Peace Support Ukraine (PSU) is a 6-month first phase project that aims to lay foundations for long-term nonviolence and peacebuilding work in Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus in support of local and national partners. It is implemented in partnership with PATRIR (Romania), Un Ponte Per (Italy), Nonviolence International Ukraine (Ukraine), Institute for Peace and Common Ground Ukraine (IPCG) (Ukraine), and the All-Ukraine Youth Centers (AUYC) (Ukraine) in Ukraine. PSU aims to support local and national organizations and authorities in Ukraine and to ensure EU and international organizations and partners increase support for peacebuilding, trauma recovery and nonviolence in Ukraine; and direct nonviolent resistance and opposition to the war in Russia and Belarus. Peace Support Ukraine supports Ukrainian experts, CSOs, activists and youth to address priorities they identify, have their voices heard internationally and to create opportunities for Ukrainian citizens to build hope for their future and positive change in their everyday lives during and after the war.
Executive Summary

This report has been prepared as part of the multi-phase assessment mission of the Peace Support Ukraine project by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) of Romanian Peace Institute (PATRIR) together with partners in Ukraine. The Assessment is being implemented across Ukraine, and including Ukrainians outside the country, from August 2022 and will continue until November 2022. It represents the first part of a two-stage review of the needs, challenges and opportunities facing Ukrainian civil society organizations, experts, local authorities and national government institutions addressing the impact of the invasion and war on the people of Ukraine, including trauma support and care, and identifying, with Ukrainian institutions and stakeholders, key priorities for peacebuilding and addressing the impact of the armed conflict, invasion and temporary occupation of Ukrainian territories now, during the war, and preparing now for critical needs for peacebuilding, stabilization and post-war recovery and peace consolidation after the ending of the war.

Partnering for Peace in the Midst of War

The scale of the challenge of addressing the impacts of the war on the people of Ukraine and peacebuilding in the midst of the full-scale war requires thorough understanding of the situation on the ground and nourishing and supporting strategic and operational partnerships. Recognizing, supporting and strengthening the vital role, capacity and ownership of Ukrainian civil society and state institutions is essential. INGOs, which have been significantly absent inside Ukraine during the war, can support and assist, but leadership, ownership, and primary support for strengthening capacity should go to local and national actors in Ukraine. Closer strategic and operational partnerships between international actors with regional and local organizations are critical. The PSU prioritizes supporting, developing and deepening the role of local and national actors in addressing the impacts of the war, peacebuilding, and supporting direct non-violent resistance in the occupied territories, and works with both state and non-state actors as well as the breadth of European and international peacebuilding organizations engage to support peace and recovery in Ukraine.
Even in the midst of war there is a substantial need for peacebuilding programming, from strengthening local peace capacities in local government authorities and civil society organizations to improving mediation and dialogue skills in humanitarian response, strengthening do no harm in aid delivery, supporting psycho-social and trauma care, direct assistance to nonviolent resistance and non-cooperation in the temporarily occupied territories, and much more;

There are already existing and strong local and national capacities in many key areas relevant to this work in Ukraine, including, in particular, dialogue and mediation skills. International organisations, partners and donors should prioritize listening to and authentically supporting local and national capabilities in Ukraine, rather than designing interventions and measures from abroad or to meet own-organization interests;

Ukrainian civil society and state (local and national authorities) should be further supported with strengthening additional key peacebuilding capacities and competencies in critical areas identified by stakeholders on the ground as priorities, including: improving coordination and communication capabilities of local authorities and civil society in recovery and local peacebuilding programming; strengthening capacities for joined up analysis and identification of needs for peacebuilding and recovery in newly liberated areas; joining identification of local tensions and emerging conflict issues with planning and delivery of peacebuilding measures to address these; improving emergency trauma psychology and trauma-informed care, strengthening and dramatically scaling support for nonviolent resistance in the occupied territories, and much more. A full list of priority areas and measures that can be taken will be included in the September After Mission Report.

“Peacebuilding” is critical now even in the midst of war, but this term is highly contentious in the current context in Ukraine. Instead, actors should focus – in the immediate term – on using words that address the specific function/tasks to be addressed, eg: trauma informed care; recovery and stabilization; social cohesion and inclusion; strengthening local coordination capabilities; supporting nonviolent cooperation; while integrating effective peacebuilding practices into these.

European and international partners working to support peacebuilding and peacebuilding-related programming in Ukraine should: prioritize listening to and supporting local and national capabilities and actors in Ukraine; substantially improve robust coordination together to ensure complementarity and doing more together than can be done apart and avoiding overlap/duplication or redundancy of efforts; develop context-appropriate programming that addresses both urgent/immediate needs and begins today to lay foundations for short-, medium- and long-term programming, placing priority emphasis on local/national ownership and strengthening capabilities;

International aid, humanitarian assistance and recovery interventions by international donors, partners of Ukraine, and international NGOs need to substantially improve their performance in accountability to Ukrainian citizens and authorities, coordination of efforts, delivery on promises, development of support mechanisms to Ukrainian state and civil society efforts that are appropriate to context and need, and address critical shortcomings and bad practices that have been identified currently. A comprehensive list of these will be developed in the September After Mission Report.
## Fluid and highly volatile conflict

### Key indicators

- Changing conflict environment
- High risk of new threats (nuclear power plants/weapons; Russian offensive)
- High levels of Ukrainian solidarity and joint work, feeling of national identity awakening
- Emergence of newly de-occupied territories
- Physical violence and threats to activists' safety on occupied territories
- Need for psychological support and work with Trauma
- Continuous relocation (change of dynamic from West to Central Ukraine)
- Increased levels of internal polarization;
- Lack of transparency and clarity of some organizations' work
- Low level of trust towards certain INGOs
- Decrease in the ratio of humanitarian assistance
- Propaganda narratives and presence of multidimensional identity elements

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Emerging Needs

International NGOs

- Re-gaining trust from the local actors;
- Sensitivity and opening up the space for safe conversations with local actors;
- More transparent instructions and communication on the ground;
- Developing the space not the context of Peacebuilding work;
- Focus on coordination and cooperation among INGOs;
- Developing Joint statement.

Local NGOs, practitioners, academia

- Trauma informed care trainings for both delivering programming and self-care; request for retreat space for the Peacebuilders;
- Support not only to IDPs but also national minorities – identity element should be present in the programming;
- Favour an area-centered approach, including both internally displaced persons and host communities when working with social cohesion – to tackle and avoid harshening tensions and competitions for resources;
- Starting to shift focus from purely humanitarian perspective into restoration of relations in the society;
- Inclusion of youth and women – leadership trainings and presence in the policy-making, as per UNSCR 2205 on Youth, Peace and Security;
- Development of joint coordination and communication platform in the triangle – civil society-donors-authorities;
- Programs for social cohesion and further research on polarization.

Local governments

- Establishment of direct and transparent channels between local authorities, civil society organizations, and international actors;
- Supporting legitimacy of local municipalities;
- Training for the local authorities on Trauma and Conflict Resolution, Post-War Stabilization and Reconstruction.
Preliminary conclusions

01. Recognise the ownership, power, capability and expertise of local peacebuilding organisations and experts – and support and strengthen this capacity and recognize the critical importance of peacebuilding even during and in the midst of war and ensure coordinated support, funding lines and prioritization;

02. Strengthen integrated planning and joint analysis: humanitarian response, recovery and peacebuilding, including across agencies, national and local authorities and civil society organisations;

03. Embrace complexity, create entry points for effective peace support and provide dedicated and enhanced, robust support to non-violent resistance;

04. Develop context-appropriate approaches to peacebuilding and definition of the term, while being able to use other languaging appropriate to the context in the immediate term;

05. Create a long-term vision for recovery and peace consolidation in Ukraine placing ownership and capability of local and national state and non-state actors at its heart, and begin supporting capacity developing – including of coordination, planning and implementation capacities – now integrated into the humanitarian response and recovery;

06. When approaching peace consolidation and reconstruction, support economic independence and autonomy of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, placing emphasis on internal drivers of recovery and supporting these over financial benefits of external agencies and interests

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