

UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S FUND

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

2013 has been a tumultuous but productive year for the Ukrainian Women's Fund. As the Fund moves into its 14th year of supporting the work of women's NGOs across Ukraine and the nearby countries of Moldova and Belarus, the focus of the Fund's work this year was empowerment: a deeper involvement in creating the structures of civil society that lead to the empowerment of women and transformative change in Ukrainian society.

In 2013, the Ukrainian Women's Fund expanded and strengthened their mission on many fronts. UWF worked with rural Ukrainian communities to provide training in gender sensitivity to increase the participation of rural women in civil society. In Moldova, UWF launched a three-year initiative to strengthen and consolidate Moldovan NGOs working in the women's movement. In the area of economic empowerment, UWF partnered with the U.S. Embassy to strengthen and encourage women in business through trainings and collaborations. UWF continued their ongoing support of activities and organizations dedicated to ending domestic violence and supporting victims of domestic violence. In 2013 UWF expanded their First Step to Success program to Moldova. In its seventh year, First Step to Success continues to identify and encourage girls and young women to become future leaders of Ukraine and now Moldova.

In the closing weeks of 2013, the tangible results of the work of UWF for the past fourteen years were nowhere more evident than in the revolution of Euromaidan. As the citizens of Ukraine took to the streets to demand a transparent government that represented their interests, the faces of women were seen everywhere—reporting, organizing, governing, volunteering—and their voices were demanding that women be heard. For the Ukrainian Women's Fund, Euromaidan was a strong display of the development of civil society, giving hope to the vision of a Ukrainian future where the empowerment of women is seen at all levels and in all facets of society. Ukrainian Women's Fund is dedicated to making that vision a reality.

MISSION AND GOALS

About the Fund

Ukrainian Women's Fund is an international charitable organization founded in the year 2000 by the team of women-leaders, who have common approaches to implementing ideas of gender equality in all spheres of social life and to support of women's movement in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus.

For the years of active work Ukrainian Women's Fund has become a leading and the only organization in Ukraine, which consistently provides financial, informational, educational and consultative support to civil society organizations that work in the sphere of protection, support and promotion of women's rights in all main spheres of life: political, economic and social.

Ukrainian Women's Fund is the member of International Network of Women's Funds (INWF), Women's Funding Network (WFN), International Gender Policy Network (IGPN), UN Global Compact in Ukraine and Ukrainian Philanthropists Forum

The UWF's mission is to assist CSOs, specifically women's CSOs, to play an active role in the processes of the democratization of society and to contribute to equality, justice and respect for human rights by supporting civil society development with financial opportunities.

The Fund's goals:

- To promote human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens by strengthening CSOs
- To attract more resources to support civil society by developing a culture of philanthropy in Ukraine
- To facilitate the consolidation of women's movement as an integral part of civil society in Ukraine, as well as in Moldova and Belarus
- To enhance public participation in decision making on different levels
- To increase public attention to issues of diversity and gender

PROGRAMS IN 2013

Economic Empowerment of Women

Partner: United States Embassy to Ukraine, Democracy Grants

Recognizing that there can be no advancement of equal rights for women in Ukraine without also closing the gender gap in wages, business ownership, and policy making, the Ukrainian Women's Fund launched an economic empowerment for women project supported by the United States Embassy to Ukraine.



The project was kicked off by the forum for women entrepreneurs in Kyiv on April 12, 2013, **“Women-Entrepreneurs: the Next Driving Force of Ukrainian Economy?”** Over 150 women from small and medium sized businesses across Ukraine attended the all-day event. One of the first Ukrainian gatherings of its kind, the forum gave the women entrepreneurs an opportunity to exchange experiences, discuss the development of women entrepreneurship in Ukraine, network to build partnerships for future collaborations and for mutual support, and to build both their business skills and their confidence to become leaders in business and society. The forum was also attended by high level government representatives concerned with the development of women's entrepreneurship in Ukraine. One of the highlights of the forum was an opportunity for the women entrepreneurs to showcase their businesses in a networking bazaar held throughout the day.

“The time has come for all women, including Ukrainian women, to determine what they want to do and how far they want to go. If they want to break the glass ceiling that blocks them from getting to the top, they must claim and generate opportunities to both lead and succeed....

One way to do that is by forming associations that can help women organize and become stronger advocates for a better business environment. And that's why I recognize the role of events like this one, so you can hear the success stories and exchange ideas with some of the most dynamic women in the Ukrainian business world today.

We are in this together, and our goal is to make sure that we have an equal representation as leaders in our economies so we can share in their outcomes as equal partners. That's why what we do – at this forum and in the future--is so important.”

Tara Sonenshine, U.S. Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, speaking at the Women Entrepreneurs Forum.



Survey

Following the April forum, UWF conducted a survey of participants and other women entrepreneurs as an initial step to create a web resource that would provide a place for communication among women entrepreneurs and mentoring for future business owners.

The survey addressed the issues of the importance of networking and collaboration and women's readiness to become mentors for their less experienced colleagues. It also explored possible topics for future communications and discussions.

Database

A database was created of over 180 women entrepreneurs from all regions of Ukraine containing contact information and areas of expertise and interest.

Roundtable

To further the work started at the forum in April, Ukrainian Women's Fund hosted a roundtable September 30th on the topic, **"What Is Necessary for Women to Become the Next Driving Force of the Ukrainian Economy?"** Women business leaders and other stakeholders gathered to identify key strategies for strengthening women's entrepreneurship in the Ukrainian economy.

Dnipropetrovsk Forum for Women Business Owners

In November 2013, Ukrainian Women's Fund co-organized a forum in Dnipropetrovsk for women business owners that brought together over a hundred participants from the eastern region of Ukraine.



Leaders from business and government addressed the Forum, providing information and inspiration for the women business owners. The forum also included a number of skills building sessions on the topics of finance, the legal environment, marketing, leadership, and effective communication. As a special addition, the first social network for Ukrainian women entrepreneurs was unveiled at the event.

In his opening remarks, the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey R. Pyatt, offered encouragement to the forum participants:

"The title of today's workshop, "Women Entrepreneurs – a Force for Ukraine's Economy?" was posed as a question. But I think everyone in this room knows the answer is a resounding yes! Entrepreneurs are the driving force in any economy, and women have been underrepresented and underutilized in Ukraine's economic growth...."



Empowerment of Rural Women

Partner: USAID,



Sofia Burtak, a
trainer from
Ukrainian Women's

As part of AgrolInvest, a large five-year USAID project to promote the development of agriculture in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Women's Fund is providing gender sensitivity trainings to increase the ability of stakeholders to identify and solve problems concerning gender in rural development.

Ensuring equal rights for rural women in Ukraine is crucial as women represent 53% of the rural population but suffer from acute gender discrimination due to the lack of a social infrastructure that could make their lives easier and the prevalence of gender stereotypes.

In 2013, up to 200 people participated in fifteen one-day trainings held in different locations throughout Ukraine. The trainings introduced key local players to the concept of how equal involvement by women and men positively affects the socio-economic development of their community. Through interactive exercises, participants were able to personally feel the problems facing rural women and men and how gender insensitivity exacerbates those problems. Key gender imbalances and how they affect rural development were defined, and partnerships among participating organizations were created. Most importantly, by the end of the day, participants in the trainings had drafted action plans to help solve the gender problems in their communities.

In a second stage of this project, scheduled for 2014, the Ukrainian Women's Fund will provide participants of the first trainings with additional training and support to develop and implement full-fledged action plans.

And one more reflection from a participant: *My name is Ina Kravets. I live in a village in the Vinnytsia region and have my own tourist business. For a long time I liked my business, liked to host guests, serve them and show our sights. But recently I haven't seen any opportunities to develop my business. Our village head is hostile, and the regional council is also not inclined to support entrepreneurship. I became tired of that and suspended my activities.*

But in the autumn, my friend invited me to the training. What I liked there the most were the people. Young men from cooperatives discussed something, argued, and then made plans. There were two older men – village heads. I was impressed by their ideas about our rural life, problems and relations, and thought that not all administrators look like our village head, there are normal people.

Step by step during the training I started feeling and thinking in a different way. When I returned home, the first thing I did was to write my own tactical plan: what I would do to develop my enterprise. And now, I have 100% fulfilled most tasks. I updated my web page <http://green-tourism.org/?p=1&lang=ua>. Visit it, read it, and come to have a rest.

And the main thing – don't leave us alone. Invite us to trainings that give us hope and self-confidence.



Tatyana Buraga, Training participant
from Kirovohrad:

"Unfortunately, gender aspects in the field of rural development are still not a priority. However, now I am convinced that each program of rural development and every decision that comes to power, should be carefully examined through 'gender glasses' so that the development processes will indeed involve all segments of the population that these programs affect."

PROGRAMS IN 2013

Empowerment of Young Women

First Step to Success--Ukraine

Partner: Mama Cash

Founded in 2006, the First Step to Success program focuses on creating a new wave of Ukrainian feminists and future women leaders by supporting girls and young women to develop their leadership skills and create change in their communities.

To identify girls who can benefit from the program, every year UWF sends out a call across Ukraine for girls and young women to participate in an essay writing contest, answering such questions as: "How do you see your future? What do you want to contribute to your town or city? What plan do you have for projects in your community?" The winners of the contest are then invited to a three-day workshop in Kyiv.

This year, 20 contest winners participated in the June 27-29 workshop in Kyiv. The girls visited the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament) to meet women leaders, participated in trainings, networked with other girl leaders, and presented their ideas for leadership projects in their communities. Returning to their home towns, they developed grant proposals and submitted them to UWF for funding. Five mini-grants were awarded to support the girls' projects in the area of understanding disabilities, local governance, environmental issues, human rights awareness, and realizing personal goals and dreams.



"From my own experience, I realized that one must always go forward, set new goals and achieve them. The first step may be uncertain, but with it comes a change that is an invaluable experience of our lives."

Bella Antonyan-Shevchuk, 2011 winner



As the results of the program have become more evident, Natalia Karbowska, chairwoman of the UWF Board of Directors, makes this observation:

"Today one can see participants from the beginning years of the program on TV--many work in governmental agencies or political parties; many created their own civil society organizations and stand actively for their position and change the life of their communities for better. Definitely, they are already successful!"

"We are not just a crowd to be governed and to be influenced. We are, first of all, citizens with rights that are now violated. I wish everyone understand that."

Anastasia Kulakevych, 2013 winner, commenting on the events of Euromaidan.



PROGRAMS IN 2013

Empowerment of girls in Moldova – the First Step to Success program comes to Moldova

Partner: Oak Foundation

In 2013 the Ukrainian Women's Fund launched its highly successful First Step to Success program in Moldova. Based on the belief that the future of a country lies in part with the development of its girls and young women into strong feminist leaders, UWF sought motivated, proactive girls from across Moldova to participate in the First Step to Success program.



Natalia Shirbu

"A society where women's voices are not heard is not less feminine, it is less human".

Initially, three young women leaders from Moldova were identified to receive small grants to help disseminate information about the First Step to Success program in Moldova. As a result of their publicity campaigns and presentations, flash mobs and other activities, girls from all regions of Moldova participated in the essay writing contest, "I know the challenges that women face in my community and I know how to address them."

Twenty girls were selected to participate in a three-day meeting in Chisinau to be held in early 2014. At this event, they will have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, network with other young leaders, and learn how to apply for mini-grants to fund their community projects.

I have always wondered how great leaders don't lose motivation and keep fighting 'till the end. After a deep research in books, movies and real life stories, I discovered that there isn't any specific recipe for leadership--the key to success is hidden in your heart, in the dreams you believe in, the actions you take. My name is Axenti Aura-Alina and like Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream!" Honestly to say, my entire life is a chain of dreams that step by step have become reality and make me more self-confident in the beliefs I have. Successful achievements start from childish dreams.

The main problem in making your dream reality is the courage to continue when everything is almost done and the only thing you need is insistence and patience. For women, especially, insistence and confidence in their own plans are the keywords and the most difficult levels to pass in order to make a change and become real leaders. I know I have the ambition to continue and to not give up, even when it seems impossible to find a solution. For me, the First Step to Success Program isn't a solution, but it can be the key for more than a solution, if I will gain all the experience, knowledge and contacts that the project can provide me and many other dreamer-girls. For this project, I really expect to meet a lot of role-models and many examples of how to win. In my hopes, I still believe that maybe this project will be the one that will help not only my team's initiative but an entire school and youth community.



Axenti Aura-Alina,
program winner

PROGRAMS IN 2013

Empowerment of Moldovan Women: From Competition to Cooperation – the Development of the Women’s Movement in Moldova

Partner: Oak Foundation

In 2013 the Ukrainian Women’s Fund extended its work to strengthen women’s NGOs and build strong women leaders to the Republic of Moldova. Moldova is a small, post Soviet country on the southwest border of Ukraine. Almost 25% of its population travels abroad to work, and it is a main source for sex trafficking to Europe and the Middle East. The inequality of women, unfortunately, is a strong feature of Moldovan society: the majority of unemployed Moldovans are women, they have lower wages than men, and only 5% of managerial roles are occupied by women. Furthermore, women are greatly underrepresented in government and in all spheres of Moldovan public life.

Recognizing that gender equality and women’s empowerment are prerequisites for the successful development of a nation, the Ukrainian Women’s Fund with its partner, Oak Foundation, launched a three-year project to develop and consolidate the women’s movement in Moldova and to strengthen its role in the promotion of women’s rights and democratic reforms.



“These trainings are exactly what we need to develop capacity of our civil society organizations. We need this development. It’s very important to know and practice all these methods and tools. Due to new knowledge, I systematized everything I knew before, analyzed our previous activities, and now understand better how to improve and harmonize our plans and future actions.”

There are approximately 400 women’s CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) in Moldova, but only one-fourth of them are considered effective. They lack the resources—human and otherwise—to address the problems of gender inequality.

As a first stage in this project, in 2013 the UWF organized four capacity building trainings for 42 women’s organizations in different geographical regions of Moldova.

In the second stage of the project, the Moldovan women CSOs, using the skills they acquired in the trainings, were invited to submit proposals to the UWF for projects to support vulnerable women or women in crisis. In 2014, fifteen projects will be selected to receive grants.

In each six-day training, the CSO leaders had the opportunity to increase their organizational capacity building skills. The training included sessions to review mission statements and strategic plans; improve communication efficiency through marketing and social networking skills and cross-organization collaboration; develop fundraising skills; and to create and implement project campaigns from initial stage of formulation to monitoring and evaluation of campaign impact.

In the course of the four trainings in Moldova, participants often mentioned the importance of collaboration

“Maybe you’ve heard in the course of the trainings that previously our organizations, even working in the same region and the same city, didn’t collaborate much. Each of us was engaged in our own projects, perceiving others as competitors not partners.

And I think that these trainings started the process of discussing common ideas and common actions.”

A shift in that competitive mindset began to take place through the discussions of common ideas and common actions.



Following the trainings, the fruit of those discussions became evident in a grant proposal from the Beltsy region in northern Moldova. Three women CSOs united to present a proposal for a project that interlinked and complemented the work of their three different organizations, a collaboration that most likely would not have happened before the UWF training.

PROGRAMS IN 2013

Empowering Women to End Violence in Their Lives

Partner: Sigrid Rausing Trust

In the second year of this project to address the problem of domestic violence in Ukraine, Ukrainian Women's Fund continues to provide support for ten women's NGOs in nine regions of Ukraine and also to provide support for the national domestic violence hotline maintained by La Strada Ukraine.

44% of Ukrainian women have or will experience domestic violence at least once in their lifetime, and 75% of violence survivors do not seek help from authorities or friends and family, nor even tell anyone about the crimes committed against them. The ten NGOs funded by UWF seek to change those statistics through public awareness campaigns, direct support for victims, and pressure on local authorities to enforce existing legislation concerning domestic violence.



In 2013, the NGOs conducted roundtables in their regions which brought together representatives of state social service providers, law enforcement agencies, health care providers, and media representatives to acquire a better understanding of the problems and to create collaboration agreements to support victims of domestic violence.

Media campaigns were initiated in many regions. Informational materials provided by UWF and the NGO were widely disseminated in public places. Newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, and social network postings helped raise the public's awareness of the problem and the availability of free services for women who need help.

Direct services were provided to more than 1200 women, including legal and psychological consultations, support in court proceedings, medical support, and other services.

As a result of the work in 2013 of these NGOs, women in Ukraine suffering from domestic violence have had a greater opportunity to improve the conditions of their lives and interrupt the cycle of violence. The grantee organizations have had the opportunity to strengthen their relationships with government and law enforcement institutions and to establish collaborations that provide real assistance to victims.



Raising awareness of services available for women in Drohobych, Lviv region

The national Hotline maintained by La Strada Ukraine was also able to increase its capacity due to the support provided by UWF. During 2013, the Hotline provided more than 5000 consultations on the issues of domestic violence.



Discussing the standards

With the information provided by the organizations in their work with domestic violence victims, La Strada and UWF initiated the development of a unified methodology of providing assistance to victims of domestic violence.

These recommendations were presented at the organizational network meeting at the end of 2013. In 2014, it is planned to further develop the recommendations and prepare for national discussions. The UWF invited representatives from the

Ministry of Social Policy to this two-day meeting to discuss adoption of official approval and implementation of standards for providing services to victims of domestic violence.

My name is Iryna and I came to the Center because for eight years, I and my two children suffered from psychological and physical violence from my husband, who abused alcohol.

Due to the Center's help, I was able to solve my problem. I took my children and left my husband, rented an apartment, and started court procedures on divorce, alimony and division of property. Though my former husband did everything possible to deprive me property and money, I managed to win this case.

Thanks to the Center, I was able to stand up and start a new life together with my children. Now, my children sleep well and enjoy life; they are not afraid of coming back home and do not fear to lose their mother.

I think the main thing the Center did for me was to help me to act. Earlier, people had tried to help me with money or a place to live, but then I would return to my husband and everything would start again. But now I am more confident, I have a place to live, and I am sure of the high-quality support I can get.



Mutual psychological support group, Kyiv

Iryna, a client of Women's Perspectives West-Ukrainian Center, Lviv

Empowering Philanthropy

2013 opened a new direction in fund raising for the Ukrainian Women's Fund. In the spring of 2013, UWF hosted two volunteers from the IBM Corporate Service Corps. With the goal of expanding the UWF fundraising strategy to include corporate donors, the IBM team spent a month analyzing corporate giving in Ukraine, developing a corporate communications plan for UWF, and creating a kit of proposals directed at corporate donors. At the end of their evaluation period, the IBM team presented UWF with a list of recommendations to build corporate partnerships and profiles of potential effective partners. In 2014, UWF plans to continue to pursue this fundraising strategy and has applied for further assistance from the IBM Corporate Service Corps.



2013 also delivered a uniquely rewarding experience in the UWF fundraising. This year the First Step to Success program was partially funded by one of its original participants. In 2006, Oksana Kvitka was one of the first participants in the UWF First Step to Success program. Inspired by her involvement in the Program, Oksana went on to study at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy where she majored in political science. Today she is an Assistant Deputy in the Ukrainian parliament and has become a mentor in the First Step to Success program. Furthermore, inspired by the ambitions and ideas of the 2013 participants, she made the decision to fund one of the mini-grants awarded to further the girls' leadership development.



*In 2004, 16-year-old Oksana Kvitka came with her father to Kyiv from their home in Donetsk to witness the Orange Revolution of Ukraine. There she saw for the first time Kyiv-Mohyla Academy—the most prestigious university in Ukraine—“and hanging from the main building was a big red sign that read: We are on Strike. I saw that sign and said: I will study there.” Two years later she participated in the **Ukrainian Women's Fund** First Step to Success program and found the encouragement and support to realize her dream.*

For Oksana, who was inspired by her participation in the First Step to Success program in 2006 to pursue her dream to attend Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, that initial experience opened up a pathway for her to become the strong feminist she is today. She received a First Step to Success mini-grant to conduct trainings for girls in her home community on how to develop leadership skills and build a career. Oksana went on to participate in a number of national and international feminist events representing young feminist activism in Ukraine and became an active volunteer at UWF. Her political science studies at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy led her to a career in government service, making good on her desire “to see many more women in politics.” Today, Oksana is an Assistant Deputy in the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine.

As a successful feminist role model, Oksana has become a mentor in the First Step to Success program and one of its funders. She invests her money in the program --something the organizers did not even dream about seven years ago— because “I want to help change the life of young girls in Ukraine as the First Step to Success program has changed mine.”

What better success story can you hope for than when a program participant becomes a program funder? Such is the Ukrainian Women's Fund First Step to Success program.

From an [article by Barbara Wieser](#), U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer at UWF, published in the [Latest from Alliance global philanthropy blog](#)

DONORS AND PARTNERS

The Ukrainian Women's Fund wishes to sincerely thank all our 2013 donors and partners. Your generous support of UWF programs helped to improve the quality of women's lives across Ukraine and Moldova. Thank you.

Sources	USD
UN WOMEN/UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women	89,025
The Sigrid Rausing Trust	90,033
Mama Cash	54,412
OAK Foundation	127,165
AgroInvest Project (USAID)	16,200
USAID and Office of Global Women's Issues	9,570
Democracy Grants Program of US Embassy in Ukraine	8,175
Women's civil society organizations in Ukraine, Individual donors in Ukraine and abroad	9,480
International Network of Women's Funds	5,000
Total	409,060