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**Report on funding for people with intellectual disabilities in
Ukraine**

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Funding for people with intellectual disabilities in Ukraine

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, following Russia's full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, a lot of money has been promised (committed) and delivered (allocated) to aid Ukraine in the defence and survival of the country and its citizens. A range of public and private funders have contributed by providing military, financial and humanitarian aid to Ukrainian government and its people.

While official announcements from governments and international organisations often declare new large-sounding numbers to demonstrate their solidarity and commitment to Ukraine, many are left wondering how this money is distributed and who it reaches. When communicating how the money is distributed governments and international relief organisations often say they are directing the money towards “the most vulnerable”. They rarely specify who falls into this definition.

Already widely overlooked before the war, people with intellectual disabilities and their families are fighting to keep their heads above water now more than ever. People with intellectual disabilities and their families are disproportionately affected by war-related issues such as destruction of infrastructure, increased risk of poverty, disrupted healthcare access, and inadequate / inaccessible shelter. However, they too rarely receive any funding or support. The loss of once supportive community networks leaves them in a state of isolation and insecurity, especially those living in institutions and / or with complex support needs.

With too little funding and resources, the organisations that advocate for people with intellectual disabilities are facing intense operational challenges.¹ This makes

¹ Inclusion Indicators 2023 / 2024 – Representation 4/10: “People with intellectual disabilities are represented in the national cross disability organisation. VGO Coalition does not receive government funding for their advocacy work.”

representation at local, regional, and national level very hard. To tackle this, targeted financial aid is needed, to provide both immediate relief and lay the groundwork for a sustainable recovery framework.

To follow through on their claims, the EU, its member states, the US, international organisations and the Ukrainian government (amongst others) must make sure the distribution of their funding reaches people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Because, by any measure, they belong to one of the most vulnerable population groups in Ukraine.

Purpose and Methodology

This report tracks the flow of aid to Ukraine, identifies potential funding opportunities, and provides suggestions on how these funds can be distributed to address the needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

The purpose of this report is:

- To serve as a practical resource for our member organisation, the VGO Coalition, and its network by highlighting current funding opportunities.
- To guide the Coalition's members on how to leverage these funds.
- To advocate for a more inclusive funding approach that considers the needs of people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

The first chapter on public funding, mainly relies on the data of the [Ukraine Support Tracker](#) created by the Kiel Institute for the World Economy.² Here, three main categories of funding are defined: military, financial, and humanitarian. Because only financial and humanitarian aid have the potential to directly reach people with intellectual disabilities the report does not consider military aid. Both financial and humanitarian aid are considered in terms of commitment and allocation. The data of the Ukraine Support Tracker covers the period from 24 January 2022 to 31 August 2024. Funding that was

² This especially applies to the first chapter on public funding (EU and countries that provide funding).

committed / allocated afterwards is mentioned according to the official websites of the European Commission and USAID. There is a special focus on currently active multi-year funding frameworks to aid Ukraine.

Financial aid is money that the Ukrainian government receives in form of grants, loans, and loan guarantees.

Humanitarian aid is money that supports the civilian population. It includes food, medicines, and other relief items.

Commitments are official promises governments and organisations have made to fund Ukraine. There are many large but unused commitments.³

Allocations are funding that has either been delivered or is intended to be delivered in the short term. It already has a specific purpose and describes the aid that is actually arriving in Ukraine.

The report looks at public and private funders, and multilateral organisations.

Public funders mean the EU, its member states, other European countries, the US, and other non-European countries.

Private funders mean organisations that have raised and distributed money for Ukraine, that people donated.

Multilateral organisations mean organisations that are formed by 3 or more countries and that work together to support Ukraine. These organisations can provide both financial and humanitarian funding to a range of different projects. The funding distributed by multilateral organisations comes from multiple governments.

This report does not consider funding that is committed or allocated to aid Ukrainian refugees outside of Ukraine.

³[The Ukraine Support Tracker](#): Which countries help Ukraine and how?

Public Donors

EU

Humanitarian aid

From January 2022 to September 2024 the EU committed *and* allocated €2,3 billion in humanitarian aid to Ukraine. ⁴ In comparison to the two prior years, the amount of humanitarian aid provided by the European Commission significantly decreased in 2024. With €165 million in 2024, only 57% of what was allocated by the Commission in 2022 (€285 million) was covered. ⁵ In September 2024 it was announced that €35 million would go to “vulnerable Ukrainians” ahead of the approaching winter. ⁶

Financial aid

From January 2022 to September 2024 the EU committed around € 77,5 billion in financial aid to Ukraine. In the same time frame, only €41,5 billion in financial aid were allocated.

On 1 March 2024, the Ukraine Facility – an EU support package of up to € 50 billion, to be allocated between 2024 and 2027 (€ 12.5 billion yearly) – came into effect.

The main goals are:

- Support of recovery, reconstruction, and modernization
- Support of Ukraine’s reforms on the way to EU accession

⁴ Ukraine Support Tracker:

Financial allocations: € 41,49 billion.

Financial commitments: 77,44 billion.

Humanitarian allocations: € 2,34 billion.

Humanitarian commitments: € 2,34 billion.

⁵ [Humanitarian aid allocations by the European Commission:](#)

2022: € 285 million.

2023: € 300 million.

2024: € 165 million.

⁶ European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_4563.

- Supporting Ukraine’s financing needs for the State to deliver uninterrupted public services (schools, hospitals, social benefits, etc.)
- To mobilise investments (budgetary and financial support)
- Supporting the Ukrainian society, helping to address the social consequences of the war.⁷

It is not clear how much financial and humanitarian funding was and is being allocated to support people with intellectual disabilities and their families specifically.

*„The EU pays particular attention to support **the most vulnerable households** in preparation for the upcoming winter.“⁸*

Money for recovery / reconstruction

For immediate reconstruction and recovery at national and community level Ukraine would need € 14,5 billion, in 2024 alone. This funding would be distributed as part of the Ukraine Facility and with a specific focus on restoration of housing, soft infrastructure, services, energy and transport, as well as supporting the private sector. The distribution is coordinated by the [Ukraine Donor Platform](#), a platform whose permanent members are the G7 countries.⁹ The steering group is co-chaired by Ukraine, the USA, and the EU. Temporary members include Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and South Korea.¹⁰

We urge all members of the Ukraine Donor Platform and all individuals working on the Ukraine Facility to focus their efforts on the reconstruction of inclusive communities.

⁷ [Ukraine Facility](#).

⁸ European Commission: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/europe/ukraine_en.

⁹ European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_1921.

¹⁰ All of these members have committed to contribute at least 0.1% of the country’s 2022 GDP, and at least one billion. They can participate in the Ukraine Donor Platform as long as their funding continues to flow.

This includes not funding the reconstruction of institutions but directing the money towards community-based services. Considering the housing needs of people with intellectual disabilities and making sure enough money is allocated to cover their continued support also must be a priority when estimating, allocating, and distributing funding for reconstruction and recovery.

Possible funding opportunity: The European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

[The EED](#) is an independent, grant-making organisation, which was established in 2013 by the EU and EU member states. It aims to provide fast and flexible financial support for the improvement of democracy and human rights in the European Neighbourhood. Amongst others, the EED supports CSOs, pro-democracy movements, and civic and political activists that work towards a pluralistic political system, including newly created or non-registered organisations, informal platforms, youth groups and individuals. The EED particularly considers those who cannot be supported by other donors and existing EU instruments.

Thematic areas relevant for people with intellectual disabilities, their families and their representative organisations might include:

- Civic activism and participation
- Human rights activism and monitoring
- Women's civic and political participation
- Inclusive society: sexual orientation and gender identity
- Arts and culture
- Youth

Applications can be submitted at any time.

Further information on how to receive support can be found [here](#).

The application form can be found [here](#).

The EED has funded a project for people with disabilities in Ukraine before.¹¹ The initiative from Chernivtsi aims to improve inclusion and accessibility and puts a strong focus on community development. While the initiative does not specifically address people with intellectual disabilities, it serves as a good example and possible inspiration for those interested in applying.

EU Member States and other European Countries

Country	EU member	Financial allocation (€ billion)	Financial commitment (€ billion)	Humanitarian Allocation (€ billion)	Humanitarian Commitment (€ billion)
Austria	Yes	0,71	0,71	0,08	0,13
Belgium	Yes	0,20	0,46	0,24	0,18
Bulgaria	Yes	0	0	0	0
Croatia	Yes	0	0	0,09	0,09
Cyprus	Yes	0	0	0	0
Czech Republic	Yes	0	0	0,05	0,07
Denmark	Yes	0,12	0,14	0,29	0,25
Estonia	Yes	0,01	0	0,06	0,18
Finland	Yes	0,15	0,15	0,14	0,14
France	Yes	0,80	0,80	0,60	0,60
Germany	Yes	1,41	1,41	3,05	3,05
Greece	Yes	0	0	0	0
Hungary	Yes	0	0	0,05	0,05
Ireland	Yes	0,04	0,04	0,10	0,12
Italy	Yes	0,41	0,41	0,47	0,47
Latvia	Yes	0,05	0,05	0,02	0,02
Lithuania	Yes	0,04	0,04	0,15	0,09
Luxembourg	Yes	0	0	0,02	0,02
Malta	Yes	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	Yes	0,72	1,06	0,58	1,12
Poland	Yes	0,89	0,89	0,40	0,40
Portugal	Yes	0	0	0	0
Romania	Yes	0	0	0,12	0,12
Slovakia	Yes	0,01	0,01	0,01	0,01
Slovenia	Yes	0	0	0,01	0,01
Spain	Yes	0,57	0,57	0,08	0,08
Sweden	Yes	0,35	0,31	0,27	0,65

¹¹ Have a look at EED's coverage of Mariia Nikitina and her work as head of the NGO [Chernivtsi Association Zahyst](#) from south-west Ukraine [here](#).

Denmark

Since before the war in Ukraine, Denmark has had a funding program for people with disabilities - the Danish Disability Fund. This fund supports international development cooperation of organisations of persons with disabilities from Denmark and their partners in the Global South. The fund falls under the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is administered by Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD), the Danish umbrella organisation for persons with disabilities. While there is no official data available on the Danish Disability Fund being applied to Ukraine, colleagues from Inclusion Europe's Danish member organisation, Lev, have confirmed it. According to our partners, the fund requires Danish disability organisations to be the main applicant. This means that only Ukrainian organisations who have a partnership with a Danish disability organisation can be eligible for funding. According to Lev, a project application for a new partnership with the VGO Coalition was recently submitted and is expected to launch in January 2025. This is great news! To receive future funding through the Danish Disability Fund both organisations should deepen their collaboration and shared partnership. By working to ensure that the Ukrainian and Danish inclusion efforts complement each other, the likelihood of receiving funding and achieving sustainable and impactful outcomes may increase.

More on Denmark's disability inclusive funding [here](#).

Germany

In October 2024, the German government announced increased investment to disability rights in Ukraine.¹² Together with the [Christian Blind Mission \(CBM\)](#) the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) is funding the Empower Ukraine project. An overall value of € 4,6 million has been allocated to the project, for a timeframe of 30 months (July 2023 to December 2025).¹³ The European Disability Forum (EDF) is among the receiving and implementing parties. Locally active project partners are EDF's Ukrainian members, the [National Association of Persons with Disabilities \(NAPD\)](#) and the [League of the Strong \(LoS\)](#).

¹² [EDF on Empower Ukraine.](#)

¹³ [EDF on Empower Ukraine.](#)

The project aims to better the inclusion of at-risk internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, veterans, older people, single-headed households, adults and children in institutions, and members of host communities with and without disabilities, looking specifically at 6 oblasts of Ukraine. They work in the areas of food security and livelihoods, protection, shelter and (mental) health.

Actions of Empower Ukraine include:

1. Providing cash and voucher transfers for food, non-food items and shelter.
2. Improving access to inclusive health and rehabilitation services.
3. Providing inclusive mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) at community level.
4. Raising awareness of the rights, humanitarian needs and interests of persons with (intellectual) disabilities within and outside the humanitarian coordination system.
5. Capacity building for local partners to manage the scaled-up humanitarian response for people with (intellectual) disabilities.

Lithuania

Together with the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania co-financed the [EU4Youth – Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Programme](#). In July 2023, this program launched a support project, specifically targeting people with intellectual disabilities and their families / support persons in Ukraine. The project aims to improve community-based services by training young professionals in social work, psychology, and special education. It also updates university programs for care-related fields to better meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. The program received €2 million (of €75 million total for EU4Youth) and is run by the Central Project Management Agency (CPVA). The action is implemented by the VGO Coalition and the Djerela Charity Association. Over 18 months, the program operates in six regions. By improving services and reducing isolation, the directly benefits people with intellectual disabilities. Their families / caregivers / support persons also get support through a respite program. This way over 380 families get a short break from their role as carers and supporters. Around 300 young professionals are receiving practical training,

with 75 securing jobs and 200 volunteering. Around 20 000 people are expected to benefit from the new social services.

Lithuania is one of the EU member states (including Germany, Denmark and Sweden) that has set up a multi-year aid program for Ukraine.

Sweden

Together with the EU, Germany, and other donors, Sweden funded a program for people with disabilities in 2024. The Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy and the UN World Food Program were trusted with distributing the funding. The program provides almost €20 million in financial assistance to 310 000 citizens over the course of three months.

The program targets people and children with disabilities who receive less than UAH 3,250 in monthly state social benefits, who do not get aid from other international organisations, and who do not receive internally-displaced-person payments (except those in active or high-risk areas). The World Food Program will top up state social benefits to ensure recipients get up to UAH 3,250, with a minimum payment of UAH 100. This financial aid is sent directly to bank accounts or delivered by Ukrposhta (Ukraine's national post) for those without accounts. No action is needed from the recipients to receive the payments. The program aims to reduce financial strain on people with disabilities, ensuring better access to basic needs and stability.

Members of the organisation „Надія Славутича“, a member of the VGO Coalition, received financial support through this program. While it addresses gaps by supplementing state aid in support of people with intellectual disabilities it is important to note that even the full amount (UAH 3250 = €74,40) is way too little to fully support vulnerable families even in peaceful times.

Besides this, the Swedish government adopted the Recovery and Reform cooperation agreement in July 2023. The strategy commits around €500 million from 2023 to 2027. It focuses on a wide range of aid purposes, including essential social services, security and stabilisation, and human rights and democracy.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ukraine Support Tracker: [Sweden \(page 10\)](#).

Other European Countries

Country	EU member	Financial allocation (€ billion)	Financial commitment (€ billion)	Humanitarian Allocation (€ billion)	Humanitarian commitment (€ billion)
Iceland	No	0,01	0,01	0,01	0,02
Norway	No	0,81	3,10	0,49	0,50
Switzerland	No	0,11	0,16	0,75	2,25
UK	No	3,41	6,17	0,85	0,88

Norway

In February 2023, as one of the first donors to do so, Norway established a multi-year strategy under the [Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine](#) worth €6.6 billion.¹⁵ The program covers both military and humanitarian aid, including reconstruction and upkeep of civil infrastructure. The fund plans to provide €1.3 billion per year to humanitarian and military aid each, but the distribution will be determined annually and adapted depending on Ukrainian needs. The focus of the Nansen Support Programme lies on maintaining societal function, civilian infrastructure, and on reconstruction. The distribution is coordinated with the Ukrainian government and international partners. Humanitarian aid is administered by the Norwegian Agency for Development Coordination ([Norad](#)) and implemented by “established, internationally recognised organisations”. It is not very clear which organisations are meant by this, as “core support for UN organisations, civil society partners and international financial institutions is provided outside of the Nansen Support Programme”. Because Norway’s total commitment to Ukraine extends beyond the programme this is possible, but it lacks transparency on who is being trusted to distribute the funding.

Switzerland

In April 2023, the Swiss federal council reserved funding of €1.6 billion for humanitarian aid and development coordination in Ukraine for the period from 2025 to 2028.

¹⁵ Ukraine Support Tracker: [Norway \(page 10\)](#).

Main multi-year aid programs

Country	Announcement Date	Disbursement Period	Total Commitment (billion EUR, Feb 29, 2024)	Allocated (billion EUR, Feb 29, 2024)	Outstanding (billion EUR, Feb 29, 2024)
Denmark	May 2023	2023-2028	8	4	4
EU	June 2023	2024-2027	50	0	50
Germany	May 2023	2024-2027	12	4.1	7.9
Lithuania	July 2023	2024-2026	0.2	.02	0.18
Norway	Feb 2023	2023-2027	6.6	1.2	5.4
Sweden	July 2023	2023-2027	0.52	0.08	0.44
Switzerland	April 2023	2025-2028	1.6	0	1.6

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USA

Financial aid

From January 2022 to September 2024 the United States committed €31,65 billion in financial aid and allocated €25 billion.

Humanitarian aid

From January 2022 to September 2024 the United States committed €2,95 billion in humanitarian aid and allocated €2,93 billion of that amount.

Rehab4U

On October 2, 2024, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) committed another €225 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine. On the same day, the USAID Rehabilitation for Ukraine initiative “Rehab4U” was launched.¹⁷

The main goals are:

- to increase the quality of and access to services,

¹⁶ The commitment and allocation data in this table include military aid. Kiel Institute for the World Economy: Ukraine Support Tracker – Methodological Update & New Results on Aid “Allocation” (June 2024), Table 1, [Page 10](#).

¹⁷ [USAID – Rehab4U initiative](#).

- to increase the quality of and access to assistive technologies,
- to promote the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in their communities and the country's recovery.¹⁸

The five-year program has a budget of €38 million and is allocated for 5 projects that will cover 15 regions of the country to ensure a nation-wide impact.¹⁹ In partnership with the Ministry of Health in Ukraine, the program is implemented by [Momentum Wheels for Humanity](#). Other project implementing partners are:

- [Results for Development \(R4D\)](#),
- [Project Hope](#),
- the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine,
- and [Deloitte](#).²⁰

Ukraine Rapid Response Fund by IREX

Another program that can reach NGOs working with and for people with intellectual disabilities and their families is the [Ukraine Rapid Response Fund \(URRF\)](#). URRF is funded by the U.S. Department of State and distributed by [IREX](#), a global development and education organisation. The program supports Ukrainian NGOs to implement projects that directly relate to the war's challenges.

The URRF is currently accepting concept notes / applications under the Annual Program Statement (APS). People with disabilities are specifically mentioned as one of the vulnerable groups that will be considered when applying. We strongly recommend members of the VGO Coalition to apply for funding.

Details:

- Funding ranges from €19 000 to €237 000.
- Project duration: from 1 December 2024 to 31 May 2025, or shorter, depending on the needs of the grant proposal.

¹⁸ [USAID – Rehab4U initiative](#).

¹⁹ [European Ukrainian Council for Cooperation and Development \(EUCCD\)](#).

²⁰ [Ministry of Health of Ukraine](#).

- Application deadline: applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed quarterly. During November 2024-January 2025 only short-term projects (2 months) will be accepted.
- Closing dates for submissions are:
 - o 20 December 2024
 - o 31 January 2025
 - o 25 February 2025
- Applications are accepted in Ukrainian or English.

Relevant eligibility criteria:

- Must be a Ukrainian NGO registered for at least 18 months.
- No political or religious affiliations.
- Proven record in donor-funded projects and work with vulnerable populations, including those with disabilities.
- Must adopt or have inclusive policies like social inclusion.
- Align with URRF's goals of addressing war-related needs and boosting resilience.

Important:

- Describe objectives, activities, and measurable outcomes.
- Propose costs within \$20,000–\$250,000.
- Only one submission / one project per organisation allowed.
- Key Contact: Yuliya Solovey, IREX Program Director.

Other Countries

Country	EU member	Financial allocation (€ billion)	Financial commitment (€ billion)	Humanitarian Allocation (€ billion)	Humanitarian commitment (€ billion)
Canada	No	4,89	5,18	0,42	0,43
Australia	No	0	0	0,11	0,11
New Zealand	No	0	0	0,03	0,03
Japan	No	7,93	10,27	1,02	2,04
South Korea	No	0,47	2,6	0,30	0,44
Taiwan	No	0	0	0,03	0,07

Canada

Canada has committed and allocated a lot of money to Ukraine both in financial and in humanitarian assistance since January 2022. But Canada also has a third aid category that might offer the most chances for inclusive funding: **development assistance**.

Canada has committed €298 million in development assistance funding in support of Ukraine's needs in the areas of:

- inclusive governance,
- economic growth,
- and gender equality.

In line with these priorities the Embassy of Canada in Ukraine launches a yearly call for proposals for the **Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)**.²¹ While the submission deadline for 2024 passed in July, it is advisable to prepare for the submission period 2025.

The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) provides opportunities for NGOs to secure funding for projects that align with Canada's global priorities.

Details:

- Funding ranges between €20 000 – €33 700 per project.
- Proposals must be in English or French
- Open for NGOs and community / non-profit organisations
- Open for organisations emphasizing local civil society partnerships

Relevant eligibility criteria:

- Projects should be aligned with the CFLI priorities:
 - Women, Peace, and Security Agenda
 - Veterans
 - Strengthening Ukrainian Identity and Social Cohesion

²¹ [The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives – Ukraine \(2024\)](#).

Projects could focus on integrating displaced people with intellectual disabilities into local communities through:

- Community events and art programs to reduce displacement stress.
- Cultural initiatives to promote inclusivity and interaction among diverse groups.

Important:

- All projects must include a Gender-Based Analysis to:
 - Assess how issues affect men, women, boys, and girls differently.
 - Ensure projects are designed inclusively and do not cause harm.
 - Engage women and/or girls in project design to reflect diverse perspectives.

Another funding opportunity to keep an eye on is the Canada-Ukraine Foundation. While applications for funding are currently closed, this could be a great opportunity to receive humanitarian aid for any NGO that has a Canadian partner organisation.²²

²² [Canada-Ukraine Foundation – Apply for funding.](#)

Private Donors

Committed and allocated funding by private donors is tracked by [OCHR](#).

Current (November 2024) funding committed: **€ 1.1 billion**

Current (November 2024) humanitarian aid paid: **€ 576 million**

In total **825 donations** were made, **by 509 private sector donors**.

In the table below you can see the biggest private corporations that raised or donated money and which organisations were trusted with the distribution.

Donor	Amount (€ million)	Distributed by / recipient
Microsoft Corporation	\$177	In-kind technology & in-kind credits to unspecified sources
Epic Games	\$144	Direct Relief , UNICEF, World Food Program (WFP), UNHCR, World Central Kitchen
Amazon.com, Inc.	\$75,3	UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, Red Cross, Polska Akcja Humanitarna, Save the Children
MSD	\$65	Cash and product donations (medicine) to Ukrainian Government, Direct Relief & cash to American Red Cross, Direct Relief IMC, Project HOPE and others
Akelius Foundation	\$52	UNHCR
Metinvest Group	\$40	Aid projects in Ukraine

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Reaching big private donors is not easy, and possibly not necessary. More important to note from the information above is who distributed the funding. Multilateral organisations and NGOs that have committed themselves to disability inclusion like the UN institutions, the Red Cross, and Save the Children, should be open to distributing funding in an inclusive way.

²³ [AP News](#).

Multilateral Organisations

Financial aid

Financial aid by organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, United Nations, and the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) add up to €13.3 billion.²⁴ The greatest amount of financial aid is made up by loans from the IMF and World Bank.²⁵ In comparison commitments by other international organisations like the UN or the Red Cross are minor.²⁶ There is no specific information available on direct financial aid for organisations working with people with intellectual disabilities. Financial aid is given to and distributed by the Ukrainian government

The World Bank provides a rare example of multilateral financial aid that has been allocated for the support of people with (intellectual) disabilities. Launched in November 2023, the project [Investing in Social Protection for Inclusion, Resilience, and Efficiency \(INSPIRE\)](#), provides support to 29 social assistance programs targeting “the most vulnerable people in Ukraine”. INSPIRE is financed by a €1.14 billion World Bank loan and is implemented by Ukraine’s Ministry of Social Policy.²⁷ The project “specifically aims to help people with disabilities, orphans, children under guardianship, foster families, socially vulnerable students, and victims of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster and human trafficking.” The project has supported Ukraine in meeting its financial needs in 2024 and it was expected to reach over 10 million people at the time of its launch.

Humanitarian aid

Humanitarian aid (in general) is tracked by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

²⁴ Ukraine Support Tracker.

²⁵ Ukraine Support Tracker.

²⁶ Ukraine Support Tracker.

²⁷ [World Bank](#).

The yearly [Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\)](#), by way of the financial tracking service, provides clear information on:

- the funding source,
- the destination organisation (the one that will implement the project),
- the area of funding such as education, health, food security, or protection,
- the amount,
- and the funding status.

The financial tracking service / HRP also provides information on committed, required, and delivered funding. In 2024 only 7.5 % of the total humanitarian aid requirements were covered, the requirements being €2.95 billion, and donations only amounting to 221 million. This is a lot less than in the year before, where 40 % of what was needed was covered.²⁸

One of the UN funding mechanisms that works with Ukrainian local and national NGOs and that supported people with disabilities is the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund. In 2023, the UHF targeted aid to around 3,2 million people affected by the war, including 480 000 people with disabilities.²⁹

Probably one of the most direct ways to receive funding through the UN is through the Small Grants Program to CSOs and Volunteer Organisations.³⁰ The program was created in September 2022 with a budget of €19 million, so that Ukrainian civil society organisations and NGOs could have direct access to humanitarian aid. While there is no call for proposals now, this is a good program to look out for and apply to in case the chance arises again.

²⁸ [Global Humanitarian Overview 2024.](#)

²⁹ UHF [Annual Report 2023.](#)

³⁰ UHF [Review of Small Grants Programmes 2023.](#)

Other than that, it is important to note that many of the multilateral (destination) organisations that are trusted with the distribution of funding and implementation of projects in partnerships with local Ukrainian NGOs have frameworks for disability inclusion.

Examples:

- [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [Strategic Framework on Disability Inclusion by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement](#)
- [Save the Children Disability Inclusion Policy: lifting barriers, realizing equality](#)

Recalling these strategies might be useful when asking for funding.

Ukraine

The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine is officially responsible for people with disabilities in Ukraine. As the “central executive body responsible for the rights of persons with disabilities” the Ministry for Social Policy is “open to dialogue and actively cooperates with public associations of persons with disabilities”.³¹ It also states that it works to “create equal opportunities for people with disabilities”.

The Ministry for Social Policy of Ukraine was one of the destination organisations of funding from the EU, Germany and Sweden, that provided financial assistance to persons with disabilities. This aid reached at least one of VGOs members, the organisation „Надія Славутича“.³²

When it comes to the distribution of aid and cooperation with NGOs implementing projects, the number of involved ministries widens. For example, the project Rehab4U is a collaboration between USAID and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. The Ministry of Financial Affairs of Ukraine is responsible for getting and distributing financial aid.³³

While the Ukrainian government is vocal on increasing the number of specialists and departments to address the increasing number of people with physical disabilities,³⁴ there is not much data provided on people with intellectual disabilities or the funding and projects that target them.

But, as seen with some of VGO Coalition’s members local and regional governments can also provide aid. For example, the Department of Social and Veteran Policy of the Executive Body of the Kiev City Council (Kiev City State Administration) made the program “Inclusive Playback Theatre Team” possible in 2024. Financed through the

³¹ Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine [on people with disabilities](#).

³² Facebook Page of Надія Славутича.

³³ [Ministry of Finance of Ukraine](#).

³⁴ Ministry of the Temporarily Occupied Territories [on people with disabilities](#).

budget of the city of Kiev Djerela was able to continue its ongoing theatre project for people with intellectual disabilities.

Lack of transparency

During the research for this report the lack of transparency on funding that people with intellectual disabilities and their organisations receive became evident.

New funding commitments from major public and private donors often warrant official announcements and press releases. But when it comes to monitoring the implementation of these commitments, the work is usually left to others. Due to inconsistent (and in many cases non-existent) tracking of funding by the donors themselves, it is increasingly difficult to provide a realistic, complete and comprehensible picture of who *exactly* receives financial and humanitarian support in Ukraine. Local and international NGOs, civil society groups advocating for people with intellectual disabilities, external think tanks, and UN organisations take on the job of piecing together fragmented funding information.

Often, the most detailed information is found on social media. For this report, Facebook pages of members of the VGO Coalition were studied. Some provided valuable insights. On Facebook, local organisations posted mostly to thank donors and provide proof of implementation. They disclosed information on donors, the project or framework behind the funding, and the actions taken. While these posts showed that in some cases multilateral organisations and international and local NGOs had, in fact, included people with intellectual disabilities in their distribution of funding, the amount received was rarely disclosed. Nor for how long this money lasted or how many people were reached.

Providing transparency and data during times of war cannot be on the recipients' shoulders alone. All major donors, public and private, must recognise the responsibility they carry and respond accordingly.

Recommendations for applying for funding

1. Clearly define your needs.

Use data and personal stories to show the war's disproportionate impact on people with intellectual disabilities. Emphasize the humanitarian crisis you face and make it clear to donors that you are (representing) their target group of "the most vulnerable".

2. Access funding opportunities

- Apply to ongoing and upcoming funding opportunities, such as the European Endowment for Democracy.
- Keep track of submission deadlines for applications.
- Track **multi-annual programs** like the Nansen Support Programme (Norway) or the Ukraine Facility (EU) for updates and upcoming proposals.
- Advocate for inclusion in budgets allocated for community reconstruction or targeted social programs in **local government funds**.

3. Effective Applications

When applying for funding it is important that you carefully read the eligibility criteria of the donor and tailor your application accordingly.

- Focus on and match your application to the donor's stated priorities.
- Give clear objectives, timelines and indicators that ensure transparency and impact.
- Highlight the way your project aligns with international commitments to disability inclusion, such as the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy or the CRPD.
- Demonstrate your dedication to inclusion by highlighting your awareness of intersectional vulnerabilities, such as gender or complex support needs, if required.

4. Enhance and build international partnerships

Collaboration increases visibility and can make your organisation eligible for funding reserved for national organisations of other countries and their partners.

Therefore, it is recommended to:

- Foster existing partnerships or establish new ones with organisations from Denmark to access the Danish Disability Fund.
- Foster existing partnership or establish new ones with organisations from Canada to access Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI).
- Foster existing partnerships or establish new ones with organisations from strong public donor countries that prioritise inclusion.
- Communicate your needs to partner organisations from other countries and ask them for support in applying for funding.

Recommendations to donors

Inclusion Europe and the VGO Coalition urge donors to follow through on their promise of directing aid towards “the most vulnerable people” in Ukraine, specifically people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

1. Act according to the UN CRPD / your organisation’s disability strategy

All public donors mentioned have ratified the UN CRPD. Many have put policies in place to further the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. Now, they must act on it.

Article 11 of the UN CRPD on Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies states that all states parties “shall take, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, [and] humanitarian emergencies”.³⁵ To do so, public donors must fairly commit and allocate aid to people with intellectual disabilities.

To do this:

- Make sure your government’s international development assistance (IDA) takes the needs of people with intellectual disabilities and their families into account.

³⁵ [UN CRPD – Article 11](#).

- Make sure humanitarian and financial aid are directed in a fair and inclusive way.

Many of the multilateral organisations and NGOs that distribute the funding (such as Save the Children and the Red Cross) have disability frameworks within their own organisations. To honour their pledge to disability inclusion, members of said organisations need to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities, their families and organisations, are on the receiving end of the funding they are distributing.

2. Stop using “the most vulnerable people” as a general term.

Who are they? By leaving it up to interpretation donors evade going into detail for the good of the recipients. How do you know what the recipients of your funding need, when you don't know who they are? Defining who you aim to reach is the first step to reaching them. The situation in Ukraine has shown that having inclusive policies is not enough to ensure equal access to funding.³⁶ This is why people with intellectual disabilities need to be specifically mentioned in funding strategies. Only then can individual needs be recognised and addressed, and only then will donors be able to truly fulfil their promise of supporting the most vulnerable people in Ukraine.

3. Make funding accessible to people with intellectual disabilities and their families

As this report shows, it is not impossible for people with intellectual disabilities to receive funding. However, the lack of inclusive information makes it very difficult. By not providing easy-to-read information many are prevented from learning about upcoming funding opportunities and applying on time. This is made even worse by power outages and the humanitarian emergency Ukrainians face during the war.

To allow for a fair application process private and public donors need to:

³⁶ Study commissioned by Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD), 2023/2024: [Mapping of Danish efforts to include persons with disabilities in development cooperation and humanitarian action.](#)

- Provide information on upcoming funding opportunities in a timely manner
- Publish information on upcoming funding applications and applications calls in easy-to-read and understand
- Consult people with intellectual disabilities to better meet their needs in crisis
- Reach out to umbrella organisations, like the VGO Coalition, to ensure people with intellectual disabilities and their organisations are aware and able to participate

4. Allocate realistic amounts of funding

There are approximately 260 000 people with intellectual disabilities in Ukraine, many of whom are forced to live in institutions.³⁷ For immediate relief as well as long-term support (e.g. inclusive community building) donors must calculate and provide realistic budgets to meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. For these calculations donors must communicate directly with national and local organisations representing people with intellectual disabilities, such as the VGO Coalition and its members. When allocating funding, consider the specific circumstances people with intellectual disabilities are in such as:

- living inside or outside of an institution,
- location within Ukraine and exposure to war-related dangers,
- access to healthcare and necessary medicines,
- lack of available, affordable and inclusive housing,
- availability of community-based services.

5. Transparency

Track the distribution and implementation of your funding

All donors, especially public ones, have a responsibility to make sure their money is not used in harmful ways. By not tracking funding, donors neglect this responsibility,

³⁷ Milan Šveřepa for FEANTSA: [The impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. What the homeless sector can learn from the disability sector.](#)

sometimes allowing money to go to the reconstruction of institutions. Hereby public donors contribute to human rights violations of people with intellectual disabilities. A study of the UN showed institutions in Ukraine were overcrowded and understaffed, their remote locations excluding residents from community life.³⁸ The study also showed that residents were deprived of other basic rights and in some cases faced extreme violence and torture. There is a general, and justified, fear that international funding is used to support these harmful places, rather than the people living inside them. Transparent tracking mechanisms are essential to ensure funding reaches its intended purpose.

6. Invest in inclusive communities

For a full and inclusive recovery in Ukraine, donors must target, distribute, and monitor their funding to promote inclusion, not exclusion. To do so funding must prioritise community-based services, ensuring that people with intellectual disabilities can live independently and be active members of their communities.

Donors must avoid supporting institutions that perpetuate segregation.

The Rapid damage and needs assessment (2022–2023) identified €127.5 million for rebuilding residential care facilities, a move contrary to EU guidance on independent living and inclusion.³⁹ Such funding undermines global commitments to disability rights and reinforces outdated models of care.

Instead, donors must channel resources toward inclusive housing policies and community-based supports, ensuring that people with intellectual disabilities and those with complex support needs are integrated into housing strategies, like those currently under development between Norway and Ukraine.

³⁸ UN Briefing Note: [The human rights situation of people with intellectual disabilities and psychosocial disabilities in Ukraine](#), 2022.

³⁹ World Bank: [Rapid damage and needs assessment \(2022-2023\)](#).

By avoiding harmful reconstruction and actively fostering inclusive communities, donors can fulfil their commitment to the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and contribute meaningfully to a Ukraine that leaves no one behind.

Summary of future funding opportunities

1. Rehab4U (USAID)

Focus: Enhancing access to inclusive services and assistive technologies and promoting community participation for people with disabilities.

Budget: €38 million over five years.

Regions Covered: 15 regions in Ukraine.

How to Apply: Build partnerships with implementing organisations like Momentum Wheels for Humanity and align your proposals with community inclusion goals.

2. Ukraine Rapid Response Fund (URRF) by IREX

Focus: Addressing war-related challenges with specific inclusion of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities.

Funding Range: €19,000–€237,000.

Deadlines: Rolling applications; key dates include 20 December 2024, 31 January 2025, and 25 February 2025.

Recommendation: Tailor proposals to the fund's priorities and ensure projects have measurable outcomes.

3. Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)

Focus: Strengthening governance, promoting inclusivity, and addressing gender-based and community needs.

Funding Range: €20,000–€33,700.

Next Opportunity: Prepare for the 2025 application cycle.

Recommendation: Highlight community-based projects and incorporate a gender-based analysis in applications.

4. Empower Ukraine (Germany)

Focus: Supporting the inclusion of at-risk groups, including people with disabilities, in community development and access to essential services.

Budget: €4.6 million until December 2025.

Recommendation: Collaborate with local partners like the National Association of Persons with Disabilities or EDF to join ongoing efforts.

5. EU4Youth (Lithuania)

Focus: Training professionals and improving community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities.

Budget: €2 million for 18 months.

How to Apply: Engage in partnerships with implementing organisations like the VGO Coalition or Djerela Charity Association.

6. Small Grants Program to CSOs and Volunteer Organizations (UN)

Focus: Providing direct access to humanitarian aid for NGOs.

Budget: €19 million (last cycle closed; future opportunities likely).

Recommendation: Monitor announcements for new calls and prepare projects aligned with inclusive community services.

7. Danish Disability Fund

Focus: Supporting international collaborations between Danish disability organisations and their partners.

Eligibility: Requires a Danish partner.

Recommendation: Foster partnerships with Danish organisations like DPOD to access this funding.

8. Nansen Support Programme (Norway)

Focus: Societal function and inclusive infrastructure in Ukraine.

Budget: €6.6 billion multi-year strategy.

Recommendation: Advocate for inclusion in reconstruction projects and emphasise community-based housing policies.

9. European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

Focus: Democracy, human rights, and community inclusion.

Applications: Open year-round.

Recommendation: Showcase your organization's commitment to inclusion and democracy-building.

10. INSPIRE Project (World Bank)

Focus: Social protection programs targeting vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities.

Budget: €1.14 billion.

Recommendation: Engage with Ukraine's Ministry of Social Policy to align projects with the programme.

11. Sweden's Financial Assistance Program

Focus: Topping up state social benefits for people with disabilities.

Budget: €20 million.

Recommendation: Ensure beneficiaries are aware of their eligibility and advocate for expanded programme coverage.

12. Private Donors

Key Donors: Organisations like Microsoft, Amazon, and Akelius Foundation.

Focus: Technology, healthcare, and community aid.

Recommendation: Align proposals with donor interests and ensure transparency in expected outcomes.

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