



Image courtesy of Oleg Andreyev

# Ukraine's Other Army: Civil Society through the Lens of Citizen Finance and Volunteering

## Implications for the War, Democratization, and Reconstruction

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## Introduction and Purpose

The “other Ukrainian army,” a term borrowed from Anne Applebaum, to describe an organic interplay between Ukrainian civil society (CS) and the public (Applebaum, 2022). The term refers to a powerful loyal force supporting the humanitarian and military needs of the country for 8 years following the Russian Federation’s (RF’s) invasion of Ukraine in February 2014. With the RF’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, CS effectively mobilized its forces to face the biggest challenge of their lives—the total war of attrition against the Ukrainian people, their freedom, and their way of life. Emergent needs of the military scale-up and growing humanitarian crises, however, were not the only challenges that Ukrainian CS had to face. The international community’s support of Ukraine has been directly dependent on the country’s ability to maintain its democratic foundation. Thus, CS has been the conscience of Ukraine, providing checks and balances to governmental reforms and decisions, the role that it was expected to continue to play in the war-ravaged country. Almost 1 year since the start of the RF’s full-scale war, the other army managed to maintain this democratic foundation.

Although the state of Ukrainian military and the economy have been monitored in-depth, little attention has been paid to understanding the composition CS players and their role in wartime mobilization. The heroism of volunteers transporting strangers and animals from the zones of active fighting, the proliferation of fundraising efforts to purchase life-saving equipment, and protests on the streets of cities around the world inspired others to join the efforts to support Ukraine. Nevertheless, no serious attempt has been made to quantify the extent of the wartime mobilization of CS. To understand how Ukraine was able to withstand the RF’s total aggression while maintaining its democratic foundation and unity, one needs to understand the role of CS in wartime Ukraine and its relationship with the Ukrainian people.

The key objective of this report is to present the findings of RTI International’s study of the wartime response of Ukrainian CS to inform the international community and the Ukrainian government of efforts to support Ukrainian statehood and defense capabilities.

## Seeds of Ukrainian Volunteering

The seeds of the unique volunteer movement in Ukraine were planted during tumultuous times of the Orange Revolution in 2004 when the Ukrainian people took to the streets to protest Russia’s meddling in Ukraine’s governance and to steer the country towards more democratic future (Taras Kuzio, 2023). As the Ukrainian people protested rigged elections and the poisoning of the winning candidate Yushenko, they asserted themselves as a civic society and charted the course towards more democratic Ukraine. At the same time, Russia doubled down on propaganda culminating in the creation of the Russia Today (RT) that would later play a crucial role in the U.S. presidential elections in 2016. During Euromaidan in winter of 2013 that was launched on the “Maidan,” Kyiv’s central square, and spread to the rest of the country, the word “volunteer” took on very special meaning in the Ukrainian context. Volunteers were the people who were protesters or who helped the protestors while risking their lives in the

Revolution of Dignity that followed. These volunteer-protestors played a key role in the events that followed and inspired significant following. They were one of the first to volunteer to fight against Russia backed separatists in Donbas and to form new CS groups that supported veterans, the military, and people affected by the RF's invasion. These efforts also spearheaded the development of investigative journalism and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and partnerships inside and outside the country and deepened the country's bench of motivated CS leaders.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, these developments were the cornerstone of the remarkable scale-up of the country's military crowdfunding and humanitarian relief efforts in response to the RF's full-scale attack exactly 8 years after its 2014 invasion.

The lack of understanding of this foundational path of Ukrainian society was one of the biggest miscalculations by Putin's regime. For the Ukrainian people, "Euromaidan" was the point of no return from Russia's colonial sphere of influence. To the rest of the world, the extent to which people were united by this idea became apparent only in the weeks following the full-scale invasion by the RF in 2022. Moreover, the insufficient understanding of the social context hindered accurate reporting and interpretation of the events leading up to the 2022 tragedy, specifically, the RF's annexation of Crimea and its support for separatists in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions. A more in-depth understanding of Ukrainian CS is critical.

## Wartime Scale-up of Civil Society

The actions of the Ukrainian people in the first days of the full-scale invasion defined the nature of the war and its geopolitical implications. While the international community was still recovering from the shock of the invasion and miscalculating Ukraine's ability to defend itself, CS had rapidly mobilized its existing logistics and networks to address the immediate humanitarian needs and critical gaps in military and medical supplies. As the United Kingdom Humanitarian Innovation Hub (2022) research in the early stage of the war demonstrates, "for the first six weeks post-invasion, virtually all humanitarian aid inside Ukraine was organized and implemented by local actors." In this report, the term "local" is defined broadly. Although the people on the ground took the most risks and were the initiators for these efforts, many formal and informal groups had networks of committed international partners; have been led by the active members of the Ukrainian diaspora; or received support from international humanitarian relief organizations in the years preceding the RF's full-scale aggression.

## Study Goals

The primary goal of RTI's study was to measure the magnitude of the CS response to the full-scale invasion and understand the composition of players that the Ukrainian people trust the most.

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<sup>1</sup> The remnants of these pre-war efforts received the world's recognition when three NGOs that started in response to Russia's invasion in 2014—Razom, Come Back Alive, and Prytula Foundation—went on to receive recognition by the U.S. Congress for their support of the Ukrainian military (Razom, 2022). In addition, the Center for Civil Liberties became one of the 2022 Nobel Prize winners for its efforts in documenting egregious violations of human rights by the Russian Armed Forces and Russia's nonmilitary entities that have been imposing systematic Russification on the occupied territories and engaging in mass-scale human trafficking of Ukrainian children.

One central element related to the health of a democratic society is the availability of a vibrant CS. The traditional approaches to assess a country's CS may not be appropriate for a wartime situation when an entire society is in a state of emergency. NGOs and other groups are likely to direct all efforts to the continuous emergency response and outreach to partners and donors. Thus, people-centric orientation were the guiding principles of RTI's data collection approach.

RTI's researchers selected giving behavior as a focal point of this study, in a novel approach to identifying the grassroots strength and public trust in CS organizations. One of the perennial challenges of international actors seeking to support CS is identifying effective organizations with solid local support. CS capacity building is often prone to "projectization," in which resources are given to organizations that are most efficient at producing project proposals that primarily appeal to donors, rather than those organizations most capable of delivering what the local public needs most. By tracking where Ukrainians and supporters of Ukraine directed their own money, this study sheds light on an underappreciated and less understood aspect of local grassroots CS: getting direct feedback from Ukrainian communities on awareness, reputation, and trust of leading CS actors. This approach also allowed us to expand what is known about how civically engaged Ukrainians have responded to the current conflict through their charitable giving and other activities such as volunteering and organizing.

## Study Design

We deployed an anonymous survey through a dissemination campaign on social media targeting Ukrainians and unaffiliated "friends of Ukraine." Our approach "followed the people," and we asked how ordinary individuals supported Ukraine and what specific organizations, groups, and individuals they donated their money to since February 24, 2022. The data was collected in September 2022. Respondents were incentivized by matching their individual complete responses to a \$5 charitable donation to one of seven Ukrainian-led NGOs. The NGO with the most votes won the total amount. The final data set included 971 Ukrainians: 15% were internally displaced, 32% were living as refugees, and the majority, 53%, remained at their homes as of September 2022 (Table 1). Ukraine-based respondents (68% of the sample) came from across Ukraine, encompassing all oblasts except the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

**Table 1.** Survey Respondents

Type/Location	Ukraine	Europe	USA or Canada	Other Location	Total
<b>Ukrainian National</b>	660 <sup>a</sup>	296 <sup>b</sup>	10	6	971
<b>Ukrainian Diaspora</b>	0	14	33	4	51
<b>Friends of Ukraine</b>	5	26	46 <sup>c</sup>	6	83
<b>Total (location)</b>	665	336	89	16	1,105

<sup>a</sup> Out of 660 Ukrainian respondents located in Ukraine, 150 (23%) respondents had been displaced internally by the war that started in 2014.

<sup>b</sup> Of 296 refugee respondents currently located in Europe, 216 (73%) were in Poland.

<sup>c</sup> Friends of Ukraine represents respondents in the United States who were concentrated in Washington state, North Carolina, Texas, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC.

## Magnitude of Support

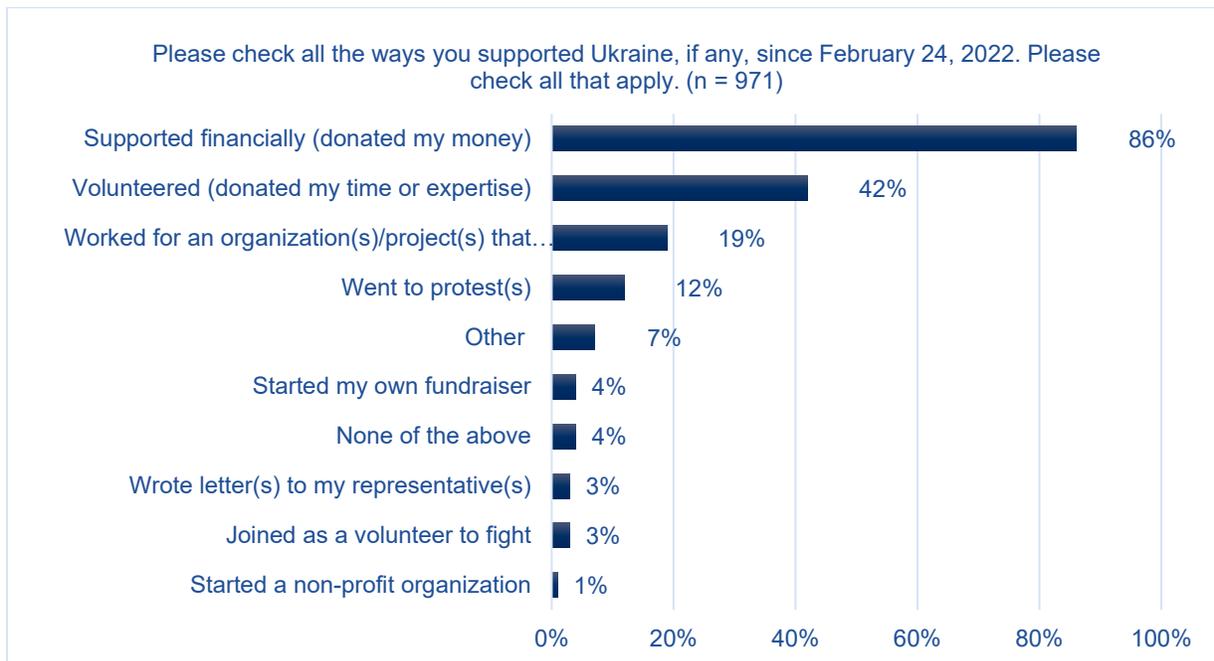
### Takeaways

This study provides evidence for the magnitude of Ukrainian SC's mobilization where 86% donated their money and 42% volunteered to support Ukraine. An average Ukrainian donated more than monthly and volunteered about 9 hours a week since February 24, 2022.

- Differences in frequency of donations and hours of volunteering among Ukrainians, the diaspora, and friends were as follows:
  - Ukrainians and the diaspora donated more frequently than friends.
  - Friends were more likely to be onetime donors.
  - An average donation by the diaspora and friends was 4 times larger than of Ukrainians.
- Results highlight the importance of the diaspora in providing financial and awareness support. The Ukrainian diaspora (96%) showed the highest level of financial support when compared with Ukrainian nationals (86%) and friends (77%). Also, 73% of the diaspora reported protesting, which is 3 times higher than proportion of friends and Ukrainian refugees.
- Responses from refugees, internally displaced persons, and those Ukrainians who stayed at home show unity in the way they supported their country despite different circumstances.

To measure the scale of support, the first question of the survey intended to capture the diversity of all possible ways people supported Ukraine. It was also important for respondents to tell their unique stories about how they helped Ukraine or, as Ukrainians say, “each front is important.” Figure 1 provides the survey question and its results for Ukrainians.

**Figure 1.** Ways Ukrainians Supported Ukraine



The data show that an overwhelming number of the Ukrainians, or 86%, supported Ukraine financially (Figure 1). The second most common way people supported Ukraine was by volunteering: 42% donated their time or expertise to support Ukraine.

Responses to the “other” category (n = 61, or 7%) revealed a few more common ways that Ukrainians supported their country, in addition to the predetermined list of options, and included:

- Joining the “IT Army” to fight Russian propaganda in the digital space
- Identifying and reporting about enemy activities
- Purchasing military bonds
- Donating blood
- Supporting refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) (in different ways)
- Launching fundraising campaigns and collecting items (e.g., food, clothing, equipment) for IDPs or military/territorial defense forces
- Volunteering to fight
- Driving people to safety and offering humanitarian help to those in need
- Buying clothes or necessities to give family members or friends who joined the military
- Donating expertise or a trade in exchange for donations to the Armed Forces

The average number of times a typical Ukrainian respondent donated money was 9 times between February and September 2022, or more than monthly. Specific to intensity, the giving behavior of the majority of respondents was continuous and was not limited to one specific organization. More than half of respondents (60%) donated money to more than one type of organization, and almost half (48%) donated more often than once a month since the full-scale invasion. The typical self-reported donation amount ranged from \$1 to \$10,000 USD.

## Comparison between Ukrainians, the Diaspora, and Friends

The comparison between Ukrainians (n = 971) and a small sample of the diaspora (n = 51) and friends (n = 83) respondents revealed some differences between the groups. A higher proportion of respondents representing the diaspora reported participating in the following activities than the other two groups: a) 73% went to protests (12% Ukrainians, 28% friends), b) 71% volunteered (42% Ukrainians, 45% friends), and c) 96% donated money (86% Ukrainians, 77% friends).

Friends selected “other” as the response option to the survey question listed in Figure 1 in larger numbers (41%) than the other two groups (7% Ukrainians, 14% diaspora).<sup>2</sup> Their open-ended comments revealed the three most common ways people who are not Ukrainian or members of the diaspora supported Ukraine: a) donated things or food, b) hosted Ukrainian family(ies) in their home, and c) shared information on social media or expressed publicly their support for Ukraine. Specific to volunteering behavior, the average Ukrainian volunteered 9 hours a week to support Ukraine. Comparatively, a typical member of the diaspora volunteered 5 hours a week, and a typical friend volunteered 6 hours a week.

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<sup>2</sup> The survey instrument was primarily tailored to the Ukrainian audience.

## Comparison between Ukrainians in Ukraine, Refugees, and IDPs

In terms of type of support, we found no large differences between different types of Ukrainians, those who stayed in their homes (n = 511), IDPs (n = 150), and refugees (n = 310). The slight differences between the groups demonstrated the various ways people helped Ukraine appropriate to their circumstances. For example, refugees were less likely to volunteer than IDPs and Ukrainians who remained at home: 37% of refugees volunteered compared with 50% of IDPs and 42% of Ukrainians who remained at home. On the other hand, refugees were more likely to attend protests (24%) than Ukrainians who remained at home (5%) and IDPs (15%) to raise awareness about the war in the communities that provided support.

## Comparison between Ukrainians in Different Country's Regions

RTI also investigated for any difference in giving and volunteering behavior of Ukrainians in different regions (Central, West, East, and South) at the time of the study. RTI sample (n = 660 respondents in Ukraine) was not evenly distributed with only 12 responses (2%) from the East (Table 2). Thus, we compared the findings to the demographically representative data collected during the same time by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS). RTI sample was also skewed towards the Central region (60%) in comparison with KIIS sample (43%).

No difference between RTI and KIIS results was found. The RTI data showed that people from the West and Central region supported Ukraine financially in high proportions at 83% and 87% respectively with slightly lower numbers in the South (79%). The percentages from KIIS data were similar. Specific to respondents in the East, KIIS data showed that 64% donated their money to support Ukraine which is remarkable considering their difficult circumstances. RTI sub-sample of respondents from the East was too small to be used for interpretation. The proportions of people in different regions who volunteered were slightly larger for KIIS sample and did not differ significantly between the regions.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1.** Results on Giving and Volunteering for RTI and KIIS Sample

Region/Sample	RTI (n = 660)			KIIS (n = 1,257)		
	Proportion of sample	Percent donated	Percent volunteered	Proportion of sample	Percent donated	Proportion volunteered
<b>West</b>	12%	83%	50%	17%	85%	56%
<b>Central</b>	60%	87%	46%	43%	84%	52%
<b>East</b>	2%	92%	42%	17%	64%	40%
<b>South</b>	27%	79%	35%	23%	74%	52%

We also asked the respondents what oblasts respondents supported with their donations. The data show that donations targeted oblasts that that were hit particularly hard by the RF including

<sup>3</sup> Note, data was collected at a time when a large proportion of the Ukrainian population relocated to the Western part of the country largely from the East and South of Ukraine and that RTI sample included 150 responses from IDPs.

Sumska, Khersonska, Zhytomyrska each at 6%, Kharkivska (9%), Kyivska (11%), and Mykolaivska (12%). Half of Ukrainians indicated that their support “was not specific to a region.”

## Civil Society through the Lens of Citizen Finance

### Takeaways

#### Citizen Finance

- Ukrainians have “skin in the game” in defending their country’s sovereignty and freedom. The survey data show nearly universal support for the military: at least 79% supported the Armed Forces of Ukraine with their own money.
- Ukrainians and the government created diverse mechanisms to support the military, the proof of what is known as the first large-scale “crowdfunded war effort.”

#### Composition of Civil Society

- Opinion leaders that Ukrainians trust their money with were highly represented (n = 40).
- The internal capacity of established NGOs helped them raise money and scale up in other ways to provide needed emergency response.
- NGOs and informal groups have active social media presences and a large pool of followers that help them be more approachable and trustworthy.

#### Trust

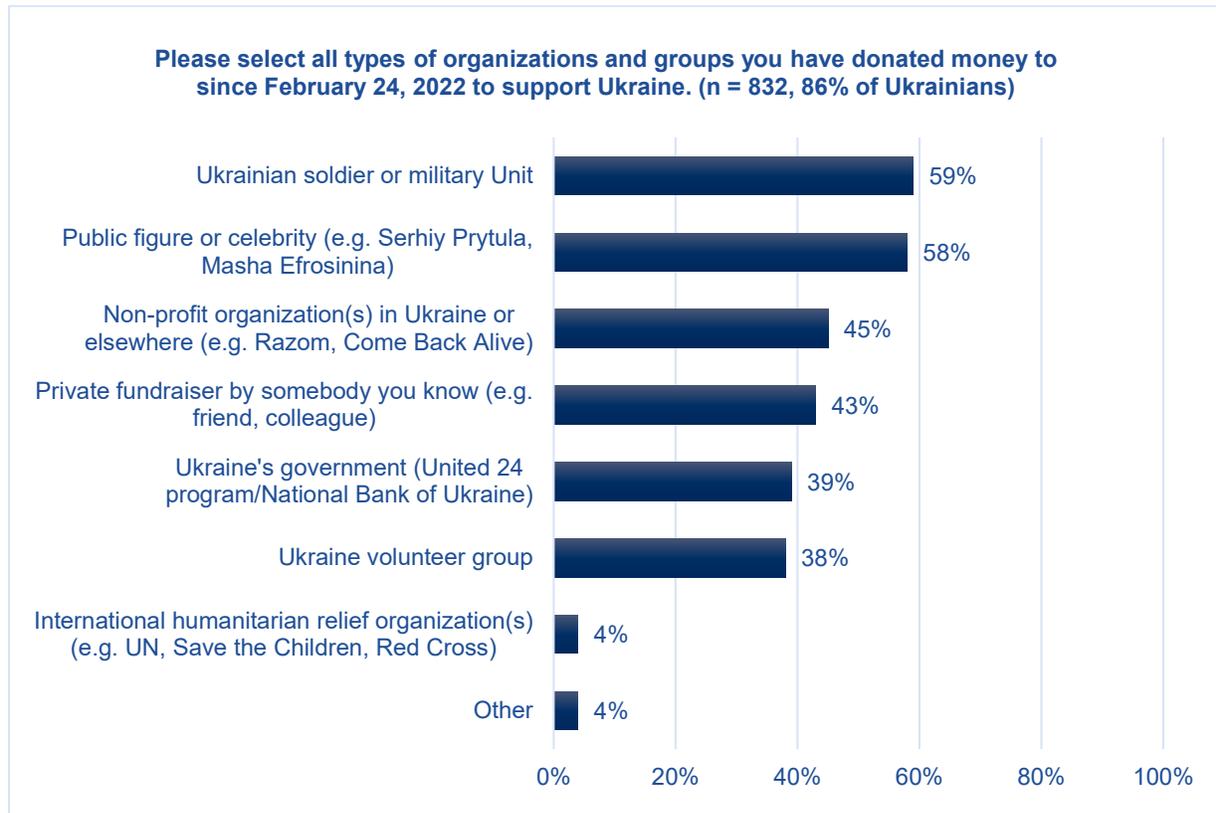
- The extensive giving behavior of Ukrainians through diverse sources demonstrates high trust in CS and the country’s military. Social media multiplies the effect of trust.

Figure 2 demonstrates different organizations Ukrainians have been supporting. The top 3 types of sources Ukrainians donated their money to were soldiers or military units (59%), public figures (58%), and NGOs (45%). Analysis of the data on the organizations revealed that these three categories represent different ways the Ukrainian people have been supporting Ukraine’s Armed Forces.

For example, of the Ukrainians who donated to a public figure or celebrity, 95% supported a celebrity volunteer, Serhiy Prytula (see case study page for more information). Since February 24, 2022, Prytula has led almost monthly crowdfunding campaigns, raising large sums of money for the military. Probably the most well-known campaign was “The People’s Bayraktar.” During the campaign that lasted 3 days, Ukrainians raised \$16 million USD to purchase three Turkish drones. The CEO of the company making the drones was so touched by the Ukrainian people’s devotion that he offered the drones for free. According to Prytula’s foundation’s official website, the main source of the foundation’s donations comes from within Ukraine, indicating the seriousness of Ukrainians’ commitment to their country’s sovereignty during a time of great instability in their personal lives. It is unclear what portion of support in these crowdfunding campaigns came from individuals or businesses.

From almost half of the Ukrainians (45%) who supported NGOs, 93% supported Come Back Alive, a veteran-led organization supporting active military and veterans since the 2014 invasion. After February 2022, Come Back Alive shifted its wartime efforts to primarily focus on supporting the military. The official governmental platform, United 24, was supported by 39% of respondents with a majority supporting its defense line of work.

**Figure 2.** Civil Society Players Ukrainians Supported



In sum, at least 79% of respondents supported the Ukrainian military by donating to at least one of four sources (directly to a military unit, Serhiy Prytula, Come Back Alive, and United 24).

## Composition of Civil Society

The respondents to the survey were asked to choose or provide the names of organizations and public figures following their answers to the question listed in Figure 2. The analysis of the data generated by responses from all three groups, Ukrainians, the diaspora, and friends, provides insights about the general landscape of the CS groups. The data generated a list consisting of 77 unique organizations and 40 unique individuals. Background information on the organizations revealed the following:

- More than two-thirds, or 70%, of the organizations supported were NGOs.
- Of the unique 77 organizations, 16% were based outside Ukraine, primary in the USA.

- At least 40% of these organizations have a clearly defined focus on defense efforts.
- About 22% of these NGOs started in 2022.
- Majority of 78% of organizations that started before 2022, started in the years following the RF's invasion of Ukraine in 2014.

Based on the frequency of donations, the final list of the organizations and individuals the respondents donated their money to can be summarized into three groups: one with the highest frequency of donations; medium frequency; and low frequency. The three are provided below with examples.

- Highest frequency: military unit, public figure supporting military fundraisers, local and diaspora-led NGOs.

In addition to Serhiy Prytula, the other public figures that Ukrainians donate to the most include: Serhiy Sternenko (activist and blogger), Ihor Lachenkov (blogger), Valeriy Markus (veteran, author), Roman Donik (long-time volunteer, started Russian Speaking National Association in Ukraine). Come Back Alive led the way among NGOs, followed by California-based United Help Ukraine and New York City's Razom that have more humanitarian and advocacy focus respectively. Other NGOs mentioned by multiple respondents included: Voices of Children, Sprava Hromad, Station Kharkiv, Nova Ukraine, and Sunflower of Peace.

- Medium frequency of donations: friends or family, volunteer groups and NGOs local to a region or city, diaspora-led groups, and church groups.

Most volunteer groups that Ukrainians donated money to were local to a given region, city or a town. Some groups had wider reach and included Hospitallers Medical Battalion and Zgraya (Kyiv-based volunteer group, that provides support in other regions of Ukraine). Specific to the groups outside Ukraine, those were community groups specific to states or countries such as Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas in the United States. Respondents also mentioned well-established organizations of the Ukrainian diaspora such as the Ukrainian National Women's League of North America and the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Ukraine.

- Low frequency of donations: political figures, international NGOs, and businesses.

World Central Kitchen and Ukrainian Red Cross were the two international organizations that were mentioned by more than one respondent. Some Ukrainians mentioned using DIIA, governmental administrative platform, and Nova Poshta, a private Ukrainian postal service and courier company, as the way to support Ukraine.



“Ukraine’s victory is also my duty, so I want to support people fighting on different fronts to the best of my ability.”

—Ukrainian Respondent

## Who is Serhiy Prytula and his foundation and what does Come Back Alive do?

Serhiy Prytula and Come Back Alive are the most used platforms for Ukrainians to donate their money for the military besides the Ukrainian President's United 24 program. Serhiy Prytula is a volunteer and activist known for fundraising to support the Ukrainian military since the RF's invasion in 2014. His foundation has raised about USD 108 million since February 24, 2022. (Ukrainska Pravda, 2023). Come Back Alive is a veteran-led organization that also launched as a response to the 2014 invasion to support active military and veterans of the Donbas war.

Since the full-scale invasion, Come Back Alive and Prytula Foundation have executed dozens of large-scale fundraising campaigns to support military. In the process, they also worked with each other and with the Ukraine's Armed Forces, and created new processes to meet faster the needs of specific military units.



Picture 1: Serhiy Prytula with strangers, July 12, 2022.



Picture 2: Taras Chmut, the head of Come Back Alive is shaking hands with CEO of Bayraktar company.

### Fundraising milestones by the Serhiy Prytula Foundation in 2022:

- May: Auction of Maria Prymachenko's painting "Flowers grew near the fourth block" or the Chernobyl nuclear reactor (raised in USD, \$500,000)
- May: Ukraine's Eurovision trophy & hat (\$900,000)
- June: "People's Bayraktar" (\$16 million in 3 days)
- July: 10 y.o. checkers world champion raised money by playing with strangers (\$600)
- August: Prytula announced the decision of buying a satellite service for Ukraine's intelligence using the money from the People's Bayraktar fundraiser.
- October: "pomsta" ("revenge") fundraiser in response to October 10 attack (\$9 million)

## Trust

This study provides evidence of ongoing strengthening of Ukraine's democratic society. Despite the fears and reports about people illegitimately trying to take money, 99% of participants did not regret donating money to organizations and individuals they indicated in the earlier questions of the survey. A high level of trust in CS and the government was made evident by the sustainable nature of giving behavior, given that most Ukrainians (86%) and the diaspora (96%) made repeated donations since February 24, 2022.

Personal connections play an important role in the level of trust of Ukrainians. Of the six types of organizations Ukrainians donated to the most, three represent people they know or informal organizations: the top type of organization was a soldier or military unit (59%), the fourth most selected type was private fundraisers started by someone respondents know (43%), and the sixth most selected type was volunteer groups (38%). This finding is consistent with a study conducted in 2021 on the giving behavior of Ukrainians (Zagoriy Foundation, 2021). This study revealed that Ukrainians tend to trust individuals and their friends and family rather than institutions. However, Ukrainians may show growing trust in institutions given that close to half of the respondents donated to NGOs (45%) and the Ukrainian government (39%). Trust in public figures demonstrated by 58% of respondents indicates that opinion leaders across the political spectrum and professional affiliations are important.

Finally, social media is an important factor that magnifies the network effect of personal connections. The top 2 reasons that Ukrainians selected as the main reason they supported a given group were following them on social media (65%) and hearing good things about them from a family or friend (50%). The two other highest chosen reasons were shared by 28% of respondents each and were conducting their own research on the group and knowing someone working or volunteering at a particular group or organization.



“The war in my dear native Ukraine, the suffering of people. I don't know how it is possible to remain aloof when people all around are suffering from the war crimes of the Russians.”

—Ukrainian Respondent

## Volunteering Before and After the War

### Takeaways

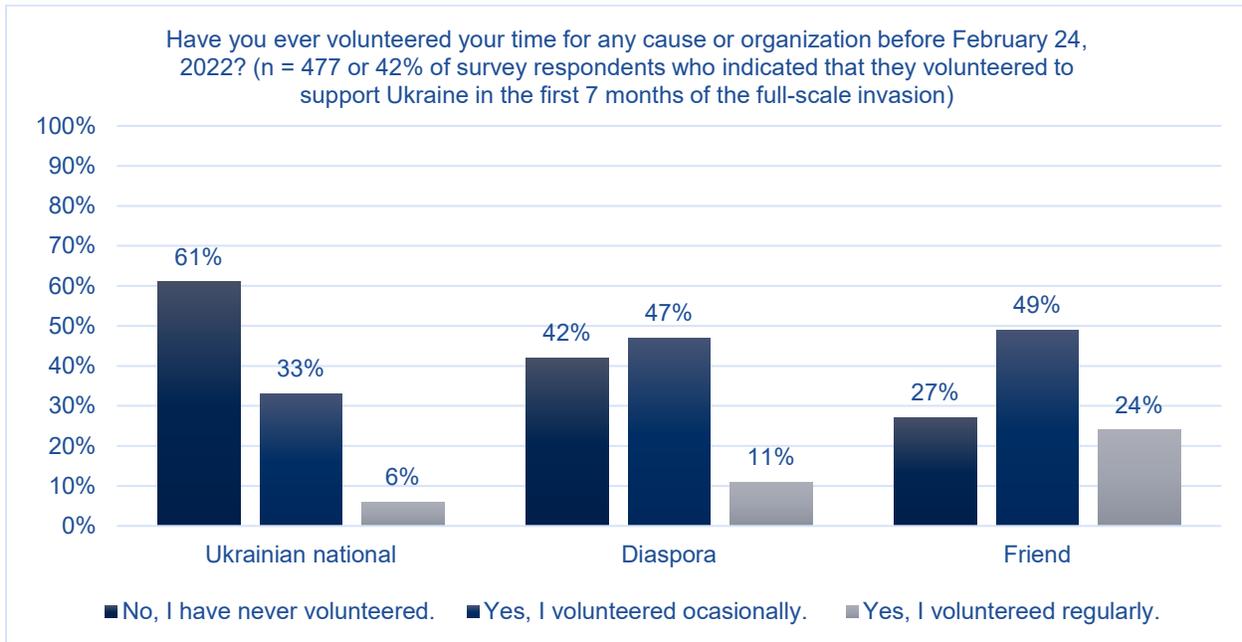
- More than half of the Ukrainian respondents who reported volunteering to support Ukraine after the full-scale invasion volunteered for the first time in their lives.
- Compared with the higher number of diaspora and friend volunteers who volunteered in the past, the proportion of the Ukrainian people volunteering is indicative of an acceleration of the democratic culture change with more people taking an active part in civic engagement.

One of the most significant shifts in Ukrainian society has been the growing culture of volunteering. Ukrainians use the word “volunteer” with the highest respect as it goes back to the Revolution of Dignity. If it were not for the volunteers who stayed day and night on the central square of Kyiv and others who supported them by providing food and water and protecting them from the police, a small group of student protesters would not have morphed into a revolution (Jarymowycz, 2019; Matychak, 2019). Many of the same people who took part in the Revolution of Dignity volunteered to fight in the war in Donbas against Russian-backed separatists. Others have gone on to take public service positions to push for progressive reforms or form new institutions for strengthening Ukrainian democracy and defense capacity. For example, Come Back Alive, Razom, Nova Ukraine, and many other NGOs have their roots in the Revolution of Dignity, similarly to the roots of the Ukrainian investigative journalism and human rights groups.

Volunteering, however, has not been the mainstream in the Ukrainian society. In 2011, Ukraine was one of the world’s lowest ranked in giving and volunteering at 105<sup>th</sup> place out of 145 countries according to the World Giving Index (Charities Aid Foundation, 2022). Only 5% of the population reported volunteering. By 2015, Ukraine moved to 90<sup>th</sup> out of 139 countries. Early in 2022, following the consequences of the pandemic and increased Russian threats, Ukraine has moved to the top 10 most giving countries where 75% would help strangers, 47% would donate money, and 24% would volunteer in the last month.

To understand the changes in Ukrainians’ volunteering behavior, we asked the respondents about their past experience with volunteering. The RTI data indicate that from the total sample of Ukrainians, 70% had never volunteered, 26% had volunteered occasionally, and 4% volunteered regularly before February 24, 2022 (n = 897). Specific to 42% of Ukrainians (n = 477) who indicated volunteering to support Ukraine *after* February 24, 2022, 61% had never volunteered *before* February 24, 2022 (see Figure 3). In other words, every second person who volunteered to support Ukraine in 2022 was volunteering for the first time.

Figure 3 provides the responses of people who selected “volunteered” as one of the ways they supported Ukraine in 2022 and compares them among the three groups: Ukrainians (n = 404), the diaspora (n = 36), and friends (n = 37). Higher proportions of the diaspora and friends were engaged in volunteering before the war as they represent advanced democracies with historically high levels of civic engagement and clearer opportunities for volunteers.

**Figure 3.** Volunteering Behavior Before February 24, 2022 by Respondent Type

## Summary

This report describes the results of RTI's survey of giving behavior for Ukraine. The survey demonstrates a committed CS that has greatly escalated its activity to support the Ukrainian state in a time of war. Survey respondents, especially Ukrainians and the Ukrainian diaspora, have remained engaged through multiple different activities. Donors appear to be strategic in their choices; they frequently donate money to several different organizations, not favoring one cause or one action over another.

Ukrainian donors are highly motivated, organized, and actively supporting the Ukrainian government, military, and NGOs. Not limiting their participation to financial contributions alone, donors also volunteered in high numbers and contributed in various other ways such as donating goods and professional services.

By focusing on donors, this study reveals an important dimension of Ukraine's response to the Russian invasion and the progress of Ukraine's democracy going back farther in time. CS is a keystone of democracy, a mechanism by which individual citizens can unite around a common goal to solve problems together without the support (or interference) of the government. CS requires freedom of association and collective action; because it is community based, it is well positioned to rapidly and organically respond to issues at the community level. Ukraine's highly engaged and well-organized CS is an achievement years in the making and also demonstrates how quickly efforts can be scaled up in a time of need.

## Implications

### Methodological approach

The study approach to “follow the people” is a unique way of monitoring any ongoing situation and can be replicated. International donors struggle to measure CS capacity not only in situations of conflict, but also in transitional states or authoritarian states where CS is not allowed to operate in the open. Efforts to encourage and assist CS in these contexts are limited by a lack of knowledge of local grassroots support. Survey research is a critical window into how the public views CS, the reach of organizations at the community level, the organizations people trust, and the ways people participate in CS. This research adds a new dimension to our understanding of CS and how to gauge its effectiveness, which is a critical question for development agencies and governments worldwide.

### Implications of Balancing Military and Humanitarian Support

In addition to enormous humanitarian efforts by Ukrainians, as indicated by the United Kingdom Humanitarian Innovation Hub (2022), this study highlights that the scale of Ukrainians’ support for the military may have surpassed local humanitarian efforts.

After a full year of total aggression by the RF, the country has been fully transformed and defense took the foremost priority. Ukraine has built a strong infrastructure to withstand the country-wide missile strikes by the RF and survive the winter of 2022-2023 and brutal Russian attacks energy infrastructure. One of the striking changes is the rise in number of veterans and their status in the society. According to the Sociological Group “Rating,” the number of veterans has increased 5 times since the full-scale invasion (Rating, January 2023) increasing the status of this population. While nearly all Ukrainians have high trust in the military right now (95%) and almost half (47%) think positively about veterans running for political office, the attitudes may shift when the war is over.

CS is already playing an important role in balancing these emergent priorities. For example, a new advocacy group called “Pryncyp” (“principle”) has been launched in February 2023 to help wounded veterans who are seeking treatment to navigate the governmental bureaucracy. The founder of this platform is Masi Nayyem, the brother of Mustafa Nayyem, a journalist whose’ Facebook post initiated the Euromaidan protests in 2013 as he called for people to get out and rally against the government. Like most Ukrainian initiatives, the group has a formal page on different social media platforms to engage its following and promote transparency.<sup>4</sup>

To support Ukraine, the Ukrainian government and the international community needs to be in tune with these societal changes and support the dynamic interplay of institutions, systems, and leaders across time.

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<sup>4</sup> Facebook page of the advocacy group Pryncyp: <https://www.facebook.com/pryncyp.org>

## Implications for Reconstruction and Democratization

Ukraine's CS is a pillar of its response to conflict. Although it is not possible to foresee a clear end to the current conflict, CS organizations will be essential to the continued war effort and to the post-war recovery. The key element to the success in both will be the Ukrainians' ability to keep the country on its democratic trajectory. Organizations forged in the hardest of conditions will emerge stronger and more effective, and it is important to continue to research and document their role to better assist the Ukrainian people in their struggle for peace and democracy. The pliable nature of CS and enabling mechanisms, such as a digitalization of services and communication infrastructure, made it possible for Ukrainians to unite and build bridges, and, when appropriate, create new social structures and institutions, all key to the healthy democracy. Supporting initiatives that promote cross-structural connections, technical and social, that bring more cohesiveness and build internal capacity of the groups, organizations, and institutions is key.

In sum, CS has been a constant that has kept Ukraine on its developmental course during the unstable period of pre-war reforms and now during the country's full-scale wartime effort. Therefore, it will be a critical part of Ukraine's reconstruction and modernization. As Andrii Dligach, co-founder of Center for Economic Recovery in Ukraine, said in a discussion organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies as part of Ukraine Economic Reconstruction Commission, CS needs to be the third part of Ukraine's reconstruction triangle, in addition to the Ukrainian government and the international community.

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## Appendix A: Methodology

RTI International implemented the Ukraine Giving Survey to understand how Ukrainians have supported civil society through financial donations and other activities since February 2022 and the expansion of war with Russia. The self-administered web survey included a sample of 1,105 respondents, among them 971 Ukrainian nationals (including Ukrainian residents, IDPs, and refugees), 51 Ukrainian diaspora, and 83 non-Ukrainian nationals, or “friends of Ukraine.” Data were collected from September 2 to September 27, 2022. RTI’s Technical Lead collaborated with a team of advisers on the questionnaire design and oversaw the implementation of fieldwork. The survey instrument, the study’s implementation and relevant materials were approved by the RTI’s Institutional Review Board.

### Sampling and Recruitment

The Ukraine Giving Survey was designed as a cross-sectional web survey using a non-probability opt-in panel. The target population was defined as adults ages 18 and over who have donated money or otherwise contributed to support Ukraine since the Russian invasion started in February 24, 2022. Respondents were recruited through real-time sampling, also known as “river” sampling. Links to the online survey were placed on webpages and social media groups that are regularly used by the target population, including Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram, and also distributed via email to contact lists generated by Ukrainian civil society and donor networks. Upon completing the survey, respondents were provided with a shareable link that could be posted to social media or shared directly with other potential respondents.

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 17 total questions, including two open-ended questions. The survey was available to respondents in both Ukrainian and English. The questionnaire underwent two rounds of testing with small groups of potential respondents in both languages.

The questionnaire included two demographic questions in which respondents were asked their nationality and residential status (e.g. resident national, Ukrainian diaspora, internally displaced person, refugee, or other), and current location. The substantive questions covered respondents’ donation history in support of Ukraine, motivations for giving, recipients of donations, participation in other civic activities, and attitudes regarding the experience of donating money to support Ukraine. The average survey duration was approximately 10 minutes.

### Review and Programming of the Questionnaire

RTI survey researchers and civil society technical advisers conducted a review of the draft questionnaire and provided feedback on the questionnaire content and skip logic. RTI programmed the survey in Alchemer, an online survey platform. Once the survey was programmed, it was tested for functionality in English and Ukrainian, both by RTI staff and Ukrainian respondents. RTI reviewed the test data to determine if there were any issues with

instrument routing or administration. The survey skip logic was updated and questions revised based on feedback from the testers.

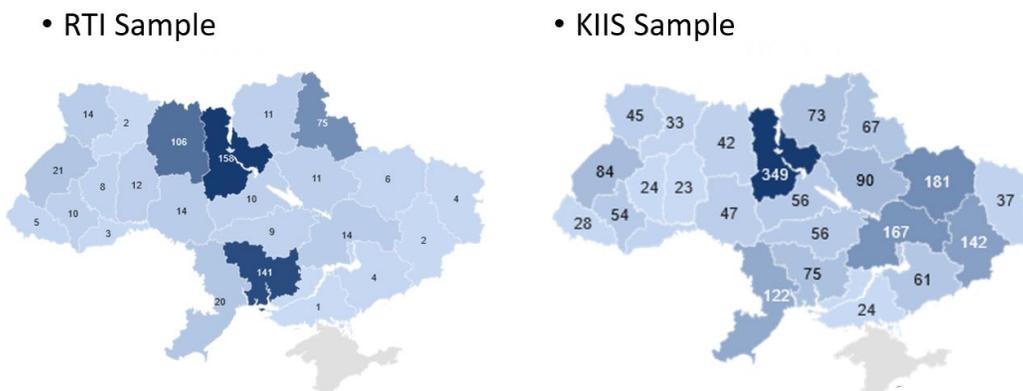
## Survey Implementation

The survey was disseminated to respondents starting on September 2, 2022. RTI created a study page on Facebook to inform potential participants about the study, RTI International and objectives of this research in an effort to bring more transparency and help with the dissemination.<sup>5</sup> A link to the survey platform was first posted to Facebook groups likely to be frequented by the target population, and emailed to distribution lists of civil society members, donors, or volunteers maintained by international and Ukrainian NGOs. The link was later distributed through Telegram groups, and then through ads placed on Telegram targeting Ukrainian users. Data was collected from September 2 to 27, 2022.

Participation in the survey was anonymous and confidential. To prevent interference in the data collection, respondents had to correctly answer a CAPTCHA test.

While the survey was open to everyone, the efforts to target the survey respondents on social media were focused on the Ukrainian nationals to meet the primary objectives of the study. Given the large size of the country and the regions being attacked by Russia with different intensities of the missiles strikes, it was important to have a geographically representative sample of the Ukrainian population. Since RTI survey was anonymous and did not collect any demographic information, the team leveraged the Omnibus survey service by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology to compare responses to RTI study's two main questions to the answers from demographically representative sample of 2,000 Ukrainians in Ukraine surveyed via phone interviews by KIIS staff during two-week period in September 2022. Responses to the KIIS survey questions were compared to RTI's online sample, and no significant differences were observed.

**Figure A-1.** Geographic Distribution of the RTI and KIIS Survey Samples

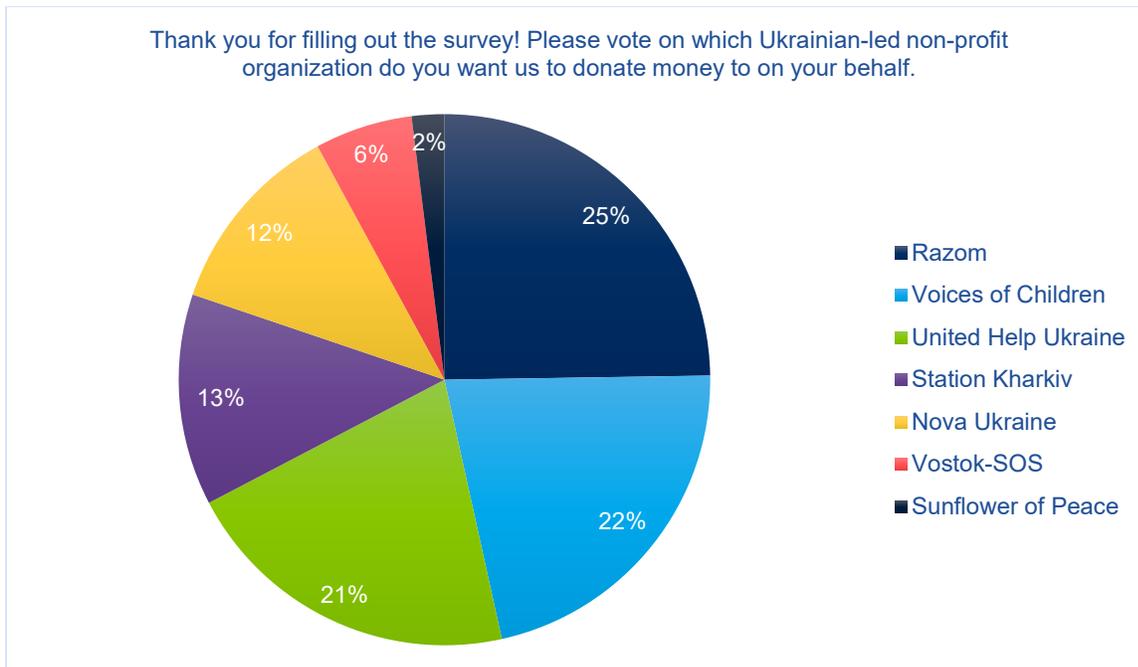


<sup>5</sup> The study page on Facebook is located at: <https://www.facebook.com/UAGivingSurvey>

## Incentive

As an incentive to participate, survey respondents were invited to vote for one of seven Ukrainian-led NGOs vetted by RTI to nominate for a charitable donation of \$5 for every completed questionnaire (see Figure A-2 for the names of NGOs). This incentive allowed respondents to raise money for a group they support by taking the survey, and as a proxy measure of public confidence in the seven NGOs selected by RTI. The goal of 500 complete responses was met which allowed to meet the maximum donation amount set by RTI or \$2,500. Razom, one of the most well-known NGOs associated with supporting Ukraine, has won the nomination by a small margin, and received the charitable donation.

**Figure A-2.** Choice for the Charitable Donation by Respondents to the RTI Survey



## Data Cleaning and Quality Control

RTI conducted quality checks on all completed questionnaires. RTI produced translations of all open-ended responses and coded the responses into the available response categories when appropriate. Back-coding occurred for all the responses that aligned with the response categories provided in the questionnaire. This included standardizing names of organizations listed by respondents as donation recipients.

The primary mechanisms for data quality control were data review and survey implementation oversight. During fieldwork RTI monitored quality metrics including overall interview length, interview initiation time, and review of open-ended responses.