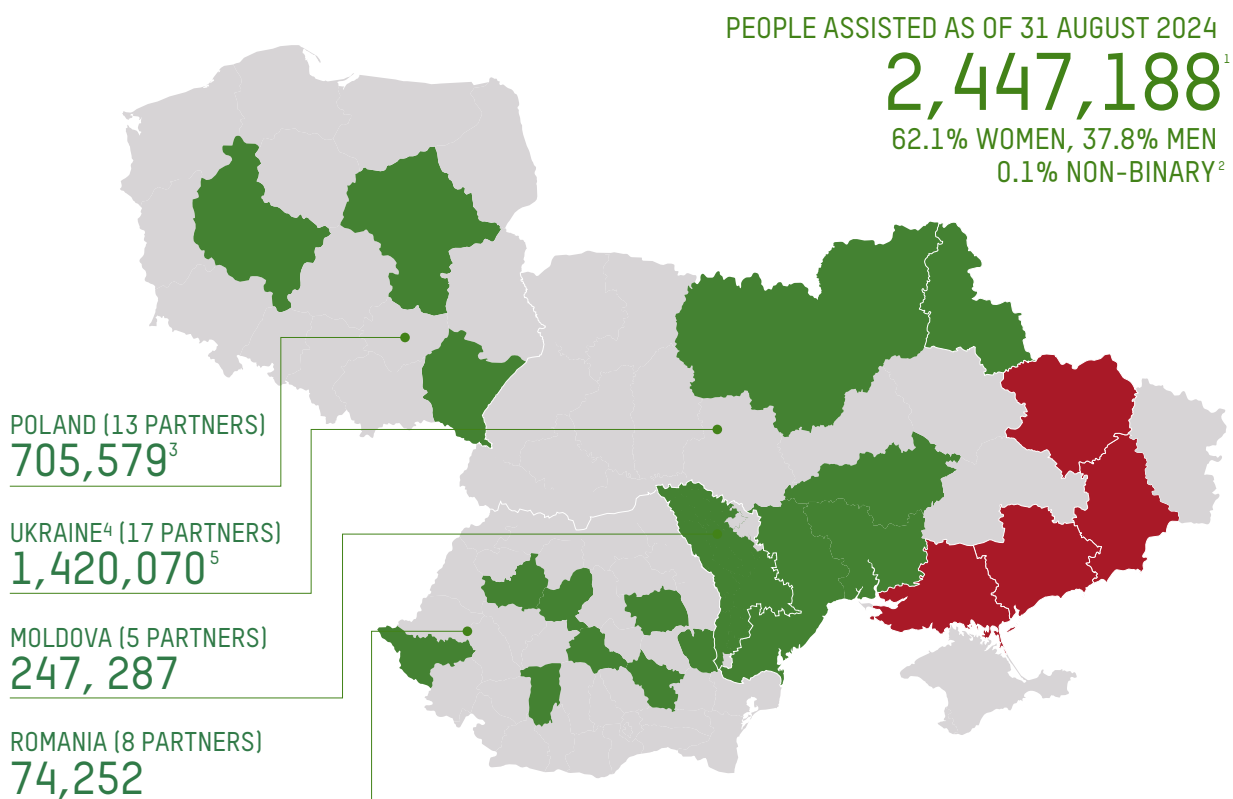
TWO AND A HALF YEARS OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

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TWO AND A HALF YEARS OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

“Oxfam understands partnerships as mutually empowering relationships, which are aware of power imbalances and focused on mutual growth, organizational development, institutional strengthening and above all, on achieving impact. We believe that programs implemented in partnership increase the collective knowledge, skills, reach and experience applied to an issue or challenge.”

Oxfam’s Partnership Principles



Notes

¹ Estimated cumulative number of people reached in Oxfam Ukraine Response. Marginal double-counts of people reached might not be removed due to operational constraints. While every effort has been made to ensure that all statistical information is verified, figures represent an estimate. Triangulation of information and sources is performed on a continuous basis. Therefore, amendments to figures may occur, including retroactively.

² 0.1% people identified as non-binary in primary data collected by 9 of our partners. This equates to 1,959 people.

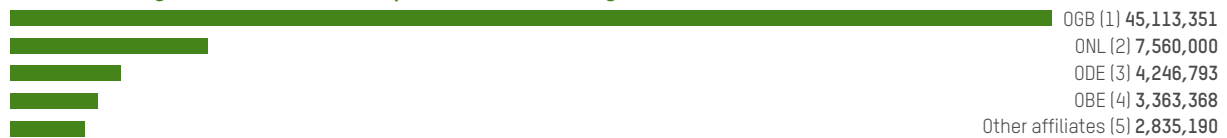
³ Due to a standard end of year data quality review the reach figure for Poland has been amended since Oxfam’s previous report on the Ukraine response in January 2024

⁴ The Oblasts (regions) highlighted in red include front line areas with some of the most acute humanitarian needs. Oxfam works in areas of this oblast that are under control of the Ukrainian government.

⁵ Figures for Ukraine also include number of people reached through partnerships with Bank Lviv, NRC, ACF, HEK and PIN.

FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE

Total funding for the Ukraine response as of 31 August 2024: € 63,118,702

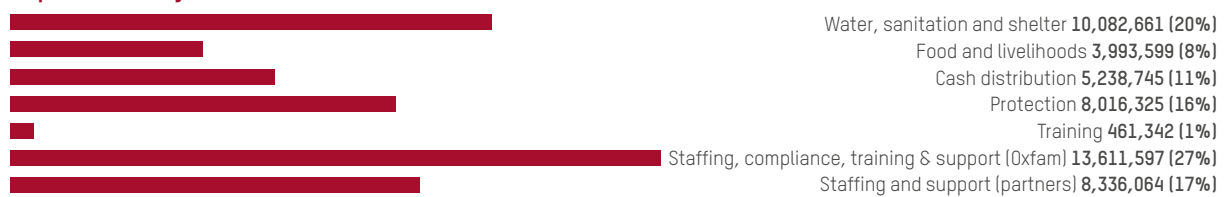


Total expenditure by country as of 31 August 2024: €49,740,333

Oxfam: €23,983,243 (48%); Partners: €25,757,090 (52%)



Expenditure by theme: €49,740,333



Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) Sharing

Oxfam Ukraine is committed to sharing Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) with our local partners, aligning with Oxfam’s global policies and commitments to localization, the Grand Bargain and the Charter for Change. ICR is funding that covers essential operating costs like rent and utilities not tied to specific projects.

From April 2024 onwards, all new partnership agreements included a provision for ICR sharing, a crucial step in supporting the financial sustainability of Oxfam’s partners in Ukraine. Oxfam is sharing ICR with our partners at 7% of contract budgets, from the ICR we receive from donors. By doing this, we ensure that partners have access to flexible, unrestricted funding, which is essential for covering overhead and administrative costs, ensuring they have greater stability and sustainability.

According to the Humanitarian Localisation Baseline for Ukraine conducted in 2023, 37% of national organizations in Ukraine reported receiving no overhead costs not linked to projects. The lack of sufficient funding for overheads prevents these organizations from strengthening their organizations and weakens their long-term sustainability. Oxfam’s ICR sharing helps address these gaps, empowering our local partners to take on leadership roles and strengthen their resilience. This approach is a vital component of Oxfam Ukraine’s ongoing response strategy, ensuring that local actors are equipped to lead in the humanitarian response.

(1) Oxfam Great Britain’s contribution includes funds received through the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) (€42m) and Ukraine Response Appeal Funds (€3m).
 (2) 100% of Oxfam Novib’s contribution come from funds received through the consortium appeal fund Giro 555. The total contribution to Oxfam from Giro 555 is €12,000,000. Contributions to the following organizations were made for their work in Ukraine at the start of the conflict: Action Contre la Faim, HEKS/EPER, Norwegian Refugee Council, People in Need. €7,560,000 was dedicated to work by the Oxfam Ukraine response across Ukraine, Poland, Moldova and Romania.
 (3) Oxfam Germany’s contribution includes funds received through the consortium appeal fund BEH (Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft).
 (4) 100% of Oxfam Belgium’s contribution come from funds received through the consortium appeal fund 12-12.
 (5) Other affiliate contributions came from Oxfam Australia, Oxfam Quebec, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Intermon, Oxfam Denmark, Oxfam France, Oxfam New Zealand, and Oxfam America.

OXFAM'S PARTNERS IN UKRAINE, POLAND, ROMANIA AND MOLDOVA

Oxfam has worked with 43 partners between February 2022 and August 2024. You can find out more about these organizations in this section.

UKRAINE

Women's Consortium of Ukraine (WCU)

The WCU unites 45 women's non-governmental organizations and has 15 branches in Ukraine. It plays a coordinating role in advocacy, training, and education initiatives aimed at strengthening the principles of equal opportunities for women and men, as well as child rights, in the country.

Rural Women Business Network (RWBN)

The purpose of the RWBN is to protect the rights and interests of rural women, to support their empowerment, equal economic participation, leadership, access to education and health care, and participation in local governments' decision-making processes.

Caritas Odesa UGCC

Caritas Odesa UGCC is the Ukrainian member of the organizations Caritas Internationalis and Caritas Europe. With more than 30 branches in the country, its purpose is to assist the most vulnerable, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, religion, social status, or other characteristics.

Gay Alliance Ukraine (GAU)

The main purpose of Gay Alliance Ukraine is to increase the level of tolerance in Ukrainian society, to promote the full realization of human rights for the LGBTIQ+ community in Ukraine and beyond, and to promote the establishment of equality of all people and respect for people's freedom.

The Tenth of April ("Desyate Kvitnya")

The mission of The Tenth of April is to ensure access to rights for everyone in need and make laws and international obligations work. It has been providing free legal aid to refugees and asylum

seekers, in partnership with the UNHCR, as well as psychosocial support and cash grants to people whose safety is at risk.

Anika Foundation and Rebuild Makariv are community-based organizations providing support to people directly affected by the war in the Chernihiv and Makariv regions. They help clean the ruins of destroyed or severely damaged homes, rebuild houses, repair roofs, and install windows, and provide families in difficult conditions with everything they need to survive the winter.

Rokada is an organization that has been involved in supporting refugees and asylum seekers and since February 2022 has extended their support to displaced people and other population affected by the conflict. They provide with inclusive social and other protection services, community engagement activities, basic needs, and shelter.

Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv is an organization supporting people in need in Kharkiv city and oblast with hygiene kits, food and non-food items and hot meals. The organization operates four humanitarian centres, in which they also provide psychosocial support and other relevant services such as warm places in wintertime for people affected by destruction of infrastructure.

SpivDiia

The purpose of the Foundation is to provide charitable assistance to individuals, territorial communities, non-profit organizations, as well as legal entities under private law in the specified areas, as well as the development and support of these areas in the public interest to help people in need and struggling small businesses become self-sufficient.

Eleos

The mission of ELEOS-UKRAINE is to serve the society, namely helping those who need support. Their main areas of support include providing food, clothes, and protection to people in need, creating decent living conditions for everyone; contributing to the spiritual growth of people; promoting access to education, work, quality medical care, food, housing, and other necessities.

Shchedryk

Shchedryk was created to provide assistance to the war-affected population of the region. Sectors of operations include food security, psychological and legal support of socially vulnerable population segments. They also provide information support for businesses.

Open Door Ukraine

Open Door Ukraine (ODU) was set up as a Dutch non-profit foundation (stitching) in December 2018 to bring actors and stakeholders from Ukraine and the Netherlands together, in order to promote cooperation among people and organizations from the two countries.

Voice of Romni

The Association of Roma Women Voice of Romni is a non-governmental organization based in Zaporizhzhya. Since the outbreak of the full-scale Russian invasion it relocated to Uzhhorod. The name of the organization reflects the very purpose of its activity: "Romni" means "a Roma woman", so the organization works with women of Roma origin.

N-place (Ukraine)

NGO "N-Place" is a grass root community-based organization established to support the local population. Before the war the organization developed and provide popularization of automotive culture. But when the Russian Federation started a military offensive against Ukraine in February 2022, the organization totally switched their activity to support local population. Many initiatives are done on a voluntary basis.

POLAND

Fundacja Centrum Badań Migracyjnych (Migrant Info Point - MIP)

Migrant Info Point is an information clearing house and assistance program for immigrants living in Poznan and vicinity. MIP offers legal advice as well as integration activities such as Polish language courses and professional counselling and training.

Stowarzyszenie Lepszy Świat (The Better World)

Better World provides social assistance, supports education, and offers volunteer support. They have been involved in pro-migration activities since 2013, supporting refugees in Poland and around the world.

Fundacja w Stronę Dialogu (Foundation Towards Dialogue)

Towards Dialogue is a Roma led organization working on integration and awareness raising related to Roma issues. They assist Roma and other marginalized and vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion and create educational programs about minorities.

Fundacja Feminoteka (Feminoteka Foundation)

Feminoteka is a feminist and gender-based violence response organization. They run a helpline for women experiencing violence, offer free legal, psychological, and therapeutic support and campaign to change the law and society.

Ukrainian House Przemysl

Ukrainian House is supporting the integration of migrants into Polish society. They work to preserve the cultural identity of Ukrainian minority, promote Ukrainian culture, organize language trainings, and offer legal support to Ukrainians arriving in Poland.

Fundacja Aktywizacji I Integracji

FAI is member of a federation of organizations which works on integration and mobilization of people at risk of social inclusion (people with disabilities, seniors, people at risk of homelessness) and addresses the issue of homelessness for refugees.

**Stowarzyszenie Lambda Warszawa
(Lambda Warsaw Association)**

Lambda Warszawa has been active in supporting and creating a positive image of the LGBTQI+ community in Poland since 1997. They are working on providing LGBTQI+ Ukrainian refugees with safe working space and opportunities through an integrated protection program.

Homo Faber Association

Homo Faber is a human rights organization specialized in anti-discrimination and integration of migrants. They have two main programs, which focus on providing legal advice to migrants and asylum seekers and integration for migrants in Lublin.

Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej (SIP)

SIP is a human rights organization which supports refugees and migrants, including those held in detention centres. They provide legal aid and advice and seek social cohesion by promoting the equality of all people in the face of the law.

Migration Konsorcjum

The Migration Consortium is a group of 9 organizations giving support to immigrants and refugees in different regions throughout Poland by providing legal and integration support, advocacy work and campaigns.

Egala association (Poland)

Focuses on Building a welcoming, inclusive community for all people - regardless of their nationality, culture, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, or background. Supporting migrants and refugees in the process of adaptation and integration to life in Poland, developing the sensitivity of the host community to the situation of people with migration and refugee experience, developing the host society's knowledge of migration and refugees among others

PAH (Poland)

PAH's mission is to make the world a better place by alleviating human suffering and promoting humanitarian values. We support the victims of humanitarian crises caused by armed conflicts and natural disasters. We provide development aid by seeking long-term solutions and preventing further catastrophes.

Helsinki Foundation (Poland)

HFHR has been long focusing on the protection of the rights of migrants in Poland, particularly by providing free-of-charge legal aid to migrants, monitoring the situation at Poland's external borders and in the immigration detention facilities, conducting trainings for the state officials and advocating for human rights-centred migration policies. In response to the humanitarian crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border, since August 2021 HFHR focuses on providing legal aid both to migrants and activists delivering humanitarian aid in the forests who face criminalization for their activities among others.

ROMANIA

eLiberare is involved in prevention, early detection and awareness raising around human trafficking. It helps build the capacities of local authorities and civil society organizations to prevent and respond to cases of human trafficking.

The Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) is one of the leading centres of expertise in peacebuilding and peace education and is involved in gender-based violence and anti-trafficking counselling, training and prevention.

Carusel is a human rights organization promoting and ensuring that the most vulnerable people receive both immediate and long-term support, enjoy equal opportunities and become visible to society.

easyECO is an inclusive and feminist organization combating any form of exclusion and discrimination and focusing on responding to the needs of women, Roma and LGBTQI+ individuals and communities residing in state-run shelters.

The Romanian Federation of Community Foundations (FFCR)

FFCR aims to contribute to the development of social collective responsibility in Romania and supporting the refugee response through a range of activities encouraging social cohesion, education and food security (language classes, workshops, open events etc.)

Federation of Romanian NGOs (FONSS)

FONNS offer social services to vulnerable groups. Thirty-one of its 44 member organizations are involved directly in supporting refugees through a variety of actions including managing and providing services in large transit centres, as well as providing specialized centres for people with disabilities, chronic conditions and autism.

FEM Consortium (Centrul Filia, MozaiQ, E-Romnja)

Centrul Filia is a feminist NGO focused on advocacy, research and activism on gender-based violence. MozaiQ is a community organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for LGBTQIA+ people in Romania. E-Romnja is a Roma feminist organization whose mission is to promote and make visible the implication of Roma women in society.

CLEAR Global

CLEAR Global are a non-profit helping people get vital information and be heard, whatever language they speak. CLEAR stands for community, language, engagement, accountability, and reach, the cornerstones of their work around the world.

MOLDOVA

Women's Law Center (WLC)

The WLC's mission is to contribute to the promotion of gender equality and to prevent and combat gender-based violence in Moldova by raising public awareness, building the capacity of relevant actors, providing services to assist and protect women, and conducting research and analysis.

Amici dei Bambini (AiBi)

The AiBi Association's mission is to support abandoned children and to promote every child's right to a family through adoption. Over the past 15 years, it has been developing socio-educational programs in order to contribute to the integration of children from disadvantaged families and boarding schools.

Centrul de Drept al Avocatilor (CDA - Law Center of Advocates)

The LCA's mission is to promote respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection, stateless persons, people at risk of becoming stateless, and foreigners in need (including foreigners in detention).

La Strada

La Strada is a non-governmental human rights organization that supports the rights of women and children to stay free from violence through research, legal expertise, counselling and representation, capacity building programs and development of toolkits, with a special focus on anti-trafficking strategy in Moldova.

Y-PEER Moldova

Y-PEER Moldova is a youth led organization and the Moldovan member of the Y-PEER global network. Its mission is to promote youth health education, especially reproductive and sexual health education, youth leadership and global citizenship education, targeting both rural Moldovan host community and refugee youth from Ukraine.

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Front cover photo: The mural “Berehynya” by Mata Ruda on the streets of Kyiv, Ukraine.
Photo credit: Laura Norman for Oxfam

Page 4: Diana* and Maria* work together during a vocational training class in tailoring, supported by Oxfam’s local partner Shchedryk, in Mykolaiv city.
Photo credit: Katya Moskalyuk/DEC

Page 8: Final Learning Review Workshop with Oxfam’s partners in Poland.
Photo credit: Olga Petrova for Oxfam

This page: View of Mykolaiv city, heavily bombarded early in the conflict, forcing over half the population to leave.
Photo credit: Katya Moskalyuk / DEC

*Not their real names



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