Forum Aftermath

What do we need to [with]STAND?

Partnership

Efficiency

Professionalism

Support

Communication Networking

Unity

Independence

Society

Mentorship

Development

Culture

Activity

Trust

Cooperation

Infrastructure

Advocacy

Strategy

Public Awareness

Dignity

Uniqueness

Power

Infrastructure

Patriotism

Justice

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On 30–31 January 2025, the Forum Aftermath What Do We Need to (With)STAND took place near Kyiv. The event was held within the framework of the Strong Civil Society of Ukraine – a Driver Towards Reforms and Democracy project, implemented by ISAR Ednannia and funded by Norway and Sweden. It was also made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) within the Ukraine Civil Society Sectoral Support Activity implemented by ISAR Ednannia in partnership with the Ukrainian Center of Independent Political Research (UCIPR) and Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law (CEDEM). The event was further supported through the EU Unity4Community project, implemented by ISAR Ednannia with the financial support of the European Union.

This Post-Forum continued the dialogue launched at the Civil Society Development Forum (with)STAND held in December 2024. It brought together visionaries, thought leaders, representatives of civil society organisations and charitable foundations to reflect collectively on the current challenges facing civil society in Ukraine.

Over the course of two days, participants had the opportunity to analyse the past and explore future scenarios alongside leading experts. They engaged in honest discussions, analysed trends, exchanged ideas, and jointly developed strategic directions for the coming years. Through collaboration and knowledge-sharing, we were able to align around a common information space and outline potential development paths for civil society.

Thousands of thoughts were voiced, hundreds of ideas shared, and dozens of projects presented during the event — some of which are already in the planning or implementation stages. An analysis of participant interaction revealed a high level of unity on key issues, including:

- respect, gratitude, and the continued need to support and strengthen Ukraine's Defence Forces;
- formation of a new social contract that is understood and shared by all social groups;
- acknowledgement of internal challenges and imperfections within public authorities, which must nevertheless be defended in the face of external instability;
- recognition of societal exhaustion and the urgent need for additional resources for recovery;
- readiness among active citizens to consolidate efforts for victory and to defer less critical challenges until later.

This report reflects the ideas, decisions, and collective work shaped during the Post-Forum. It captures the discussions, proposals, and strategic directions that will serve as a basis for our continued joint work. We are confident that these outcomes will help us not only withstand today's challenges, but also ensure a better future for our society. They will support the coordination of efforts among civil society, local and national authorities, donors, and citizens who continue to demonstrate resilience in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

We sincerely thank everyone who took part in the event for your dedication, energy, and commitment to working together toward our shared goals.

Your contribution is invaluable, and we look forward to continuing our cooperation on future projects.

Our deepest thanks go to the Defence Forces of Ukraine!

SLAVA UKRAINI!

In most cases, the abbreviations and terms used in this report should be understood as defined below. These interpretations reflect the tone of the discussions and the understanding of the concepts by participants during the event.

Abbreviations:
CSO – Civil Society Organisation
GU – Governmental institutions
Donors – Donor organisations providing funding
ITA – International Technical Assistance
CSOs – Civil Society Organisations
LGA – Local Government Authorities
MH – Mental Health
TA – Target Audience
UA AID – Proposed Ukrainian equivalent of USAID to support key national initiatives
USAID – United States Agency for International Development

Glossary of Terms:
Advocacy – Activities aimed at influencing political decisions, legislation or public opinion in the interest of a particular group or cause.
Charitable Contributions – Financial or in-kind donations made in support of charitable objectives.
Volunteering – Voluntary, non-profit activity involving the donation of time, effort or skills to help individuals or communities without expectation of financial reward. In the context of post-invasion Ukraine, the term often refers to civil–military partnerships and civilian contributions towards the logistical and material support of the Defence Forces.
Authorities – Representatives of national-level legislative and executive authorities. At local and regional levels, the term may refer to representatives of local self-government bodies or regional branches of executive authorities.
Civil Society – A collective term for organisations, institutions, communities, movements and individuals that act independently of government structures, representing citizens' interests and rights. Used interchangeably with *civil sector*, this includes non-governmental organisations, charitable foundations, professional associations, civic initiatives and other forms of volunteer-based activity that contribute to social dialogue, human rights protection, democratic development, and citizen participation in decision-making.
Governmental Institutions (GU) – Organisations, institutions, and agencies established by state authorities and accountable to them in both strategic and operational terms.
Donation – Charitable contributions in support of non-profit organisations or individuals aimed at implementing socially important initiatives and addressing a wide range of needs.
Donor Organisations (Donors) – Organisations that provide financial and resource support to CSOs, typically through grant programmes, international technical assistance, or private capital funds.
Roadmap – A plan or strategy that outlines the key steps and methods for achieving future goals.
Institutional or Organisational Development – The process of improving an organisation's structures, processes, and policies to ensure sustainability and effectiveness.
Mentorship Programmes – Initiatives that provide guidance and support to less experienced or newly established organisations, aimed at building their capacity and effectiveness.
Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) – Non-profit, independent organisations established to address social, cultural, environmental, and other public interest issues.

Full-Scale Invasion – The intensification of military aggression involving the deployment of significant armed forces by one country against another, covering large territories. In the context of the Russian–Ukrainian war, this refers to the large-scale military offensive launched by Russia against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, which resulted in significant human losses and widespread destruction across the country.

Mental Health (MH) – A state of psychological well-being in which an individual can realise their own potential, cope with everyday life stress, work productively, and contribute to their community.

Russian–Ukrainian War – An armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation that began in 2014 with Russia's annexation of Crimea and continued with military operations in eastern Ukraine. The war has had a profound impact on Ukraine's political, economic, and social landscape, leading to humanitarian crises and mass displacement.

Social Enterprise – A business model focused on addressing social problems and improving community well-being, while maintaining financial sustainability.

Philanthropy – Charitable giving or support provided by individuals or organisations to address socially important initiatives or needs.

Target Audience (TA) – A group of individuals who are the intended recipients or beneficiaries of a specific activity or service.

To ensure a shared discourse among participants, the event programme included presentations by respected speakers. The main objective was to create a common information space, achieved through expert engagement.

On the first day, the guest speaker was **Valeriy Pekar** – a lecturer at the Kyiv-Mohyla and Lviv Business Schools, author of numerous articles on management, marketing and information technologies, and the Multicoloured Management: The Evolution of Thinking, Leadership and Governance monograph. In his presentation Scenarios of the Future: Visualising Victory in One's Mind, he explored potential trajectories for society and the civil sector in the context of the full-scale invasion.

On the second day, just before the finalisation of group outputs, **Anton Drobovych** – Head of the Centre for Human Rights and War Memorialisation at the Kyiv School of Economics – addressed the participants. In his presentation Self-Acceptance as a Challenge for the Nation and the Individual. The Role of Civil Society in Times of Uncertainty and the Threat of a Protracted War of Attrition, he highlighted the importance of civil society organisations in preserving historical memory.
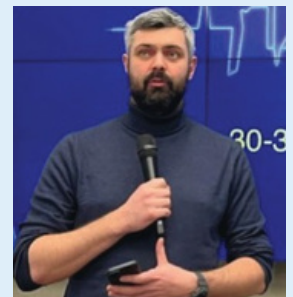
These talks provided participants with valuable intellectual stimulation, encouraging deeper reflection on possible scenarios for the future development of Ukrainian society in general, and the civil sector in particular. They also served as a source of inspiration on how to make use of existing tools and the historical capacity of an active minority to overcome contemporary challenges.

The practical group work and discussion took place using the Open Space Technology (OST) methodology. This was made possible by creating a comfortable working environment and thanks to the high level of motivation and professional competence among participants.

Open Space Technology is an effective method for organising meetings that encourages active participation and collaboration. It allows participants to set the agenda themselves, select the issues most relevant to them, and work in a dynamic setting to exchange ideas and develop solutions.

The Open Space session followed several key stages:

1. **Opening** – establishing a welcoming atmosphere, initial interpersonal connection, and readiness for interaction. Facilitators welcomed the participants, introduced the organisers and the support team, explained the purpose of the event and the main themes to be addressed. They also introduced and clarified the core principles and *laws* of Open Space, as well as the participants' role in shaping the agenda.

The principles are designed to reduce anxiety in situations of uncertainty: Whoever comes are the right people; Wherever it happens is the right place; Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened; Whenever it starts is the right time; When it's over, it's over.

The Law of Two Feet: if you are neither contributing value nor gaining value — move to another space.

All participants were assigned one of two roles, which could be changed freely throughout the event.

Bees actively moved between different groups and sessions, *pollinating* ideas, questions and insights they had gathered elsewhere.

Butterflies did not necessarily engage in any one discussion group, choosing instead to sit alone or in small side groups, reflecting or simply resting.

2. Agenda setting – Participants with ideas for discussion wrote their topics on sheets of paper. Then, using a snowball method (pairing up and then joining groups of 7–9 people), they formed a list of ideas. During the discussion of topics, these were placed on a special board, and participants chose freely which discussions they wished to join.
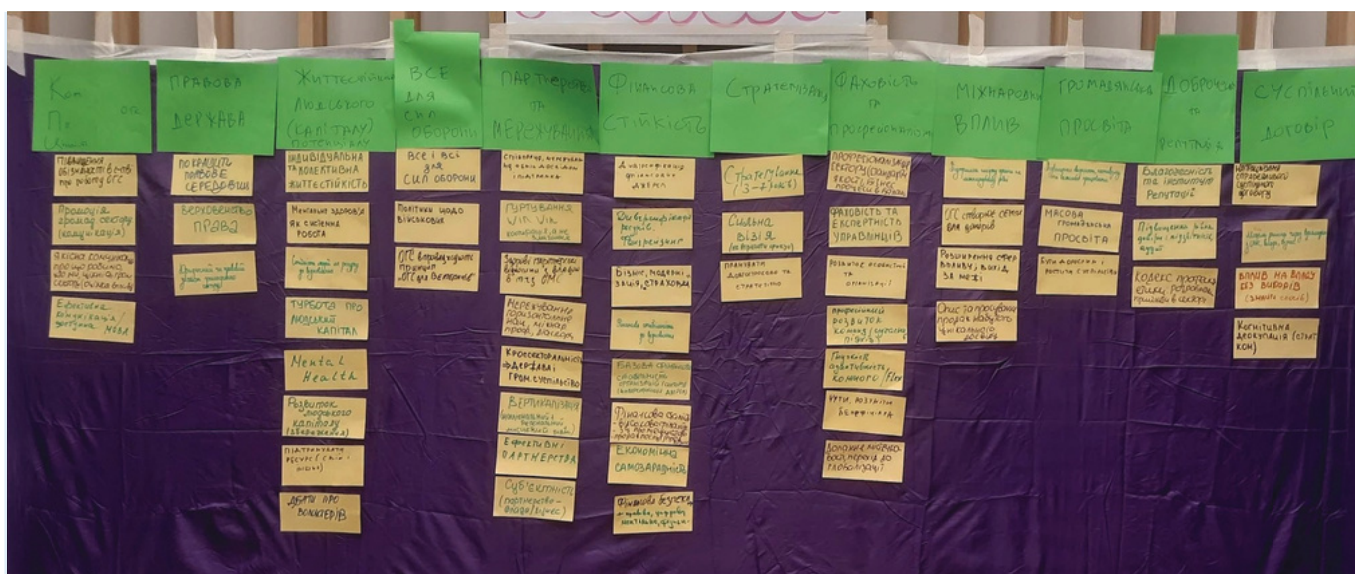
3. Sessions were held on the second day in a rearranged and adapted space, using digitised materials. Each session lasted between 20 minutes and 1 hour, depending on the dynamic and the level of interest. Participants could move freely between sessions whenever they felt they could contribute more or benefit more in a different group.

4. The final plenary session provided an opportunity to summarise the outcomes, during which groups shared the results of their discussions. Participants recorded and presented the key ideas, conclusions, and proposals.
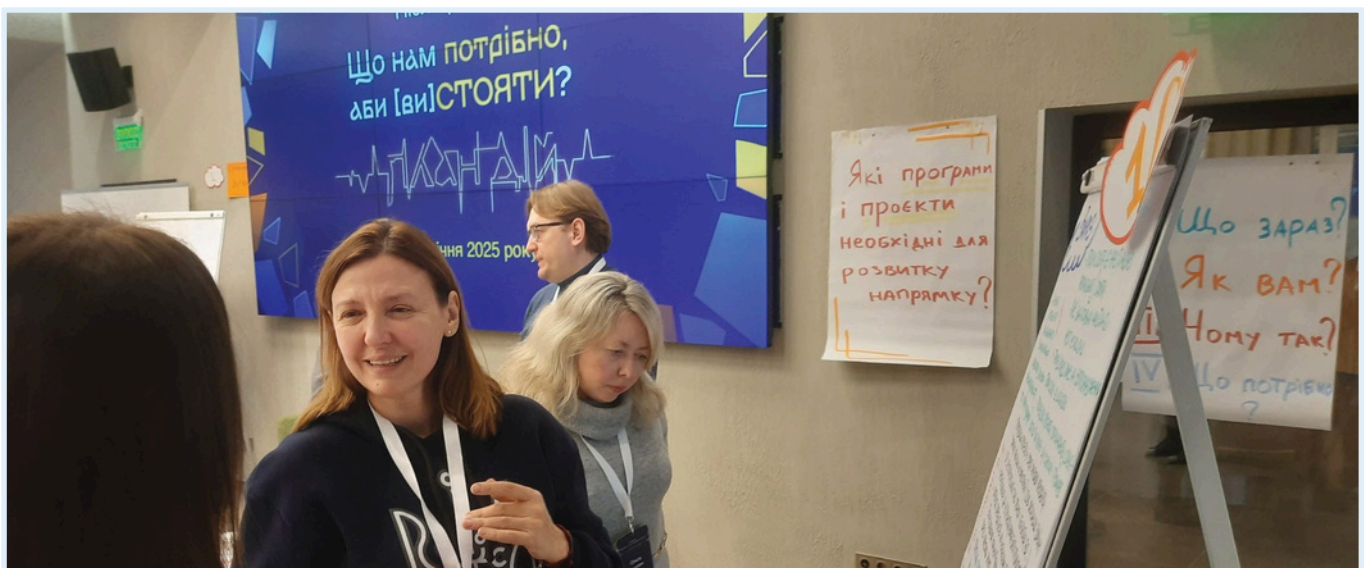
Participants represented various spheres of civil society, including education, humanitarian initiatives, local self-government, human rights advocacy, fundraising, veterans' organisations, healthcare, and child and youth initiatives, among others. The group encompassed civil society organisations, charitable foundations, governmental institutions and agencies, as well as donor organisations.

Most participants were engaged in specific areas of work, which enabled the formation of a comprehensive picture based on a wide range of project implementation experiences — from the development and implementation of regional policies, organisational development, and tools for local democracy to direct support for vulnerable groups, mobilisation of local resources, and educational or humanitarian initiatives. They were also involved in raising awareness and mobilising resources through fundraising campaigns, as well as protecting the rights and needs of specific groups such as veterans.

Participants held different roles within their organisations — from directors and senior leadership to project and communications managers. Their work plays a vital role in advancing society through the implementation of diverse initiatives.

Grouped by category, the main participant groups (according to their numerical representation at the event) were as follows:

- **Civil society organisations** (CSOs) – typically focused on advocating for community interests and promoting social change. They work in areas such as education, healthcare, human rights, support for veterans and/or internally displaced persons (IDPs), the environment, and more. Through their projects and initiatives, they aim to influence policy, engage the public, and deliver services to those most in need.
- **Charitable organisations/foundations** – these actors mobilise and distribute resources to support various social, cultural, or educational projects. Regardless of their original thematic focus (e.g. support for children, disease prevention, or the arts), many have redirected their efforts to support IDPs, veterans, and defenders.
- **Local government authorities** (LGAs), governmental institutions and agencies (including development agencies) – responsible for implementing policies and laws in areas such as healthcare, education, or economic development. These actors may be involved in planning, regulation, or service delivery, and often collaborate with other organisations to achieve shared goals.

Each of these organisations contributes uniquely to society by leveraging their resources, expertise, and networks to address pressing challenges and improve people's lives. The shared experience of dialogue, reflection, and planning among these actors at the event helped shape more effective and comprehensive strategies for achieving common goals.

Participants worked using a "snowball" method – starting with individual reflections and progressing toward group discussion and prioritisation – to generate ideas in response to the central Forum Aftermath question: *What do we need to withSTAND?* As a result, 14 topics were identified for further exploration, with work on them continuing beyond the event itself.

Throughout the discussions, participants remained in fixed groups and analysed each topic in detail, focusing on its key aspects. Their findings were structured across several important sections: current state of affairs, participants' perceptions, root causes of the current situation, necessary actions, and relevant programmes or projects aimed at addressing identified issues. This approach not only enabled a deeper understanding of the challenges but also laid the groundwork for future collaborative efforts.

Each topic is presented in this document using the following five-part structure:

- **Vision** – a statement encapsulating the core meaning and focus of the topic.
- **Current State** – a description of the present situation, issues, and challenges.
- **Participants' Perceptions** – how participants feel about the topic and the need for improvement.
- **Root Causes** – an analysis of the key factors contributing to the identified problems.
- **What Needs to Be Done** – concrete steps and actions required to address the challenges.

Some groups were also able to develop additional sections:

- **Programmes and Projects** – a list of initiatives that could be implemented to support and develop CSOs.
- **General Conclusion** – a summary underscoring the importance and relevance of improving communication strategies.

At the same time, it is important to note that some sections and topics lacked comprehensive input. This may reflect participant frustration (for example, in the discussion on the *Rule of Law*, where participants highlighted cases of biased court rulings or selective enforcement of legislation but were unwilling to document these in writing), a low level of expertise (as in the case of international advocacy, which remains a niche activity for only a small number of CSOs), or the absence of necessary stakeholders (such as the persistent but unsuccessful efforts to develop civic education projects, for which participants perceived no genuine demand from the state), among other factors.

1. COMMUNICATION / PROMOTION OF CSO VALUES

Vision: If we don't say it — others will say it for us.

I. Current State:

- There is no clear communications strategy as part of civil society organisations' structures.
- There is a lack of qualifications in the field of communications.
- Project budgets often do not include a communications component.
- Low visibility and weak public image of CSOs, which may lead to negative public perceptions.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

- Participants feel that communication must be improved and CSO values need greater promotion.

III. Root Causes:

- The importance of communications is underestimated by both donors and internal organisational structures.
- CSOs face competition from the private sector and other initiatives, which complicates their positioning.
- There is a lack of understanding of the value of communications within organisations, and no consistent plan to promote CSOs.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

- Increase the perceived value of communications in projects and develop a culture of allocating resources to this component.
- Engage professionals to improve communication and build CSO brands.
- Introduce innovative communication tools and support networking and partnerships among CSOs.

V. Programmes and Projects:

- Implement comprehensive projects aimed at systemic support and development of CSOs, rather than only addressing isolated issues.
- Create a *unified voice* for CSOs and publish aggregated data on the sector's contribution to national development, highlighting its significance.
- Introduce measures to counter disinformation and support CSO solidarity to protect the sector's interests.
- Promote charitable giving and philanthropy among citizens, support organisations, emphasise volunteering as a societal norm, and ensure ongoing feedback mechanisms.
- Establish a unified communications strategy framework within the CSO cluster to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

Conclusion:

Improving communication strategies and promoting the values of civil society organisations remains highly relevant for Ukraine. The implementation of the proposed projects and programmes can enhance public awareness of the importance of CSO work and their contribution to the country's development, as well as strengthen the sector's standing in society.

Among the general recommendations is the development of expertise and competencies of CSO representatives in the field of public communication. It is important to note that progress in this area requires not only training, but also adequate resource support, as there is still no strong public demand for independent media and analytical materials.

I. Current State:

- The legislative framework for civil society organisations (CSOs) remains underdeveloped.
- Government bodies demonstrate low-quality implementation of regulatory documents concerning CSOs.
- There have been attempts by authorities to restrict the rights and freedoms of civil society.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

- Strengthen partnerships between CSOs and increase their advocacy power to enhance influence on national-level legislation.
- Improve the quality of public services for CSOs, particularly through digitalisation.
- Establish a National Civil Society Development Coordination Council with the involvement of representatives from the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and the Office of the President.
- Align Ukrainian legislation concerning CSOs with European standards.

V. Programmes and Projects:

- Develop and adopt a law on tax benefits for *charitable contributions* that is easy to implement and understandable for both citizens and organisations. This would encourage greater charitable activity and support socially significant projects.
- Conduct advocacy for the simplification of tax legislation for CSOs. This may include reducing the tax burden, streamlining reporting procedures, and introducing other measures to facilitate CSO operations and improve their effectiveness.

  These initiatives will help create a more enabling environment for the development of civil society in Ukraine, enhance its influence on public policy, and improve the overall state of democracy in the country.

Conclusion:

It is essential to intensify efforts to improve legislation and conditions for the development of civil society in Ukraine by ensuring institutional support and promoting positive change in the sector.

3. RESILIENCE OF HUMAN CAPITAL (POTENTIAL)

Vision: A resilient and healthy society is grounded in the integrity of the individual — mentally and physically well — and a government worthy of such a society.

I. Current State:

There is currently a lack of systematic work in the field of mental health support, leading to issues such as burnout, the underestimation of psychological problems, a shortage of qualified professionals, and insufficient culture of seeking psychological assistance.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

◆ Participants feel that their engagement and availability are constant (24/7), reflecting a high level of dedication and willingness to respond to challenges at any time. However, this also indicates a high risk of burnout and the need to implement measures that ensure their psychological and physical well-being.

◆ They are aware of shortcomings in their work and strive to address them. However, their efforts to analyse the situation and implement changes are not always systematic, which suggests a need for a more strategic approach to addressing these challenges.

III. Root Causes:

◆ Historical lack of culture around seeking help.

◆ Unrecognised needs.

◆ The fast pace of life in wartime society.

◆ Lack of resources (human, financial, etc.) to support systematic action.

◆ The absence of a broad societal focus on mental health issues.

## IV. What Needs to Be Done:

◆ Develop and implement clear and relevant strategies at both the state and CSO levels, including the formation of policies to support mental health and prevent burnout.

◆ Launch programmes aimed at reducing burnout risk among workers across all sectors, especially in high-stress environments.

◆ Establish a platform for knowledge-sharing, experience exchange, and resource coordination among stakeholders including government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector.

◆ Improve specialist qualifications through formal and informal education programmes, and draw on international experience to share best practices.

◆ Foster partnerships between organisations to address mental health challenges more effectively.

◆ Consider creating a dedicated body to monitor the quality of psychological services and certify specialists.

◆ Promote a culture in which seeking psychological help is viewed as a norm rather than a stigma.

- Improve public perception of psychological services through information campaigns and educational programmes.
- Introduce psychoeducation programmes from an early age to promote a better understanding of mental health and the importance of psychological support.
- Ensure adequate resources — including funding, human resources, and access to international experience — to support mental health initiatives.
- Draw on national experience to develop and implement effective practices and strategies in the field of mental health.

Conclusion:

The issues outlined above highlight the need for systemic changes in approaches to mental health and personal development. To achieve meaningful progress, active efforts are required to address the underlying causes of burnout, fragmented support, and unrecognised needs. Implementing the proposed measures and programmes can improve the current situation and help ensure the sustainability and growth of civil society.
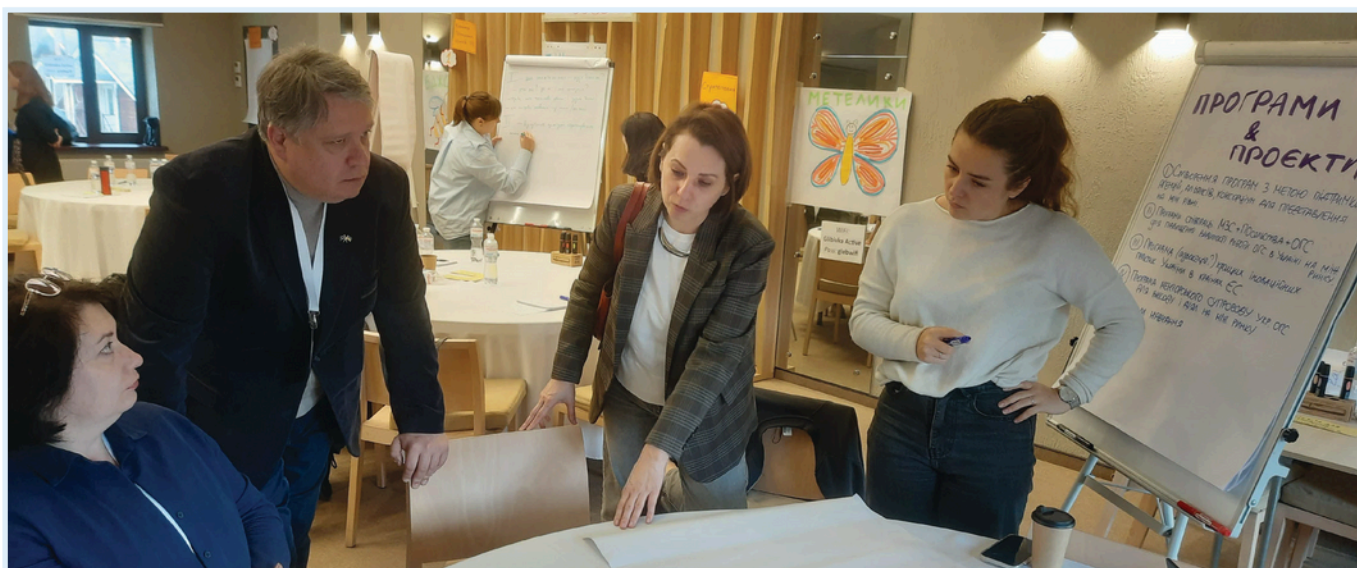
4. ALL FOR THE DEFENSE FORCES

Vision: Fight – and you will overcome!..

I. Current State:

◆ Find your calling.
◆ What are we doing for the Defence Forces?

II. Participants' Perceptions:

There is a prevailing sense of anxiety and sorrow. Participants expressed feelings of resentment and concern about the current situation. There is a clear desire to be more actively involved in processes and to contribute to initiatives that could improve the situation by supporting the Defence Forces. This should become one of the key directions for mobilising resources and engaging the public. It is important to identify and support concrete initiatives and actions that can be practically implemented.

III. Root Causes:

◆ Lack of programmes to support the development of volunteer and veterans' organisations at the local level.
◆ A tendency within society to shift responsibility onto volunteers.
◆ Desensitisation to the war reduces the perception of immediate threat and weakens sustained support for the Defence Forces.
◆ Insufficiently effective governance and limited government engagement.
◆ Spending priorities are skewed – "drones first, stadiums later" – reflecting a lack of political will and effective tools to reassess budget priorities.
◆ Effective decisions are often made only under pressure from CSOs.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

◆ Raise public awareness about the ongoing war through informative campaigns, memorial ceremonies, a nationwide minute of silence, and other symbolic actions.
◆ Ensure fast and high-quality coordination between organisations, volunteers, and citizens to enhance collective efforts towards victory. This includes developing joint projects, sharing information and resources, and improving operational efficiency.
◆ Establish a hub or organisation where anyone willing to support the Defence Forces can find clear information on how and where they can contribute. This space should provide guidance, instructions, and recommendations on volunteering activities.

V. Programmes and Projects:

Information Centre: Everything and Everyone for the Defence Forces
Goal: A place where any individual can find out how they can support the Defence Forces.
Target Audience: Every person in the community.
Steps: An organisation or network assumes responsibility for launching the centre, creating a map of CSOs and initiatives, establishing effective communication, running an information campaign, and facilitating cooperation between government, business, and CSOs.

◆ Humanitarian Aid and Military Volunteering

Provision of essential materials and resources for both civilians and military personnel.

Organisation of volunteer groups to provide assistance on the front lines and in the rear.

Support for Service Members and Their Families

◆ Development and implementation of psychological support programmes, including hotlines and mobile response teams.

Establishment of rehabilitation centres and facilities for service members and their families.

Rights Protection and Advocacy

◆ Protection of the rights of individuals affected by military actions.

Advocacy for a new veteran policy and increased awareness of veterans' rights and needs.

Information Campaigns and Enhancing the Standing of the Military

◆ Public information campaigns to raise awareness about the military's contribution to national defence.

Efforts to strengthen the status and public respect for military personnel.

Collaboration with Businesses and Development of Veteran Enterprises

Involving businesses in the production of military supplies and in providing donations.

◆ Supporting veteran-owned enterprises through specialised programmes and business hubs.

Transparency and Efficiency in Military Procurement

◆ Promoting transparency in procurement processes and efficiency in the use of resources.

Advocating for international support and the supply of weapons from global partners.

Conclusion:
The proposed programmes and initiatives can contribute to strengthening support for the Defence Forces and further developing the volunteer movement. It is vital to recognise the importance of every citizen's involvement in upholding the country's defence capacity. Active cooperation among civil society, government, and other stakeholders is essential to achieving our shared victory.

Vision: The formation of a resilient, effective, and mutually supportive community of CSOs, government, and business — capable of promptly responding to the needs of the front line and society in times of war, while ensuring comprehensive support for a shared victory and the establishment of a sustainable and just peace.

I. Current State:

Since 2022, there has been a notable increase in the activation and expansion of partnerships between different sectors of society, particularly among civil society organisations (CSOs), government, and business. This has led to the creation of new coalitions and strengthened networking, which contributes to more effective coordination across various fields.

Horizontal ties between CSOs have grown stronger, allowing these organisations to cooperate and coordinate more effectively. Partnerships between government, CSOs, and business have shown positive progress, especially at the local level, where collaboration with local authorities has become more active.

However, at the national level, government–CSO partnerships remain difficult and often situational. Authorities are frequently reluctant to engage in partnership with CSOs, perceiving them as competitors, which complicates opportunities for cooperation. This situation requires CSOs to be more persistent and adaptable to changing partnership dynamics.

Despite these challenges, cooperation between CSOs and local authorities often proves more productive, as local governments tend to be more open to partnership and collaboration. This creates favourable conditions for the development of local initiatives and projects aimed at addressing specific community needs.

Target audiences also show growing interest in partnerships, as they are directly affected by the issues at hand. This leads to greater engagement and involvement in joint projects and initiatives.

Overall, despite certain challenges at the central government level, the strengthening of partnerships and networking between CSOs, authorities, and business is key to achieving more sustainable and effective results in society.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

At this stage of societal development, significant challenges exist in cooperation between different sectors — particularly among CSOs, government, and business. One of the key issues is the diversity in goals and objectives, which complicates the establishment of effective partnerships.

Cooperation between CSOs and the business sector, especially in the context of social entrepreneurship, is also hindered by a weak culture of philanthropy and a lack of attention from government to the challenges faced by micro and small enterprises. These factors create additional barriers to the development of sustainable partnerships.

Attempts by government authorities to exert control over CSO activities lead to frustration and a sense that the government merely pretends to seek cooperation. This turns the process into a continuous struggle, creating the impression that the parties are "speaking different languages" and unable to find common ground for meaningful dialogue.

Despite these challenges, CSOs continue to defend the rights of civil society and are becoming increasingly professional in their partnerships. This strengthens collaboration between organisations, although competition over resources remains.

On a positive note, there is both a need for and a desire to engage in closer cooperation, which contributes to greater effectiveness and opens the door to building resilient and mutually beneficial partnerships. This highlights the potential to overcome existing barriers and form more harmonious relations between sectors of society.

III. Root Causes:

Partnerships between government and CSOs remain complex and tense. One key issue is the misuse of martial law and the lack of consultation with CSOs in important decision-making processes. This creates barriers to effective cooperation and undermines trust.

On the other hand, CSOs themselves face internal challenges in building partnerships. Many are hesitant to *grow up* and act as full-fledged, influential actors in Ukraine's recovery, reform, and transformation processes. This reluctance may stem from limited resources, insufficient experience in large-scale projects, or fear of increased responsibility.

To overcome these obstacles, it is necessary to strengthen dialogue and mutual understanding between government and CSOs. Mechanisms should be established for regular consultations and for engaging CSOs in decision-making processes — enabling them to see themselves as meaningful participants in public affairs. CSOs also require support in their professional development to effectively influence national processes and meet the demands of mature partnerships.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

To improve and strengthen partnerships between civil society organisations (CSOs), government, and business, the following steps should be taken:

First, it is important to recognise and embrace the mutual benefits of cooperation. This will help build motivation for deeper engagement and greater openness.

Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each party to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

Assess shortcomings in existing partnerships and be willing to compromise where necessary. Understanding the limitations of partnerships helps manage expectations and allows for more realistic planning.

Develop a roadmap for building effective partnerships — a tool to structure the process and outline specific steps toward shared goals.

Organise forums and meetings with current and potential partners to discuss the importance of partnership and address shared challenges.

Ensure regulatory support for CSO activities to guarantee legal protection and reduce pressure from government authorities.

Sustainability of initiatives and partnerships is key to achieving long-term objectives and maintaining positive momentum.

Finally, identifying effective levers of influence on government and uniting the efforts of CSOs and business can significantly strengthen their impact on policymaking. This will encourage greater government transparency and accountability to society.

V. Programmes and Projects:

◆ Formation of sectoral CSO associations
These may include associations that unite CSOs based on their area of work — such as veteran, volunteer, youth, environmental, or humanitarian organisations. Such associations can improve communication and coordination efforts within their respective fields.

◆ Mentorship programmes from CSOs to CSOs
These initiatives would enable younger and less experienced organisations to gain knowledge and skills from more established and successful CSOs, supporting their development and professionalisation.

◆ Series of advocacy meetings on the benefits of partnering with CSOs
These meetings would highlight the advantages of partnership with CSOs, helping to attract new partners and build trust in the sector.

◆ Partnership roadmap
A strategic plan to establish and develop partnerships between sectors — including government institutions, business, and CSOs.

◆ Creation of a local-level integrator
This could take the form of an advisory body comprising representatives of local government, CSOs, municipal enterprises, and others — focused on developing an ecosystem to preserve and strengthen human capital.
Programme to support civil society development
A programme focused on strengthening and advancing CSOs at the level of territorial communities and regions.

◆ Training on team building and partnership development
Programmes aimed at reducing competition between CSOs by teaching them to collaborate effectively on joint projects and shared initiatives.

6. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Vision: A financially sustainable and independent Ukrainian civil society with diversified funding sources that reflect its specific characteristics (regional, thematic, capacity-based).

I. Current State:

◆ The financing and development of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Ukraine remains a complex issue. Many CSOs face the challenge of lacking stable funding, which forces them to operate from project to project.

◆ CSOs often lack access to programmes that would ensure their long-term growth and sustainability, resulting in a lack of institutional support and absence of strategic, long-term funding.

◆ Available grants often fail to meet organisational needs, as the funding amounts are insufficient.

◆ There is a divide in funding and management approaches depending on the geographical origin of donors, leading to an informal categorisation of organisations as "American" or "European".

◆ Many grants are project-specific and do not support overall organisational development or cover administrative costs, leaving gaps in sustainability planning.

◆ Philanthropy is underdeveloped, and the lack of tax deduction mechanisms for charitable contributions in legislation limits the potential for domestic fundraising.

◆ CSOs often have limited ability to generate their own income through paid services due to the absence of marketable expertise or advertising opportunities.

◆ Although CSOs have learned to work effectively with international donors, cooperation with the business sector remains weak. Similarly, the lack of transparency impedes collaboration with local communities, limiting the potential for local partnerships and development.

◆ Frequent shifts in donor priorities result in funding losses for some projects.

◆ These challenges require a comprehensive approach, including legislative reform, increased transparency, and the development of stronger partnerships with the private sector and local communities.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

◆ The current state of funding and organisational management causes significant anxiety among CSO leaders and staff.

◆ There is a tangible risk of losing teams or rented premises due to unstable financing and uncertainty about the future.

◆ The threat of halting operations is constant, due to the lack of long-term programmes and insufficient grants. Burnout among personnel is becoming increasingly common due to high levels of stress and insecurity.

◆ Despite considerable efforts to seek solutions — including appeals to various organisations and institutions — results often fall short of expectations, further reinforcing a sense of helplessness.

◆ In such conditions, setting priorities and allocating resources becomes critically important, yet the absence of clear criteria and strategic direction complicates this process.

III. Root Causes:

The economic situation in the country remains tense, directly affecting the funding available for civil society organisations (CSOs).

Additionally, a significant share of individual donations is directed toward supporting Ukraine's Defence Forces, further reducing the availability of financial resources for CSOs.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

To improve the financial situation and stabilise CSO operations in Ukraine, a number of actions are required:

Building financial reserves within organisations should become a key step toward ensuring financial stability.

Diversifying income sources will reduce dependency on any single donor.

It is essential to engage the business sector more actively, as this could open new opportunities for funding and partnerships.

Experienced CSOs should support newcomers through mentoring and capacity building to promote sector-wide development.

Advocating for realistic budgets and needs is crucial to help donors and partners understand the actual requirements of CSOs.

The creation of a donor-funded emergency reserve would allow CSOs to survive financial crises.

Introducing tax deduction mechanisms for contributions to CSOs could provide a valuable source of additional funding.

Demonstrating mutual benefit for businesses that support CSOs and civic activity centres may encourage broader private sector engagement.

Fee-based services can provide CSOs with opportunities to generate self-sustaining income.

Social partnerships, including those with public employment centres and other state institutions, can attract additional resources.

Risk insurance programmes for CSOs could mitigate threats to their operations.

Thematic coalitions and coordination centres can foster better interaction and collective problem-solving within the sector.

Diversifying types, durations, and sizes of funding will help CSOs adapt to varying conditions and needs.

Public funding models, similar to the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, could become a valuable source of support.

Establishing a Ukrainian equivalent of USAID, such as UA AID, would provide a stable funding mechanism for critical national projects.

Nationwide coverage and the use of software tools to track non-profit organisations would help ensure equal access to resources and transparency in their use.

7. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Vision: A clear and effective strategy is the foundation for the sustainable development of CSOs — a joint effort with the state.

I. Current State:

- Civil society organisations (CSOs) in Ukraine are currently facing a number of challenges that require attention and resolution. The lack of deep understanding of strategic planning, mission, and values has led many CSOs to operate without a clear long-term perspective. As a result, organisations are often established to address specific issues without a broader vision for the future.
- Activities are frequently reactive or opportunistic, based on what can be done rather than what is necessary or right — weakening the overall purpose of their efforts. A lack of knowledge and resources further hinders the implementation of existing ideas and intentions.
Moreover, limited opportunities for initial funding and organisational development reduce their overall capacity.
The ongoing war has halted many activities, forcing organisations to postpone their plans.
- The absence of a coordinated strategy between different organisations and sectors further contributes to fragmentation in approaches and actions. Crisis management has become the dominant operational mode, which does not support systemic development or long-term stability.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

- A sense of confusion and uncertainty prevails among Ukrainian CSOs.
- Many leaders and team members feel unsure about their goals and role in the current context, asking questions like *Where are we heading?, Who are we?, and Where do I and my organisation fit in?*
- There is a strong sense of urgency — a pressure to act quickly and respond, which often results in rushed decision-making.
- This perceived need for immediate action weighs heavily on CSO actors, creating a constant expectation to react to external challenges.

III. Root Causes:

The challenges Ukrainian CSOs face with strategic planning and development stem from a range of factors.
Foremost is the absence of a culture of strategy, which limits organisations' ability to plan effectively for the long term.
Many organisations lack the professional knowledge or educational background to design and implement strategies, putting them at a disadvantage.
There is also insufficient motivation to engage in strategic work, which is often seen as an optional or secondary task — something that can be done *on the side*.
The lack of visible success stories of well-executed strategies within the civic sector further discourages the adoption of a strategic mindset.

In the civil society sector, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are less clearly defined than in business, which complicates efforts to measure effectiveness and adjust strategies accordingly. In addition, many organisations face a lack of funding for organisational development, as most resources are allocated to project-specific activities rather than to overall institutional growth.

Overall, the lack of resources for organisational development and for cultivating a strategic culture represents a significant barrier to implementing effective plans — which, in turn, impacts the general efficiency and resilience of civil society organisations (CSOs).

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

◆ CSOs require a systematic promotion of strategic culture, an understanding of organisational values, and exposure to success stories that can inspire change and motivate action.

◆ The development and implementation of specialised training programmes focused on strategic planning and management is essential for enhancing the competencies of CSO staff.

◆ Involving experienced strategy professionals — not just facilitators — in trainings and mentoring will improve the quality and practical relevance of learning.

◆ It is important to place the topic of CSO strategic development on the agenda of donors and philanthropists to secure funding and support for these efforts.

◆ There must be active communication and alignment of ideas, plans, and needs among CSOs, authorities, and donors to produce high-quality, mutually acceptable strategies.

V. Programmes and Projects:

◆ Revive and expand CSO organisational development programmes
◆ Create regionally-based support hubs
◆ Shared understanding model – a certified training programme combined with grants for capacity building
◆ Develop adaptive strategies suitable for uncertain contexts
◆ Establish communication platforms for sharing both success stories and failures (e.g. Fuck-up Nights)
◆ Mentoring support for strategy development and implementation
◆ Thematic information campaigns

Organisational Support Insurance Fund Project – aimed at building a reliable system to help CSOs manage unexpected crises or setbacks while maintaining operational stability and continuity. Key elements of this project include:

◆ Short-term support mechanism – offering temporary aid to CSOs facing challenges such as the loss of key team members or sudden funding disruptions. Support may include financial assistance, consultancy services, or temporary staff placement.

◆ External expert involvement – in cases where a leader or key specialist leaves, the project allows for the engagement of external experts who can temporarily assume responsibilities or assist in developing crisis-response strategies.

◆ Ready-to-use algorithms and case studies. The project also includes the development and provision of ready-made response algorithms and case studies to CSOs. These resources will enable organisations to quickly adapt and respond effectively to various crisis situations, minimising negative impacts on their operations.

◆ Organisational development services. The project proposes providing organisational development services to help CSOs strengthen their internal processes and increase their resilience to future crises. This could include training sessions, workshops, and consultations on management and strategic planning.

Example of application: If a CSO leader — who is also the organisation's key visionary — is mobilised for military service, the project will help identify a temporary director or expert who can take over leadership responsibilities, support the team, and ensure continuity of operations until the leader returns.
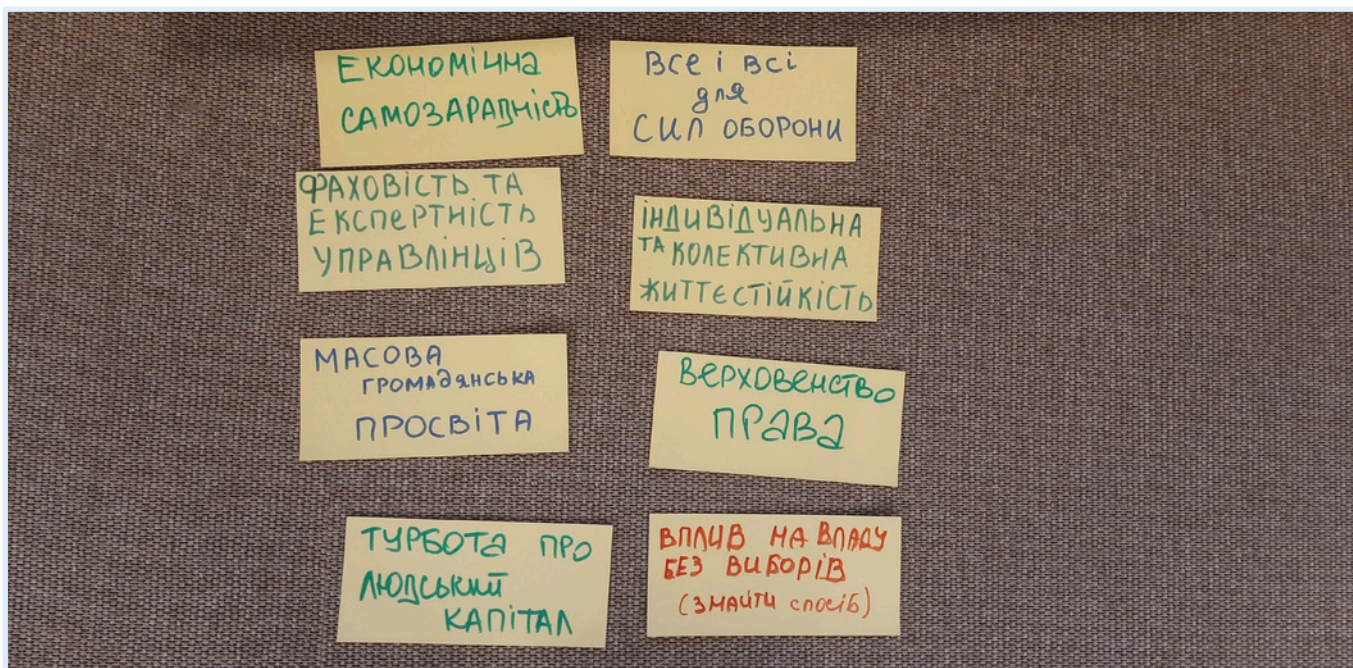
8. EXPERTISE AND PROFESSIONALISM

Vision: To establish a standard of effectiveness, ethics, and innovation within the civil society sector — supporting the resilience and development of society through high-quality results built on trust and collaboration.

I. Current State:

- The civil society sector is becoming increasingly prestigious and recognised as a vital component of society, playing a key role in advancing democratic reforms and social change.
- Civil society organisations (CSOs) are actively engaged in reform processes, acting as both initiators and supporters of reforms at various levels.
- Despite the growing recognition, the sector remains inconsistent in terms of expertise. Challenges persist regarding the varying levels of professionalism and competence among organisations.
- CSOs demonstrate strong adaptability and readiness to respond to diverse social, political, and economic challenges arising both nationally and globally.
- CSOs actively collaborate with international partners, gaining support and recognition at the global level — fostering experience-sharing and improving the overall effectiveness of their activities.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

- There is potential for improvement.

III. Root Causes:

- Working in CSOs is often associated with high stress levels and emotional strain, as staff regularly deal with complex social issues and face high performance expectations. This can lead to exhaustion and burnout, negatively impacting productivity and team motivation.
- High expectations, coupled with limited opportunities for career advancement or financial compensation, may result in qualified professionals leaving the sector. As a result, organisations are often left with less experienced or underqualified staff, which can affect the quality of their work and project implementation.
- Due to low barriers to entry in the sector (e.g. minimal requirements for education, experience, or licensing), CSOs may attract staff who lack the necessary skills or knowledge to work effectively. This can affect the professionalism and overall performance of the organisation.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

To address these challenges and improve CSO effectiveness, the following actions should be taken:

- Academic research on CSOs: Conducting in-depth studies will help identify key challenges faced by organisations, as well as highlight the most effective practices. This will contribute to the creation of a knowledge base that can support sector development and enhance its overall effectiveness.

◆ Professional Growth. Developing professional skills through master's programmes, short-term training courses, and the establishment of professional standards is essential for enhancing the qualifications of CSO staff. This will help improve the quality of work and the capacity of organisations to address complex challenges.

◆ Certification, Licensing, and Accreditation in the Sector. Introducing a system of certification and licensing for CSOs will ensure their operations meet established standards and regulations. This will increase public and donor trust in the sector.

◆ Financial Sustainability. Ensuring financial stability is vital for the long-term operations of CSOs. This may include developing fundraising strategies, diversifying funding sources, and applying sound financial management principles.

◆ Initiatives aimed at improving professionalism, strengthening institutional capacity, and ensuring financial sustainability will allow CSOs to respond more effectively to societal challenges, increase their impact, and build greater trust among stakeholders.

V. Programmes and Projects:

◆ Professional education vouchers

Providing vouchers for study at institutions such as the Ukrainian Catholic University or abroad could serve as a significant incentive for developing human capital in the CSO sector.

An important condition would be that participants commit to sharing the knowledge and experience they gain with colleagues in their organisations — promoting the spread of new practices and raising overall competence across the sector.

◆ Development of a governance-focused training course

Creating a specialised course focused on governance rather than management will help participants better understand the nuances of working in the public or non-profit sector. Topics could include ethics, transparency, accountability, and governance efficiency.

◆ Standardisation of terminology

Establishing universal terminology across the CSO sector will help prevent misunderstandings and simplify communication among organisations and their partners. It will also support greater standardisation of documentation and reporting — which is crucial for securing funding and sustaining project support.

9. INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

Vision: CSOs as drivers of diplomacy, contributing to the country's image on the global stage.

I. Current State:

The following trends are currently observed in Ukraine's civil society sector:

- There are existing platforms that provide information about CSOs with transparent reports and budgets. These contribute to building trust in the sector and promote organisational transparency.
- Advocacy projects focused on localisation are being implemented to adapt global goals to local contexts and needs.
- Ukraine is home to many strong CSOs working across various fields — from social initiatives to environmental projects.
- Some CSOs produce English-language materials and present their experiences at international forums, although this process is time-consuming (taking around two months).
- Amateurism and lack of professionalism are still common in the sector, which can negatively affect overall effectiveness and outcomes.
- Targeted mentorship and support are available for small CSOs and grassroots initiatives, helping them grow and strengthen their capacities.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

- Implement international event-based projects to showcase the experience and work of Ukrainian CSOs abroad.
- Organise international events to present successful practices from Ukrainian CSOs, helping to attract the attention of the global community.
- Raise visibility through socially impactful projects — initiatives that generate public resonance can help strengthen the position of CSOs and raise awareness of their contributions.
- Share successful examples of collaboration between CSOs, government, and local authorities. Strengthen engagement with ministries to improve coordination and joint effectiveness.
- Enhance CSO visibility via digital platforms and alliances. Broaden the use of online tools and international networks to increase awareness and access to information about CSO activities.
- Adopt hybrid communication formats — including interactive events, gastronomic initiatives, and in-person engagement — to attract audiences through innovative approaches.
- Engage Ukrainian embassies in promoting the work of CSOs. Cooperate with diplomatic missions to raise international awareness of Ukrainian CSO efforts.
- Create an agency to support CSOs in preparing for international events, offering methodological and organisational assistance.
- Provide mentorship and guidance to civic initiatives to ensure continued support, increased effectiveness, and stronger impact of both new and ongoing efforts.

◆ Training Programme on Professional Skills (Hard Skills), Advocacy, and Negotiation Enhancing the competencies of CSO representatives through specialised educational programmes focused on building advocacy and negotiation skills, as well as addressing complex challenges.

V. Programmes and Projects:

To advance this area and increase the international visibility of Ukrainian civil society organisations (CSOs), the following programmes and ideas can be implemented:

◆ Support programmes for agencies, alliances, and consortia to facilitate joint international representation. These efforts would allow multiple CSOs to pool resources and collaborate in representing Ukraine on the global stage — boosting both influence and visibility.

◆ Partnership programmes with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies, and CSOs to strengthen international awareness of Ukrainian CSO activities. Strategic cooperation with diplomatic institutions would help promote the interests of Ukrainian civil society abroad.

◆ Advocacy programme to showcase Ukraine's top innovative practices across EU countries. This initiative could include experience-sharing, presentations of successful projects, and promotion of Ukraine as a country with high innovation potential.

◆ Mentorship programme for Ukrainian CSOs to expand internationally. Mentoring and advisory support would help CSOs adapt to international standards and engage more effectively with foreign partners.

◆ Professional training programmes (hard skills) for CSO leaders and representatives. Courses in negotiation, public speaking, English language, and advocacy would equip participants to effectively represent Ukraine's interests.

◆ Creation of an agency for international support/consulting/diplomatic representation of Ukrainian CSOs. This central body would coordinate and support CSO activity at the international level by providing resources and expertise.

◆ Support for establishing international branches of Ukrainian CSOs to expand global influence. Geographic expansion would allow CSOs to access new resources, build partnerships, and unlock additional opportunities for implementing their initiatives.

Vision: Civic education is the foundation of a democratic society — where citizens not only know their rights but actively participate in decision-making.

In Ukraine, a systemic approach is lacking: there is no strong national stakeholder, most initiatives depend on donor funding, and the overall level of political culture remains low. This contributes to civic passivity and the spread of manipulation.

We seek to change this situation by:

Developing a network of civic education agents

Investing in open educational spaces (hubs, libraries, youth centres)

Adapting and distributing educational materials

I. Current State:

Civic education in Ukraine currently exists within the formal education system but is offered as an optional component. This undermines its consistency and quality, often resulting in limited attention or low implementation standards by educational institutions.

There is a positive trend among local self-government bodies (LSGs) to introduce civic education in schools, which supports the development of civic awareness among young people.

Civil society projects are increasingly expanding into villages and smaller communities, helping to engage a broader range of participants and deepen the reach of civic education.

So-called *cargo participation* practices are used to involve citizens in public life — often through various community-based initiatives and activities.

In some cases, civic education is replaced by general awareness efforts focused on combating fake news and disinformation. While important, these may divert attention from the core goals of civic education.

These trends indicate a need for greater attention and resources to ensure high-quality and systematic civic education in Ukraine, as well as for the development of comprehensive programmes that can be implemented across different levels.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

◆ There is a strong sense of care and concern among participants.

III. Root Causes:

Civic education in Ukraine faces a number of structural and contextual challenges:

◆ Lack of a strong national stakeholder: There is no central institution responsible for coordinating and financing civic education programmes, which makes it difficult to systematise or standardise such efforts.

◆ Heavy reliance on donor funding: Most programmes depend on external sources of support, creating instability and limiting the capacity to develop long-term strategies.

◆ Competing priorities: Civil society organisations often do not prioritise civic education, focusing instead on urgent needs like crisis response or military conflict-related support.

◆ Misidentified target audience: Programmes are often focused primarily on children, while it is equally important to engage adults through methods such as andragogy, financial literacy training, and support for youth entrepreneurship.
◆ Populism: A low level of civic education can be exploited by populist forces to concentrate power, undermining democratic processes.
◆ Political parties as ineffective actors: Low public participation in party life and dependence on oligarchic structures result in disengagement and limit the role of political parties in advancing civic education.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

To improve and expand civic education in Ukraine, the following steps and initiatives should be considered:

◆ Breaking out of the *bubble*: The civic education sector needs to extend its reach beyond traditional platforms and engage new spaces such as churches and political parties. This would help reach a broader audience and foster inclusion of diverse societal groups.
◆ Building a network of civic education agents: Training professionals from a range of disciplines — such as mathematicians — can help build a network of civic education agents who disseminate knowledge through their professional and personal networks.
◆ Leveraging modern platforms and trends: Using popular social media platforms such as TikTok and engaging influencers and opinion leaders can significantly boost the reach and impact of civic education campaigns.
◆ Investing in civic education infrastructure: Developing and maintaining infrastructure that supports civic education is essential for creating a sustainable and effective system.
◆ Dialogue and debate as educational models: Inspired by Paulo Freire's approach, dialogue and debate can serve as universal tools for education that encourage participant engagement and the development of critical thinking.
◆ International support and pressure: Involving international partners and encouraging them to demand action from national authorities can help promote and sustain civic education initiatives.

These steps would support the development of a more effective and inclusive civic education system in Ukraine, engaging a wide range of population groups and fostering democratic values and active citizenship.

V. Programmes and Projects:

◆ Improving practical civic education courses: Programmes such as *Me and the World* should be made more accessible and engaging for children by using interactive methods and modern technologies.
◆ Tailored approaches to different audience segments: Use appropriate communication channels for each target group — for example, social media for younger audiences and traditional media for older age groups.
◆ Activation of the Civic Education Agents' Network: Engaging civil society organisations, local self-government bodies, and other volunteer groups to implement broad-based and effective civic education efforts.

- ◆ Provision of Resources for Infrastructure Development:
  Investing in the creation and maintenance of infrastructure such as educational hubs, libraries, churches, and open public spaces that can serve as venues for civic education activities.
- ◆ Development of Educational and Methodological Materials:
  Designing and adapting manuals, methodological guides, and training programmes for mass civic education that are easily accessible and understandable for broad audiences.
 Mass Communication Campaigns:
- ◆ Using media and messaging platforms to run large-scale information campaigns aimed at raising awareness and encouraging citizens to take an active role in public life.
  Securing Funding:
- ◆ Exploring diverse funding sources — including public funding, grants, donor support, and private investment — to sustain and expand all of the above initiatives.

These measures can contribute to the establishment of an effective and inclusive civic education system in Ukraine that reaches diverse population groups and fosters democratic values and civic engagement.
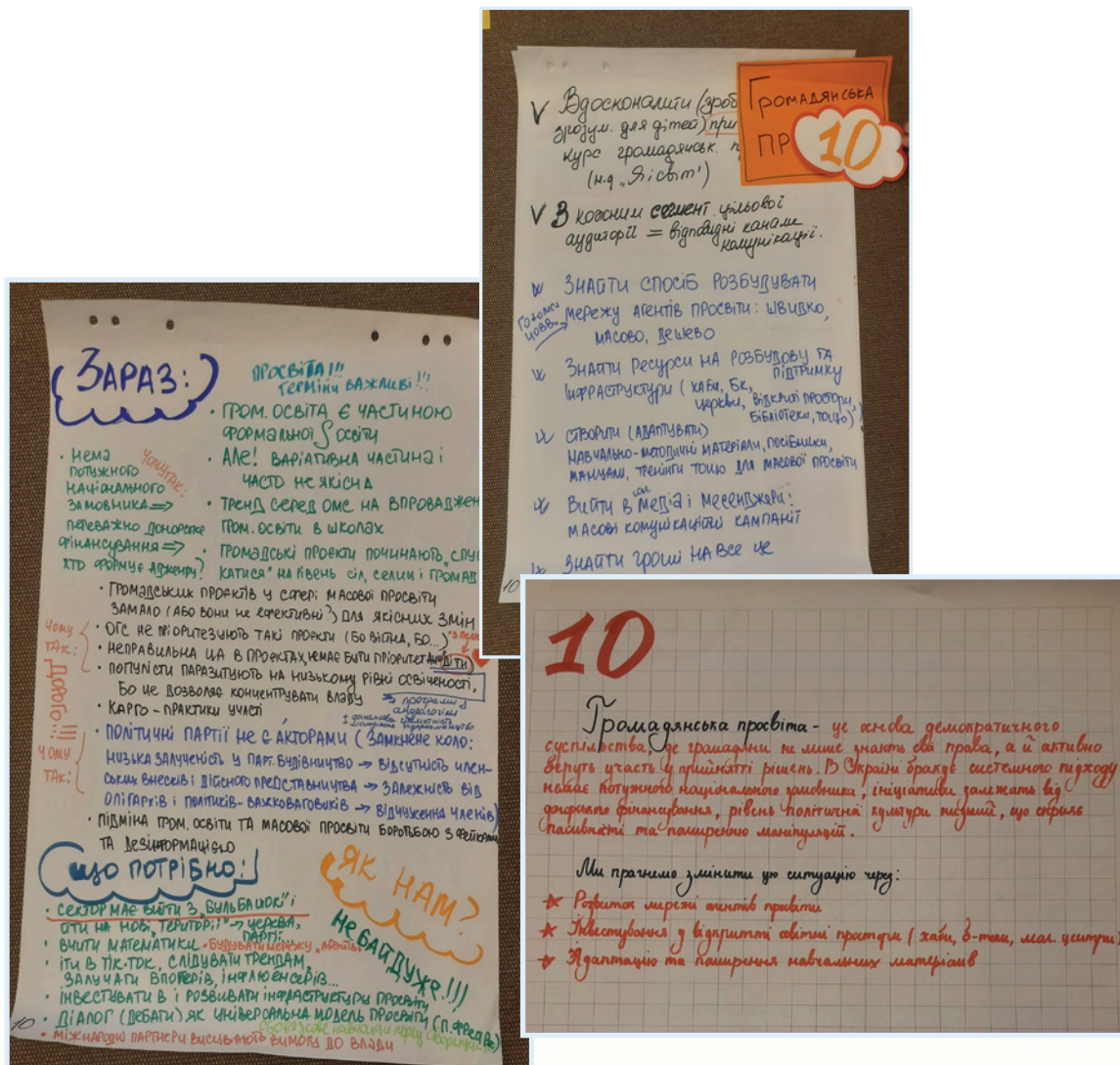
Vision: To transform society through transparency, accountability and trust, strengthening societal values and enhancing impact at both national and international levels.

I. Current State:

◆ Stereotypical perceptions: A segment of the public holds stereotypical views of civil society organisations (CSOs), referring to them as *grant-eaters, urban lunatics,* or *idlers*. This complicates public perception and assessment of their work.

◆ Integrity as a priority: In recent years, there has been increasing focus on integrity and transparency in CSO activities, making it a key priority in their operations.

◆ Trust from international partners: CSOs enjoy the trust of international partners who support their work through various programmes and grants.

◆ Lack of trust from public authorities: At the same time, there is insufficient trust and support from public institutions, which hinders cooperation and effective engagement.

◆ Corruption and misconduct: Despite efforts to improve transparency, cases of corruption and misconduct still occur within the sector, undermining trust in CSOs.

◆ Underdeveloped culture of domestic giving: Ukraine continues to lack a strong culture of domestic financial support for CSOs, leading many to rely heavily on external funding sources.

These aspects reflect the current landscape of civic education and civil society in Ukraine, underscoring the need for ongoing reforms and changes to enhance sectoral effectiveness and public trust.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

◆ Undervaluation by society: Civil initiatives and organisations often face public scepticism or are deemed unnecessary or ineffective. This creates additional obstacles to their work and undermines participants' motivation.

◆ Struggling to maintain standards: In the face of ongoing public devaluation, financial instability, and high expectations from donors and partners, CSOs find it challenging to maintain a high level of performance and integrity. This jeopardises their long-term sustainability and growth.

III. Root Causes:

◆ Hostile propaganda: Public attitudes are often shaped by propaganda that portrays CSOs in a negative light, branding them as traitors or opportunists.

◆ Manipulation of public opinion: Media outlets and certain political actors manipulate public perception to undermine the influence and authority of CSOs.

◆ Unhealthy competition: The civil society sector sometimes experiences conflict and competition over resources and influence, which can result in negative campaigns targeting rival organisations.

◆ Lack of sufficient experience: Many new or less experienced CSOs may face challenges due to limited capacity in project implementation, management and strategic planning.
◆ Lack of transparency: Some CSOs do not adhere to high standards of transparency and accountability, which undermines public trust.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

◆ Promote a culture of accountability and transparency: All civil society organisations should uphold high transparency standards in their operations to build trust among the public and donors.

◆ Increase professional capacity: Investment in staff training and development is crucial for improving the effectiveness and professionalism of CSOs.

◆ Encourage critical thinking: Public education should foster the ability to critically assess information, which helps counteract manipulation and propaganda.

◆ Engage the public in project implementation: CSOs should actively involve citizens in the implementation of their projects to enhance legitimacy and impact.

◆ Strengthen networking and partnerships: Collaboration with other organisations and institutions facilitates experience sharing, resource pooling and increased influence.

◆ Communicate the role and value of CSOs: It's essential to actively inform the public about the importance and contributions of CSOs to societal and national development.

◆ Prioritise resource optimisation: Internal resource and process optimisation is necessary to boost the productivity and efficiency of CSOs.

V. Programmes and Projects:

To support civic education and enhance the effectiveness of civil society organisations in Ukraine, the following programmes and ideas could be implemented:

Programme: Communication Strategy = Success+

Objectives:
◆ Teach CSOs how to develop and implement effective communication strategies.
◆ Master methods for 'selling' themselves and their ideas to wider audiences.
  Develop partnerships with other CSOs and the private sector.
◆ Attract resources, including funding, volunteers and other forms of support.

Trust in Action Programme:

Objectives:
◆ Ensure transparent reporting and implement public audits.
◆ Develop and introduce a code of ethics, integrity, and compliance.
◆ Establish and implement internal policies and procedures that promote transparency.
◆ Create an integrity rating system for civil society organisations.

Stop Fake Programme:

Objectives:

◆ Provide public education on information security.

◆ Create an online platform to collect and analyse feedback on the activities of civil society organisations.

◆ Organise open dialogues with the public to ensure transparency and openness.

◆ Ensure cybersecurity and develop a safe media environment.

These programmes will not only help improve the effectiveness of civil society organisations but also strengthen public and partner trust in them.
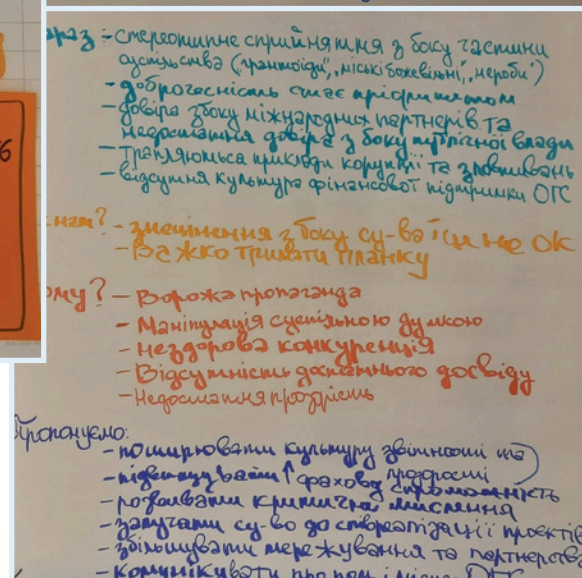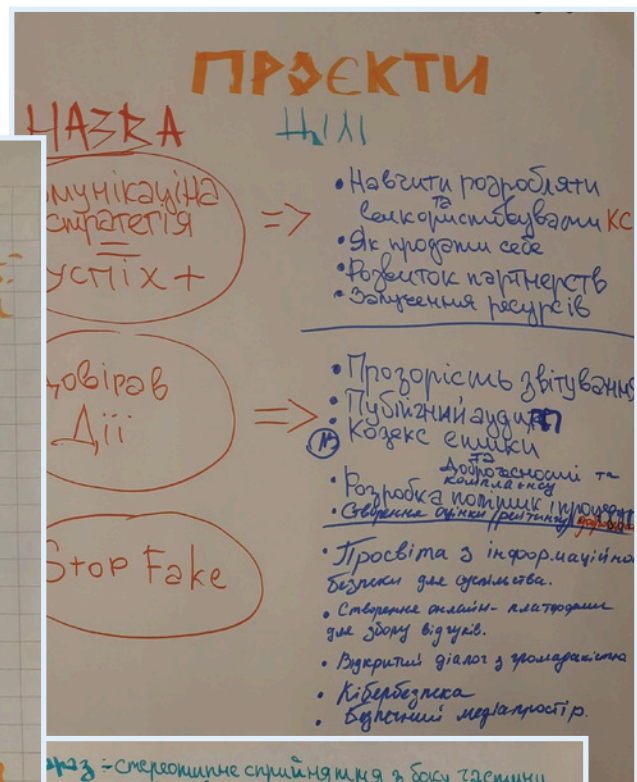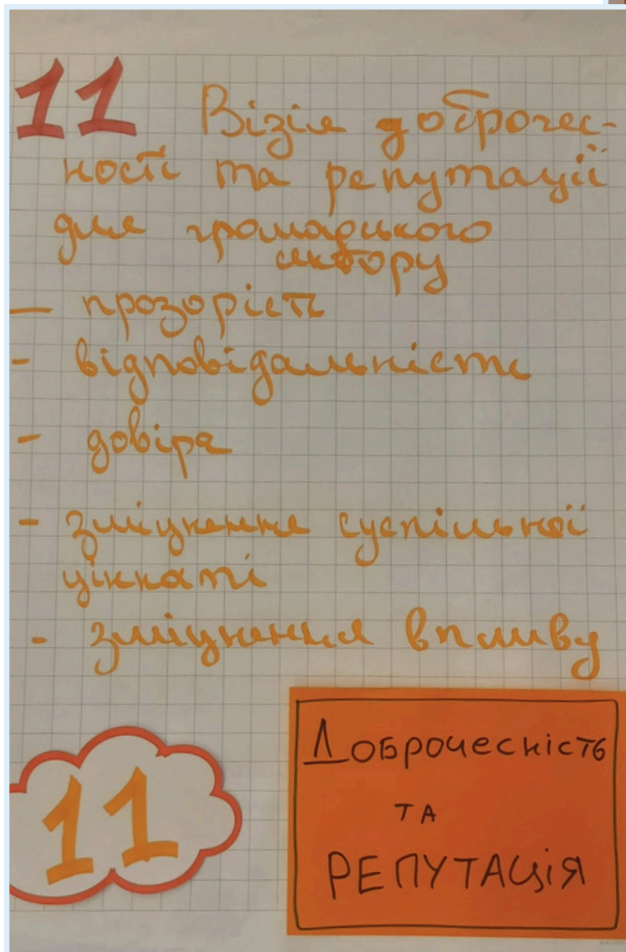
12. SOCIAL CONTRACT

Vision: To transform society through innovative approaches and the restoration of trust, based on an awareness of constant threats and the inefficiency of outdated methods. We aim to restore justice and create sustainable solutions that meet the needs of the modern world.

I. Current State:

There is currently a pressing need to establish coalitions of civil society organisations (CSOs) that work in specific sectors. Such coalitions would enable greater unity, exchange of experience and resources, and more effective influence on reform processes in the country.

An essential step is the development of a clear action plan that includes strategic goals and concrete objectives for implementing reforms. Advocating for these reforms before state institutions will help ensure their implementation and monitoring in accordance with the law.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

Initially — rules and procedures, and only then — substance. This approach was perceived as rational and justified, as it created a sense of structure and predictability in the process. Clear frameworks and agreed procedures at the start provided comfort and confidence in further work, reducing the risk of misunderstandings or chaos. This allowed participants to focus on the substantive aspects of discussions, view the work as organised and effective, and contributed to smoother interaction among participants.

III. Root Causes:

Engagement with business is key to creating a social contract that defines the responsibilities and roles of all actors in building a resilient society:

Demands and Pressure: CSOs can use their influence to articulate demands for businesses to uphold high standards of social responsibility, ethics, and environmental sustainability. This encourages conditions under which businesses feel public pressure, driving them to implement positive changes.

Win-Win Scenarios: Cooperation between CSOs and businesses can generate synergies where both sides benefit. Businesses enhance their public image and build consumer trust by investing in socially meaningful projects, while CSOs gain resources to implement their initiatives. This promotes transparent and open relationships — the foundation of a social contract. Such engagement is fundamental to developing a social contract that supports a sustainable society and fosters mutual accountability between the private sector and the public.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

To enable an effective recovery and rebuilding process in Ukraine following crisis events, it is necessary to develop a psychosocial map of the regions. This map should include:

- Analysis of the population's psychological state: Studying levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges among residents of different regions.
- This will help identify areas in urgent need of psychological assistance and support.
  Social indicators: Including data on unemployment rates, poverty, access to education and healthcare. These indicators will help identify the specific social needs of each
- region.
  Cultural and demographic features: Taking into account the age structure of the population, ethnic composition, traditions, and cultural characteristics that affect lifestyle
- and community needs.
  Infrastructure needs: Assessing the condition of infrastructure such as housing, transportation, communications, and other key factors influencing quality of life.

Creating such a psychosocial map would enable the government, local authorities, CSOs, and international partners to more precisely plan and implement recovery programmes based on the actual needs of communities across different regions.

V. Programmes and Projects:

The Social Contract Project is an initiative aimed at community recovery and development through the creation of effective mechanisms for cooperation between authorities, civil society organisations, businesses, and local residents. The project's main objective is to restore key infrastructure that has been heavily damaged by shelling.

Problem Context: Significant infrastructure destruction following shelling.

Objective: To create effective mechanisms of cooperation between authorities and communities for restoring essential infrastructure.

Stakeholders: Community residents, businesses, CSOs, volunteers, activists, and local authorities (LCAs).

Implementation Stages:

- Formation of the Social Contract: public consultations, identification of needs, Memorandum of cooperation between CSOs and LCAs
- Analysis: prioritisation of needs, development of a needs-based list, identification of funding sources
- Organisation: seeking funds from CSOs, forming a public budget from the authorities, engaging businesses, CSOs, and volunteers
- Execution, Oversight, and Monitoring: public communication, transparent reporting, oversight by all three parties

Core Principles of the Social Contract:

Every voice matters: open forums and participant gatherings

Budget transparency: public reports

Open participation: any resident or organisation in the community can join

Amendments only with consensus from all parties involved

Responsibilities of the Parties:

◆ Community: Compliance with the law, mutual respect, and active participation in civic initiatives.

◆ Business: Responsible entrepreneurship, ecological initiatives, social projects, transparency, job creation, and contribution to community development.

◆ CSOs: Advocacy for community interests, cooperation with business and government, and facilitation of projects that are important for the community.

◆ Local Authorities (LCAs): Transparent decision-making, open reporting, and provision of high-quality public services.
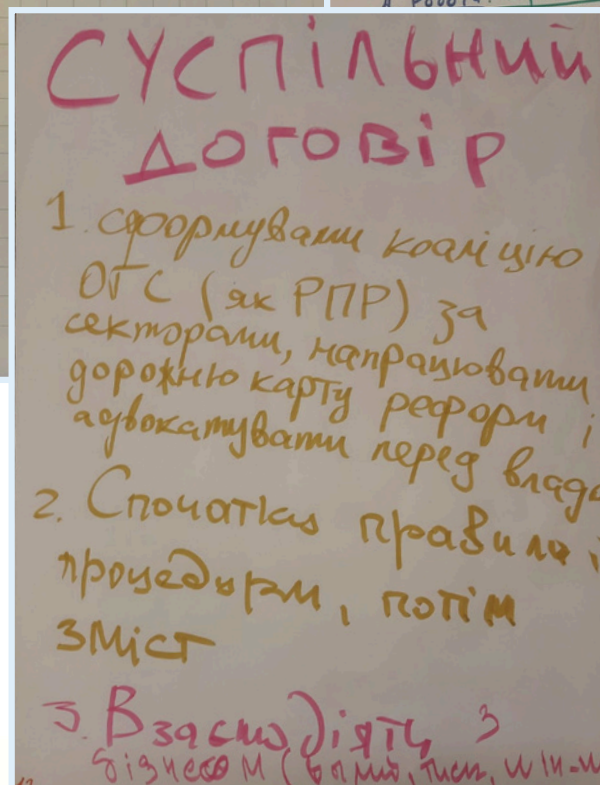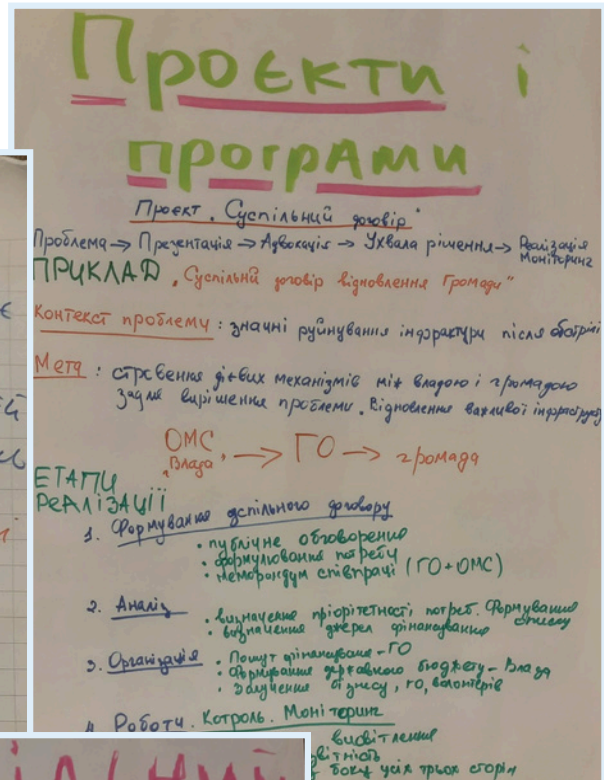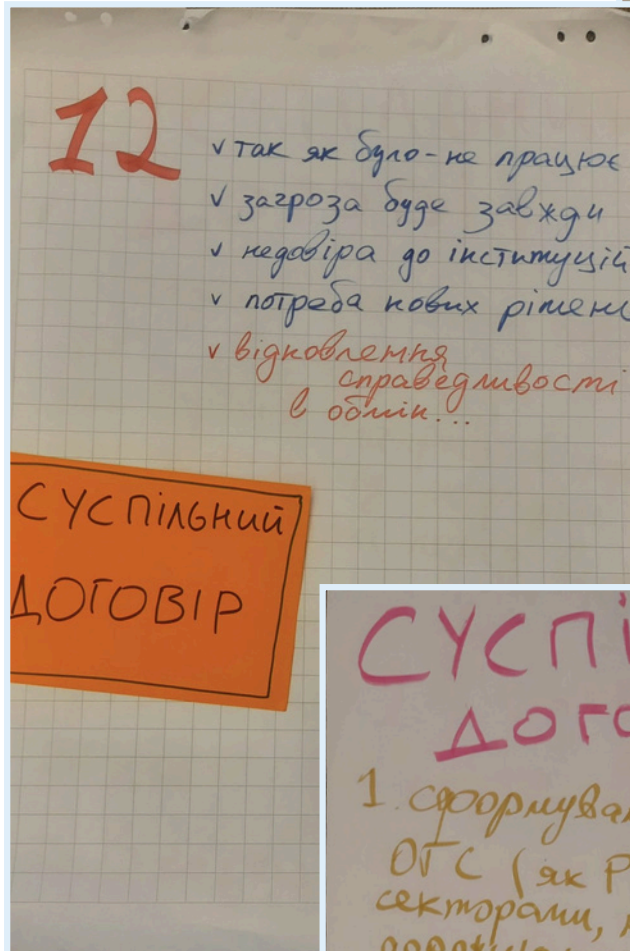
13. NATIONAL IDEA

1. **Vision:** The National Idea is the foundation of the social contract, aimed at: withstanding challenges and preserving a free Ukraine; building a successful, secure, powerful, progressive, innovative, fair, prosperous, dignified, and united Global Nation of Worthy People for at least the next 1000 years.

I. Current State:

At present, a prevailing sentiment expressed as *We hate the Russians* carries a strong negative charge and is no longer effective. This approach can lead to further polarisation and conflict rather than fostering positive change or development.

Moreover, we currently lack a clear vision for the future, which makes it difficult to plan and implement long-term objectives.

II. Participants' Perceptions::

We are currently facing the opportunity to move away from outdated approaches and become leaders in shaping a progressive and modern image of Europe. This includes several key aspects:

◆ Acceptance of migrants: Ukraine could invite migrants to become part of the country on its own terms — encouraging integration into Ukrainian society, learning the language and culture. This approach would not only facilitate cultural exchange but also strengthen Ukraine's economic and social potential.

III. Root Causes:

Many of the problems we face have deep-seated roots and are often linked to individual and collective triggers from the past. These include historical events, cultural norms, past conflicts, and personal experiences that shape perceptions and behaviour today.

◆ Individual triggers might involve trauma, loss, or abuse, which influence people's actions and relationships.

◆ Collective triggers could include wars, genocide, economic crises, or political upheaval that have left a lasting mark on collective memory and national identity.

Understanding these triggers is key to developing strategies for moving forward. This involves addressing historical memory, promoting education, providing psychological support, and engaging communities in dialogue and reconciliation.

Acknowledging and addressing these triggers can help avoid repeating past mistakes and contribute to a more peaceful and stable future.

◆ Strengthening the Ukrainian diaspora:
Active development and support of the Ukrainian diaspora can play a significant role in reinforcing ties with Ukraine. This includes supporting cultural and educational projects, and creating a network of support for Ukrainians abroad. These actions can also boost investment, tourism, and international cooperation.

ЦThese initiatives can help Ukraine not only address internal challenges but also significantly enhance its international image. It is important to understand that such changes require time and effort from the whole of society, yet they can lead to a more sustainable and prosperous future.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

To strengthen national identity and unity, several key areas should be prioritised:

◆ Uniqueness: Emphasising the individual uniqueness of citizens which, when combined, forms a universal national identity. This could become a form of "superpower" that allows Ukraine to act as a united front on the international stage.

◆ Transforming triggers into strength: Reframing historical and cultural triggers into a unifying national idea — a *Ukrainian Power* — which would turn past challenges into sources of pride and cohesion.

◆ Will for independence: Reinforcing the nation's will for independence by promoting active protection of sovereignty and autonomy in all aspects of national life.

◆ The role of the military, language and faith: Highlighting the army as the guardian of national security, the language as the foundation of cultural identity, and faith as a pillar of spiritual unity. These three elements can contribute to national consolidation and raise Ukraine's international standing.

◆ Developing a unifying idea: There is a pressing need to formulate and promote a unifying idea that connects Ukrainians across all regions and social groups. This idea should be rooted in shared values, history, and aspirations for the future.

V. Programmes and Projects:

Shaping the National Idea Programme:
Target audience: Ukrainians inside the country and abroad, ethnic Ukrainians, and emigrants aligned with Ukrainian ideology.
Objective: Unite Ukrainians around a common idea and promote *Ukrainian Studies* as a cultural trend.
Tasks: Identify the core strengths of the Ukrainian nation; Develop effective messages that reflect these strengths; Reframe existing emotional and historical triggers into powerful narratives that boost national pride and unity.
Strategic goal: Establish Ukraine as a powerful, successful, prosperous, intellectual leader with influence on global processes. Unite Ukrainians into a *Global Nation* for the next 1000 years, integrating the past, present, and future. Ensure every Ukrainian feels proud of their identity and carries this idea forward for generations.
To achieve these goals, it is crucial to employ all available communication tools, including media, education, cultural events, and collaboration with Ukrainian diaspora communities worldwide.
The messaging must be inclusive and reflect the diversity of Ukrainian society.

Vision: Education must shape the person of the future – not one for the past.

I. Current State:

At present, there are considerable gaps in Ukraine's education and professional development system, specifically:

◆ Lack of accessible professional development programmes for senior-level managers, which limits opportunities for leadership growth and international advancement.

◆ Absence of quality education in advocacy, making it difficult to train skilled lobbyists and defenders of civic interests.

◆ Lack of systemic education for changemakers, which prevents proper preparation of individuals capable of initiating and implementing meaningful reforms.

These shortcomings may significantly hinder the country's progress, as they restrict innovation and effective governance at all levels.

II. Participants' Perceptions:

Expressions like *It hurts me* and *Everything is in vain* reflect deep disappointment and frustration with the current state of affairs. This highlights serious dissatisfaction, especially regarding the lack of adequate educational and professional opportunities within the country.

III. Root Causes:

One cause of this discontent is the frequent change in national direction across politics, economics, and education, which leads to widespread uncertainty and instability.

There is also a noticeable lack of a clear long-term vision regarding national identity and the development of the citizen.

The unanswered question *What kind of Ukrainian do we envision in 15+ years?* illustrates the absence of clear goals for shaping civic identity and potential.

This void contributes to public anxiety and disillusionment, as citizens struggle to see the direction the country is headed and their role within it.

IV. What Needs to Be Done:

To address these issues and improve the educational sector, several critical actions are necessary:

◆ Evaluate *What came out of the New Ukrainian School (NUS)*
A comprehensive analysis of the NUS reform should be conducted to identify its successes and shortcomings. This will clarify which components were effective and which need to be revised.
Initiate a national conversation on *What's wrong with the teaching profession?*

◆ A broad dialogue should be started on the current state and future of teaching in Ukraine. The focus must extend beyond salaries to include professional training, working conditions, social standing, and public recognition of teachers.

These activities can help identify key problems in the education system and develop effective strategies to address them, contributing to improving the quality of education and increasing the prestige of the teaching profession in Ukraine.

V. Programmes and Projects:

◆ Development of a motivation system for schoolteachers and university educators. Design both public and private initiatives to boost motivation and job satisfaction within the teaching profession.

◆ Research initiative: *Why educators are indifferent to learners*. An investigation into why the education system fails to meet students' needs, followed by actionable recommendations for reform.

◆ Adapting the *Civil Society Home* platform model for educators. Implement successful practices from other sectors to improve performance and collaboration in the education sphere.

◆ Integration of professionals from other sectors into formal education. Involve experts from various fields at the national level to teach specialised courses, thereby expanding learning opportunities for students.

◆ Comprehensive campaign to improve the public image of teachers. Elevate the social standing of educators and promote positive perceptions of the profession throughout Ukrainian society.

◆ Enhanced parental and employer engagement. Create stronger links between schools, families, and employers to better prepare students for real-life challenges and employment.

◆ Establishment of a network of educational managers within institutions. Professionalise education management to raise the effectiveness and quality of school administration and instruction.

Implementing these programmes and initiatives can substantially improve the education system in Ukraine, enhance motivation among educators, and ensure higher-quality preparation for future generations.

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