



UNDERSTANDING INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS AMONG
IDPs IN EASTERN UKRAINE

TRAPPED IN A PROPAGANDA WAR. ABANDONED. FRUSTRATED. STIGMATIZED

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COVER PHOTO

Every Sunday around 11am, the local volunteer group “Heart of Sloviansk” distributes aid to IDPs in Svyatogorsk, a small town of 3,500 people 30 km from the city of Sloviansk, in the Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine.

Tania, a woman in her mid-thirties from Horlivka, a large city north of Donetsk city, comes every Sunday usually not knowing what kind and amount of humanitarian aid will be distributed. It is January 24, 2015 and the temperature is -10 °C. Some people claimed that they came to register for the line at 2am.

“Heart of Sloviansk” delivers what they have managed to collect during the week. Very often there is not enough aid for everybody and people get frustrated. Some people in the line said that it would be useful to receive a SMS about what kind of humanitarian aid is available, who’s eligible and when and where they can get it.

According to “Heart of Sloviansk” Svyatogorsk is now home to 9,000 IDPs. This means that for every local resident there are almost three internally displaced people.

JACOBO QUINTANILLA/INTERNEWS



1 INTRODUCTION¹

In March 2014, following Russia's annexation of Crimea, the political situation in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region (Donetsk and Luhansk) deteriorated rapidly. After numerous demonstrations for and against independence from Ukraine, pro-Russian rebels began seizing government buildings and facilities. The resulting clashes with Ukrainian government forces drove residents to flee their homes, making them increasingly vulnerable as the conflict spread. By the end of April 2014, rebels had raided a Ukrainian weapons depot, solidified gains in a number of key cities and towns, and declared the region the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR).

A continuing back-and-forth struggle raged throughout the region over the next several months until a ceasefire was declared in September 2014. After numerous violations by both sides, fighting in eastern Ukraine resumed in mid-January and has intensified in recent weeks.

After rocket attacks and indiscriminate shelling caused more civilian casualties and further destroyed infrastructure, separatist groups launched an offensive against the government-controlled port city of Mariupol. Strategically located between mainland Russia and the Crimean Peninsula in the Black Sea, it is home to some half a million people.

Many IDPs have exhausted their financial resources and face difficulties paying for accommodation, heating, food, and other essentials. The elderly and other vulnerable groups are also at risk due to the non-payment of pensions and state benefits in non-government controlled areas. People had been obliged to register as IDPs in government-controlled

¹ WITH INPUT FROM BRIEFING – 30 JANUARY 2015 EASTERN UKRAINE: CONFLICT (ACAPS) [HTTP://RELIEFWEB.INT/SITES/RELIEFWEB.INT/FILES/RESOURCES/ACAPS-BN-UKRAINE-CONFLICT-30JAN2015.PDF](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/acaps-bn-ukraine-conflict-30jan2015.pdf) AND OCHA SITUATION REPORT NO. 24 AS OF 23 JAN 2015 ([HTTP://RELIEFWEB.INT/REPORT/UKRAINE/UKRAINE-SITUATION-REPORT-NO24-23-JANUARY-2014](http://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-situation-report-no24-23-january-2014))

territory by February 1 in order to receive payments. Delivery of food and medical supplies to conflict areas is also being hampered by limited access.

The number of displaced people has risen to more than 920,000 in recent weeks. Key reception areas are those under government control in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, along with neighboring Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhya and Dnipropetrovsk regions. Conditions are likely to deteriorate further given continued fighting and limited access to non-government controlled areas.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), churches and local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have been vital to respond and meet the immediate needs of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), filling a void left by the Ukrainian government.

The United Nation's (UN) Clusters² were activated at the end of 2014. While international organizations and international NGOs have scaled up their emergency capacity and footprint with the onset of winter and the increasing scale of the humanitarian crisis, local organizations said that it is not happening fast enough.

ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT

From January 20-30, 2015, an Internews assessment team carried out a rapid assessment with displaced populations and host communities in eastern Ukraine to understand their information needs and access to communication channels.

This rapid needs assessment included over 50 interviews with IDPs and representatives from local volunteer groups, civil society organizations, national and international humanitarian organizations and local media groups in eight different locations in eastern Ukraine, namely, Sloviansk, Druzhkivka,

Kramatorsk, Svyatogorsk, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, and Kiev.

This was a 2-week rapid consultation (including 10 days in the East) to gauge the current information needs and access of IDPs, and learn about the current situation of the national and local media in eastern Ukraine. There were limitations to the team's ability to consult with communities inside the non-government controlled areas because of the security situation and lack of relevant permits (phone interviews were conducted with international journalists and with humanitarian organizations in Donetsk).

Based on these findings, Internews has formed the basis for proposed next steps. With adequate funding, these activities could be immediately rolled out to help meet the urgent information and communication needs of displaced people and try to reduce tensions with host communities.

ABOUT INTERNEWS

Internews (www.internews.org) is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect and the means to make their voices heard.

Internews has been working continuously in Ukraine since 1993. Through grant support and targeted technical assistance, Internews helps a wide array of local partners carry out projects that they design and implement themselves. These initiatives include educating citizens and journalists about the public service role of a responsible media sector, increasing the quality and quantity of investigative reporting by local journalists, helping traditional media increase their online offerings, providing legal support to journalists and media outlets, and reforming media legislation to approach European standards.

² CLUSTERS ARE GROUPS OF HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS (UN AND NON-UN) WORKING IN THE MAIN SECTORS OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION, E.G. SHELTER AND HEALTH. FOR MORE INFORMATION: CLUSTER APPROACH (WWW.UNOCHA.ORG/WHAT-WE-DO/COORDINATION-TOOLS/CLUSTER-COORDINATION)

COMMUNICATION IS AID

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, keeping communities informed about what's happening around them, how to reconnect with their families and friends or what aid services may be available for them, goes beyond saving lives. It is about restoring people's dignity and respect, it is about fulfilling people's rights and the right to know, ask questions and participate in their own relief and recovery and, very importantly, holding stakeholders to account.

Communications with Communities (CwC) is an emerging field of humanitarian response that helps to meet the information and communications needs of people affected by crisis.

CwC is based on the principle that information and communications are critical forms of aid in their own right, without which disaster survivors cannot access services or make the best decisions for themselves and their communities.

Since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Internews has been present in major humanitarian crises around the world, establishing critical links between affected populations, local media, and humanitarian agencies to provide life-saving information and set up effective two-way communication platforms between local communities and aid providers.³

Internews is pre-qualified to UK DFID's Rapid Response Facility (RRF) and is a partner of the European Commission's Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO).

Internews is co-founder and current host of the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network (www.cdacnetwork.org) in London. The CDAC Network is a cross-sector initiative between aid agencies, UN organizations, the Red Cross Movement, media development

organizations and technology providers that recognizes information and two-way communication as key humanitarian deliverables.

The CDAC Haiti initiative led by Internews in the immediate aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake on behalf of the CDAC Network as mandated by OCHA "achieved one of the largest cross-agency commitments to communications ever seen in an emergency, playing a particularly important leadership role in coordinating communications around the cholera epidemic. It succeeded in providing critical services, coordination, strategic leadership, capacity building and advocacy for better communication with affected people. While a favorable context and propitious circumstances played a critical part, hard work and skillful decisions, along with OCHA's ongoing support, also contributed to CDAC Haiti success... CDAC Haiti played a key role in facilitating partnerships and building relationships. Its operational model filled a gap in a way much appreciated by partners."⁴

Current Full Members of the CDAC Network are: ActionAid; BBC Media Action; Development and Humanitarian Learning in Action (DAHLIA); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); International Organization for Migration (IOM); International Media Support (IMS); Internews Europe; UMCOM (United Methodist Communications); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA); Plan UK; Save the Children; Thomson Reuters Foundation; Translators without Borders (TwB); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Food Program (WFP); and World Vision International.

Affiliate Members: FdL Development; FilmAid; First Response Radio; Freeplay Energy; Ground Truth; Pecojon; Social Impact Lab; and HFCC-International Broadcasting Delivery.

³ IN THE PHILIPPINES FOR EXAMPLE, INTERNEWS EMERGENCY RESPONSE WAS RECOGNIZED BY DFID AS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE NICHE INTERVENTIONS BY ANY AGENCY IN THE WAKE OF TYPHOON HAIYAN: "THOUGHTFUL, COST-EFFECTIVE NICHE PROGRAMMES LED TO DISPROPORTIONATELY POSITIVE IMPACTS, FOR EXAMPLE INTERNEWS AND MAPACTION." RAPID REVIEW OF DFID'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO TYPHOON HAIYAN (PHILIPPINES), P.14, ICAI, MARCH 2014 ([HTTP://ICAI.INDEPENDENT.GOV.UK/2014/03/11/RAPID-REVIEW-DFIDS-HUMANITARIAN-RESPONSE-TYPHOON-HAIYAN-PHILIPPINES/](http://icai.independent.gov.uk/2014/03/11/rapid-review-dfids-humanitarian-response-typhoon-haiyan-philippines/))

⁴ CDAC HAITI LEARNING REVIEW (CDAC NETWORK, INTERNEWS AND UNOCHA) CECILIA LJUNGMAN, MAY 2012 ([HTTP://CDAC.TRUST.ORG/TOOLS-AND-RESOURCES/1/20140610200806-NUDON](http://cdac.trust.org/tools-and-resources/1/20140610200806-nudon))

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“People [IDPs] lack information about what to do although those with access to the Internet have a better chance.”

- AID WORKER IN SLOVIANSK

Russia’s swift annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and the ensuing conflict in the East have directly impacted the diverse but controlled local media landscape in Ukraine.

In addition to the terrible toll of the actual fighting, eastern Ukraine has also become an ideological battlefield, an all-out propaganda war pitting Moscow against Kiev and its Western supporters. Meanwhile, local communities and international humanitarian organizations struggle in the quest for local, practical, accurate, reliable and up-to-date information.

Lack of clarity about the Ukrainian government’s IDP legislation and assistance mechanisms, including a newly introduced travel permit system,⁵ bureaucracy and difficulties in accessing relief and assistance creates confusion, frustration and an increasing sense of isolation among IDPs.

As information among IDPs spreads mostly through word-of-mouth and social media, rumors and misinformation are rife. Citizens in eastern Ukraine have low trust in traditional media, and Ukrainian TV is largely not perceived as a credible source of information.⁶

IDPs do not seem to be fully aware of eligibility criteria and/or what aid they are able to access if eligible to do so. This increases expectations of displaced communities and feeds further frustration. The situation directly affects the capacity of local and international relief groups to effectively plan and deliver aid.

Timely, accurate and neutral information about entitlements, rights, legal assistance, eligibility criteria and available aid are vital in enabling affected populations to make informed decisions and regain a degree of self-agency.

As the conflict escalates and the economy worsens, host communities that have shown unprecedented solidarity and generosity are beginning to feel the pressure in their own communities. This is creating social tensions, stigmatization and discrimination against IDPs, who are struggling to integrate.

For aid organizations it is vital IDPs and host communities alike are aware of the principles that guide humanitarian action, what aid organizations are mandated to do, what they do not do and how they may be contacted, as a way of managing people’s expectations and perceptions. Similarly, promotion of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is paramount.

Civil society organizations, local citizens and the diaspora have filled the communications void left by the Ukrainian government. Anchored by social media, these groups crowdsource and match requests for help with offers of assistance, crowdfunding relief and support operations for both IDPs and soldiers on the frontlines.

Many rapid assessment interviewees stated “Everything is on Facebook.” Yet finding accurate, updated and reliable information can be a major challenge for IDPs. Within such a saturated media and information ecosystem, we must challenge the assumption that “those who want to know will manage.” The very nature of online communications also excludes those who fall through the cracks due to digital, gender and age divides.

A particularly worrying factor is the deeply rooted sense of “abandonment” among IDPs who feel the

5 “THE ONLY OPTION FOR RESIDENTS OF DONETSK AND OTHER REBEL-HELD AREAS TO OBTAIN A TRAVEL PERMIT IS TO DRIVE TO THE FIRST UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT CHECKPOINT AND HAND OVER THE APPLICATION TO SOLDIERS, EXPLAINING THEIR REASONS FOR WANTING A PERMIT. HOWEVER, THE SOLDIERS ONLY ACCEPT A FEW APPLICATIONS PER HOUR, MEANING PEOPLE WAIT FOR HOURS IN THE COLD TO HAND OVER THE DOCUMENTS, AND THEN HAVE TO DRIVE BACK 10 DAYS LATER TO FIND OUT IF THEY HAVE BEEN GRANTED PERMISSION. ON MONDAY MORNING THERE WAS HEAVY SHELLING AROUND THE CHECKPOINT, FORCING CARS TO TURN BACK TO DONETSK.” JANUARY 26, 2015 (WWW.THEGUARDIAN.COM/WORLD/2015/JAN/26/UKRAINE-DONETSK-TRAVEL-PERMIT-MEDICINES)

6 INTERNEWS CARRIED OUT MEDIA RESEARCH FROM APRIL-JUNE 2014 WHICH REVEALED THAT A LARGE MAJORITY OF CITIZENS IN DONETSK WERE STILL WATCHING UKRAINIAN TV BUT JUST 24% TRUST THE VERACITY OF THE INFORMATION. THE SURVEY CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNEWS WEBSITE HERE. (HTTP://UMEDIA.KIEV.UA/ENGLISH/MEDIA-RESEARCH/)



Like many towns and villages in eastern Ukraine, Semenovka, a village near Sloviansk in the Donetsk region, was badly damaged during fighting between May and July 2014. Many people have left for safer places in Ukraine or Russia (December 2014). PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ICRC: CC BY-NC-ND / ICRC / M. DONDUK.

government is not “reaching out” to them. This not only increases a sense of frustration and isolation but complicates the task of providing useful and timely information.

IDPs who fled from non-government controlled areas have been left “shocked and traumatized” and many are struggling to integrate. Despite the generosity shown by local residents, negative perceptions have arisen among host communities who see IDPs being favored by “positive discrimination.” This increases stigmatization and affects their ability to rent accommodation or find jobs.

INFORMATION NEEDS

Overall, the priority information needs among displaced people in **non-government-controlled areas** are:

- 1 **How to be evacuated:** Questions include: How to get travel permits? Who can help me get out? Who will receive me “out there”?
- 2 **Practical, life-saving information:** Up-to-date reports on safe/open roads, security incidents, travel permits, supplies coming in, markets open, new IDP laws and regulations.
- 3 **What aid is available:** How, where and through whom to access humanitarian aid such as food, hygiene items, medicines, blankets, children’s clothes, household goods, tarpaulins or materials to repair damaged residential or public buildings.⁷

Outside non-government-controlled areas, the priority information needs among displaced people are:

- 1 **How to access aid:** Who, where and how to access humanitarian aid, mostly housing, food and job opportunities, although local groups report that families request “anything”, from children’s clothing to legal assistance or household items.
- 2 **Tracing disappeared persons:** More recently, as the conflict intensifies, there has been an increase in person tracing requests.

It is very important to note that in both locations, people want to know when the war is going to finish and what’s going to happen in the future.

⁷ THOUGH THE HUMANITARIAN PRESENCE IN THE NON-GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AREAS IS VERY SMALL - MOSTLY ORGANIZED BY LOCAL VOLUNTEER GROUPS AND THE ICRC, MSF, PIN AND THE AKHMETOV FOUNDATION - REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE HAPPEN DURING FIELD VISITS, AID DISTRIBUTIONS, PHONE CALLS (“THE OFFICE PHONE IS RINGING ALL THE TIME”, SAID AN INTERNATIONAL AID WORKER INTERVIEWED OVER THE PHONE FROM DONETSK) AND WALK-INS TO THE OFFICES OF AID ORGANIZATION AND THROUGH DIRECT REQUESTS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES THAT TRY TO ASSESS PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND CHANNEL REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE TO AID ORGANIZATIONS.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

To date, residents and IDPs in **non-government-controlled areas**, are mostly relying on:

- » **Word-of-mouth.**
- » **Mobile phones** (i.e. calls within their own communities and with family/friends in government-controlled territory).
- » **Social media** (Facebook and VK (VKontakte)⁸ to try to follow security developments and know what’s going on.
- » **Russian TV channels**, predominantly among the elderly who are largely cut off from mobile phone and the Internet.
- » **Local media** launched by the new local authorities is very prevalent.

Outside non-government-controlled areas, IDPs mostly rely on:

- » **Word-of-mouth**, “information from people who are already here” and volunteers.
- » **Mobile phones** i.e. calls with friends and family, hotlines from local groups.
- » **Local volunteer groups and churches.**
- » **Social media** from local volunteer groups.
- » **National TV channels** (mostly 1+1, Inter, STB, ICTV, Kanal Ukraina), and to a lesser degree local media. Credibility and trust in media is, generally speaking, low.

⁸ VKONTAKTE ([HTTPS://VK.COM](https://vk.com)), KNOWN ALSO AS THE ‘RUSSIAN FACEBOOK’, LITERALLY MEANS “IN TOUCH”. MANY TOWNS AND DISTRICTS HAVE THEIR FACEBOOK AND VK PAGES WHERE RESIDENTS SHARE ALL SORTS OF INFORMATION

3 KEY FINDINGS

IDPs

***“We feel abandoned...
When they are shelling around you, you feel
nobody needs you.”***

DONETSK RESIDENT ARRIVED IN DNIPROPETROVSK WITH HIS WIFE AND 4 CHILDREN ON JANUARY 28 AFTER WEEKS LIVING IN A BASEMENT AND DAYS TRYING TO LEAVE NON-GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED TERRITORY

- 1 **IDPs feel “abandoned” by the Ukrainian government:** Since December 2014, areas controlled by pro-Russian rebels have seen Kiev cut all funding for state-run facilities, including the removal of ATMs from banking networks and discontinuing other financial services. As a result, IDPs feel “abandoned” by their government.
- 2 **Trapped and confused:** The introduction of new travel restrictions and the need to obtain a special pass to get in-and-out of non-government controlled areas is, according to local residents, not just very difficult to obtain, but also extremely dangerous as they need to make a perilous journey to far away block posts (i.e. checkpoints) manned by the Ukrainian army without any assurance of how long it will take or whether it will be eventually granted.
- 3 **Shocked and traumatized:** “They are shocked and traumatized... They have their past, they have their present, but their line of future is being destroyed,” said a psychologist working with IDPs in Zaporizhzhya.
- 4 **Social tensions, discrimination and stigmatization are on the rise - struggling to integrate:** “Of course IDPs have problems, with loss of family members and property, but people here [in Zaporizhzhya] also have problems and nobody is looking after them,” said a local

volunteer, echoing what seems to be a generalized sentiment in Zaporizhzhya and elsewhere, that questions “positive discrimination” favoring IDPs.

IDPs are blamed by many for the casualties and destruction and perceived as separatists. At the same time, “some people [IDPs] come with a ‘you owe us’ attitude.” It is what a number of interviewees in Zaporizhzhya called a “blame attitude,” a “soviet mentality” and a “self-learned helplessness.”

GOVERNMENT

“The Government is absent. They don’t realize that IDPs are everybody’s problem, for the whole Ukraine.”

AID WORKER IN ZAPORIZHZHAYA

- 1 **Not reaching out to the East:** The vast majority of IDPs and a number of aid groups interviewed said the Kiev government has not done enough, if anything, to reach out to the people in the East and reiterate that they are still viewed as citizens of Ukraine.
- 2 **Lack of clarity on the Government’s IDP legislation and assistance mechanisms:** This lack of definition creates further confusion among IDPs and increases their frustration. In the absence of clearly defined policies, government officials, local groups and international organizations are unable to more effectively cooperate to deliver timely, relevant aid services to IDPs.
- 3 **“The devil is in the details,” both for IDPs and volunteers:** “I’ve been working with IDPs for six months and I’m still unclear [about how the different laws work], sometimes the laws contradict each other and the devil is hiding in the details,” said a Protection Monitor in Zaporizhzhya.

Relevant laws and changes in those laws are not adequately understood, first and foremost, by IDPs. Equally concerning is the widely-shared assumption by local volunteer groups themselves that volunteers, tasked with guiding IDPs through the process, may be in a similar situation i.e. confused. This leads to an increase in the level of misinformation and rumors, generating more frustration and isolation.

“The Ukrainian government is not helping the IDP situation with contradictory policies that create negative consequences and a very large number of protection issues.”

INTERNATIONAL AID WORKER

HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

- 1 Civil society is at the forefront of the humanitarian response, organizing itself online:** Filling the void left by the Ukrainian government, volunteer groups, churches and local NGOs - many driven by a patriotic, anti-Russian sentiment – crowdfund, coordinate and lead their own local relief operations - both helping IDPs and supplying army divisions - through Facebook and/or VKontakte. It is a “Second State inside Ukraine” that tries to provide protection and assistance where the Ukrainian state has failed.⁹
- 2 Solidarity is not endless:** Ukrainian citizens, civil society organizations and Diaspora groups have shown unprecedented generosity. However, as the conflict intensifies, the economic crisis worsens and negative attitudes towards IDPs increase, solidarity may run out.

“We are talking a lot about problems but we see no actions.”

AID WORKER FROM ZAPORIZHZHYA

- 3 Local civil society organizations need more support now:** Local groups predominantly feel that they have not been adequately supported in a timely manner by the government, international organizations and donors.

As the backbone of relief operations, it is paramount to offer rapid and timely support to civil society organizations, including public media initiatives.

“They [donors and international organizations] are very slow. For example, the school bags arrived only in January when the school started last September, and blankets and heaters are only arriving now. The people from Kharkiv reacted within hours, while it takes international organizations weeks to move,” said one of the volunteers.

- 4 International humanitarian capacity and footprint is scaling up too slowly:** Very few humanitarian agencies were present in Ukraine prior to the conflict. To counter the lack of funding, bureaucratic barriers to rapid response - including NGO registration, tax and customs requirements, along with other restrictions - international aid organizations are increasing their emergency capacity and physical footprint in eastern Ukraine. However, local organizations say this is not happening fast enough.
- 5 Need to increase awareness of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and promote the principles that guide humanitarian action:** As military operations escalated in January, the number of civilian deaths increased along with violations of IHL. This was due to the deliberate targeting of civilians and to placing military assets in civilian residential areas.

It is vital to explain both to IDPs and host communities what aid organizations do and do not do, and how they do it in order to try to prevent misunderstandings and manage community expectation and perceptions. “They [IDPs] think we

⁹ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEER GROUPS: UKRAINE'S FACEBOOK WARRIORS. DAVID PATRIKARAKOS, NEW YORK TIMES, DECEMBER 29, 2014 (WWW.NYTIMES.COM/2014/12/30/OPINION/UKRAINES-FACEBOOK-WARRIORS.HTML) AND HOW VOLUNTEERS CREATED A 'SECOND STATE' INSIDE UKRAINE. CHRIS DENNETT, HROMADSKIE INTERNATIONAL, JANUARY 30, 2015 ([HTTPS://MEDIUM.COM/@HROMADSKIE/HOW-VOLUNTEERS-CREATED-A-SECOND-STATE-INSIDE-UKRAINE-EBEFB5D82E1C](https://MEDIUM.COM/@HROMADSKIE/HOW-VOLUNTEERS-CREATED-A-SECOND-STATE-INSIDE-UKRAINE-EBEFB5D82E1C))

ZAPORIZHZHYA IS NOT DETROIT

The region of Zaporizhzhya is an industrial, underdeveloped, under resourced and impoverished region.

In an environment with high rates of unemployment and already limited resources, welcoming over 67,000 IDPs is generating tensions.

According to local statistics quoted by a protection monitor in Zaporizhzhya, there are 80 people for 1 job in the whole Zaporizhzhya region; 40 to 1 in Zaporizhzhia city only. For every one working person, there are two pensioners.

Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv, larger cities, offer more opportunities but also higher rents attracting mostly middle-high upper class from Donetsk.

On the contrary, Zaporizhzhya is a region economically more dependent on the welfare historically provided by industries – this has also had an impact on the development of civil society organisations: “We have less experienced NGOs. Zaporizhzhia is not Detroit but it could be. Generally speaking, the situation is more complicated here,” said a volunteer.

do provide everything,” said the Director of an international organization in Dnipropetrovsk. “This is not an IDP crisis, it is a national disaster.”

- 6 **Counter negative perceptions and stigmatization of IDPs:** Negative stories and rumors about IDPs spread quickly through traditional and social media. While the situation is different from city to city, they contribute towards increasing discrimination against IDPs and stigmatization when trying to rent accommodation or get a job. Certain groups clearly feel that “We’re paying for them,” “they steal our jobs,” or “they are not grateful to us.”

This growing divide between IDPs and the host communities needs to be addressed with more dialogue and coverage of positive examples of integration.

The problem, as a volunteer from Zaporizhzhya

explained, is that “it is easy to find negative examples, much harder to find positive ones.”

- 7 **IDPs want to talk to volunteers:** Many local organizations relied upon by IDPs and/or soldiers have dedicated hotlines and produce their own brochures, posters and leaflets. “No matter how much information is in front of them, they want to talk to a volunteer,” said a volunteer from Kharkiv.

An important issue raised by IDPs and volunteers alike is that in many instances the contact details, phone numbers or websites provided in those leaflets contain information that is out-of-date or when trying to connect, nobody picks up the phone.

A challenge faced by some organizations running hotlines is their lack of capacity to register the calls and analyze the data. Sometimes a hotline means just three or four mobile phones and one or two staff.

MEDIA

(For further reference read 5 *Overview of the media landscape*)

- 1 **A dearth of News-You-Can-Use:** There is an urgent need for local, practical, accurate, up-to-date information about rights, entitlements, and changes in policies, eligibility criteria and available aid services. Local media does not have the capacity to source, produce, and disseminate this information, or effectively and consistently engage with local humanitarian actors.
- 2 **Over-reported war; under-reported humanitarian crisis:** The war dominates news coverage; the humanitarian crisis and its scale and social costs need to be adequately explained and regularly updated. Media focus on the war’s progress and “patriotic” editorials, dedicating little space or attention to reporting

on the extent of the humanitarian crisis and its consequences.

- 3 **Independent, impartial voices have been stifled:** from the wholesale dismantling of independent Ukrainian media in non-government-controlled areas in the Donbas region to the general trends of tabloidization and commercialization of Ukrainian media, local audiences often lack access to independent, objective, and high quality reporting and information.
- 4 **Journalists lack skills in conflict and humanitarian reporting and covering crisis-related topics:** Journalists need training in conflict reporting, physical and digital security, and how to objectively and sensitively report on topics such as internally displaced persons. Coverage of humanitarian events by local organizations (e.g. distributions of aid) does not constitute adequate reporting on complex humanitarian issues and the multi-faceted social dimensions of the crisis.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Internews recommends a set of mutually reinforcing capacity building and support interventions that will:

- 1 Improve the flow of critical information to internally displaced and conflict-affected populations.
- 2 Strengthen coordination between humanitarian organizations and media operating in eastern and southern Ukraine. Interventions address specific challenges related to media and the work of humanitarian actors identified during this assessment, including:
 - » Increasing production and dissemination of content specifically for IDP and conflict-affected communities (*news-you-can-use*).
 - » Improving production of independent, objective news and information related to the conflict, delivery of government services, and the efforts of humanitarian actors.
 - » Establishing efficient communications and coordination between humanitarian actors and the media.

MEDIA SUPPORT

- 1 **Provide financial and technical support to a selected number of local, independent and moderate media organizations in eastern Ukraine for the production of multimedia humanitarian information, social news and analysis on humanitarian issues:** There are very few independent, moderate local voices in the region and those are struggling to stay afloat due to limited resources and support. Some of those outlets need to be supported and strengthened. Credible local reporting, along with media literacy education, is one of the few ways to counter propaganda.

Some of these local media organizations, and hence local audiences, could benefit immensely if they could 1/ hire, train and pay new field reporters, 2/ buy new equipment for reporters and for production, and 3/ be able to cover travel expenses to cover unreported humanitarian and social issues in new geographical areas. This will increase the production and broadcast of first-hand, genuine, professionally produced content audiences can then access.

An international Humanitarian Reporting Advisor with experience in conflict environments and a small team of Ukrainian trainers is needed to support these media organizations in the east and in Kiev to produce, among other humanitarian-related content, news-you-can-use on where to get humanitarian aid and what the eligibility criteria is, people's rights, entitlements or how to access legal assistance, among other topics. This also includes informing the public about changes



Volunteers help offload construction materials from ICRC vehicles. Shastye, a town of 13,000 inhabitants in the Luhansk region, is located a few hundred metres from the front line (December 2014).
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ICRC: CC BY-NC-ND / ICRC / M. DONDYUK

within the Government’s IDP legislation and assistance mechanisms.

- 2 **As part of the technical support for the proposed partner media organizations, deploy a Humanitarian Liaison Officer (HLO) to support them increase the quantity, quality and relevance of their humanitarian content:** The HLO will be the link between the clusters, humanitarian actors, NGOs and selected local media partners in the East.

The HLO will work within the clusters and with aid agencies on the production and broadcast of humanitarian information and messages in partnership with selected media partners. The HLO will assist in the production of community-driven content, share feedback obtained through the multimedia productions into the cluster system, and support the coordination of Communication with Communities (CwC).

- 3 **Round Tables / Town Hall events between CSOs, government officials, humanitarian organizations and local media:** Bringing together local activists, civil society, aid organizations and local media, these round tables will create an open space for dialogue to discuss humanitarian, social and other pressing issues in the region.

- 4 **Training for a select number of local media organizations and travel grants:** Local media organizations in the East would benefit from training on the basics of reporting (“journalism 101”), ethics, verification/fact-checking, reporting on complex humanitarian issues, physical and digital security, along with conflict sensitive journalism.

FOR HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

- 1 **Coordination on Communication with Communities (CwC):** Since the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, UNOCHA and the CDAC Network have advocated for the deployment of a specialist to coordinate CwC in providing critical services, strategic leadership, coordination, capacity building and advocacy for better communication with affected people.

This CwC specialist will initiate, convene, facilitate and coordinate a CwC Working Group, ensuring it is well managed and results-oriented through the development and distribution of relevant information products and campaigns while informed by community perspectives.

The CwC Coordinator is a position that will serve across all sectors providing technical support and guidance to local and international organizations.

- 2 **The CwC Coordinator will work closely with a Local Media Liaison (LML):** The LML is media specialist with sound understanding of and a wide network of contacts within the national and regional media in Ukraine.

This national position will provide advice and technical assistance to clusters and aid organizations on how to effectively liaise and work with national/regional/local media organizations and, very importantly, how to leverage online and social media networks to enhance aid effectiveness, transparency and accountability. This is something successfully tested in Haiti during the 2010 earthquake response and most recently in Central African Republic (CAR).

The LML will be the focal point for media organizations wanting to connect with aid organizations, ensuring that relevant requests for information and/or interviews are redirected to the relevant aid organization.

This position will create links and establish partnerships with the most relevant players in the media field, assisting aid organizations with pitching stories or proposing interviews for TV shows, radio programs or online media.

The LML will also monitor media coverage and assess media and public's perceptions and attitudes towards humanitarian interventions. As an explanatory note, while the LML will provide advice and technical assistance on media relations to the larger humanitarian community, the Humanitarian Liaison Officer (HLO) proposed by Internews will focus specifically on the production and dissemination of humanitarian content with a selected number of local media partner organizations in close collaboration with aid organizations.

TIT-FOR-TAT

In early March 2014, Crimea removed Kiev-based TV channels ahead of the referendum for annexation to Russia. Later that month, the Ukrainian National Council for TV and Radio Broadcasting ordered all cable providers to stop transmitting top Russian state-controlled TV channels which were accused of broadcasting misleading information about Ukraine. In August, Russian authorities restricted access to Ukrainian news websites.

"UKRAINE HITS BACK AT RUSSIAN TV ONSLAUGHT" (MARCH 12, 2014) [WWW.BBC.COM/NEWS/WORLD-EUROPE-26546083](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26546083)

5 OVERVIEW OF THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Historically, TV is the most popular media in Ukraine. As of December 2014, the most popular TV channels are STB, Kanal Ukraina, 1+1, Inter and ICTV,¹⁰ according to the Television Industry Committee (ITK).¹¹

According to the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council of Ukraine, there are 1,660 TV and radio broadcasting companies and program service providers in Ukraine as of September 2014.

Out of these, there are 104 satellite TV channels, 536 free-to-air channels, 147 cable channels and 254 radio stations.

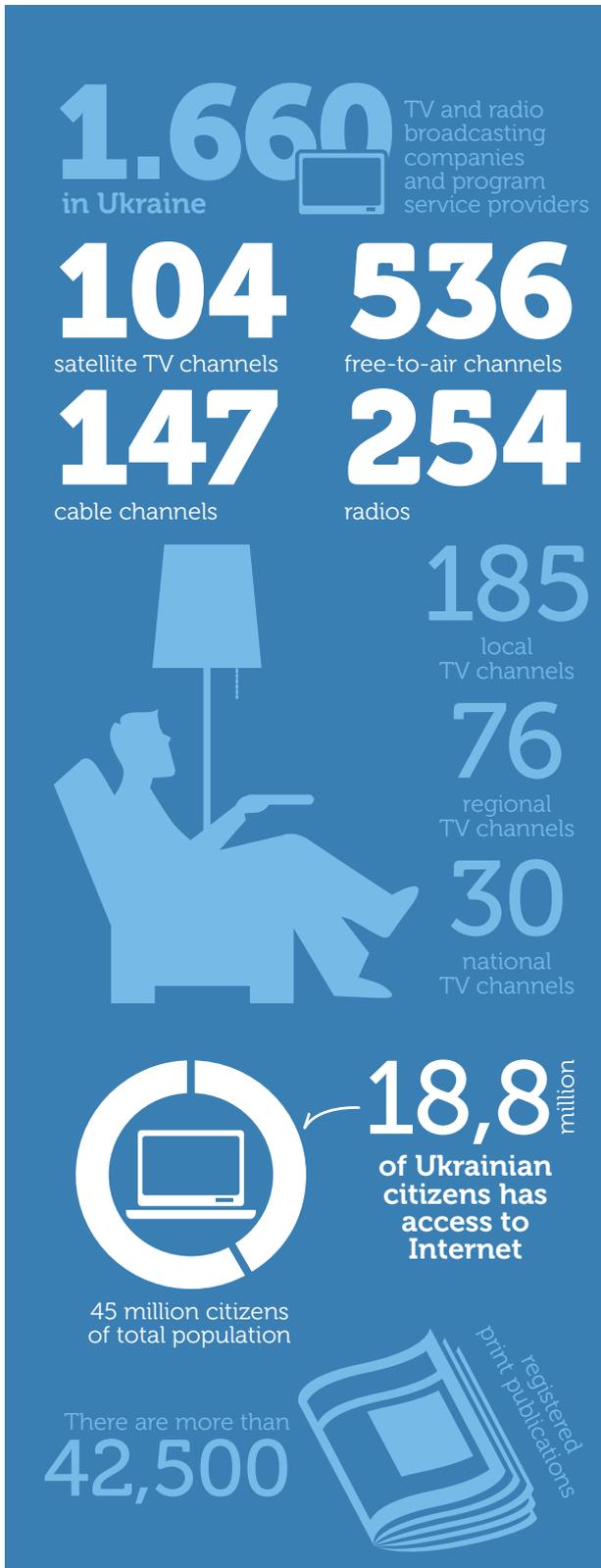
Out of the TV channels, 30 are national carriers, 76 regional, and 185 local.¹²

The new Law of Ukraine "On Public Broadcasting" was adopted in May 2014. This law sets up a legal framework for Public Television and Radio Broadcasting in Ukraine and determines the principles of the national public broadcasting.

10 RATINGS OF UKRAINIAN TV CHANNELS (DECEMBER 2014) [HTTP://TAMPANEL.COM.UA/EN/RUBRICS/CANALS/](http://tampanel.com.ua/en/rubrics/canals/)

11 ITK IS A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEADING TV-CHANNELS AND MEDIA AGENCIES. IT REPRESENTS INTERESTS OF TELEVISION INDUSTRY OF UKRAINE. THE MAIN GOAL OF TIC IS TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TV INDUSTRY IN UKRAINE.

12 MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX 2014: UKRAINE (IREX) [WWW.IREX.ORG/CATEGORY/FOCUS-AREAS/MEDIA-DEVELOPMENT](http://www.irex.org/c/category/focus-areas/media-development)



In 2014, **the internet** became a vital tool for media and civil society in Ukraine. It helped transform the nature of communication and self-organization during the events of the EuroMaidan protests and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine.

The internet plays a significant role in the everyday life of millions of Ukrainian citizens who use it to consume news, for online shopping and for entertainment. According to Gemius research, as of June 2014, 18.8 million¹³ Ukrainian citizens (out of 45 million citizens of total population) have access to internet.

There are more than 42,500 registered **print publications** (Media Law Institute report, 2012); out of these, about 3,100 actually publish. The top three dailies are Fakty i Kommentarii (6.52%), Segodnya (5.54%), Komsomolskaya Pravda v Ukraine (4.16%), all private (2013 est., TNS audience research MMI Ukraine).

The top radio networks are Russkoe radio (1.22%), Hit FM (1.21%), Radio Shanson (1.09%), Retro FM (0.74%), (all private), as of October 2013.

LOSS OF CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

Ukraine’s mainstream national TV networks disappointed audiences with their biased coverage of the events during the EuroMaidan protests. Countless complaints about the national media appeared on social networks and internet TV - the most powerful media of the revolution.

According to media analysts and members of the public who were interviewed, with the start of the conflict in the East, moderate, independent voices could be profiled as anti-patriotic, while media freedom in the non-government-controlled areas has been extinguished.

As a result, neither national media nor local organizations fulfill the role of public service media. They focus largely on coverage of the war’s progress along with “patriotic” editorial policies, dedicating little space or attention to reporting on the extent of the humanitarian crisis and its consequences.

13 [HTTP://WATCHER.COM.UA/2014/08/19/AUDYTORIYA-UKRAYINSKOHO-INTERNETU-SPOVILNYLA-SVIY-RIST-ZA-RIK-ZROSLA-LYSHE-NA-12/](http://watcher.com.ua/2014/08/19/audytoriya-ukrayinsko-ho-internetu-spovilnyla-sviy-rist-za-rik-zrosla-lyshe-na-12/)

**“YOU DECEIVED VIEWERS
AND SPREAD ENMITY**

“I can tell you how I hate Yanukovych and all those who carry out their criminal orders. I came here today [to the TV studios of Inter] only because I found out that this is a live broadcast. I want to say that I also despise Inter because for three months it deceived viewers and spread enmity among citizens of this country.

And now you are calling for peace and unity. Yes, you have the right to clear your conscience but I think you should run this program on your knees. I’ve brought these photos here for you, so that you see my dead friends in your dreams and understand that you also took part in that.

And now, I’m sorry, I don’t have time. I’m going to the Maidan. Glory to Ukraine.”

LIDIA PANKIV, JOURNALIST,
SPEAKING LIVE ON INTER TV

UKRAINE MAIDAN: AN UNLIKELY LOVE STORY ARISES FROM THE CHAOS AND PROTESTS IN KIEV. PALASH GHOSH, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES, FEBRUARY 27, 2014 (WWW.IBTIMES.COM/UKRAINE-MAIDAN-UNLIKELY-LOVE-STORY-ARISES-CHAOS-PROTESTS-KIEV-1558380)

According to Kostyantyn Kvurt, chair of the board for Internews Ukraine, in this difficult media environment, and despite many examples of solid journalism, “the overall trends are: entertainment programs eclipse news, socially important topics are suppressed, ethical standards are ignored, and professional and educational levels are declining.”¹⁴

There are a few more professional moderate voices like hromadske.tv in Kiev, hromadske.tv Donbas and hromadske.tv Zaporizhzhya, R1 TV and TV S-plus, various news agencies and online media outlets operating in Kharkiv, Odessa, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolayiv and Sloviansk, that are not just covering the conflict but trying to explain the consequences of the humanitarian crises, giving people a voice and demanding accountability from the government.

As President Yanukovych was ousted from power in February 2014, national TV networks undertook a serious exercise in “political realignment.” Unfortunately,

due to both government-enforced censorship and media self-censoring, a great deal of credibility and trust was lost.

A number of closely related oligarchs still own a disproportionate number of TV channels, including current Ukrainian President Poroshenko.

Similarly, regional media cannot be considered truly independent, relying on either the support of politically connected businessmen or on funding from regional or local government authorities, all with vested interests and defined agendas.

In Zaporizhzhya for example, business interests with a specific political agenda or local authorities own all four TV channels (i.e. TRK Alex, TV5, TRK Zaporizhzhya and MTM). Only the online independent TV station, hromadske.tv Zaporizhzhya (“Public.tv” Zaporizhzhya) is fulfilling a public service media role by conducting investigative reports, sending multimedia journalists to cover under-reported stories and producing political debate segments, in addition to children’s and cultural programming.

In non-government-controlled areas, the new “local authorities” are operating at least four new TV stations, including Novorossiya TV (“New Russia”), Oplot (named after a battalion), First Republican and Union TV. Local authorities also run at least two newspapers, two local radio stations (listenership in cars is high)¹⁵ and have released a “Novorossiya” app available in the AppStore since late January.

These “new” TV and radio stations are mostly seized and renamed media infrastructure that existed prior to the conflict. Viewers with satellite receivers can watch Ukrainian TV. National Ukrainian TV channels Channel 5 and 1+1 can be watched, at times, though the signal quality is very bad.

Besides this type of local media, according to an editor from hromadske.tv in Kiev: “Many people in the East of the country are only getting Russian TV channels,

14 MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX 2014: UKRAINE (IREX) P.9 WWW.IREX.ORG/CATEGORY/FOCUS-AREAS/MEDIA-DEVELOPMENT

15 THE RADIO NETWORK WAS STARTED AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE WAR, AND AIRS EVERYTHING FROM TRADITIONAL COSSACK SONGS TO TALK SHOWS THAT DEBATE VARIOUS POINTS OF RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PRACTICE. SOLDIER VANISHES IN UKRAINE. JOSHUA YAFFA, NEW YORK TIMES, JANUARY 7, 2015 WWW.NYTIMES.COM/2015/01/11/MAGAZINE/A-RUSSIAN-SOLDIER-VANISHES-IN-UKRAINE.HTML?SMPROD=NYTCORE-IPAD&SMID=NYTCORE-IPAD-SHARE

especially the elderly, who rely on that for information and are usually cut off from the internet.”

INDEPENDENT REPORTING IS A COLLATERAL VICTIM

Impartial and independent reporting is a collateral victim of this conflict. “Ukrainian media has been pushed into a situation where it is very difficult to be impartial. It is very difficult to be impartial when your country is at war. You can’t fix it until the war is over,” said the owner of a TV channel interviewed during this assessment.

Other media practitioners are not as pessimistic and praise some of the coverage done by national TV networks. IDPs and civil society groups interviewed in this assessment were however unanimously critical of the country’s media.

Many interviewees claimed “the media lies” and “does not present what is really happening on the ground.” Others suggested Ukrainian media should more vigorously engage in counter-propaganda and promote “positive news” (i.e. patriotic media that does not cover “negative news” and the consequences of the war that can undermine morale).¹⁶

WHO TO TRUST AND WHO TO BELIEVE

Both Russian and Ukrainian media largely echo simple narratives, not willing to challenge their audience’s views – something which becomes amplified in social media. Ukraine’s media industry may give the impression of stepping up their game (i.e. Ukraine launched the English-speaking, oligarch-sponsored *Ukraine Today* modeled on and created to oppose Moscow-sponsored *Russia Today*, RT). However, according to media analysts, Russia seems to be winning that battle as it has greater resources, with further and deeper reach into the global media environment.

**“Media are not reporting on what people need to know, for example, the situation at different checkpoints, how to claim some social benefits, get travel permits...
In that sense there is a real information vacuum”**

EDITOR OF HROMADSKIE.TV IN KIEV

The conflict and displacement have caused a breakdown of communication between local populations, IDPs, and local media organizations, some of them once considered trusted sources.

For IDPs and host communities, after the coverage of EuroMaidan and the escalation in the conflict, there is the challenge of who to trust and who to believe. For IDPs and people caught up in the conflict in the Donbas region, there is a vacuum of practical, useful, accurate and up-to-date information to help them make informed decisions and remain safe.

A climate of intimidation and self-censorship took hold in the Donbas region from the beginning of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Freedom of expression, as well as freedom of the press has been severely curtailed and working conditions for media professionals remain extremely difficult due to security concerns.¹⁷

Many journalists fled Donbas, most of them permanently,¹⁸ with immediate and lasting negative impact on the diversity of information, the sources accessed and stories coming from the region since the conflict began. “We are getting less and less independent information [from Donbas]. [Rebel] groups are exerting tighter control on territories and information is important to them,” affirmed a Ukrainian media development expert.

According to media organizations consulted, there are few Ukrainian reporters inside the non-government-

16 A LOCAL NEWSPAPER IN DNIPROPETROVSK THAT BRANDS ITSELF AS ‘PATRIOTIC’ DEDICATED A FULL PAGE ON 29/01/15 TO COVER HOW THE DIRECTOR OF THE LOCAL OPERA WAS THROWN INTO A DUMPSTER BY A ‘LOCAL COMMITTEE’ AS HE WAS ACCUSED OF BEING PRO-RUSSIAN. THE NEWS STORY WAS ILLUSTRATED WITH TWO PHOTOGRAPHS, ONE OF THE DIRECTOR INSIDE THE DUMPSTER, AND ANOTHER ONE WITH THE ‘LOCAL COMMITTEE’ SHOWING A RUSSIAN FLAG THAT ALLEGEDLY BELONGED TO HIM. THE DIRECTOR OF THE OPERA DENIED OWNING THE FLAG. MONTHS AGO, THE SAME NEWSPAPER CHANGED ITS MOTTO FROM “THE NEWSPAPER THAT HELPS” TO “THE NEWSPAPER THAT HELPS THE COUNTRY AND OUR SOLDIERS TO SURVIVE THESE HARD DAYS”.

17 OHCHR, REPORT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN UKRAINE, NOVEMBER 15, 2014 [HTTP://WWW.UN.ORG.UA/IMAGES/STORIES/FINAL_OHCHR_SEVENTH_REPORT_UKRAINE_20.11.14_BEFORE_LAUNCH.PDF](http://www.un.org.ua/images/stories/FINAL_OHCHR_SEVENTH_REPORT_UKRAINE_20.11.14_BEFORE_LAUNCH.PDF)

18 OLEKSIY MATSUKA, THE EDITOR OF THE NOVOSTI DONBASA NEWS WEBSITE, HAD TO FLEE DONETSK IN MID-APRIL AFTER HIS PHOTO WAS CIRCULATED WITH THE WORDS ‘ATTENTION, TRAITOR’ AND HIS CAR WAS SET ON FIRE. LOCAL MEDIA ARE PRIORITY TARGETS IN EASTERN UKRAINE. RSF, JUNE 10, 2014 [HTTP://EN.RSF.ORG/UKRAINE-LOCAL-MEDIA-ARE-PRIORITY-TARGETS-23-05-2014,46342.HTML](http://en.rsf.org/ukraine-local-media-are-priority-targets-23-05-2014,46342.html). MATSUKA WAS AWARDED WITH THE 2014 INTERNATIONAL PRESS FREEDOM AWARD.

controlled areas. Increasingly, a large proportion of the information coming out of the area is user-generated content from a variety of sources through Facebook, VKontakte, YouTube, Twitter or Instagram.

INTIMIDATION IMPACTS ON MEDIA PLURALISM

Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) issued a statement in June 2014, indicating the organization was very concerned that intimidation of journalists since the start of the unrest has created a hostile climate which continues to have a disastrous impact on local media pluralism.¹⁹ This followed the rebel capture of a number of TV broadcasting towers in April 2014 when Ukrainian channels were immediately turned off and replaced with Russian telecasts.

During March and April 2014, the Institute of Mass Information documented 15 cases of attacks against and seizing of media offices and TV broadcasting towers in eastern Ukraine.²⁰ The pro-Russian attackers demanded the TV channels report more about them, adding they would teach the journalists how to present news correctly. As a result of these confrontations, some offices were vandalized and burned. While some media in the Donbas region were seized and are currently used to spread propaganda, other media organizations were either forced to or independently decided to close temporarily in order to be less exposed to harassment.²¹

19 LOCAL MEDIA ARE PRIORITY TARGETS IN EASTERN UKRAINE. RSF, JUNE 10, 2014 [HTTP://EN.RSF.ORG/UKRAINE-LOCAL-MEDIA-ARE-PRIORITY-TARGETS-23-05-2014,46342.HTML](http://en.rsfo.org/ukraine-local-media-are-priority-targets-23-05-2014,46342.html)

20 EDITORIAL OFFICES OF LOCAL MEDIA AND BROADCASTING TOWERS IN THE EAST OF UKRAINE ARE BEING ATTACKED BY TERRORISTS AND SEPARATISTS – 15 CASES. MAY 14, 2014 [HTTP://IMI.ORG.UA/NEWS/44211-IMI-EDITORIAL-OFFICES-OF-LOCAL-MASS-MEDIA-AND-BROADCASTING-TOWER-IN-THE-EAST-OF-UKRAINE-ARE-BEING-ATTACKED-BY-TERRORISTS-AND-SEPARATISTS-15-CASES.HTML](http://imi.org.ua/news/44211-imi-editorial-offices-of-local-mass-media-and-broadcasting-tower-in-the-east-of-ukraine-are-being-attacked-by-terrorists-and-separatists-15-cases.html)

21 LOCAL MEDIA ALSO UNDER FIRE. RSF, JANUARY 6, 2015 ([HTTP://EN.RSF.ORG/UKRAINE-SUMMARY-OF-ATTACKS-ON-MEDIA-12-05-2014,46265.HTML](http://en.rsfo.org/ukraine-summary-of-attacks-on-media-12-05-2014,46265.html))

WAR REPORTING DOMINATES OVER NEWS-YOU-CAN-USE AND HUMANITARIAN ANALYSIS

“War stories are driving the news agenda, forgetting the consequences of the very same war”

- INTERNATIONAL AID WORKER

A common issue that came up in this assessment is the lack of adequate coverage of the humanitarian and social consequences of the conflict. The humanitarian crisis and its scale and social costs need to be adequately explained and revisited constantly.

“While distributions of aid can generate interest among national and local media, we have to be clear on what we do and how we do it and explain it,” said an international aid worker. “It is easier to cover the war than the humanitarian crisis,” affirmed a local volunteer.

In terms of professional standards, the quality of journalism is slipping substantially. “If previously political influence and censorship were the most important reasons for declining standards, today they are accented by the commercialization and tabloidization of news,” said Natalia Gumenyuk of hromadske.tv.²²

According to Kostyantyn Kvurt, chair of the board for Internews Ukraine, “the overall trends are entertainment programs eclipsing news, socially important topics suppressed, ethical standards ignored, and professional and educational levels are declining.”²³

As the war escalates and the national economy continues to stagnate, local media is feeling the pinch, seeing the amount of paid advertising significantly reduced, along with dramatically slashed reader subscriptions

In a media sector where *jeansa* (i.e. paid advertorials that pass as news) is still common practice, financial instability can further render media vulnerable to manipulation and corruption.

22 MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX 2014: UKRAINE (IREX) [WWW.IREX.ORG/CATEGORY/FOCUS-AREAS/MEDIA-DEVELOPMENT](http://www.irex.org/category/focus-areas/media-development)

23 MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX 2014: UKRAINE (IREX) [WWW.IREX.ORG/CATEGORY/FOCUS-AREAS/MEDIA-DEVELOPMENT](http://www.irex.org/category/focus-areas/media-development)

6 ANNEXES

METHODOLOGY

This rapid needs assessment consultation included over 50 interviews with IDPs and representatives from local volunteer groups and civil society organizations, national and international humanitarian organizations and local media groups in eight different locations in eastern Ukraine and Kiev. The CDAC Network Common Needs Assessment Tools²⁴ were used as reference to guide key informant interviews.

LIMITATIONS

This was a 2-week rapid consultation (including 10 days in the East) to gauge the current information needs and access of IDPs and learn about the current situation of the national and local media in eastern Ukraine; therefore, the following limitations apply:

- » The team was not able to consult communities inside the non-government controlled areas because of the security situation and lack of relevant permits. Phone interviews were conducted with a few humanitarian organizations operating from Donetsk and also with international journalists.
- » As much as the team tried to ensure people with disabilities and the elderly were represented; the team did not conduct specific interviews exclusively for these populations.
- » In line with Global Child Protection Working Group guidance and given the consultation took place within weeks after the displacement, children were not interviewed because of the potential harm (including re-victimization) such interviews may have caused.

- » This consultation focused on information needs and access by affected populations. While Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) were considered, the primary focus remains two-way communication.

LOCATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

The Internews assessment team would like to thank all the individuals and organizations that generously supported the mission and the production of this report with their time, views and advice.

In Kiev, the assessment team met with UNOCHA, ICRC, IOM, UNHCR, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Internews Ukraine, hromadske.tv Donbas and hromadske.tv.

In Sloviansk, People in Need (PIN), Right to Protect (R2P), Protestant Church “Good news”, local newspaper “Business Sloviansk”, hromadske.tv Donbas, in addition to families at one of the IDP collective centers and IDP families living in rented accommodation.

In Druzhkivka, Donetsk Press Club and local volunteer group “Druzhkivka is Ukraine.”

In Kramatorsk, Kramatorsk SOS, Foundation for Community Development and House of Freedom.

In Svyatogorsk, local volunteer group “Heart of Sloviansk” and IDPs at a distribution point.

In Kharkiv, local volunteer groups “Station Kharkiv” and “Peace and Order”, UNHCR, IOM, ATN TV Channel, Interfax Ukraine (news agency), and IDPs in different locations.

In Dnipropetrovsk, UNHCR, local coordination and transit accommodation center run by “Aid of Dnipro”, IDP families, Red Cross Ukraine, Evening Dnipro (local newspaper).

In Zaporizhzhya, R2P, local volunteer group of psychologists, City Center of Help and hromadske.tv Zaporizhzhya.

²⁴ THE CDAC NETWORK COMMON NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS (JULY 2014) WWW.CDACNETWORK.ORG/TOOLS-AND-RESOURCES/I/20140721171402-WJ4AU AND ASSESSING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS: A QUICK AND EASY GUIDE FOR THOSE WORKING IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (JULY 2014) WWW.CDACNETWORK.ORG/TOOLS-AND-RESOURCES/I/20140721173332-IHW5G



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