

# OUTRIGHT'S UKRAINE LGBTIQ EMERGENCY FUND IMPACT UPDATE ONE YEAR ON February 2023

Within hours of Russia's assault on Ukraine in February 2022, Outright International began mobilizing support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) groups across the country as our partners reached out to us for help. In times of wars and other crises, LGBTIQ people may face higher risks yet are often left behind or excluded from humanitarian relief efforts.

One year on, the needs of LGBTIQ civil society organizations and communities have not lessened. Whether they stay in Ukraine or attempt to leave the country, LGBTIQ people continue to face a range of threats to their security and human rights. In response to the invasion, many LGBTIQ organizations within Ukraine transformed themselves overnight. Most of these groups were previously focused on advocacy and community building; they rapidly had to learn how to provide



Olha Polyakova, Executive Director, Gender Stream.

emergency humanitarian aid. LGBTIQ activists have stayed – many in war zones – to help their communities survive by opening shelters for the displaced, creating programs to distribute food, medicine, and other aid, and offering psychological and legal help. As soon as the war began, our partners required immediate financial support to ensure the survival of LGBTIQ people and the movement itself throughout this war. The needs have not lessened.

A full year into the war, these organizations are still providing emergency support to LGBTIQ people, despite the tremendous toll these efforts have taken on their staff and volunteers – and the war rages on. Likewise, Outright continues to provide financial and other types of support, directly and in partnership with coalitions that are forming to secure the survival of LGBTIQ people and the movement longer-term. For example, several groups are leading the effort to advocate for equal civil partnership rights – a critical issue since LGBTIQ people in harm's way defending the country are denied spousal benefits in case of injury or death. Other groups such as Nash Svit Center in Kyiv have used Outright's support to [document human rights violations](#) and other challenges facing LGBTIQ Ukrainians during the war.



Andriy and Yuri at the NASH SVIT Center.

**We invite you to read more below about:**

- How Outright is supporting LGBTIQ groups and people in Ukraine and surrounding countries
- Voices from partners providing frontline, life-saving services to LGBTIQ people in and around Ukraine
- The Fund’s impact to date
- The humanitarian challenges and emerging trends, one year into the war
- How you can partner with Outright to support LGBTIQ people impacted by the war



Volunteers at Insight, a Ukrainian public organization whose main values are equality, feminism, freedom, inclusiveness, diversity for all social groups.

**How are we helping:**

**As of February 24, 2023 Outright had distributed over USD \$2.6M through more than 105 grants to 39 local LGBTIQ-serving partners in Ukraine and surrounding countries that are delivering humanitarian aid to LGBTIQ people, as well as pursuing critical advocacy to push for equal rights and protections. More than 83% of grants from Outright have been issued to groups in Ukraine.** While Outright has supported a number of LGBTIQ groups outside of Ukraine working with displaced LGBTIQ people and LGTBIQ refugees fleeing or that have fled from Ukraine, we have prioritized groups working in Ukraine, where many LGBTIQ people remain.

Contributions have provided emergency assistance to LGBTIQ people who need safe shelter, food, medical supplies (including medications), financial assistance, transportation for distribution of support and helping people reach hospitals, relocation assistance for those who are fleeing, mental health support, and other types of humanitarian assistance. Increasingly, we are receiving requests for generators and power banks, as Russia’s targeting of Ukraine’s energy infrastructure has led to widespread power outages and water supply and heating interruptions. The Fund is also supporting basic organizational operating and staffing expenses so that grassroots LGBTIQ organizations can keep their doors open, and services going. In addition, several organizations are using funds to advocate for the introduction of a new civil partnerships law so that LGBTIQ can receive the same rights as straight couples—all the more important during a time of war when LGBTIQ citizens are also risking their lives to defend the country.

Taking into consideration the protracted duration of this war, and that funders have begun exiting and pulling support from the space, Outright is making multiple grants to organizations, and continues to assess requests from new partners that need assistance.



Olena Bukova at Insight.

# The Fund's Impact:

**\$2.6M+** Funds Distributed

**\$24.5K** Average Grant Size

Of 100% LGBTIQ-Serving Grants Issued

**14%** Of Grants to Trans-Focused Projects

**20%** Of Grants to LBQ-Focused Projects

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**100+** Grants Distributed to 39 LGBTIQ & Feminist Organizations

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**27** in Ukraine

**12** in Neighboring Countries

30,000 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED

## Emerging Trends

Many Ukrainian LGBTIQ organizations that pivoted to fill the humanitarian assistance gap at the onset of the war are now at a crossroads to decide whether to continue humanitarian work (and in what form) or resume the human rights advocacy work that they were established to undertake. Either way, Outright is committed to supporting Ukrainian LGBTIQ organizations to pursue the priorities that they have identified. Further, we recognize that although some activists have left the country or are internally displaced, their work continues, and support is needed to establish or maintain office space and infrastructure, especially since fewer donors are supporting advocacy work, on the assumption that no human rights advocacy can be done in Ukraine at the moment. This is, in fact, untrue, as LGBTIQ organizations are resuming their advocacy work where they left off on February 24, 2022, while simultaneously continuing to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Put bluntly, the survival of the LGBTIQ human rights movement in Ukraine is at stake, while many thousands of queer individuals continue to need material support. Outright encourages the philanthropic sector to maintain their support of Ukrainian civil

society organizations. Outright is also advocating that mainstream humanitarian organizations ensure LGBTIQ-inclusion in their work.

## How You Can Help

Please help Outright spread awareness about the experiences of LGBTIQ people living in or that have fled Ukraine as a result of the invasion. Share this Impact Brief with your networks by email and social media:

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#)



At Insight.

Learn more about how we advocate for LGBTIQ human rights and how we prioritize and amplify the needs of the most marginalized within our community in the following:

- [World Economic Forum](#): How to Respond to the Humanitarian Crisis in Ukraine: 4 NGOs Explain
- [Teen Vogue](#): Trans People Leaving Ukraine Face Danger and Transphobia. This Organization Is a Safe Haven
- [Mail and The Guardian](#): African Governments Must Stop Harmful Conversion Practices to 'Cure' Sexual and Gender Diversity
- [Vanity Fair](#): The Fight for Ukraine Is Also a Fight for LGBTQ Rights
- [Open Democracy](#): US Christian Right Group Accused of Promoting Anti-LGBTQ 'Conversion Therapy'

- [Reuters](#): LGBT+ Conversion Therapy Thrives Even as Bans Gather Pace

Help Outright continue to support frontline responders.

**Donate today.**

Making a gift is simple: here is how you can make a one-time or recurring donation to the Ukraine Fund:

- [online in most currencies](#)
- [stock](#)
- [crypto](#)
- send a gift by check or from a donor advised fund (make check payable to Outright International, write "Ukraine Fund" in memo, mail to Outright International, Ukraine Fund, 216 East 45th Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10017, USA
- [ask your employer if they match donations](#)
- scan the QR code >>>



**Fund Supporters**

Outright is moved by the global outpouring of support and care for LGBTIQ people in Ukraine and the region. We are also deeply inspired by the strength, courage, resilience and kindness of LGBTIQ people in Ukraine and surrounding countries that are helping each other survive this horrific situation.

As of January 31, 2023, more than 8,200 people from over 75 countries have contributed to Outright’s Ukraine Fund, along with lead partners such as MacKenzie Scott, Center for Disaster Philanthropy, and Google.org. Outright also wishes to acknowledge the following institutional supporters of the Fund, whose generosity has enabled the impact cited in this report: [Anonymus](#); [Antidote Magazine](#); [Art for Ukraine](#); [Beamery](#); [Blackline](#); [Capital Group](#); [Choose Love Foundation](#); [Clearway](#); [Dropbox Foundation](#); [DWF Law Foundation](#); [Elevate Prize Foundation](#); [Endaoment](#); [FxHash](#); [Gitcoin](#); [GiveOut](#); [GoFundMe](#); [Grindr 4 Equality](#); [HEKDESH](#); [Horizons Foundation](#); [Johnson Family Foundation](#); [Kendo Brands](#); [Kares](#); [LGBTQI+ Returned Peace Corps Volunteers](#); [Looking Out Foundation](#); [Microsoft](#); [NYLife Foundation](#); [Objkt](#); [Operation USA](#); [PinkNews](#); [RELI3F](#); [SumOfUs](#); [The Giving Block](#); [Together Rising](#); [Triodos Bank](#); [Ukraine DAO](#); [Versum](#); [WoW Tech](#); [Zalando](#); and countless others.



Volunteers at Insight, a Ukrainian public organization whose main values are equality, feminism, freedom, inclusiveness, diversity for all social groups.



Olena Shevchenko at Insight.

### Testimonials

#### Trans\*Generation:

We want to thank you for supporting us and the entire Ukrainian community in this difficult time. We constantly contact trans people who stayed in Ukraine and those who left the country and try to be as flexible as possible, taking into account their needs. Thanks to Outright’s support, we can continue our work with the community and respond to their needs.

#### NGO Cohort:

Thank you for your help in such a difficult time, we appreciate it and express gratitude from the trans\* people of Ukraine. You were the first to respond to the help of trans people in Ukraine.

#### Gender Stream:

With Outright’s help, our team has not only survived but continues to help to survive other LGBTQI+ refugees from Ukraine. We continue to provide consultations on legal ways of evacuation from hotspots for transgender people, humanitarian aid, and psychological help as well as safe shelters in Ukraine and in the EU. Thank you for your great financial support, which is converted into saving lives!

#### Olena Shevchenko, Executive Director, Insight NGO

“In the war ... my human rights are useless,” she said. “It seems like humanity, [at] this stage of development, still doesn’t have any instruments [that] can be used to protect people or countries from such crazy things.” As hard as things are, she said, “The fuel [to keep fighting] is there.”

#### Paralegal Networks:

People lose their work because of war, which leads to the problems of paying for apartment rent and food and medicine bills. Officially in Ukraine now more than 50% of people lost their jobs, and more than half of our applicants for assistance were people who needed to change their place of living because of war. Many also have disabilities or health issues (HIV, mental disorders, etc), or need to take care of elderly disabled relatives. We gave priority to people from destroyed or occupied cities, and also from small villages where there is no infrastructure or/and social help services/ projects.

#### ChemBrothers:

May I address our gratitude that your organization has been the first to respond to our call to support the GBMSM community’s needs because of the war in Ukraine. Not for a single day do we stop our volunteer activities. Unfortunately, the war is still going on. We ask you to continue to support our efforts to save people from the terrible consequences of the war in Ukraine. Thanks to your support, we have saved many lives.



Anna Leonova at Insight.

#### Anna Leonova, Executive Director, Gay Alliance Ukraine

“I’m very proud of LGBT people who make open statements while serving in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and those who are open civilian activists... But after our victory, ... hatred will remain in our society, and I am scared that LGBT people might become one of the targets for this hatred,” Leonova said. “I’m sure that after the war we will have to rebuild not only our roads and buildings, but we will need to rebuild our civil society.”