

# UKRAINE FEMINIST HUBS INITIATIVE: A DECENTRALIZED, HOLISTIC, FEMINIST-LED CRISIS RESPONSE

## The Context

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has created an ongoing humanitarian crisis, disproportionately impacting marginalized groups, including women, LGBTQI people, Roma communities, and people with disabilities. Amid these challenges, feminist movements quickly mobilized to provide essential services and support. However, feminist movements responding to the crisis are underfunded, resourcing for those at the frontlines is delayed, and in traditional philanthropy, there is a lack of trust in local expertise to respond quickly. In addition, restrictive international funding mechanisms prevent marginalized activists, unregistered groups, and nascent collectives from accessing available aid.

## Urgent Action Fund Pilots Ukraine Feminist Hubs Initiative

In 2024, Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism (UAF-FA) launched its first large-scale, abundant, and flexible funding mechanism, the Ukraine Feminist Hubs Initiative, in partnership with feminist movements that were most impacted by the crisis in and outside of Ukraine.

While recognizing our limitations as a rapid response funder positioned outside the region, we intentionally designed the Ukraine Feminist Hubs Initiative to address funding gaps and partnered with organizations in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia to develop an effective crisis funding strategy.

Through the Ukraine Feminists Hubs Initiative, we aimed to:

- Strengthen local feminist crisis response infrastructure
- Ensure the autonomy of local organizations in decision-making, identifying community priorities, and distributing resources
- Make rapid and flexible grants to address evolving conditions on the ground
- Focus on resourcing marginalized communities, including people with disabilities, LGBTQI people, Roma people, and rural women.

## Urgent Action: Why the Feminist Hubs Initiative Matters

The Ukraine Feminist Hubs Initiative became a core pillar of UAF-FA's commitment to a flexible, holistic crisis response in Ukraine.

The funding resourced:

- Emergency evacuations
- Legal and medical support
- Collective care, including mental health services to prioritize marginalized communities and those outside of the reach of international funders.

## A Flexible and Localized Funding Infrastructure

The model was intentionally designed to center local feminist leadership and bypass bureaucratic delays often associated with international aid. Through these hubs, UAF-FA ensured that feminist movements had the autonomy to distribute funds and resources where they were needed most, especially in underfunded and underserved regions.



Since the start of Russia's invasion, Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism has awarded

**\$6,286,100**

to frontline feminist movements supporting women, trans, and non-binary activists impacted by war.

Photo Credit: Nati

## Holistic Approach: Balancing Emergency Relief and Long-Term Resilience

The hubs provided more than emergency relief—they also laid the foundation for long-term sustainability by offering unrestricted core funding to partner organizations. This funding helped cover operational costs like salaries, office rent, and transportation, ensuring local organizations could remain active and resilient despite the ongoing crisis.

Additionally, beyond covering grantmaking and core support, we allocated funding for collective care and respite, reflecting UAF-FA's value that sustaining movements requires sustaining the people within them. This component ensured the hub teams had resources to address mental health and well-being as they navigated their crisis response.

## Why Decentralized, Feminist-Led Responses Work

The success of the Feminist Hubs highlights the strength of feminist philanthropy, which prioritizes trust, autonomy, flexibility, and local decision-making. Centering local expertise and empowering local leaders allowed the initiative to address immediate needs and strengthen long-term feminist movement-building efforts.

## Key Outcomes

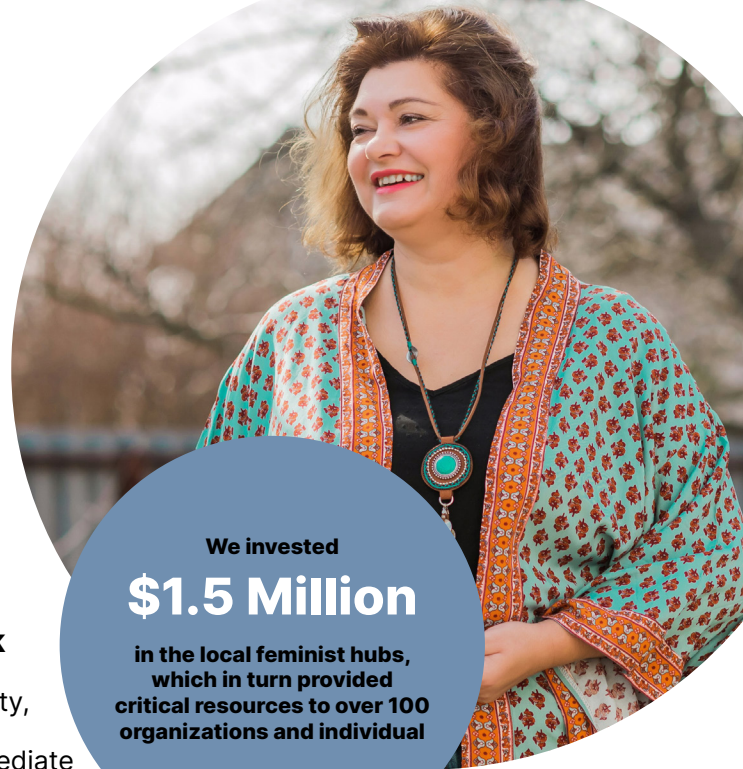
The initiative's impact was driven by its adaptability and localized approach:

- Faster response times: Decentralized networks ensured swift allocation of funds.
- Expanded reach: Connected UAF-FA to grassroots groups often excluded or invisible to traditional donor networks.
- Core support for sustainability: In addition to overhead costs, unrestricted funding enabled organizations to cover essential expenses, ensuring they could maintain long-term stability.

## Lessons for Philanthropy

The Ukraine Feminist Hubs Initiative highlights the power of decentralized, feminist-led funding to address both immediate crises and long-term resilience. By centering marginalized communities the initiative ensured critical, often overlooked needs were met. Its flexible, localized approach enabled faster response times, expanded access to grassroots groups, and provided unrestricted core support to strengthen feminist infrastructure and long-term sustainability. The balance between emergency relief and long-term movement-building demonstrates that trust, flexible resources, autonomy, and local leadership are essential for effective, sustainable crisis response.

Moving forward, we seek additional resources to expand our response to the crisis in Ukraine, advocate among donor communities for the adaptation of this model, and integrate this holistic approach into our crisis response across the regions we support.



We invested  
**\$1.5 Million**

in the local feminist hubs,  
which in turn provided  
critical resources to over 100  
organizations and individual

Photo Credit: T.Den Team

