

# Equality fund

WHEN WE MOVE TOGETHER, WE MOVE THE WORLD

## Equality Fund Statement on Ukraine

Once again the horror and pain of war is all around us. We stand with the people of Ukraine as they face an illegal and deadly invasion. Indiscriminate attacks on civilians, mass displacement, censorship, the destruction of health centres and family homes, and sexual/gender-based violence outrage us. We are concerned for all - especially women, girls, trans and non-binary persons, and members of marginalized and racialized communities.

Our hearts are warmed by the generosity offered to Ukrainian refugees, however we are angered when Black and Brown refugees are met with violence, discrimination and closed doors.

We are also reminded that armed conflict simmers and burns in other parts of the world. We hear the calls of our sisters and colleagues in Afghanistan, Palestine, Yemen, Mali, Sudan and elsewhere for an end to violent conflict and urgent humanitarian relief.

We stand with courageous women as they call for peace, dignity, and respect for human rights from Russian television stations, the streets of Kabul and Khartoum, the halls of the United Nations, and elsewhere. We add our voices to those saying Stop the War.

### We Call For

*An end to the war:* We call on governments and multilateral organizations to invest in and explore all diplomatic avenues to end the war in Ukraine.

*Humanitarian assistance that recognizes the needs and priorities of all:* We repeat the long-standing calls for humanitarian assistance that reaches all those in need, including women and girls in all their diversity including those with disabilities, of all ages, trans women, from traditionally excluded minorities, survivors of gender-based violence, and those with few resources. Local organizations, including those led by women, require funding and support to carry out their first responder role. This applies to Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

*Global measures to both mitigate and respond to sexual and gender-based violence* that all too often surges during armed conflict and moments of mass displacement.

*Equitable and meaningful participation by women (in all their diversity) in peace negotiations, humanitarian needs assessment, as well as relief and eventual recovery planning:* For over 20 years, governments have expressed support for the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Now is the time to step up and put these commitments into practice.

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*Funding and support for feminist organizations, women peacebuilders, and feminist/LGBTQ activists in Ukraine and surrounding countries - now and moving forward:* Feminist activists are

mobilizing to meet the urgent needs of their communities and to respond to the broader political and military crisis. Ending their long-standing exclusion from humanitarian and international

assistance funding is urgent. The crisis will not end when the missiles stop falling and support will be needed over the long haul.

*Global attention to other emergencies:* While the situation in Ukraine is urgent, so too are the long-standing crises in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Yemen, Colombia and elsewhere. As the world rushes to aid Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees, we must respond to these other conflicts and humanitarian crises with the same care, generosity, and human concern. Increased investments in conflict prevention, including support for feminist movements, women peacebuilders and human rights defenders, are desperately needed to help ensure that armed conflicts do not spark and grow. Attention to multiple forms of discrimination, in particular racial and ethnic discrimination, is a key element in these investments.

## What we are doing

At the Equality Fund we are working together with other women's funds, partners and colleagues in Ukraine and surrounding countries to identify where the needs are greatest and how we can best support. We are listening to feminist activists in all their diversity, recognizing that they do not speak with one voice. We are committed to supporting feminist activists over the long haul, standing with them, resourcing their movements, and working in solidarity.

We have launched an initial round of funding to address urgent needs in Ukraine and neighbouring countries in coordination with our networks such as [Prospera](#) so our support can complement that of other allies:

- We are moving resources to the [Ukrainian Women's Fund](#), who continue their work inside Ukraine under very difficult circumstances. They are able to draw on their long history of supporting women-led organizations and their specific strategies to protect the rights of women, girls and LGBTIQ activists and serve local communities.
- We are contributing to the [Urgent Action Fund](#). As a rapid response mechanism, UAF provides resources and support to activists (including women human rights defenders and LGBTQ rights defenders) both in Ukraine and surrounding countries quickly and effectively. As our own commitment to supporting women, girls and LGBTIQ activists impacted by other crises hidden in plain sight, we are providing UAF with additional resources to also deploy rapid response grants to countries such as Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, Kazakhstan and others.

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- We are supporting [FemFund](#) in Poland, who are supporting women-led organisations providing critical services to refugees from Ukraine (in the absence of a state-led response)
- We are increasing our support to grantee partners in Georgia who have mobilised to support refugees coming in from Ukraine.
- We are exploring ways to support young feminists around Ukraine who are providing responsive services to communities.

We will continue to monitor the situation and will build out a medium-term strategy to support feminist activists and organizations as the situation evolves. This includes attention to what is happening in additional countries bordering Ukraine. We are in conversations with other funders in order to avoid duplication and catalyze efforts.

We are exploring how to bring the voices of Ukrainian feminist activists (and activists in neighbouring countries) to policy and humanitarian discussions. This includes highlighting those most excluded or discriminated against, including young feminist activists, LGBTIQ activists, and IDPs and refugees from African, Asian communities, the Roma and other marginalised racial and ethnic groups.

We continue to support women's rights and feminist organizations, women peacebuilders, and feminist activists in conflict-affected countries around the globe: Colombia, Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere. We are in the process of building a new program to support feminist activists in times of crisis, exploring how to move resources and work in solidarity.

We believe in the potential of feminist foreign policies. Although the loudest voices right now are those of missiles, weapons, and destruction, we find strength in the long history of feminist activists who have dreamed of – and worked toward - a more peaceful, just, sustainable and equitable world. We continue to work to make space in security and realpolitik discussions for alternative insights and too long-excluded voices.

## In Solidarity

Our work is strongest when we work together. We learn from and with feminist organizations and networks around the world. We are signatories to the following letters and statements:

- Statement by Prospera, the International Network of Women's Funds – [Support Feminist Movements in Ukraine, Poland, and Bulgaria Now](#) (3 March 2022)
- Letter to the Hon Harjit Sajjan, Canada's Minister for International Development on [Supporting LGBTIQ Communities through Canada's Humanitarian Aid](#) by members of Dignity Network Canada (15 March 2022)

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- Letter to Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, from Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Equality Fund, Global Fund for Women, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Rights, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - **Urgent Demand for a Just and Equal Distribution of Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine**

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