

# Ukraine | Child Protection Local Responder Area Profile

July-August 2024

## INTRODUCTION

The Local Responder Area Profile aims to collect actionable, area-based information on local non-governmental actors' (LNGAs)<sup>1</sup> 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, thus improving the international integration with local systems on local terms. There is a higher risk for children in the Kharkivska, Zaporizka and Mykolaivska oblasts, where the severity of needs was assessed as the highest in 2022. LNGAs have been especially active in supporting children in response to the worsening conflict and growing needs. These actors are often in a good position to get information about CP needs from the community, so this is a key area to focus on to make localisation efforts stronger. Meanwhile, the CP Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) has set itself the goal of improving the capacity of CP-related local actors. The current assessment is designed to help CP-related local actors distribute services in the mentioned locations by providing more information to international humanitarian actors like the national and sub-national CP AoRs. Initial field information about the value of CP LRAP in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia raions to international organisations carrying out activities in these oblasts, was confirmed via consultation with CP AoR Ukraine on May 30, 2024. This research covers child protection (CP)-related local (non-governmental and local authorities) actors currently operating in the field of CP in Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Mykolaiv raions, as well as identifying the barriers, capacities and needs they may have, including in the field of cooperation with international organisations. The research includes both quantitative data and qualitative data, which were obtained from different LNGAs.

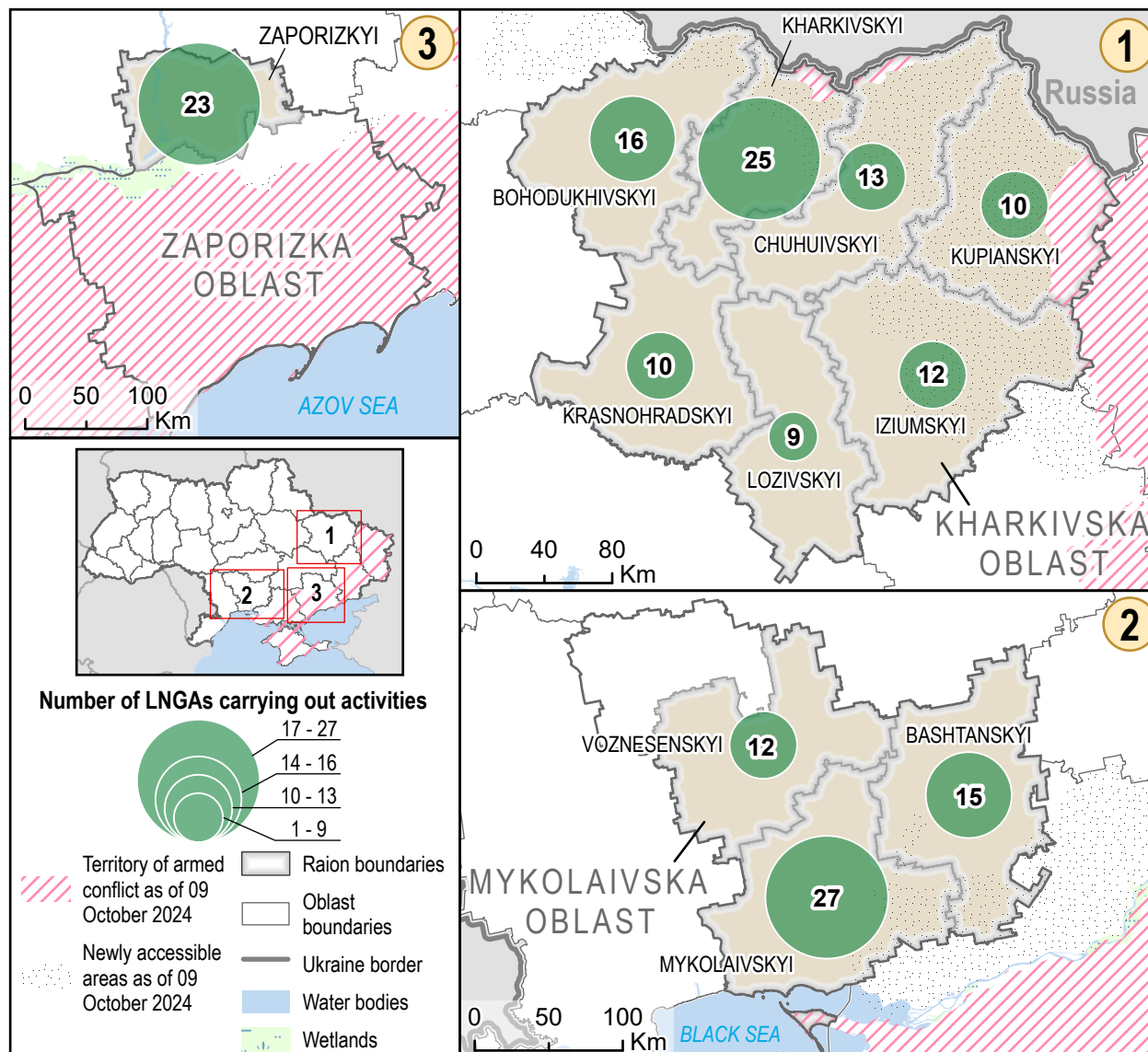
All findings are indicative only. See p. 2 for full methodology.

### Key Messages

- Most LNGAs reported a current funding gap and many LNGAs in fuel and office utilities affecting their project's sustainability. KIs also agreed they anticipated barriers in financing and paying for office utilities and fuel over the next 12 months following data collection due to inflation. Additionally, LNGAs could not estimate the scale of fuel demand due to the uncertainty of the power outage schedule.
- Assessed LNGAs in Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Mykolaiv raions named MHPSS needs for caregivers and children, needs for children with disabilities and prevention of violence on children perceived as the sectoral needs with the lowest capacity of LNGAs to cover. This corresponds well with information that among CP-related training around half of LNGAs reported the highest needs in MHPSS and training on disability inclusive safeguarding.
- Almost all local representatives reported they had positive experiences of cooperation with international organisations (IOs). Among the main reasons was the collaborative approach and how international and local organisations worked together to adapt to local needs. However, some KIs pointed to negative or neutral experiences which included predominantly a lack of flexibility to change local needs or situations and not receiving IO feedback. Additionally, most local actors emphasized that the ideal experience should include the presence of regional staff from IOs locally to allow more direct and effective cooperation between the IO and LNGAs.

## RAION-LEVEL ACTIVITIES COVERAGE OF LNGAs

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



## ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW <sup>2</sup>

### CP-related Activities Kharkiv raion

	Assistance disabilities children	21
	NFI distribution	20
	Service provision	20
	Children`s awareness raising	17
	MHPSS for children and caregivers	15
	Support for survivors of violence	12
	Child Protection Case Management	7
	Support for children in alternative care	6
	Child Friendly Legal Assistance	5

**LNGAs involved in CP-related activities** **23**

### CP-related Activities Zaporizhzhia raion

	Service provision	18
	MHPSS for children and caregivers	13
	Assistance disabilities children	11
	Children`s awareness raising	6
	Child Friendly Legal Assistance	5
	NFI distribution	4
	Support for survivors of violence	4

**LNGAs involved in CP-related activities** **22**

### CP-related Activities Mykolaiv raion

	Service provision	21
	MHPSS for children and caregivers	20
	Assistance disabilities children	20
	Children`s awareness raising	19
	NFI distribution	16
	Child Protection Case Management	6
	Support for survivors of violence	6
	Cash for Child Protection Outcome	6
	Child Friendly Legal Assistance	5

**LNGAs involved in CP-related activities** **28**

## 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).

## METHODOLOGY

The Child Protection (CP) Local Responder Area Profile (LRAP) assessment was conducted using data collected between **July 17, 2024 and September 16, 2024**. This study data from local (non-governmental and local authorities) actors currently operating in the field of CP in Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and Mykolaiv raions. REACH used a mixed method approach for this assessment, beginning with a **quantitative** phone-based survey to as many LNGAs based in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia raions 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 17-29 July. REACH field teams attempted to contact all LNGAs that were able to be identified as operating in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia raions and whose had CP-related activities; 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 CP-related activities. Ultimately, a total of **69 Key Informants (KIs) representing 69 LNGAs completed the quantitative survey**. The quantitative portion focused on LNGAs' CP-related activities, coverage, operational needs, barriers, risks for children, coordination awareness and perception of local capacity by sector. Rapid analysis of the quantitative data was used to identify follow-up KIIs for the qualitative portion, focusing on LNGAs who confirmed insufficient resources, whose activities overlapped with sectors reported as being in a situation of undercapacity in the quantitative survey. Qualitative KIIs were then conducted between 20 August-16 September with **representatives of 39 LNGAs**, focusing on LNGA perceptions of benefits, challenges, and preferences for cooperation with international actors, local sectoral capacity gaps and cooperation with international actors, risks and barriers for the future.

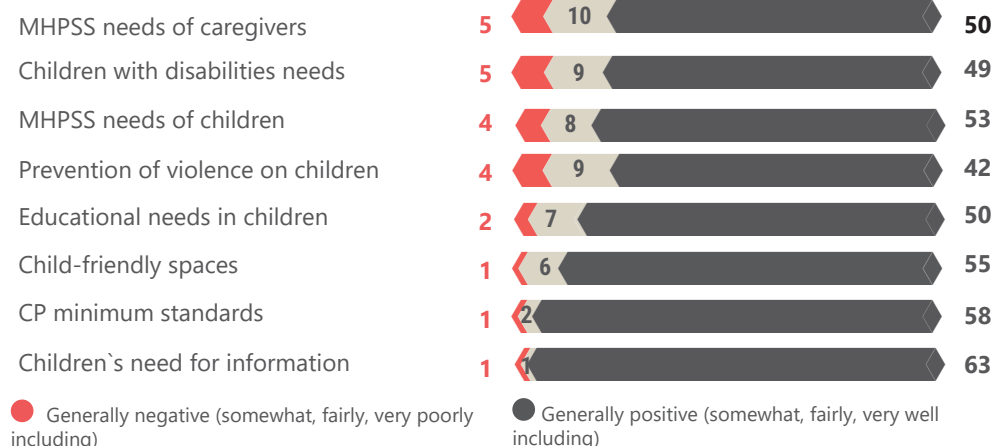
## LIMITATIONS

REACH cannot guarantee that the field department was able to identify all relevant CP-related LNGAs operating in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia raions. 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 CP-related LNGAs in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia raions 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 based in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia raions CP-related 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 CP-related 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 CP-related LNGAs' experiences in the operating environment. These findings are highly individual and are not generalisable.

<sup>2</sup> Displayed by number of LNGAs reporting participation in each activity. LNGA respondents could select more than one option.

## SECTORAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

Perception of LNGAs on how local capacity can address sectoral needs, by number of LNGAs reporting:



● Generally negative (somewhat, fairly, very poorly including)

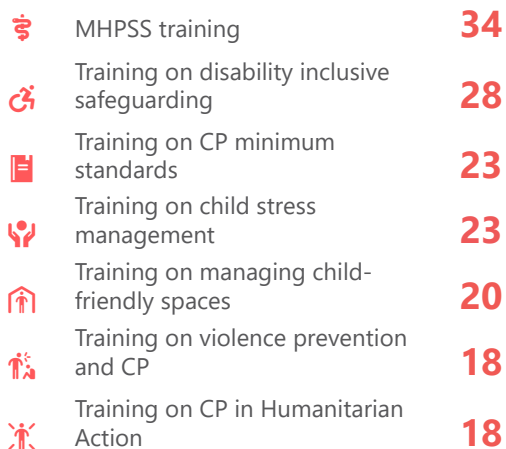
● Generally positive (somewhat, fairly, very well including)

● Neither well nor poorly

## LOCAL NEED IN CP-RELATED TRAINING

Need in CP-related training in their area

of coverage, by number of LNGAs reporting<sup>3</sup>:



Many KIs noted that at the beginning of the war, their LNGAs were involved in distributing food and NFIs among children and families with children. Most CSOs reported that **almost all challenges remained similar compared to 2022**. Many KIs noted **increasing the scale and scope of their organisations' activities**. A few - stressed activities challenges because of general aid reduction (from both international organisations (IOs) and the government) and worsening of the situation (including safety risks) due to war. Almost the same number of KIs pointed out that their CP-related activities were focusing on children`s recreation and education.

## Local perception on possible CP-related projects with international actors

Many KIs reported they would like to cooperate with IOs on some possible projects, such as **providing address support services** like buying cars for parents of family-type orphanages<sup>4</sup>, offering career orientation training and workshops for children, providing sports equipment or renovating sports schools, gyms, sports grounds, etc. Some KIs said they would be keen to **create child-friendly spaces or hubs** (like a youth centre with masterclasses, sports competitions and creative contests), as well as safe spaces for subjected to trauma children in the classroom. A few KIs also reported wanting to partner with IOs on projects such as **children`s rehabilitation or recreation** (like taking a child to the zoo, dolphinarium, or just to the park for a walk, to let them communicate with each other).

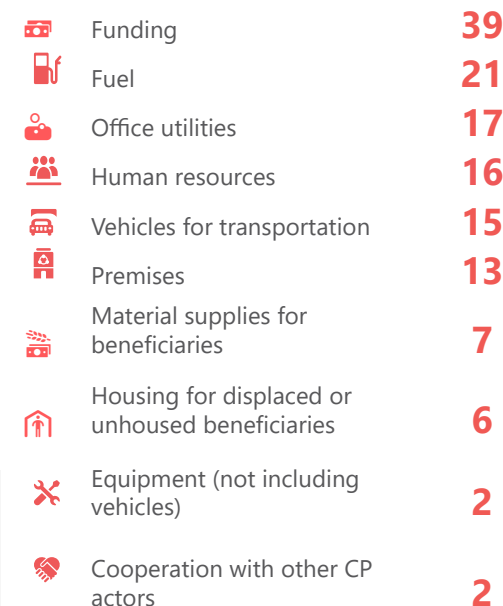
In addition, some KIs (mostly from Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia raion) noted a need for technical support and expertise from IOs about possible CP-related projects. For instance, in Mykolaiv raion, help with expert opinion, advice and practical assistance on legal issues, designing a dark sensory room was indicated. While additional expertise in best practices for conducting art therapy in wartime, methods of psychological support, educational events and training for children were reported needed in Zaporizhzhia raion.

## LOCAL PERCEPTION OF PRIORITY RISKS AND GAPS<sup>3</sup>

Top 3 priority risks for children, by number of LNGAs reporting:

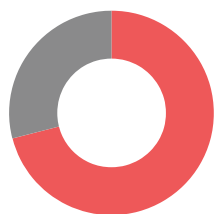


Most reported current gaps for local actors, by number of LNGAs reporting:



## INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

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



**49 of 69**

assessed LNGAs reported receiving some support from international actors

Among assessed LNGAs reportedly receiving international support:



**23** reported very satisfied with the IOs support  
**20** reported satisfied with the IOs support  
**5** reported neither satisfied, neither dissatisfied with the IOs support

## LOCAL BARRIERS ANTICIPATED BY LNGAs

Perception of local barriers anticipated in the next 12 months following data collection, by number of LNGAs reporting<sup>5</sup>:

	Funding	<b>49</b>
	Office utilities	<b>30</b>
	Fuel	<b>26</b>
	Vehicles for transportation	<b>24</b>
	Human resources	<b>24</b>
	Premises	<b>15</b>
	Material supplies for beneficiaries	<b>13</b>
	Housing for displaced or unhoused beneficiaries	<b>11</b>
	Expertise in an unfamiliar topic	<b>10</b>
	Equipment (not including vehicles)	<b>10</b>
	Cooperation with other CP actors	<b>7</b>

Amount of funding reportedly needed to meet the 6-month gaps, by number of LNGAs reporting (n=48):

35,001-60,000 USD		<b>12</b>
More than 100,000 USD		<b>11</b>
5,001-10,000 USD		<b>9</b>
10,001-35,000 USD		<b>8</b>
60,001 -100,000 USD		<b>6</b>
Less than 5,000 USD		<b>2</b>

Most of KIs indicated that if CSO operational needs are not covered, **risks for beneficiaries will be long-term (for at least 10-15 years)**. Many KIs assumed this *could lead children to grow up to adults with mental illness or disabled/dependent* in the future. It was frequently suggested by respondents that children who are isolated, afraid to talk to others are at risk of finding it difficult to make friends and needing psychological assistance due to issues of children's health and mental rehabilitation in the future. One KI added the risk that children who grow up in war and violence may get used to this reality and perceive it as normal, which can lead to the next generation being more tolerant of violence.

The majority of CSO KIs agreed that IOs could help with their 12-month needs when it comes to **financing**, including the costs of utilities and fuel for generators. Many KIs mentioned IOs could assist with **CSO staff and their professional education/training**, while some CSO KIs perceived possible help with the purchase of **vehicles and/or fuel**.

## Barriers to operational needs:

### Funding and staff resourcing

For the next 12 months following data collection many KIs perceived barriers in financing, mostly to pay office utilities and fuel. This is partly *due to inflation pushing utilities and rental prices up*, making the planned budgets too small to afford costs of planned projects. An additional reported problem was that LNGAs could not predict how much fuel for generator usage they would need because the power outage schedule was intermittent. "If there are blackouts during working hours, it will cost a lot. There are things that cannot be predicted", a KI from Mykolaiv raion added.

The other barrier many KIs anticipated was with staff and their training because the number of qualified staff has decreased. One KI from Zaporizhzhia raion noted that "to avoid problems with staff, there is need for projects with staff salaries included" (as their activities are volunteer-based and do not come with salary). Another KI from Mykolaiv indicated that *the lack of staff was exacerbated by the mobilisation, evacuation and departure of Ukrainians abroad*.

### Fuel and vehicles

Some KIs mentioned the need related to vehicles and/or fuel as barrier. One KI from Mykolaiv agreed that purchase of a car is often accompanied by additional requirements for documental proof of need. Another noted that the lack of transport will be a problem for their CSOs regarding *reducing the coverage area of their activity, leading to decrease in the number of beneficiaries*.

For instance, KI from Kharkiv confirmed a big problem in delivery for in-kind beneficiaries' items from abroad due to bureaucracy and high delivery price ("at least 3500 euros").

Many KIs concluded that they would not stop their activity if they did not receive support in the 12 months following data collection, but **would have to seriously downscale**.

<sup>5</sup> LNGA respondents could select more than one option.

## LOCAL COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

Among assessed LNGAs,



**54 of 69**

reported that they had some kind of local mechanism for coordinating the CP-related response




### LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

#### Perception of cooperation successes and challenges

Almost all KIs reported successful experiences of cooperation with IOs, the most mentioned effectiveness reason was the **collaborative approach between international and local organisations when needs were adapted to the current place**. Also, many KIs reported as successful if **beneficiaries received needed “address assistance” and there were no cooperation obstacles**. Some KIs noted CSOs’ eagerness for aid, finding donors and media presence, flexibility and a few - quick IO reactions to changed CSO needs as effective.

However, many KIs noted negative experiences among reasons - like **lack of flexibility of IO to change local needs or situations, lack of governmental transparency or corruption, lack of monitoring or transparency from IOs**. Interestingly, the same number of KIs experienced neutral cooperation with IOs - mainly because of a **lack of feedback or flexibility**.

**Types of actors LNGAs usually cooperate with for CP-related activities, by number of LNGAs reporting<sup>6</sup>:**

	Civil Society Organisation <sup>7</sup>	<b>56</b>
	Volunteer group	<b>52</b>
	Local authorities	<b>47</b>
	National Non-governmental Organisation <sup>8</sup>	<b>40</b>
	UN and/or International Non-governmental Organisation	<b>39</b>

**Perception of cooperation effectiveness with CP-related local authorities, by number of LNGAs reporting (n=62):**



<b>25</b>	reported moderately effective cooperation with local authorities
<b>20</b>	reported very effective cooperation with local authorities
<b>10</b>	reported slightly effective cooperation with local authorities
<b>7</b>	reported not effective cooperation with local authorities

#### Preferences for cooperation with international actors

When asked about the imagined ideal experience of cooperation with IOs, the majority KIs reported it should include **coordination via regional staff from IO on-site presence**. Mainly, cooperation is much more effective when ‘people on the local level’ are present from IO, it gives “more freedom and opportunities to cooperate between IO and CSO directly”. Many KIs mentioned the **need for CSO staff education/training** from IOs - for example, on strategic planning of organisation’s activities or networking for volunteers to meet, share experiences. Also, some KIs pointed out they **prefer having feedback in cooperation** - like an information session of questions and answers and giving feedback for grant applications (even negative). Many KIs also noted that **monitoring visits and monitoring themselves** from the IO side is important to build trust through clear and transparent reporting. Almost half KIs reported they prefer **on-time informing about grant possibilities and the availability of quick decision-making for emergency aid** from IOs. For example, if during an existing project new challenges arise, beyond the grant scope approved by donors, it takes time to implement it.

Some KIs mentioned problems in cooperation with IOs, such as:

- **the need to include transport costs in a proposal while anticipating inflation costs (for utilities and fuel) if the project is designed for several years**
- **avoiding cooperation with small CSOs, more flexible usually**
- **being more focused on bureaucratic procedures rather than solving beneficiaries’ problems**

#### Local coordination

The majority of KIs explained there is a **CP-related local coordination mechanism** in their region. One KI from Kharkiv raion pointed to the existing coordinating council including 43 CSOs (5 are directly CP-related) and local authorities. Another KI from Mykolaiv raion agreed there is a coordination structure that brings together volunteers and acts as intermediaries between CSOs and potential donors, organising competitions and funding the selected projects. According to KI from Zaporizhzhia raion they have a humanitarian coordination centre (RCC), uniting volunteers and tables with data for each people/hromada’s needs and how much these needs were covered. Some KIs mentioned that local organisations communicate with each other informally, via chat of the coordination centre (in telegram etc) exchanging their experiences, ideas, information or even humanitarian aid.

On the other hand, the same number of KIs were not sure of local coordination mechanism presence suggesting that each organisation solves its issues. “But if there were any, we would gladly go there, talk to our colleagues, about some needs, and generally hear what people can tell” a KI from Mykolaiv raion indicated. Additionally, some KIs mentioned other coordination mechanisms (Children’s Service/ Department of Child Protection) work under the oblast/ city authority.

This corresponds with the finding that almost all KIs pointed out local authorities are effectively included in CP-related coordination while only six KIs – are not included.

<sup>6</sup> LNGA respondents could select more than one option.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout this factsheet, “Civil Society Organisation” refers to a more local organisations, i.e. operates within one city, district or region.

<sup>8</sup> Throughout this factsheet, “National Non-Governmental Organisation” refers to organisations operating nationally (cover the entire territory of the country), with representation or offices in different regions of Ukraine.