Ukraine | Local Responder Area Profile: Mykolaiv

August-September 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Local Responder Area Profile aims to collect actionable, area-based information on local non-governmental actors' (LNGAs)[1] needs, capacities, ways of working, and preferences for international support, to give international organisations (IOs) data they can use to **avoid duplication, support LNGAs directly, and improve international integration with local systems on local terms**. This pilot covers LNGAs operating out of Mykolaiv city. **See p. 5 for full methodology.**
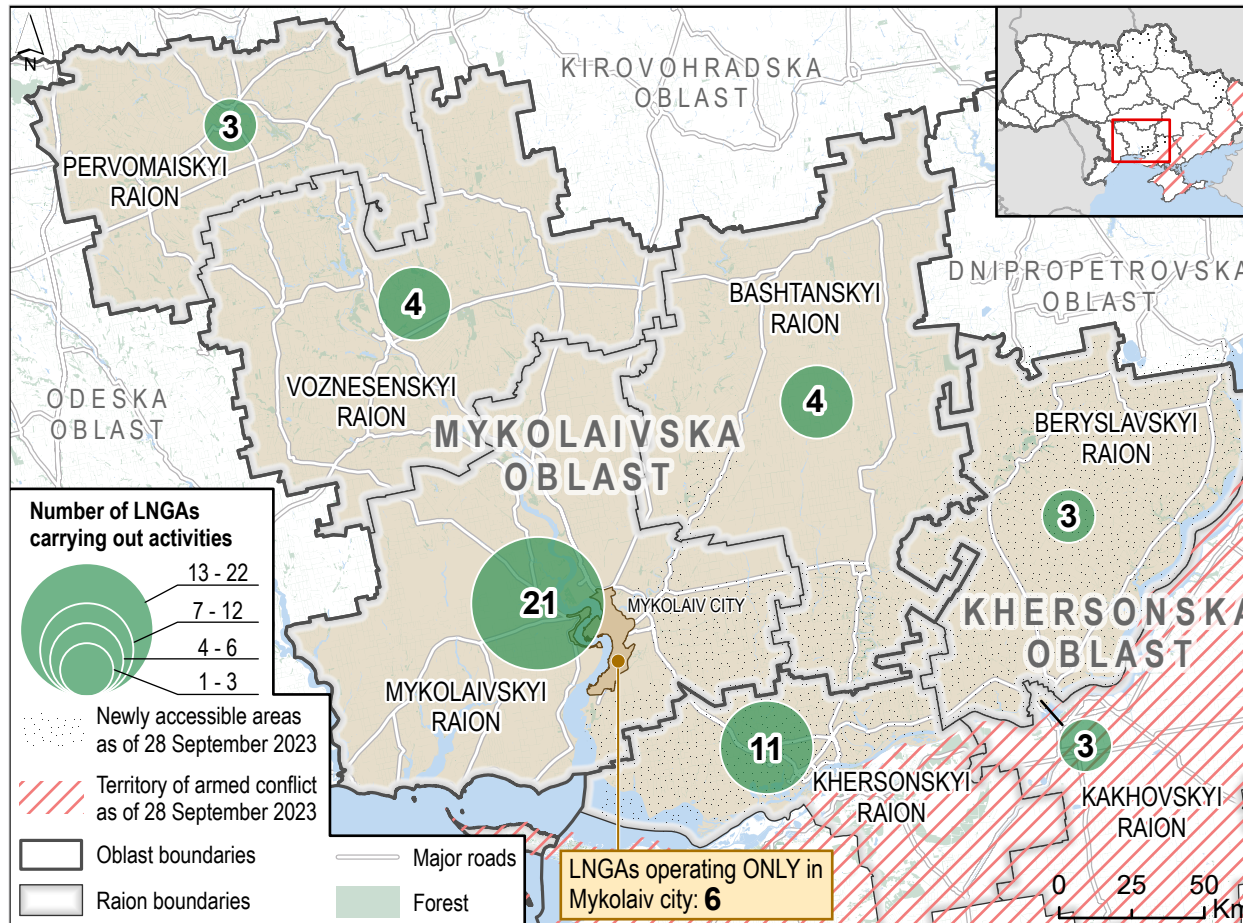
ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW [2]

Distribution of in-kind goods

🍲	Food	18
🧴	General hygiene supplies	17
🧴	Water	15
💊	Medicines	11
👕	Clothing	10
👶	Items for babies/children	8
🛏	Bedding/blankets	5
🏠	Light shelter repair supplies	5
🌡	Winterization items	4
🚰	Water treatment supplies	4
📕	Education materials	4
🧍	Items for older adults	4
♿	Assistive devices for those with limited mobility	3
🍳	Cooking supplies	2
⛽	Fuel/electricity substitutes	1
🌾	Agricultural inputs/seeds	1
LNGAs involved in distribution		**19**

RAION-LEVEL ACTIVITIES COVERAGE OF LNGAS

Areas where LNGAs are reportedly conducting activities, by number of LNGAs reporting:

Number of LNGAs carrying out activities

- 13 - 22
- 7 - 12
- 4 - 6
- 1 - 3

Newly accessible areas as of 28 September 2023

Territory of armed conflict as of 28 September 2023

Oblast boundaries

Raion boundaries

Major roads

Forest

LNGAs operating ONLY in Mykolaiv city: **6**

Frontline and first response

🚒	Evacuation	8
🚑	First responder (EMS, fire brigade, S&R, etc.)	4
	Animal rescue	2

Information and coordination

✂	Coordination	7
?	Assessing/monitoring needs	6
🎤	Awareness-raising/ sharing information	4

Top reported awareness-raising activities were mine risk awareness and legal rights awareness, followed by safe air alert behavior and mental health awareness.

1 CSO ran a hotline for general information about assistance.

LNGAs reporting heavy shelter repair activities:

5

Services for general population

💊	MHPSS services	7
⚕	Healthcare services	4
🏠	Light shelter repair	3
🏠	Housing assistance	3
♿	Home-based care for those w/ limited mobility	2
♿	Transportation services	2
	Mine victim assistance	2
🧰	Livelihoods support	2
📕	Education for <18 children	2
⚙	Support with finding/ applying for assistance	2
🏠	Utilities repair	1
LNGAs involved in services for the general population		**11**

Services for IDPs and returnees

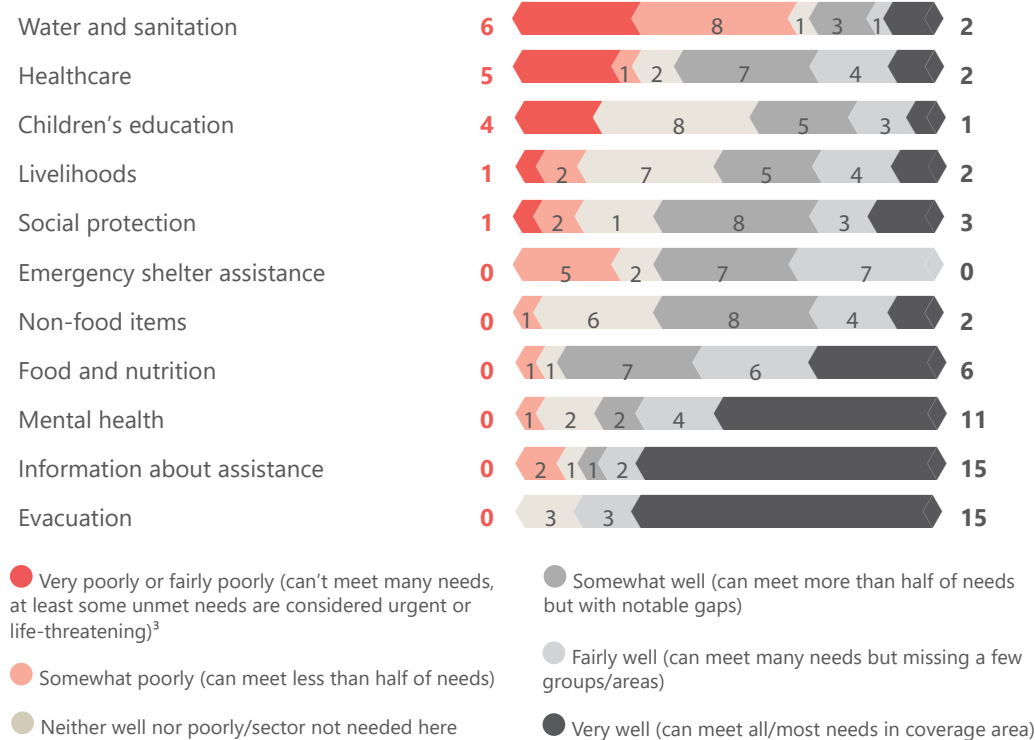|		
💊	MHPSS services	3
⚕	Healthcare services	3
⚙	Support with finding/ applying for assistance	3
🧰	Livelihoods support	2
🏠	Housing assistance	2
🏠	Light shelter repair	2
🤝	Legal assistance	1
📕	Education for <18 children	1
LNGAs involved in services for IDPs/returnees		**6**

1 Throughout this factsheet, "LNGA" refers to Ukrainian non-governmental actors including national NGOs operating out of Mykolaiv, registered civil society organisations (CSOs), and volunteer groups that met inclusion criteria (see p. 5).

2 Displayed by number of LNGAs reporting participation in each activity. LNGA respondents could select more than one option.
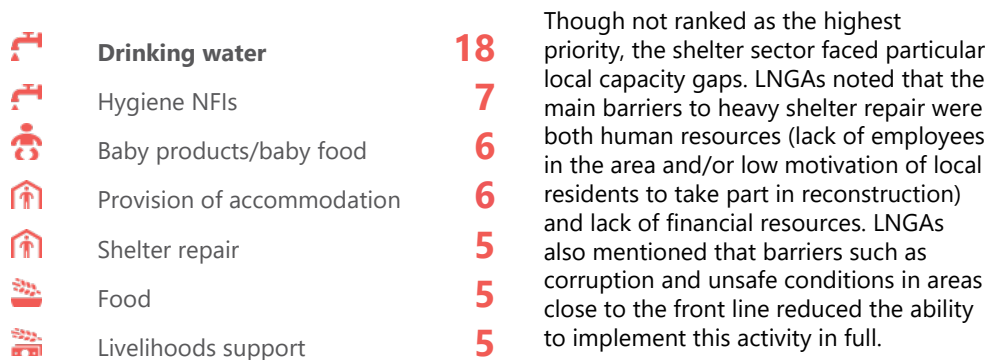
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SECTORAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

How well assessed LNGAs perceive local capacity to be able to address sectoral needs, by number of LNGAs reporting:

Sector	Very poorly/fairly poorly	Somewhat poorly	Neither	Somewhat well	Fairly well	Very well	
Water and sanitation	6	8	1	3	1		2
Healthcare	5	1	2	7	4		2
Children's education	4		8	5	3		1
Livelihoods	1	2	7	5	4		2
Social protection	1	2	1	8	3		3
Emergency shelter assistance	0	5	2	7	7		0
Non-food items	0	1	6	8	4		2
Food and nutrition	0	1 1	7	6			6
Mental health	0	1	2 2	4			11
Information about assistance	0	2 1 1	2				15
Evacuation	0	3	3				15

● Very poorly or fairly poorly (can't meet many needs, at least some unmet needs are considered urgent or life-threatening)[3]

● Somewhat poorly (can meet less than half of needs)

● Neither well nor poorly/sector not needed here

● Somewhat well (can meet more than half of needs but with notable gaps)

● Fairly well (can meet many needs but missing a few groups/areas)

● Very well (can meet all/most needs in coverage area)

Water and sanitation response capacity

With the damage to the Mykolaiv water infrastructure causing the water to be undrinkable[a], local capacity to respond to WASH needs was seen as somewhat poor despite distribution of drinking water and hygiene supplies being among the most reported activities among LNGAs—suggesting that long-term needs are outpacing the short-term fixes LNGAs are able to provide. These capacity gaps were compounded by challenges finding the necessary equipment or contractors specialising in the needed water infrastructure repair locally. According to one KI this process was further lengthened by having many actors involved.
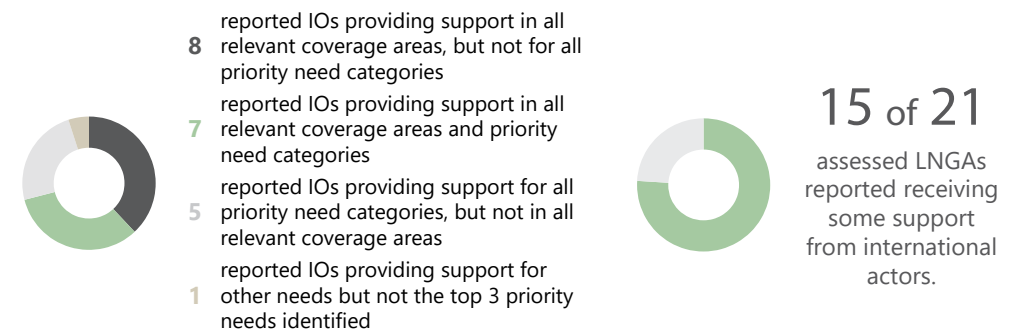
Education response capacity

KIs noted underlying education issues beyond what local capacity and emergency response was able to solve, including problems with online education due to unstable connections, as well as the lack of bomb shelters and drinking water in schools, which prevented resumption of in-person school attendance. The displacement of educational staff reportedly worsened the issue. Additionally, one KI mentioned that not all schools had been restored after damage from shellings, and that distribution of humanitarian aid to schools was not transparent.

Vulnerable groups

A few KIs flagged persons with disabilities (4 LNGAs) and older adults (2) as underserved vulnerable groups, and one KI mentioned that there was not enough humanitarian aid for these groups, especially adult diapers. Among LNGAs that targeted women and children, one KI noted that the reasons for low coverage of children and women's needs were the lack of coordination in the humanitarian response and the lack of data on the needs of these groups. Additionally, there were reportedly few jobs for women in the area, adding to their needs.
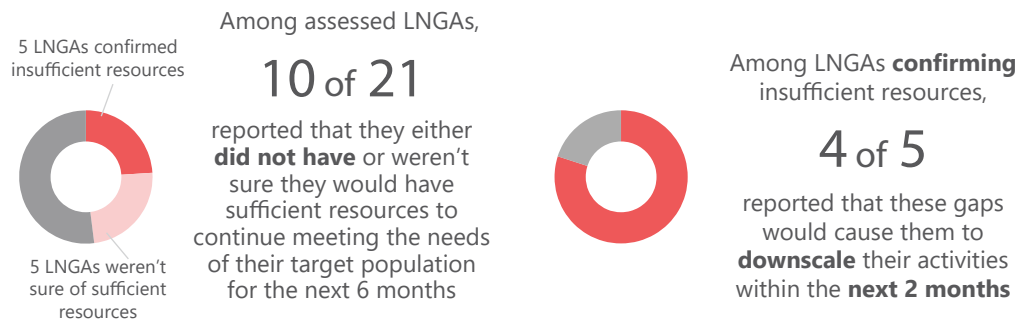
LOCAL PERCEPTION OF PRIORITY NEEDS [4]

Top 3 priority needs in their area of coverage, by number of LNGAs reporting:

🚰	**Drinking water**	**18**
🚿	Hygiene NFIs	**7**
👶	Baby products/baby food	**6**
🏠	Provision of accommodation	**6**
🏠	Shelter repair	**5**
🍲	Food	**5**
🏘	Livelihoods support	**5**

Though not ranked as the highest priority, the shelter sector faced particular local capacity gaps. LNGAs noted that the main barriers to heavy shelter repair were both human resources (lack of employees in the area and/or low motivation of local residents to take part in reconstruction) and lack of financial resources. LNGAs also mentioned that barriers such as corruption and unsafe conditions in areas close to the front line reduced the ability to implement this activity in full.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Provision of support by international organisations, by number of LNGAs reporting:

8 reported IOs providing support in all relevant coverage areas, but not for all priority need categories

7 reported IOs providing support in all relevant coverage areas and priority need categories

5 reported IOs providing support for all priority need categories, but not in all relevant coverage areas

1 reported IOs providing support for other needs but not the top 3 priority needs identified

15 of 21 assessed LNGAs reported receiving some support from international actors.

3 LNGA respondents further indicated that, where they had selected fairly poor or very poor options, it was because the sector was considered life-saving generally (water, healthcare) or urgent due to advancing deadlines, i.e. schools opening in September. Only 1 respondent selected "very poorly" (**many** unmet needs are urgent/life-threatening); this was selected for education needs due to reported uncertainty over schools having proper bomb shelters for the new school year, potentially impacting many students.
4 LNGA respondents could select more than one option.

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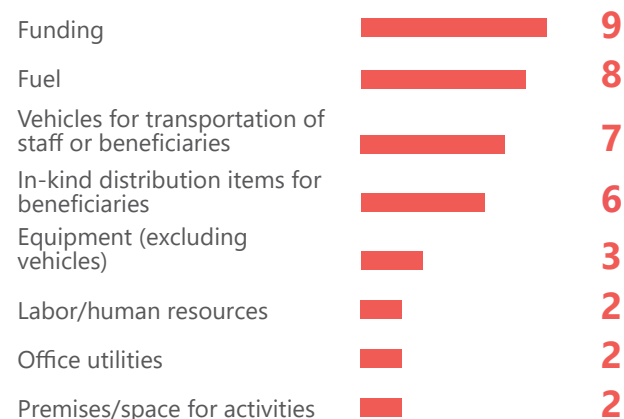## OPERATIONAL RESOURCE GAPS AND EFFECTS

How well assessed CSOs perceived local capacity to be able to address each need, by sector:

5 LNGAs confirmed insufficient resources

5 LNGAs weren't sure of sufficient resources

Among assessed LNGAs,

10 of **21**

reported that they either **did not have** or weren't sure they would have sufficient resources to continue meeting the needs of their target population for the next 6 months

Among LNGAs **confirming** insufficient resources,

4 of **5**

reported that these gaps would cause them to **downscale** their activities within the **next 2 months**

TOP REPORTED OPERATIONAL NEEDS

Most reported operational needs across all assessed LNGAs facing resource gaps,[5] by number of LNGAs reporting (n=10):[6]

Need	Value
Funding	9
Fuel	8
Vehicles for transportation of staff or beneficiaries	7
In-kind distribution items for beneficiaries	6
Equipment (excluding vehicles)	3
Labor/human resources	2
Office utilities	2
Premises/space for activities	2

In the quantitative survey, information or expertise in an unfamiliar topic was not identified as a gap by any assessed LNGAs who reported facing resource gaps within the next 6 months, despite being an answer option—but certain trainings were suggested as important in later qualitative findings (see p. 4).

Amount of funding reportedly needed to meet resource gaps among the 9 LNGAs reporting funding needs, by number of LNGAs reporting (n=9):

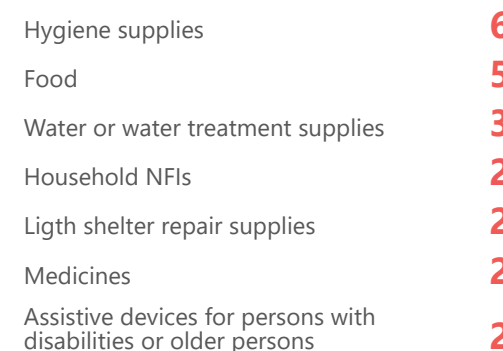| Amount	Value
10,000-35,000 USD	1
35,001-60,000 USD	6
60,001-100,000 USD	2
>100,000 USD	1
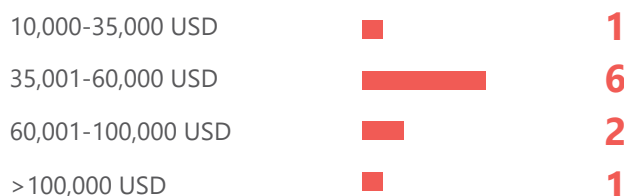
*Reports of needed resources being available/possible to independently secure vs. unavailable in the area or not possible to secure were mixed across LNGAs, but overall more organisations said they **would be able to independently secure items independently** if they had the additional funding to afford them.*

OPERATIONAL NEEDS ZOOM-IN

Types of vehicles needed among LNGAs reporting vehicles as resource gap, by number of LNGAs reporting (n=7):[6]

Vehicle	Value
Van/bus	5
Truck/SUV	3
Car	1
Specialised vehicle (ambulance, heavy repair, etc.)	1
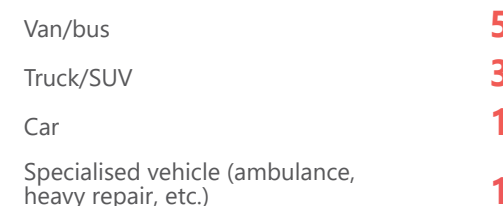
Most reported in-kind distribution items for beneficiaries needed among LNGAs reporting in-kind items as a resource gap, by number of LNGAs reporting (n=6):[6]

Item	Value
Hygiene supplies	6
Food	5
Water or water treatment supplies	3
Household NFIs	2
Ligth shelter repair supplies	2
Medicines	2
Assistive devices for persons with disabilities or older persons	2

Barriers to operational needs:

Fuel and vehicles

The need for more cargo-capacity vehicles, as well as for the repair of such vehicles, was reportedly more urgent than the need for other vehicle types. KIs stressed that these needs could be met by IOs, via loan or funding, and that without such assistance, there could be a risk of reducing the coverage of the areas where they operate.

KIs also noted that the price of fuel has increased significantly, and that they would have to reduce the amount of aid delivered without assistance covering fuel costs.

Funding and staff resourcing

Some KIs noted that their work was extremely dependent on funding from IOs and that without it, their activities would shrink. KIs also indicated that a lack of staff skilled in searching for and writing grant applications was preventing them from getting funding and meeting their organisational needs—while noting that some staffing decreases after the full-scale invasion were partially due to lowered ability to pay staff.

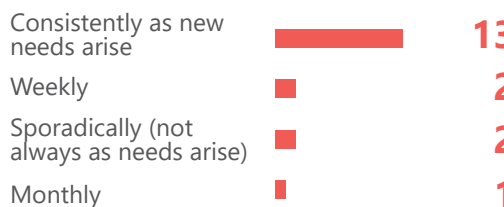## Decision-making within and among local actors

KIs noted that the internal decision-making process about who and where to provide humanitarian aid occurs as a result of collective discussion within the organization. Externally, they noted that the decision to provide assistance took place after consultations with local authorities, while trying to take into account the fact that the area that received the least support should receive assistance first.

Furthermore, half of the KIs indicated that in order to make a decision, the level of vulnerability of the people/households to whom aid would be provided was assessed. In general, KIs indicated that they try to find a variety of sources of information and, based on this, make decisions that will cover the needs of the most vulnerable groups.
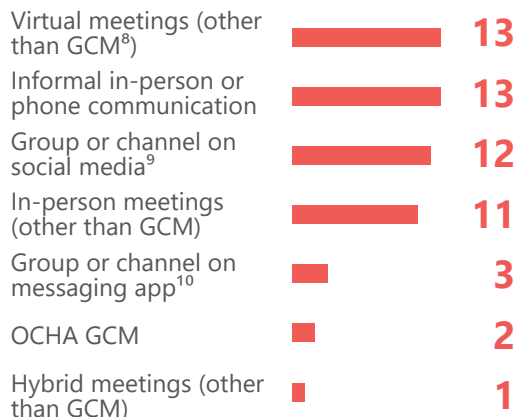
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5 LNGAs that reported EITHER that they did not have sufficient resources or that they didn't know if they did were considered to be "facing resource gaps" and were asked all follow-up questions on specific types of resource gaps and needs

6 LNGA respondents could select more than one option.

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LOCAL COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

Among assessed LNGAs,

18 of 21

reported that they had some kind of local mechanism **for coordinating the emergency response**

Frequency of coordination among LNGAs reporting any coordination mechanisms, by number of LNGAs reporting (n=18):

Consistently as new needs arise	13
Weekly	2
Sporadically (not always as needs arise)	2
Monthly	1

Coordination mechanisms used among LNGAs reporting any coordination efforts, by number of LNGAs reporting (n=18):[7]

Virtual meetings (other than GCM[8])	13
Informal in-person or phone communication	13
Group or channel on social media[9]	12
In-person meetings (other than GCM)	11
Group or channel on messaging app[10]	3
OCHA GCM	2
Hybrid meetings (other than GCM)	1

Main means by which LNGAs communicate with their target population, by number of LNGAs reporting:[7]

Phone call	14
Facebook	14
Face-to-face in office	11
Telegram	8
Instagram	5
Face-to-face at beneficiary home	1
WhatsApp	1
Viber	1
E-mail	1

Local coordination

About a third of qualitatively-interviewed KIs noted that there was a kind of coordination council created by the authorities where they tried to coordinate the distribution of humanitarian aid. However, a majority of KIs indicated that they were not aware of any formal, institution-led coordination mechanism in the area (over a third of qualitative LNGA KIIs).

Other mentioned local mechanisms for coordinating included direct communication between local authorities and LNGAs, as well as a dataset on vulnerable groups that could be used in planning assistance.

KIs noted that some online coordination occurred between LNGAs, without the participation of the authorities, with other forms of coordination occurring sporadically.

LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

Perception of cooperation successes and challenges

Reported past examples of successful cooperation with international organisations included both communication and relationship components: these included cases of **fast and direct communication** between LNGA and IO representatives, and times when the presence of **long-term collaboration experience with the IO** made it possible to quickly implement grant activities. KIs also mentioned IO technical contributions as success examples, such as IOs encouraging/assisting with **identifying people's needs**, and IOs **providing funding for LNGA activities that included training** for local staff/beneficiaries.

KIs often noted the grant process and obtaining funding as main challenges, including:

- lack of training on how to apply for grants
- difficulties in finding grant information, because there was no single platform where all opportunities from IOs were collected;
- slow decision-making about who receives the grant;
- "bureaucracy", i.e. filling out the application and reporting was too complicated for LNGAs;
- slow decision-making on implementation;
- lack of feedback when a grant was refused.

Additionally, some KIs noted problems in communication related to the fact that there was **no specific person with whom the application process could be clarified**. Some KIs noted that poor communication in general between IOs and LNGAs was a challenge.

Preferences for cooperation with international actors

The most frequently mentioned points of preference for cooperation with international organisations were the **provision of training programs for the LNGAs by IOs**: trainings related to the grant process, and training related to operation in unsafe areas, such as mine safety, etc. KIs also often mentioned the need for a single internet resource where all grant opportunities and other applications for cooperation with the IOs would be collected. In connection with this point, some KIs mentioned the currently-existing Internet resource Hurt/"Гурт", which collects many grant opportunities from different actors.

Additionally, several preferences related to communication were reported. About a third of the KIs would prefer to have a **national staff as the focal point to communicate with** in the IO, and **direct communication with the decision-maker** within an IO.

Several more KIs mentioned that ideal cooperation with an IO is characterised by **fast communication** (including responses to email), **in-person meetings**, and **information-sharing on possible risks.**

Finally, KIs identified such preferences as having a special employee on the IO side who would be directly responsible for communicating with the LNGAs during the submission of grant applications (i.e. **grant focal point**). The remaining responses from the KIs were generally related to simplifying the grant process and decision-making.

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7 LNGA respondents could select more than one option.
8 General Coordination Meeting
9 Including groups or channels on facebook, Instagram, etc.
10 Including groups or channels on WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, etc.

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METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The Local Responder Area Profile (LRAP) assessment aims to collect actionable, area-based information on local non-governmental actors' (LNGAs) needs, capacities, ways of working, and preferences for international support, in order to give international actors information that they can use to **avoid duplication, support LNGAs directly, and improve international integration with local systems on local terms**.

Mykolaiv city was chosen as a pilot for this assessment based on its relevance as a "coordination hub" from which local and sometimes international non-governmental actors conduct activities both within the city and outside of it, including throughout Mykolaivska oblast and to some extent Khersonska oblast. Initial field information about Mykolaiv city was confirmed by informal discussion with key stakeholders during a scoping trip that took place July 17-20. This scoping trip also confirmed the existence of information gaps particularly around LNGAs in the area, demonstrating the value of an LRAP to international organizations that have begun to move into the city or otherwise carry out activities in Mykolaivska and Khersonska oblasts.

REACH used a two-stage mixed method approach for this assessment, beginning with a quantitative phone-based survey to as many Mykolaiv-based LNGAs as could be identified, and following up with a smaller set of the originally-identified LNGAs for more in-depth in-person qualitative key informant interviews (KIIs).

Quantitative data collection was conducted between 23 August - 1 September. REACH field teams attempted to contact all LNGAs that were able to be identified as operating out of (i.e. had an office or consistent presence in) Mykolaiv city and whose activitites included hummanitarian support for civilians; the threshold of inclusion for more informal volunteer groups was a group with a minimum of 3-4 members, a clear focal point who could be contacted, and sustained support activities. Ultimately Key Informants (KIs) representing **21 LNGAs** completed the quantitative survey, consistent with scoping estimates from key stakeholders stating that approximately 15-25 civil society organisations (CSO) were operating out of Mykolaiv. The quantitative portion focused on LNGAs' activities, coverage, operational needs, coordination awareness and perception of local capacity by sector.

Rapid analysis of the quantitative data was used to identify follow-up KIs for the qualitative portion, focusing on LNGAs who confirmed insufficient resources, whose activities overlapped with sectors reported as under-capacitated in the quantitative survey, or who worked with vulnerable populations such as women, children, older people, and people with disabilities. Qualitative KIIs were then conducted between 19-21 September with representatives of **10 LNGAs**, focusing on LNGA perceptions of benefits, challenges, and preferences for cooperation with international actors, local decision-making, and perceived reasons behind operational needs and local capacity gaps. In addition, **2 KIIs with local authorities** were conducted to triangulate responses on local sectoral capacity gaps and cooperation with international actors.

LIMITATIONS

Although the number of KIs able to be identified during field preparation exceeded the initial estimates of 15-25 civil society actors given by key stakeholders during scoping, REACH cannot guarantee that they were able to identify all relevant LNGAs operating out of Mykolaiv city. Additionally, although REACH contacted as many LNGAs as they were able to identify that met the inclusion criteria, a small number did not answer or chose not to participate in the survey. As such, there are likely LNGAs in Mykolaiv whose perspective has not been included in this study. Results also cannot be assumed to be statistically representative of this group, given that the baseline population total of Mykolaiv-based LNGAs is not clearly known. As such **all findings are indicative only.** Furthermore, the area-based approach is not generalisable to the broader context, and these findings may not be relevant for LNGAs in other areas. Finally, certain qualitative questions based on individual LNGAs' quantitative responses, particularly questions following up on specific operational needs, were asked on a case-by-case basis instead of across all KIIs, indicating nuances of specific LNGAs' experiences in the operating environment. These findings in particular are highly individual and are not generalisable.

REFERENCES

a Radio Svoboda, ["Residents of Mykolaiv do not return home due to the lack of drinking water and closed schools - Sienkovych,"](#) 29 September 2023.

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

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