

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Supporting People  
Striving for Democracy





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Striving for Democracy



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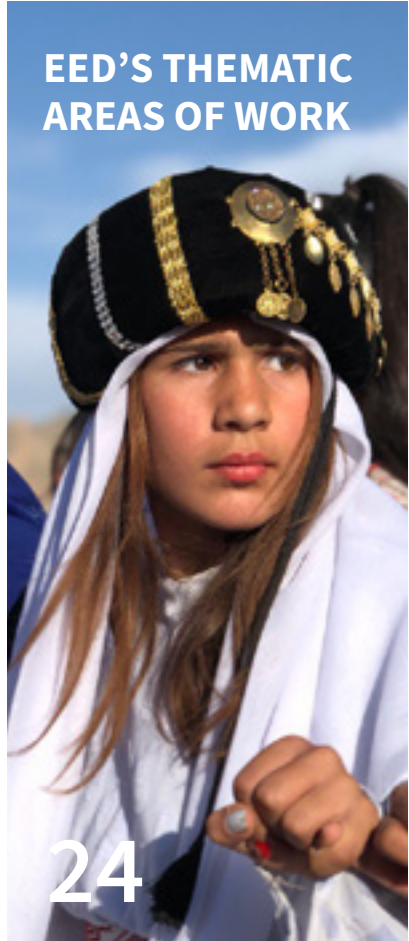






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# FOREWORD

The year 2022 was one of seismic geopolitical change for us in Europe and for our partners in the European Neighbourhood. The barbaric and unprovoked war of aggression launched by Russia against Ukraine has had far-reaching consequences. Russian President Vladimir Putin has challenged universally recognised borders, committed land theft and broken international humanitarian law.

Given the deliberate attacks and atrocities committed against the civilian population of Ukraine, the European Parliament declared Russia a state sponsor of terrorism in November 2022. Thorough documentation of war crimes committed by the Russian armed forces is key to holding Putin and his military leadership accountable in front of an international war crimes tribunal.

Since its inception in 2013, the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) has worked with a wide network of democracy actors across Ukraine. Today, our partners are at the centre of a resilient volunteer movement that is working with local and central authorities, businesses, the wider public and independent media. Among these is the Nobel laureate Oleksandra Matviichuk from the Center of Civil Liberties, an organisation that is part of the global Tribunal for Putin initiative that is recording criminal acts by the Russian armed forces. In recognition of the brave people of Ukraine, Matviichuk — together with other laureates — received the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2022.

While much attention and plenty of resources are focused on Ukraine at present, let us not forget our democratic partners in the Middle East and North Africa, the wider Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans. Each region is witnessing a democratic decline, with civil society actors and independent media fearlessly demanding accountability and transparency despite ongoing assaults on human rights and freedom of expression.

Belarusian activists still face extreme repression as the Lukashenka regime, long subsidised by Moscow, has supported and facilitated Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In late 2022, over 1,450 political prisoners, including the Nobel Peace Prize winner and human rights defender Ales Bialiatski, were held captive. Throughout the year, EED continued its crucial work at the frontline of support to Belarusian civil society and independent media within as well as outside Belarus.

Tunisian democracy deteriorated further in 2022, with the erosion of democratic reforms, the adoption of a new constitution in August that reduces the prominence of political parties, and a

record low turnout at December's parliamentary elections, which opposition parties boycotted. Precisely because the situation on the ground is so dire, EED has tailored its support to actors in Tunisia that continue to strive for democratic engagement and to protect civil spaces and media freedom.

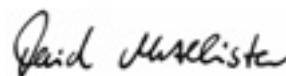
In the Balkans, EED provides vital support to a wide variety of media outlets, including local ones, that struggle to survive in an environment where freedom of thought and expression is under constant attack.

EED's support remains vital in Moldova especially, where the pro-European government is under immense pressure with relentless attempts by the Russian Federation to destabilise the authorities. This ensures that independent media continue to provide reliable and accurate information.

Last but certainly not least, I am deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Iran. The peaceful protests there have been met with repression that is violent, indiscriminate, disproportionate and unrestrained. The protests have triggered a wave of international solidarity for the people of Iran, who are determined in their rebellion against the Mullah regime and are in favour of democratic change and respect for human rights. It is my strong desire that EED's support be stepped up to respond to the needs of the brave women and men of Iran.

Since 2013, EED has been at the frontline of underpinning democratic values within the European Neighbourhood and beyond. Its flexible and innovative support model has proven itself time and again — though EED is today arguably even more indispensable than at its inception.

The European Parliament was one of EED's initial supporters, formally recommending the establishment of the Endowment to the European Council in March 2012. To this day, the parliament plays an important role in EED's governance, with up to nine members serving on EED's Board of Governors at any time. At the Board of Governors meeting in December 2022, I had the great honour of being re-elected as Chairman for a second term. As EED embarks on its tenth anniversary in 2023, we will help steer the Endowment as it takes stock of its past progress and reflects on the decade ahead.



**David McAllister**  
Chair of the Board of Governors  
European Endowment for Democracy

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the European Endowment for Democracy's 2022 Annual Report.

In 2022, EED received over 1,200 applications for support, 379 of which were funded for a total of €42 million.

2022 was undoubtedly the most difficult year since EED's establishment in 2013. The year was dominated by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the horrors of this protracted war. In February, we launched a rapid support mechanism, with grants issued 24 to 48 hours after applications were received. EED provided 77 emergency grants to civil society and independent media partners within the first two months of the war — a time when such fast and flexible support was badly needed.

Throughout the war, EED partners have helped to mobilise a massive volunteer movement within Ukraine. They are helping ordinary citizens, millions of whom have been forced to flee their homes. They are also protecting their human rights and bringing the world's attention to Russian war crimes. At the same time, civil society continues to be vigilant in its role of protecting democratic values in Ukraine. In July, with EED support, Ukrainian civic leaders presented the so-called Lugano Declaration at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in the Swiss city of Lugano, where they set out the role that civil society must play in the rebuilding and reconstruction of the country.

EED supported Ukrainian independent media partners, many of whom were reporting from the frontline — some of whom, like the Kyiv Independent and Slidstvo.info, have rightly come to international prominence. EED also opened the Centre for Ukrainian Activists in the Polish city of Przemyśl days after the war began. It provides ongoing "Work & Rest" programmes where mostly women activists and journalists can benefit from a few weeks of rest and psychological support. A special section in this report focuses on the work of our Ukrainian partners.

EED works throughout the European Neighbourhood and beyond. We have included here profiles of partners from throughout the regions of our mandate, including the wider Eastern Partnership region, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Western Balkans.

Many of these actors work in challenging and difficult environments. In Syria, for instance, EED partners are helping to empower local communities, raise awareness of human

rights and run key independent media despite a volatile security situation. In Libya, EED supports important human rights initiatives and media platforms that continue to work amid ongoing fighting and a crackdown on civic and pro-democracy actors.

Of course, many other EED partners work in more open environments. In Moldova, EED supports leading media outlets and anti-corruption initiatives that are helping to consolidate democratic reforms. In the Western Balkans, too, our partners are at the centre of a vibrant civic activist community and are ensuring pluralism of voices within a distorted media landscape.

Despite creeping authoritarianism in many parts of the world today, it is heartening to note continuing demand for democratic principles from wider society, as we saw in Georgia in 2022 and in Tunisia in early 2023. Recently, too, we have witnessed the mass protests in Iran, where despite the brutality of the regime, thousands have come out onto the streets to demand freedom and women's rights.

EED's slogan since its launch in 2013 has been "to support the unsupported", and this spirit continues to underpin much of our work. We support those who believe in the power of positive democratic change and progress and who can bring about and sustain such change.

In 2023, EED will celebrate the 10th anniversary as a grant-making institution. Much has changed in the world over the past decade and within EED as an organisation. Our mandate now includes the Western Balkans and Turkey, and the Eurasia region. But, at our core, EED has not changed, and we remain constant in our mandate of fostering democracy by responding to the demands of pro-democracy actors. We also remain constant in our admiration and awe of the tenacity — and, in so many cases, the bravery — of our partners who continue to bring about better and more democratic futures for their societies, despite the seemingly insurmountable odds they face.



**Jerzy Pomianowski**  
Executive Director  
European Endowment for Democracy



# EED APPROACH

## INNOVATIVE

EED is open to new and innovative ideas and responds in a dynamic way to requests for support when providing support to develop democracy. Although most initiatives fall into one of the eight thematic areas covered in this report, EED welcomes creative proposals that approach democracy through different lenses. Its grantees come from all walks of life and many are new to activism. EED is frequently a lifeline to organisations struggling to continue with their work in times of turmoil or when facing severe repression.



## DEMAND-DRIVEN AND FLEXIBLE

EED adapts support to respond to local realities. EED is demand-driven and flexible. It can support individuals and non-registered groups and grant emergency funding requests, often turning around such requests within a few days.



## SUPPORTING THE UNSUPPORTED

EED seeks primarily to support groups and activists without the capacity to access EU democracy-support programmes, but with a guiding principle of investing in transformational ideas and the people behind them. It also invests time in capacity building of grantees in areas such as programme and project management, ensuring that good ideas can be transformed into functioning organisations.



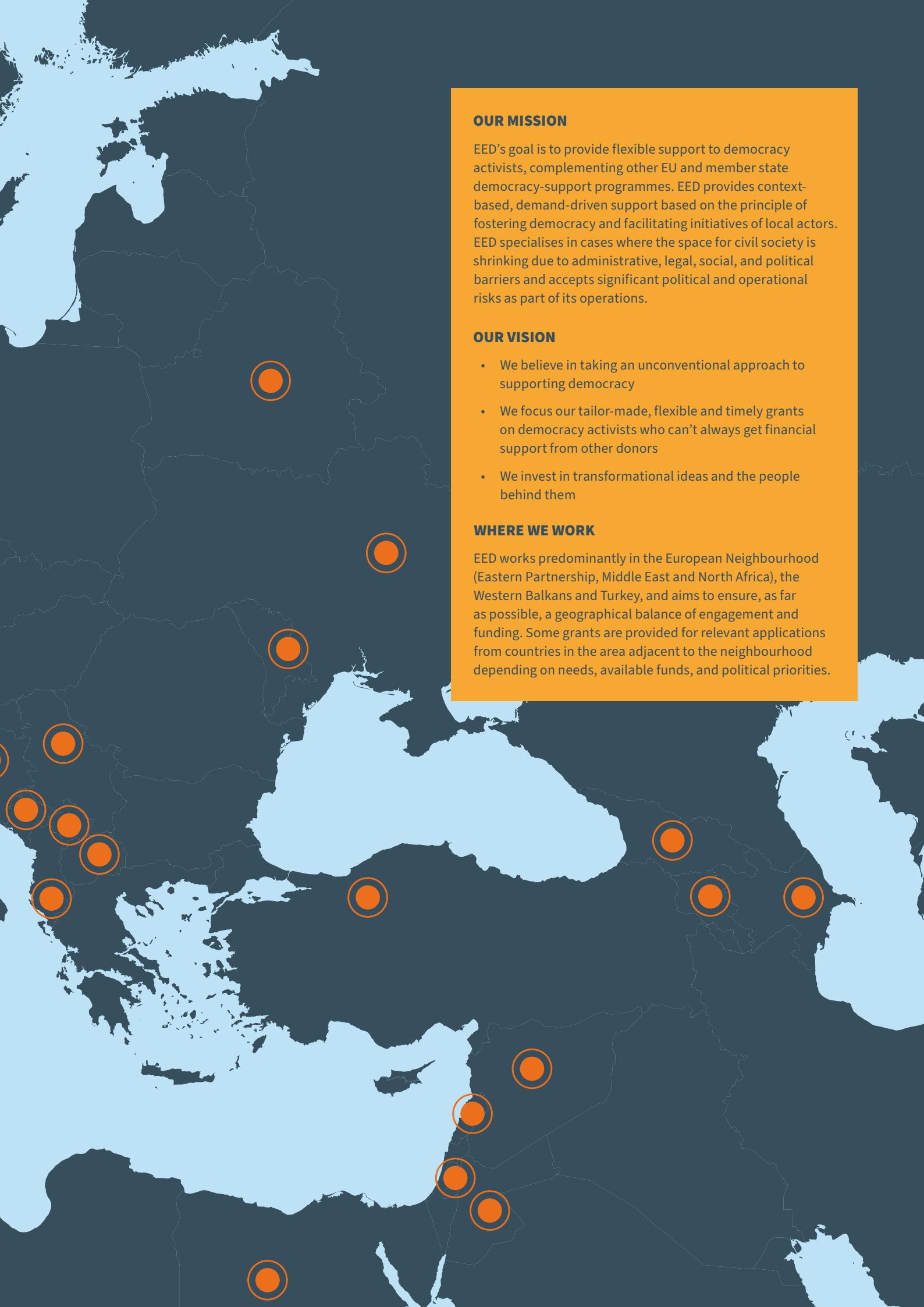
# ABOUT EED

The European Endowment for Democracy (EED) is an independent, grant-making organisation established in 2013 by the European Union (EU) and EU member states as an autonomous International Trust Fund to foster democracy in the European Neighbourhood and beyond.

All EU member states are members of EED's Board of Governors, together with Members of the European Parliament, representatives of Norway, the United Kingdom, and the European External Action Service (EEAS), a member designated by the European Commission, and three members elected to represent European civil society. Since its inception, EED has provided over 2,012 grants and has evolved into a vibrant, innovative, and respected member of the democracy support community.

EED funds a vast array of both registered and unregistered pro-democracy actors including human rights and political activists, pro-democratic movements, civil society organisations, emerging leaders, independent media and journalists that may not be able to obtain funding otherwise. Support is contingent on adherence to democratic values, respect for international human rights and observance of principles of non-violence by the grantees.





## OUR MISSION

EED's goal is to provide flexible support to democracy activists, complementing other EU and member state democracy-support programmes. EED provides context-based, demand-driven support based on the principle of fostering democracy and facilitating initiatives of local actors. EED specialises in cases where the space for civil society is shrinking due to administrative, legal, social, and political barriers and accepts significant political and operational risks as part of its operations.

## OUR VISION

- We believe in taking an unconventional approach to supporting democracy
- We focus our tailor-made, flexible and timely grants on democracy activists who can't always get financial support from other donors
- We invest in transformational ideas and the people behind them

## WHERE WE WORK

EED works predominantly in the European Neighbourhood (Eastern Partnership, Middle East and North Africa), the Western Balkans and Turkey, and aims to ensure, as far as possible, a geographical balance of engagement and funding. Some grants are provided for relevant applications from countries in the area adjacent to the neighbourhood depending on needs, available funds, and political priorities.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This report provides an overview of the work of the European Endowment for Democracy in supporting democracy in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods of the European Union, as well as in the Western Balkans and Turkey and beyond during 2022.**

## **ONE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY, MANY CONTEXTS**

EED was set up following the 2011 Arab Spring, with a vision of providing flexible support to democracy activists, complementing other European Union and Member States' democracy support programmes.

Nearly a decade after EED's establishment, democracy is under increasing threat worldwide; the optimism of the Arab Spring has been replaced by war and instability, and there are clear indications of a creeping authoritarianism in many countries. Civil space and freedom of speech are under threat. Civil society actors are facing a pushback and attacks against human rights defenders are on the increase. Despite these challenges, popular demand for democracy remains strong, as was witnessed in many of the countries of EED's mandate in 2022, including Ukraine, with the widespread volunteer movement, and Georgia, where thousands came out onto the streets in support of the country's EU membership bid.

EED's flexible operating model is even more appropriate today than it was in 2013, given its mandate to support all activists wherever they are located as they continue to protect and build democratic futures. This support is particularly important in more difficult realities, where activists take daily risks in carrying out such work, and where few other donors can operate.

## **AREAS OF SUPPORT**

EED-supported initiatives can be broadly classified into eight major thematic areas: anti-corruption and public accountability; independent and social media platforms; civic activism and participation; human rights activism and monitoring; women's civic and political participation; inclusive society, sexual orientation and gender identity; arts and culture; and youth.

This report is structured around these thematic areas, presenting a selection of initiatives supported by EED for each of them. These include, among many others, a media outlet debunking misinformation and fake news in and about Syria; an organisation fighting for legal recognition of children born out of wartime sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina; an NGO advocating for Yazidi women who survived ISIS captivity; and a magazine creating an online platform for the LGBTQI+ community in Georgia.

We also include in this report, for the fourth year running, anonymous profiles of some of our grantees working in extremely dangerous contexts, with their names changed to protect their identity.

Finally, the report includes stories about successful EED alumni, former grantees that are now well-established civil society organisations.



### **SPECIAL FOCUS ON UKRAINE**

A special section on the work of our partners in Ukraine at a time of war highlights EED's response to the crisis. EED's Executive Committee set in motion a rapid-response mechanism one day after the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, enabling EED to immediately respond to partners' changing needs.

Ukrainian civil society was already a vibrant and creative force prior to February 2022, but today it has emerged as a central pillar in society's response to the war. Many EED activists are at the forefront of the volunteer movement. They are providing humanitarian assistance to people living in areas affected by the war, sending medical and food supplies to the territorial defence forces, and collecting evidence of Russian war crimes. Ukrainian independent journalists are reporting from the frontlines and are providing balanced and credible reporting on the war.

### **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING**

In 2022, EED continued to strengthen its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning processes, which are crucial to assessing the effectiveness of our work and its impact on its beneficiaries. The system is designed to support EED's flexible democracy-support model, allowing it to react and adapt quickly to changes in environments and to evolving insights. This year, evaluation analyses were conducted on EED's work in Serbia and Armenia.

### **GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES AND BUDGET**

The EED Secretariat has continued to grow and now has 56 core staff members from 27 different countries. In 2022, 11 trainees had the opportunity to gain significant experience in democracy support through the traineeship programme in the operations and programme teams.

Twenty-five European countries that are members of the Board of Governors have contributed to EED's programme budget to date, as has Canada through special grants for Ukraine and Belarus. In 2022, EED also received contributions from the Robert Bosch Stiftung and from 3DS. EED's operations budget is covered by a European Commission grant.



КРИТИЧНИ

РІВЕНЬ

ФІРМАЧІВ

НА КВ.МЕТР.

НЕСУ СУМСЬКУ ВПЕВНЕНОСТЬ

THE STATE OF SUMSK

ASUKP.



# EED IN NUMBERS

**€42**  
million in democracy support approved in 2022



**379**  
new funded initiatives



**1,224**  
applications received



**56**  
core staff members from 27 countries




**82,996**  
unique website visits

**79,367**  
followers across four social media platforms



**59%**  
increase in LinkedIn followers

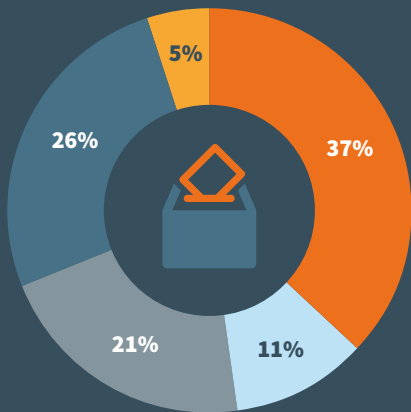


**791,703**  
post impressions across all social media (a 13.4% increase compared with 2021)



# PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

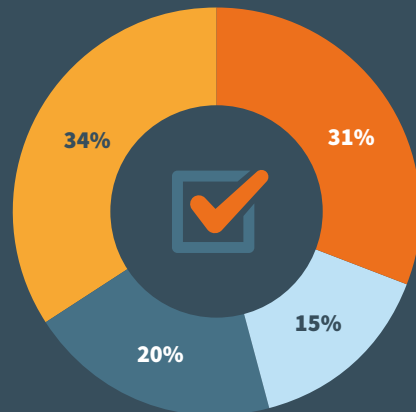
**APPLICATIONS RECEIVED PER REGION IN 2022 — 1,224**



- Eastern Partnership (EaP)\*
- Eurasia
- Middle East & North Africa
- Western Balkans & Turkey
- Rest of the World

\* For the purpose of this report, Belarus continues to be included within the EaP.

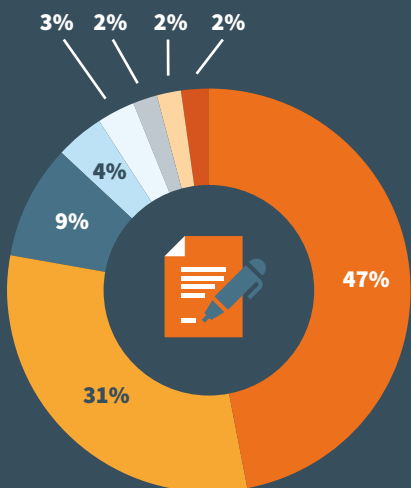
**INITIATIVES APPROVED BY EXCOM\* IN 2022 BY REGION — 379**



- Eastern Partnership (EaP)\*
- Eurasia
- Middle East & North Africa
- Western Balkans & Turkey

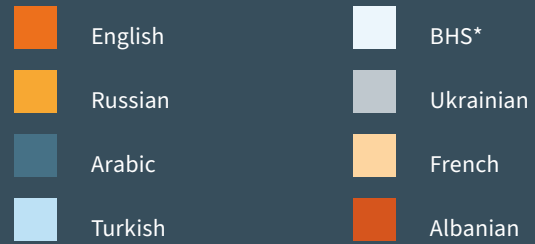
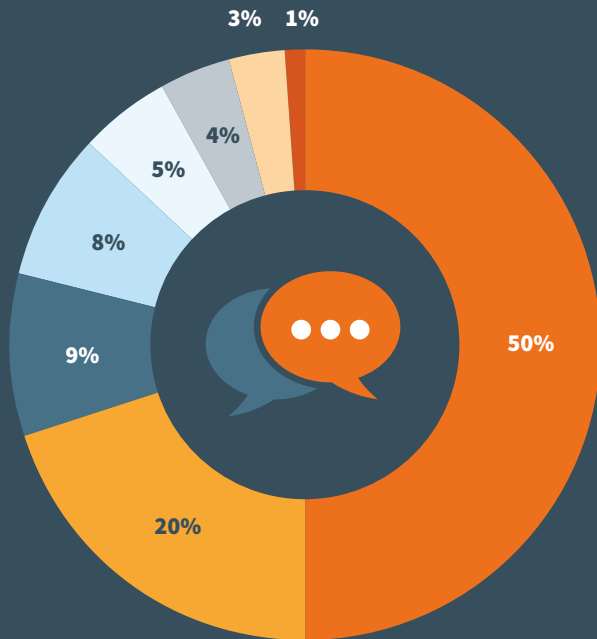
\* The Executive Committee of the Board of Governors (ExCom)

**INITIATIVES APPROVED IN 2022 PER THEMATIC AREA**



- Independent and social media platforms
- Civic activism and participation
- Human rights activism and monitoring
- Arts and culture
- Youth
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Women's civic and political participation
- Anticorruption and public accountability

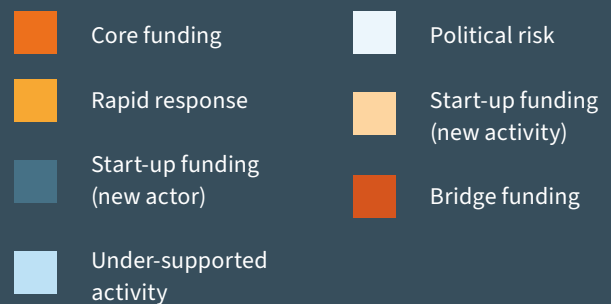
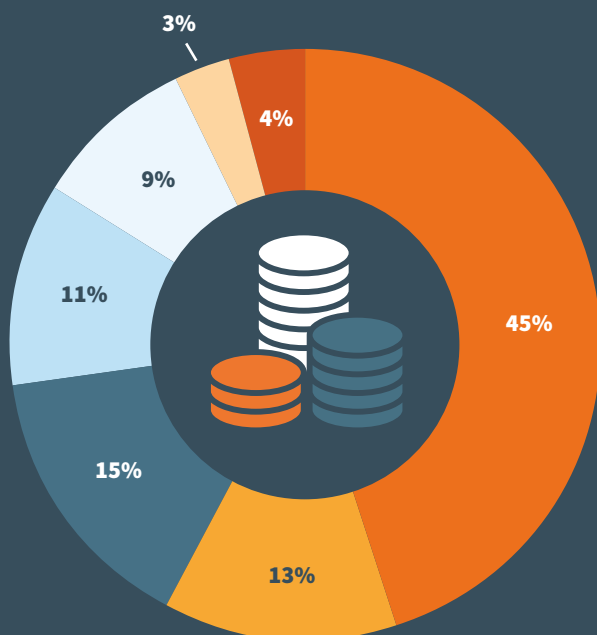
## LANGUAGE OF APPLICATION IN 2022



EED accepts applications in all the main languages spoken in the regions where our partners operate.

\*BHS: Languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia.

## EED'S ADDED VALUE\*



\* A key part of EED's mission is to "add value" to existing European mechanisms of support to pro-democracy actors and activities. EED identifies an added value for each grant as part of its ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning process.



# EVENTS

**EED offers activists from partner organisations an opportunity to make their voices heard within the European institutions, Member States and the global democracy community through events organised on EED's premises and with partners.**

## EED organised, co-organised and participated in 34 events in 2022, including international conferences and summits.

These included many closed-door events, which provided a safe space for partner organisations and activists to freely discuss their stories, experiences and opinions with representatives of EU institutions and member states, and other international organisations with a specific interest in the relevant region or subject.

2022 also saw the return of larger in-person events after a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, including co-organised events with partner organisations such as Difference Day and International Democracy Day Brussels. Online events remain part of EED's events toolbox, and are especially useful when bringing together activists and audiences from all over the world.

EED supports our partners to attend relevant international conferences, including Forum 2000 in Prague and the World Forum for Democracy in Strasbourg. These events allow activists to gain access to new audiences and to network with other activists and possible donors.

EED regularly organises policy debates and donor meetings, as well as strategic reflection meetings for all regions where we operate.

**“I wanted to show human solidarity, I wanted to show how people want to keep living even in terrible circumstances.”**

**- ABDALLAH AL-KHATIB**



### **SCREENING OF *LITTLE PALESTINE* (*DIARY OF A SIEGE*)**

In March, EED, together with ActionSyrie, hosted a screening in Brussels of the documentary *Little Palestine (Diary of a Siege)*, and a post-screening discussion with Abdallah Al-Khatib, the film's director, and Mohammad Ali Atassi, its producer and the director of former EED partner Bidayyat.

The documentary tells the story of the Yarmouk camp in Damascus, the biggest Palestinian refugee camp in the world, at the time of the siege by the forces of the regime of Bashar al-Assad between 2013 and 2015, during the Syrian conflict.

Al-Khatib, who was born in the camp, documented the daily life of its besieged inhabitants, using a camera inherited from a friend killed at a camp checkpoint.

“When I decided to film life in the camp, I didn't know I would make a documentary out of this footage. I didn't even know if I would survive. I wanted to show human solidarity, I wanted to show how people want to keep living even in terrible circumstances. They want to laugh; they want to make music. They don't just want to, they need to.”

Abdallah Al-Khatib



**DIFFERENCE DAY 2022:  
JOURNALISM DURING A TIME OF CRISIS**

For the seventh year in a row, EED was one of the co-organisers of **Difference Day**, a high-profile celebration of World Press Freedom Day in Brussels, which returned as a live event after two online editions.

EED organised a discussion, “Journalism During a Time of Crisis”, at Bozar on 3 May 2022. The panel, moderated by Belarusian journalist Hanna Liubakova, brought together journalists from Belarus and Ukraine to discuss how they continue their work despite state repression and war.

Speakers included Ukrainian conflict reporter, Nataliya Gumenyuk; Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), Barys Haretski; co-founder of The Fix, Jakub Parusinski; and EED Executive Committee Vice-Chair, Pavol Demeš.

**“When reporting on the war, journalists also need to focus on inspiring stories. Talking to young volunteers, local mayors and repairmen working under shelling gives me strength. There are countless stories that show incredible resilience.”**

**- NATALIYA GUMENYUK**





© Homam Daoud

**“People say to me: ‘Rana, you’re really brave’. But I don’t want to be brave. Journalists shouldn’t have to be brave. We shouldn’t have to be threatened, prosecuted or incarcerated.”**

**- RANA AYYUB**



© Homam Daoud

### **INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRACY DAY BRUSSELS 2022**

EED was one of the co-organisers of the eighth edition of **International Democracy Day Brussels**, held from 14 to 16 September 2022 to mark the International Day of Democracy. This year’s edition, “Democracy in an Era of Geopolitics”, consisted of online webinars and a one-day in-person event at the European Committee of the Regions.

EED partner Imad Daïmi, president of the Raqabah Observatory, took part in the plenary session with international speakers from across the world. Indian journalist Rana Ayyub gave the keynote address and highlighted the challenges faced by journalists today.

EED also organised a webinar, “Rebuilding Ukraine: the Lugano Declaration”, where Ukrainian civil society representatives — including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Oleksandra Matviychuk — discussed civil society’s vision for the reconstruction of a post-war democratic Ukraine.

EED also hosted the premiere of “Transformation”, a documentary film about civil society in Ukraine from Euromaidan in 2013 to today. The screening was followed by a discussion with civic activists featured in the film, all of them EED grantees, who travelled to Brussels from Ukraine for the occasion.



© EED

### **WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY 2022**

In November, EED was in Strasbourg with a delegation of our grantees from Armenia, Iraq, Serbia and Turkey to attend the **10th World Forum for Democracy**, organised by the Council of Europe. This year’s edition, “Democracy: A New Hope?”, discussed the future of democracy through a series of labs and panel discussions with young activists from around the world.



Diyala, March 2020, crops of  
Kaka'i community in Mekhas  
village set on fire, Iraq  
© Amir Khanaqini



# ONE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY, MANY CONTEXTS

**EED was set up with a vision of providing flexible, demand-driven support to democracy activists responding to local ambitions and needs, complementing other European Union and member state democracy-support programmes.**

EED's first grants were provided in 2013 following the 2011 Arab Spring, a period of hope and democratic aspirations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Indeed, EED's establishment was inspired by these events and Member States' acknowledgement of the need to provide timely and flexible democracy support.

Over the past nine years, we have witnessed a global shrinking of civic space. The optimism of the Arab Spring has been replaced by war and creeping authoritarianism, not only in the MENA region but also in other regions where EED operates and elsewhere around the world.

Today, over 26 percent of the world's population live in closed autocracies, and 3.4 billion people — or 44 percent of the global population — live in electoral autocracies.<sup>1</sup> Only two in 10 people live in “free” countries.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, freedom of expression has deteriorated significantly, with misinformation and disinformation multiplying and frequently used by governments as a tool to manipulate public opinion and to enhance their international reputations.

Civil society organisations have been badly affected by this ongoing trend towards autocracy, and by the accompanying censorship of the media and harassment of journalists. It has become increasingly dangerous for democracy actors in many countries to publicly receive grants from external grantors.

1 – V-Dem Institute, “Democracy Report 2022: Autocratization Changing Nature”, 1 March 2022. <https://democracy.issuelab.org/resource/democracy-report-2022-autocratization-changing-nature.html>

2 – Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz, “Freedom in the World 2022: The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule”, Freedom House, February 2022. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2022/global-expansion-authoritarian-rule>

Despite this dramatic decline in democratic freedoms, 2022 was a year marked by strong popular demand for democracy from the general public and activists, including in Ukraine and Georgia. Across the world, activists also risk their lives daily in pursuit of a freer society. They are forced to become more and more creative in how they work, as they find ways of circumventing and opposing creeping authoritarianism.

In this context, EED's flexible operating model is highly valuable today, just as it was in 2013 at EED's founding. EED's mandate means it can provide appropriate demand-driven support to activists, so that they can continue to keep working for better futures for their families and their societies regardless of the challenges they face. EED's support is important in closed and difficult contexts where few other donors are present, just as it is in less repressive environments at a risk of democratic decline, where support is vital to ensure functioning civil society and independent media organisations.

In a future where democracy is likely to continue to be under pressure, it is imperative that EED can continue to support activists. Democratic change may come quickly in some contexts, whereas in others it may take years. Today's democracy actors are laying the foundations for longer-term democratic change at a time that is right both politically and geopolitically.

Like the activists it supports, EED constantly adapts and finds new ways of supporting democratic partners today and into the future. This ability to evolve and to be flexible is at the heart of EED's model, as witnessed by EED's rapid response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine last February, and during other crises in past years.





### **FROM OPEN TO AUTOCRATIC: SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY IN THE EAST**

EED supports a wide variety of democracy actors within the Eastern Partnership and beyond. In 2022, this included emergency grants to Ukrainian civil society and media partners as they scaled up and adapted their programmes to the realities of full-scale war; grants to actors in more open contexts such as Moldova, Armenia and Georgia; and to activists working in highly authoritarian environments such as Belarus, Azerbaijan and Russia, as well as to Central Asian countries, where EED's discreet funding is of particular value.

In **Ukraine**, civil society has shown great resilience and has emerged as a central pillar in society's response to full-scale war. Today, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians are actively involved in massive volunteer movements, and many of the leaders of these movements may well emerge as political leaders in a post-war Ukraine. In July, civil society leaders presented the Civil Society Manifesto 2022 (Lugano Declaration) on the sidelines of the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC2022) in Lugano, setting out civil society's role in the reconstruction and recovery of the country. A "Ukraine Special" is included in this report.

In **Belarus**, two years after the collapse of the pro-democracy movement, the embattled regime continues to react with extreme repression against protesters, active citizens, civil society and media. At the end of 2022, there were 1,446 political prisoners in the country, including Nobel Peace Prize winner and human rights defender Ales Bialiatski. EED's discreet support enables continued assistance to Belarusian activists and media working both inside and outside the country.

In **Georgia**, the war in Ukraine has widened divisions between the ruling party and society; the government's ambivalence on its position on the war has contrasted with the opposition and the majority of the population's push for solidarity with Ukraine. There was a marked increase in protests, and civil society played a central role in mobilising society. Civil society and media operate in an increasingly fragile environment, and are subject to verbal attacks and harassment by the government, which is also tightening its grip on freedom of expression. Hate speech and discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community continue. The media environment has deteriorated and key outlets are a target of political repressions.

In **Armenia**, the war in Ukraine has meant a deterioration in the already complex geopolitical situation following the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. Public political apathy and distrust of political actors is at an all-time high. The media landscape is marked by a lack of transparency regarding the ownership of outlets, disinformation and sustainability, as well as the government's failure to respond to hate speech. Despite instability, civil society is regrouping and continues to make important steps towards democratisation; however, minorities, particularly LGBTQI+ people, continue to face harassment, discrimination and violence.

### **WAR, ECONOMIC CRISIS AND DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING: SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY IN THE MENA REGION**

As the world's focus has turned to Russia's war on Ukraine, in 2022 EED has continued to work with our network of partners throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), a region significantly impacted by democratic backsliding and economic crisis. EED's adaptive and flexible model enables it to fund sensitive initiatives, including those in regions less accessible to other donors, such as in Syria, Libya and Palestine, as well as in countries of democratic crisis, such as Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan.

In **Tunisia**, President Kais Saied has continued to undermine democratic advances following the constitutional coup of 25 July 2021. The 2014 Constitution was abolished during a referendum marked by irregularities and a low turnout. The president is no longer accountable to any future parliament, has handpicked the prime minister and has extended his control over the judiciary. A leaked draft law on association could have devastating effects on the civil society sector. EED's partners are constantly monitoring this situation and advocating to return Tunisia to a democratic path.

In **Palestine**, the situation deteriorated during the year; there are growing tensions that many fear could be a precursor to a third intifada. Israel refused to open a criminal investigation into the assassination of Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in May. In August, Israeli forces raided the offices of seven prominent civil society organisations, and they were declared illegal in a further clampdown on civic space. Mainstream donors are under constant and growing pressure to limit their operations.

As **Syria** continues to experience a volatile security situation, a stalled political process and highly difficult economic conditions exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, civil society activists and voices of dissent face heightened pressure and threats. New legislation on cybercrime is further limiting freedom of expression, and many NGO workers have been arrested and organisations dissolved within regime-controlled areas. Limitations of freedom of association and expression have also been experienced in areas controlled by the militant Islamist rebel group Hay'at al-Sham (HTS) and in Rojava, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES). Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries are subject to hate speech and direct threats, including the threat of forced return. EED stands as one of the few donors able to navigate Syria's volatility and capable of responding to emerging needs on the ground.

**Lebanon** continues to experience an economic free-fall and political deadlock. Despite parliamentary elections in May, which elected several independent candidates from new emerging political groups, there are still sharp divisions, and the country remains without a government or a new president. The democratic and human rights situation is deteriorating, with refugees at particular risk. EED supports initiatives working to address democratic backsliding, accountability and transparency, provides seed funding to new organisations and initiatives, funds politically sensitive initiatives and ensures core support to media outlets.

In **Libya**, the postponement of elections was a major setback for the country's path towards democracy and unification, plunging it into a deep crisis. As various factions fight to control the country, the crackdown on civic and pro-democracy actors has intensified, and freedom of assembly and association has been systematically repressed, as has freedom of expression. The volatility of the Libyan context, and the limited capacities of Libyan CSOs, highlight the importance of EED's flexible approach in channelling and adapting its support to emerging needs.

### **HELPING TO KINDLE DEMOCRACY AND TO REBOOT IT: THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY**

In the Western Balkans, EED works with grassroots activists, start-up groups and independent media, including many local media, most of which have seen a collapse in their revenue models in the recent period. EED's ability to provide flexible funding in Turkey continues to be particularly relevant in an increasingly autocratic environment as the country prepares for the 2023 elections.

**Serbia** is the only European country besides Belarus that has not imposed sanctions on Russia, with government-controlled media openly promoting a pro-Russian narrative. The opposition returned to parliament after boycotting previous elections. The coalition around the ruling party maintains full control. With support to independent media in Serbia acknowledged as vital for the whole region's stability, EED is supporting a wide array of media, including many local outlets. This represents significant support to the media sector in the country. EED also supports grassroots initiatives that mobilise citizens through community building and cultural activities helping to revive civic activism.

In **Kosovo\***, while the government continues to focus on the rule of law and anti-corruption, and civil society operates in a generally enabling environment, there is a noted rise in nationalism and a politicisation of the civil society sector. EED's portfolio includes many grassroots and start-up initiatives from civil society, as well as representatives from independent media, a group that struggles to obtain support from other donors.

In **Albania**, the political crisis has allowed the government to rule without much opposition. Civil society organisations are losing support and trust, while the media market remains chaotic and prone to commercial and political interference. EED's portfolio in Albania includes many new actors from grassroots activism, youth organisations and community mobilisation initiatives.

In **Montenegro**, political instability and changes of government have interfered with the work of institutions and have delayed reforms, risking a constitutional crisis. Identity politics and nationalist influences polarise Montenegrin society, and the media is increasingly partisan. In this rapidly changing environment, EED's support enables scattered pro-democracy civic-oriented activist groups and innovative media to offer alternatives to overarching identity clashes.

In **Turkey**, with the continuing authoritarianism of the government, human rights and civil society are in crisis. Rights-based CSOs are subjected to politically motivated and arduous audits and other attempts to impede and silence them. Independent media operate in a legal minefield and are constantly threatened with legal repercussions for doing basic journalism. EED plays a key role in supporting independent media and helps to strengthen innovative pro-democracy actors, including those in marginalised regions and under political risk.

\* All references to Kosovo on this website should be understood to be in compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.



# EED'S THEMATIC AREAS OF WORK



# I. ANTI-CORRUPTION AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

More established democracies generally have lower levels of corruption compared to authoritarian regimes or younger democracies. All democracies need actors and mechanisms to serve as checks and balances to corruption and to encourage environments of accountability and transparency.

Active citizens are particularly crucial in this fight, as they call attention to cases of corruption. In this section, we profile three active citizens' organisations: Veles from Armenia; the Centre for Theatre from Moldova; and the Tunisian Global Institute 4 Transitions. All three are cultivating an anti-corruption mindset within their societies and enhancing both social empowerment and accountability.

In autocracies, corruption and kleptocratic systems typically go hand in hand, as they are characterised by limited political pluralism and freedom of expression, a tightly controlled media, human rights violations, repression by the military and a reduced space for civic activism.

## EED'S ADDED VALUE IN 2022

EED's flexible funding model enables it to support anti-corruption efforts in both open and more closed environments. While this is of significant importance within emerging democracies, where corruption is often a stumbling block to ongoing democratisation, it is particularly valuable in more autocratic environments where EED is often one of the only donors able to fund such sensitive initiatives.



## ARMENIA:

### VELES — PROVIDING FOR TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF YEREVAN MUNICIPALITY

EED's funding enabled **Veles**, an NGO with a strong record in anti-corruption activity, to launch a website for public oversight of the Yerevan Municipality, one of Armenia's best-funded public institutions. Around 37 percent of Armenia's population lives in Yerevan, and the municipality receives one sixteenth of the country's total budget. Although the budget is published annually, there was no previous public oversight mechanism.

Veles has carried out a detailed analysis of the 2020 municipal budget and is now involving citizens in

overseeing the current budget and in identifying needs. This includes analysing the process of conducting tenders to encourage good urban governance and public participation, focusing on the procurement of goods and services, ensuring transparency on employee salaries and any property acquired that does not correspond to their official income. Veles has also produced a series of videos and articles to build awareness of these issues and has organised roundtable discussions with the Yerevan Council of Elders and other relevant bodies.



## MOLDOVA:

### CENTRE OF THEATRE FROM MOLDOVA — CREATING A CULTURE OF ANTI-CORRUPTION THROUGH DRAMA

Public opinion polls in Moldova consistently identify corruption as one of the top issues faced by the country, with corruption endemic in all levels of society.

Alina Turancu of Chişinău's Centre of Theatre from Moldova (CTM) believes that the younger generation must be taught to do things in a different way if they are to improve this situation. She explains that CTM had already worked on socio-political projects with children in Moldova that showed how drama can be useful when working with this age group.

With EED's funding, CTM devised a competition for playwrights from Moldova and neighbouring Romania to write a play with an anti-corruption theme. The winning play would be performed in Chişinău and in five regional

**“Our objective is to change mentalities.”**

cities. They expected 15 entries, but such was the interest that the three-person jury had to assess 50. The winner was announced in late November, and the play will be staged in Chişinău in February 2023. Following the regional performances, a film of the Chişinău performance will be posted on YouTube.

“Our objective is to change mentalities,” says Alina. “A play makes people laugh and cry, and that way they are more likely to remember its content. We want this play to prompt discussion within families and communities, and that way it can lead to change.”

## TUNISIA:

### GLOBAL INSTITUTE FOR TRANSITIONS — MONITORING ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TUNISIA

Ahead of the 2019 presidential elections in Tunisia, former Minister of Economy and Finance Hakim Ben Hammouda gathered with professors and economists to work on concrete policy recommendations for the future president. The recommendations were co-signed by more than 50 prominent Tunisian experts and communicated to all candidates through a press conference.

Together with civil society activist and communications expert Khalil Ben Cherif, Hakim decided to start “Econ4Tunisia”, a series of monthly seminars to put economic issues at the heart of public debate. The seminars were successful despite most of them being held online because of the Covid-19 epidemic.

In 2021, Hakim and Khalil officially launched a think tank: the **Global Institute for Transitions (GI4T)**. They now regularly publish policy papers and hold events open to both experts and the general public.

“We managed to gain credibility from the beginning not only because of Hakim's name and reputation, but also because of our work,” says Khalil. GI4T has unique access to Tunisian policymakers, public institutions and media, while at the same time remaining independent from any political parties.

“EED's funding gave us an incredible opportunity,” continues Khalil. “Before, our group had potential, but it was more informal. With EED's support we could consolidate and institutionalise GI4T.”

The main foci of their work in 2023 will be the economic crisis and the rise in inequality in the country on one side and monitoring the political situation and the state of freedom of the press on the other.

“We are aware that things are changing when it comes to democracy in Tunisia: we have held seminars about the electoral process, the new constitution... We want to continue contributing to the development of a democratic Tunisia,” says Khalil.

**“We are aware that things are changing when it comes to democracy in Tunisia.”**

## II. INDEPENDENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

**A free and independent media has long been considered an essential part of any democracy. Independent media investigate facts, provide unbiased coverage of news, fight disinformation, and ensure accountability and transparency within democracies. As democracy comes under threat, journalists worldwide are also under threat.**

Recent years have seen a stark rise in the number of journalists imprisoned and killed for their reporting, with many targeted for their work covering corruption, crime and politics in their own countries, a situation that some have referred to as a “war against journalism”.

Journalism is particularly dangerous in war-torn areas or in more authoritarian states, where political regimes control most mainstream media and crackdowns against press freedom, arrests and murders of journalists are commonplace.

It is no accident that with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, all non-Kremlin affiliated media in Russia were labelled foreign agents with most forced into exile. Libya has long been one of the most dangerous places for journalists to work. Similarly in Belarus, 33 journalists are currently behind bars, and most independent media primarily operate from abroad. The position of journalists in less repressive regimes is also becoming more challenging, as in the case of Serbia, where independent media face permanent pressure, with frequent attacks against journalists, including debilitating SLAPP cases.<sup>3</sup>

In many countries of EED’s mandate, ongoing economic crises caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have meant that independent media struggle to stay afloat and depend on ongoing core donor support for their survival.

<sup>3</sup> – A SLAPP suit, or a strategic lawsuit against public participation, usually arises out of a defamation lawsuit. However, unlike in defamation lawsuits, in the SLAPP suit the plaintiff does not generally plan to win the lawsuit. Instead, SLAPPs are intended to intimidate, censor, disparage, burden, and punish activists for exercising their right to free speech and protest. Source: <https://cldc.org/slapp-suits/>



**“A war against journalism.”**

### **EED’S ADDED VALUE IN 2022**

Media support was a significant part of EED’s overall portfolio in 2022. EED supports a wide range of independent media, from small hyper-local media outlets and bloggers to more established outlets. This support includes core funding, which pays for operating costs including salaries, equipment and the offices of media partners; bridge funding where media face closure due to funding shortfalls; and smaller project-based funding. A particular focus of EED’s support of independent media is to assist them to become sustainable and to survive. This can include providing repeat grants to media that are important players in their contexts.

EED plays a particularly important role in more difficult environments, where its flexible funding model enables it to provide safe and discreet support to non-state independent actors.

In this section, we profile a few of the hundreds of independent media supported by EED in 2022, including in Ukraine, Syria, Moldova, Kosovo, Iraq and Serbia.





© Kyiv Independent

## UKRAINE:

### THE KYIV INDEPENDENT — NOW AN INTERNATIONAL PLAYER

The **Kyiv Independent** has emerged as the leading English-language authority on news from Ukraine, yet it was established just weeks before the full-scale war.

Led by Olga Rudenko as chief editor and Daryna Shevchenko as CEO, the *Kyiv Independent* was set up in December 2021 after the abrupt closure of the *Kyiv Post* the previous month, when its new owner announced his intention to take over a newsroom known for its editorial independence.

EED provided a start-up grant which, in addition to other funding and a crowdfunding campaign including successful Patreon and GoFundMe pages, helped the team launch the new outlet in collaboration with Jnomics Media. On 6 December 2021, they moved into a borrowed office.

“We could not leave Ukraine without an independent English-language media, at a time when so much was happening and tens of thousands of Russian troops were amassing at Ukraine’s borders. There was lots of news from Ukraine, but little was translated into English. We needed to make sure there was a media that could act as a bridge between Ukraine and the world,” says Daryna.

Daryna admits that at that time, none of the team, even the veteran defence reporter, Ilya Ponomarenko, believed that a full-scale Russian invasion would happen. Nevertheless, they set about putting in place a contingency plan for finance and operations in the case of war.

All that changed on 24 February. Many of the team evacuated to safer locations but some remained in Kyiv. The journalists began to work around the clock, and they have ensured full and independent coverage of the many tragic events of the war since then, with constant updates on the outlet’s website, social media channels, and longer analytical articles.

By March 2022, the *Kyiv Independent* had come to international prominence with over 2 million subscribers on its Twitter accounts and 11 million visits to its website.

*Kyiv Independent* reporters have written pieces for international media, including the *Washington Post* and the *Guardian*, and have appeared on the front cover of *Time* magazine. One article was cited by European Union President Ursula von der Leyen in the European Parliament.

## SYRIA:

### VERIFY-SY — COUNTERING DISINFORMATION IN SYRIA AND ABROAD

The Syrian fact-checking organisation **Verify Media Platform** (Verify-Sy) is working to encourage a culture of fact-checking by journalists and media outlets.

Its founder and executive director, Ahmad Primo, began his career reporting on the 2011 Arab Spring at an Aleppo-based news outlet.

Due to his work as a journalist, he was arrested multiple times by Syrian intelligence agencies and then by ISIS, narrowly escaping a planned execution.

After escaping to Turkey, he founded Verify-Sy in 2016 to counter fake news, disinformation and misinformation about Syria. Verify-Sy has now gone one step further and is a member of the prestigious International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), working now not just to debunk false news, but to give others the tools and knowledge they need to recognise disinformation for themselves.

With EED's support, it has now published a guide, *Your Handbook for Verification Methods and Countering Disinformation in Clash Zones*, and in co-operation with the Global Strategy Network (TGSN), it has developed an interactive educational game for youth, *The Misinformation Vaccine*. It has also set up a fellowship programme on countering misinformation for journalists.

Ahmad admits that it took a long time to gain the audience's trust, but he already sees the fruits of this work. "There is an improvement. We are beginning to develop the critical thinking of our audience," he says.

**"We are beginning to develop the critical thinking of our audience."**



© Verify\_Sy



## MONTENEGRO:

### KRITIČKI — SHEDDING LIGHT ON SOCIETAL ISSUES

On her Instagram page **Kritički** (Critical), Nikolina Pavićević, a feminist digital activist from Podgorica, Montenegro, posts about issues of interest to young people that are rarely aired in mainstream media — including human rights, media literacy, feminism, gender equality and gender violence. She is attracting tens of thousands of views.

Nikolina was the first to start discussing obstetric violence, a significant challenge in the Balkan region, when she published the testimonies of women detailing the humiliation and pain they suffered during childbirth. She

went on to speak to medics, creating posts about best practices, and to women themselves, informing them about their rights.

Her most recent project is "Unlock", a monthly platform on Instagram for the most marginalised in society. She has hosted a transgender man and a former drug addict on this platform. EED's funding is helping Nikolina to professionalise this work and further increase her social media reach, allowing her to employ a small team and devote more time to advocacy activities.

## MOLDOVA:

### INITIATIVE 4 PEACE — PROVIDING RESOURCES AND ANALYSIS OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE ON TELEGRAM

When Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine started in February 2022, the four founders of newly created Moldovan NGO **Initiative 4 Peace** (I4P) decided to put their conflict resolution and security expertise to good use and start providing updates and analyses of the war.

They chose to do so on their Telegram channel, I4P, one of the few Romanian-language outlets targeted at professionals, including policymakers in Moldova, as well as the wider expert community.

"Our aim is not to report on the war. We focus on analysing information coming from official sources: from the Kremlin, from Kyiv, from Europe and the US. We provide summaries and our analysis of events, and we link back to the official sources so journalists can verify all information," says Alexandru Flenchea, one of I4P's co-founders.

Alexandru and his colleagues are now planning a Russian version of the I4P Telegram channel, which Alexandru sees as important for fighting disinformation among the Russian-speaking population of Moldova, including in the Russian-supported separatist republic of Transnistria, and as an important contribution to peacemaking in the region.



© Initiative4Peace

**"Our aim is not to report on the war. We focus on analysing information coming from official sources: from the Kremlin, from Kyiv, from Europe and the US."**

**- ALEXANDRU FLENCHEA**

## KOSOVO:

### PRIZMA — BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

A new bilingual media platform in Kosovo's second city, Prizren, was conceived as a bridge between the Albanian-speaking majority and the Turkish-speaking minority in this historically diverse city.

Launched in 2021, thanks to EED's start-up funding, **Prizma** wants to offer solutions-based journalism and analysis-based content on topics usually handled superficially by media in Kosovo, such as climate change, gender, social justice and marginalised groups.

*Prizma* has gained the trust of a broad community of local journalists throughout the region, with whom they regularly co-operate. They are committed to covering local issues for the local population while at the same time seeking parallels and connections beyond the region, reflecting the multicultural history of Prizren.

"*Prizma* is also a space for the people we don't hear from – marginalised people, women and girls, people with disabilities. When I go somewhere for an interview, I always ask, where are the women?", says Adelina

Hasani, editor-in-chief for the Albanian-language section of the platform.

The team is also committed to improving media literacy and fighting disinformation, helping people to develop critical-thinking skills. "Unless you know what's really happening in your community, you won't have the full perspective needed for critical thinking. Subjects such as human rights, gender equality and the environment are part of that full perspective," Adelina says.



© Prizma

**"I always ask, where are the women?"**

**- ADELINA HASANI**





© LiceUlice

## SERBIA:

### **LICEULICE — A STREET MAGAZINE WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE**

**LiceUlice** — or Face on the Street — is a high-quality Serbian street magazine with a civic mission. Conceived as an activist platform, it also works as a social enterprise. The magazine’s street sellers are all members of marginalised groups who have little hope of obtaining other employment. The sellers receive 50 percent of the magazine’s revenue.

Published monthly with a circulation of around 8,000, the magazine regularly sells out. It has subscribers across Serbia and throughout the diaspora, as well as a successful online presence, with popular Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts.

*LiceUlice* is far more than just a goodwill project. As well as helping members of marginalised communities to become more integrated into society, the editorial team puts a huge effort into developing quality content. It addresses key topics such as public health, nationalism, scientific thinking, and air pollution. It includes articles, interviews and art-based content. Prominent opinion writers also write pro-bono articles for the outlet.

An EED grant is assisting the *LiceUlice* team to become more financially sustainable, following a significant fall in revenue during the Covid-19 pandemic.



© LiceUlice



© LiceUlice



# EED ALUMNI STORIES



## JORDAN:

### SOWT — PODCASTS THAT ARE TAKING THE ARAB WORLD BY STORM

In 2016, EED seed-funding helped Ramsey Tesdell, founder of **7iber.com** — another EED success story — to set up **Sowt Podcasts**, the first Arab-language podcast platform with a focus on democracy and human rights. EED's grant covered Sowt's initial set-up outlay, including the costs of renting office space, registering, hiring staff and its first podcasts.

Sowt Podcasts draws on the Arab world's rich tradition of storytelling. As part of this first grant, it produced three podcasts of ten episodes each: the first on secularism and

the state; the second an investigative series; and the third on gender, human rights and sexual freedom, which they called *Eib*, meaning "taboo".

Now in its eighth season, *Eib* is Sowt's longest-running podcast and its most popular. With a first-person story approach, it covers many topics that are usually taboo within Arab society, such as Beirut's drag scene, discovering that one is gay or transgender, and eating disorders. The show is particularly popular in Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

## IRAQ:

### **KIRKUKNOW — INDEPENDENT REPORTING FROM THE DISPUTED TERRITORIES OF IRAQ**

“Our main goal is to provide the local community with the same information regardless of their ethnicity. We translate everything into Arabic, Kurdish and Turkmen and we publish in English as well,” says **KirkukNow’s** editor-in-chief, Salam Omer.

*KirkukNow* operates in one of the most complex areas of Northern Iraq, home to many different ethnic groups. The region was occupied by ISIS in 2014 and saw countless human rights abuses, the most infamous being the genocide of the Yazidis. Nowadays, the region is still disputed by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the central government.

*KirkukNow* and its multilingual approach are a notable exception in the extremely fragmented media landscape in the region, as in most cases people read biased and incomplete news in their native languages.

The media outlet has built a reputation as a credible and impartial source of news in the region, and provides extensive coverage about underprivileged groups, from religious and ethnic minorities to women.

“Conflict parties see the media as an enemy at a time of war,” says Salam. “They need propaganda, not quality. They thrive on misinformation. That’s why it’s important for journalism to give a voice to marginalised communities. We want to provide Iraqi citizens with high-quality reporting so that they can make informed decisions on their future and that of our country.”

**“That’s why it’s important for journalism to give a voice to marginalised communities.”**

**- SALAM OMER**



# III. CIVIC ACTIVISM AND PARTICIPATION

Active citizenship is an important part of any democracy. It can include volunteering, activism and participation in social movements, as well as traditional political action. Citizens who take an active role in their communities' democratic development are important voices in ensuring the accountability and transparency of political elites. Civil society organisations can put pressure on governments to act against corruption and ensure that citizens' voices are heard.

Ukraine, at this time of war, provides a vivid example of the potential power of civil society, with hundreds of thousands of people now involved in a massive volunteer movement that is driven by a desire to help their country and those in need, and to ensure that Ukraine stays on a democratic path.

Active citizenship is more difficult within autocratic environments where political regimes are not open to criticism. Such authorities typically act to censor and limit the work of civil society organisations by passing legislation making it more difficult for them to operate, by declaring them illegal, or accusing them of siding with foreign actors, typically the West, and by arresting its members and closing them down.

## EED'S ADDED VALUE IN 2022

Civic activists make up a significant part of EED's grant portfolio, representing 30 percent of ongoing grants in 2022. Partners funded under this thematic area include many groups and individuals who would not have the experience or capacity to obtain funding from other donors, as well as more well-known activists who are engaging in new activities that have a significant added value to their environments.

Included here are profiles of partners from Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Tunisia and Kosovo.

Civic activists represent

**30%**

of ongoing grants  
in 2022



## LEBANON:

### JOUMANA HADDAD FREEDOMS CENTER — EMPOWERING A NEW GENERATION

“When I was stripped of my parliamentary seat in 2018, I understood the importance of equipping youth with tools to defend the values of secularism, dignity, equality, inclusion and personal freedoms,” says prominent Lebanese author, journalist, and human rights activist Joumana Haddad.

A winner of multiple international awards and the author of dozens of books, Joumana set up the **Joumana Haddad Freedoms Center** (JHFC), in September 2019, as the first step to realise this vision.

“I see JHFC as my legacy. It is a continuation of the work I have done all my life,” she says. “We quickly became a space where people of different backgrounds could come together to discuss how we can fight for a different society and future.”

After the Beirut port explosion in August 2020 destroyed JHFC’s premises, the team began working with EED, launching its “Debates on Wheels” project, with two series of debates held in coffee shops and cultural and youth centres across the country. JHFC trained more than 100 young people in debating. They discussed issues such as women’s rights, LGBTQI+ issues, freedom of expression and secularism. Joumana believes this training empowers them to become active and aware citizens, and to work for change in their own community.

“I call it the ‘ant approach,’” Joumana says. “We do things little by little. I believe in gradual built-up change. I have made walls come down all my life. I will persevere in this work.”



© Joumana Haddad Freedoms Center

**“We do things little by little. I believe in gradual built-up change. I have made walls come down all my life. I will persevere in this work.”**

**- JOUMANA HADDAD**



© Joumana Haddad Freedoms Center



## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:

### “FORGOTTEN CHILDREN OF WAR” — FIGHTING FOR LEGAL RECOGNITION

When the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended in 1995, it left behind tens of thousands of women victims of wartime sexual violence and more than 4,000 children born out of rape. Their lack of status as victims of the war excludes them from housing benefits, scholarships and other opportunities.

Born in 1993, Ajna Jusić was one such child. The first opportunity she and other survivors had to discuss their identity and story was through an international research project about children born out of war. This prompted her and other survivors to found **Zaboravljena Djeca Rata** (Forgotten Children of War), an organisation advocating for the rights of people born out of wartime sexual violence.

They set up a psychological support programme, travelled across the country to establish relationships with media and human rights organisations, and conducted awareness-raising seminars on the topic. In 2019, they started producing dance and theatre shows to help survivors express their trauma through art.

“It was important for us to occupy public spaces, to show that we children of war also belong here,” says Ajna. She was able to present her story at the European Parliament and the United Nations. This exposure has empowered other survivors to continue fighting for their rights.

The group’s hard work is paying off: last July, the city of Brčko officially recognised children of wartime rape, the first such law in the region. “We didn’t think this kind of success would happen this fast, but we are very proud,” says Ajna.



“It was important for us to occupy public spaces, to show that we children of war also belong here.”

- AJNA JUSIĆ



# EED ALUMNI STORIES



## KOSOVO:

### NEW SOCIAL INITIATIVE — BRIDGING GAPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

Jovana Radosavljević co-founded the **New Social Initiative** (NSI) with a group of fellow activists in the city of Mitrovica in northern Kosovo, with a vision of empowering the Serb minority in Kosovo to take part in social and institutional life and of increasing trust between different communities in Kosovo.

An EED grant helped NSI to establish itself as an organisation and supported the creation of five online platforms for the Serbian-speaking municipalities in northern Kosovo. The platforms bridged an information gap between residents and the administration and were eventually integrated into the municipalities' websites.

Three years on from their EED grant, NSI is now a high-profile organisation with an experienced team. "I am proud that we have a more diverse team, and we also have colleagues from the Albanian community," says Jovana.

The team has carried out a wide variety of projects: some that promote the learning of both the Serbian and Albanian languages as an asset to the community; others working on encouraging a people-centric approach and including the point of view of minority communities. It has also created a media platform to aggregate reputable Serbian-language media outlets from Kosovo, broadening audiences for many small media, and has developed a platform that helps CSOs network with other organisations and prospective donors.

Jovana recognises that the heightened tensions between the two communities in Kosovo over the past few months are making NSI's work more difficult. "Right now, we cannot do much except follow developments. But we have built solid foundations, so once things improve, we'll be able to pick up where we left off," she says.

© Forgotten Children of War

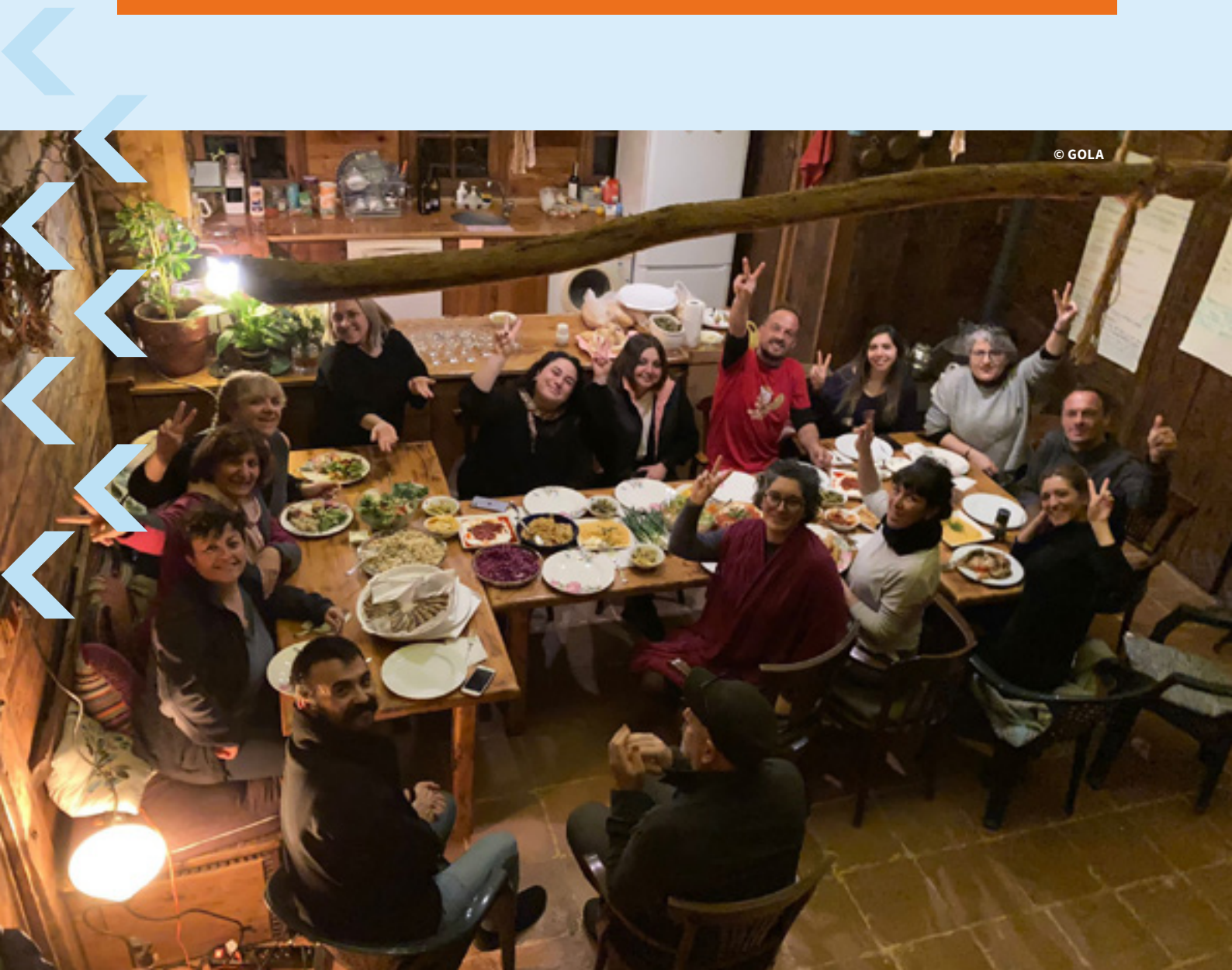




# ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

Climate activism is increasingly important worldwide as grassroots activists seek to raise awareness of climate change and to protect their local environments.

EED works with a wide range of environmental groups that are creating a culture of environmental awareness within their local communities. In this section, we profile two partners from Turkey and Tunisia who have put ecology at the heart of their activism work.





## TURKEY:

### GOLA — CIVIC ACTIVISM THROUGH LANGUAGE PROMOTION AND ECOLOGY

In 2006, a group of activists in Istanbul founded Gola to promote and protect Laz, an endangered language, spoken in the Black Sea region of eastern Turkey, near the border with Georgia. Over the past 15 years, Gola has contributed not only to the protection of Laz, but also to the development of civil society in a region that is one of the most conservative and nationalistic in Turkey, despite its diverse history and population.

“For more than ten years, we organised a Laz cultural festival where we approached the themes of language, cultural heritage and ecology,” explains Özlem Şendeniz, project co-ordinator for Gola. “It became a platform for people to come together and organise around different issues.”

Gola was forced to shut down the festival due to the government’s crackdown on civil society following the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey. With EED support, the organisation turned its attention to the creation of a digital archive of the Laz language.

EED’s funding also helped it establish its headquarters in the city of Rize, in the Black Sea region, giving the local population a place to meet, discuss and organise. “Since we opened our Rize office, we have noticed a shift in the local civil society landscape,” says Özlem. “We are a women-led, non-hierarchical organisation which approaches language and culture through ecology,” continues Gola’s president, Sevilay Refika Kadioğlu. “No one had seen anything like this before here.”



**“We are a women-led, non-hierarchical organisation which approaches language and culture through ecology.”**

**- SEVILAY REFIKA KADIOĞLU**

## TUNISIA:

### HAMDI HACHED — RAISING AWARENESS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Hamdi Hached has been interested in nature for as long as he can remember. He learned how to take care of plants in his grandfather’s garden when he was a child, and he went on to study environmental science at university. His research on how to produce biofuels from micro-algae won him awards and job opportunities abroad.

On returning to Tunisia, Hamdi opened his own environmental consultancy to raise awareness of climate change and other environmental issues. “I wrote and translated as much as I could into Arabic because there were few Arabic-language resources on these topics at the time,” he says.

He initially worked as a media consultant on environmental news on TV, conducting training

**“Unfortunately, the environment is still not a priority for the government.”**

**- HAMDI HACHED**

sessions for activists, and then he began producing documentaries about the environment. The latest one, “Under the Sun”, produced with EED’s support, describes the impact of global warming in Tunisia. It is now being screened around the country, with post-screening debates on global warming and climate change.

“Unfortunately, the environment is still not a priority for the government. I am glad that over the past few years more politicians have come to understand that climate change can destroy our existence, and have started listening to us,” says Hamdi.

# IV. HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM AND MONITORING

**As recognised in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, democracy is based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.**

There is a marked backsliding of human rights worldwide. In practical terms, this manifests as an escalation of nationalism, alongside racist and far-right ideologies, which violate basic human rights of non-discrimination. This can particularly affect minorities, who are often used as scapegoats as regimes seek to consolidate their power. Legislation passed ostensibly to protect human rights can violate other rights. Without human rights, the door is then opened for more autocratic futures.<sup>4</sup>

In 2021, Freedom House called on governments to work in solidarity with each other and with democracy advocates and human rights defenders in repressive settings if we are to reverse 15 years of accumulated decline, and to build a freer and more peaceful world.<sup>5</sup>

## **EED'S ADDED VALUE IN 2022**

EED's support helps ensure that the voices of activists, lawyers, journalists, campaigners, and other human rights defenders can continue to be heard. As well as supporting human rights activists in more open contexts such as Armenia and Georgia, as profiled below, EED works closely with brave activists in conflictual environments and other more difficult environments, who continue to monitor and report on human rights despite the personal risks posed.

4 – Yana Stoykova, “Human Rights in Decline: A Warning for Democracy”, The Political Economy Review, 27 July 2020. <https://medium.com/the-political-economy-review/human-rights-in-decline-a-warning-for-democracy-1a6ca6ce2eae>

5 – Freedom House (2022) *Freedom in the World 2022: The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule*.



**“For us, this was about protecting freedom of expression.”**

**- MARINE KAPANADZE**



## **GEORGIA:**

### **GEORGIAN DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE — DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH STRATEGIC LITIGATION**

The **Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI)** and its team of lawyers won a landmark victory in the European Court of Human Rights in 2021. Georgian courts had ruled that a condom company’s advertising violated moral principles by using religious images to trigger public discussion on taboo issues in Georgia. GDI brought the case to Strasbourg.

“For us, this was about protecting freedom of expression,” says GDI’s director, Marine Kapanadze. “The judges had taken their decision based on religion and public moral issues rather than on actual laws.”

For ten years, GDI has protected human rights in Georgia through strategic litigation. It has defended journalists in politically motivated defamation cases, ethnic minorities and fellow EED partner Tbilisi Pride, which was attacked by homophobic far-right groups when trying to organise a Pride March in July 2021. GDI published a report on the abuses suffered by LGBTQI+ activists on that day, noting the government’s failure to protect them.

GDI also works with teachers across the country to educate students on democracy and human rights, conducting workshops in school and publishing educational material on its website. “I have no faith in the government, but I have faith in society. There’s a strong love for freedom among Georgians, and we can help them believe that change is necessary,” says Marine.



## ARMENIA:

### SPITAK HELSINKI GROUP HUMAN RIGHTS NGO — PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN RURAL NORTHERN ARMENIA

Growing up in the town of Spitak in the rural and conservative Lori region of Armenia, a region still scarred by the 1988 earthquake that killed more than 50,000 people, Ashken Babayan dreamt of becoming a judge.

Unfortunately her family's financial situation precluded her from studying law, so instead she trained as a teacher. But Ashken was not willing to leave her dream behind. She began volunteering for a human rights organisation as a student, and in 2010, she co-founded the **Spitak Helsinki Group** Human Rights NGO.

"Most young people leave Spitak to seek work, and those who are left have little hope. We wanted to make them aware of their rights so they could address their problems," Ashken recalls.

The organisation began by holding training on human rights. Today, it focuses on women's issues, supporting victims of domestic violence and informing them of their legal rights. It has also founded a social enterprise producing organic herbal oils, which employs victims of gender-based violence and contributes to covering the NGO's expenses.

Following the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, in 2020, the team began working with displaced women and their dependents. Ashken admits this was an extremely difficult period. "There were so many violations of human rights during the war. We are human rights defenders, and yet we felt helpless," she says. "But we knew we had to help our community and show them that life continues and that eventually things will get better."



© Spitak Helsinki Group Human Rights NGO

**"Most young people leave Spitak to seek work, and those who are left have little hope. We wanted to make them aware of their rights so they could address their problems."**

**- ASHKHEN BABAYAN**





## INCOGNITO STORY:

### A NEW LIFE FOR FORMER PRISONERS

**Ahmed Diab\*** and his colleagues provide assistance to victims of political repression, particularly to those who are serving or have recently served prison sentences, as well as to their families. He lives in a country where activists and journalists are frequent targets of attack and imprisonment.

He explains that it is very difficult for former prisoners to return to normal life when they are released. Some are former state employees who have lost their jobs. Most of them have significant psychological and rehabilitation needs, and they are badly scarred by their prison ordeals. Ahmed's organisation helps them practically and psychologically.

EED is supporting the operational costs of Ahmed's organisation, and it also fundraises for its activities, and helps former prisoners financially.

He also assists those who are able to leave their country, helping them through arduous visa processes, and putting them in touch with networks of diaspora abroad who can assist them on their arrival.

\* This partner's name has been changed to protect their identity.

# V. WOMEN'S CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation, accountability, transparency in governance and inclusiveness are all marks of healthy and resilient democracies. Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to achieve human rights for all.

There are clear parallels between rising authoritarianism and attempts to roll back women's rights, and efforts to confine women to more traditional roles of wives, mothers and caregivers. Authoritarians are often fearful of empowered women, who, as in Belarus in 2020 and in Iran in 2022, are often at the centre of protest movements.

In many countries and regions, including those within EED's mandate, women face a range of barriers to their effective participation, as candidates, voters and elected officials.

## EED'S ADDED VALUE IN 2022

More than 30 percent of EED's initiatives have a specific gender component, although women's engagement is a cross-cutting issue across EED's funding portfolio. The projects below — from Iraq, Albania and Turkey — are helping to defend women's rights, change patriarchal attitudes, and increase women's political representation.

## IRAQ:

### FARIDA GLOBAL — PUTTING YAZIDI WOMEN SURVIVORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Farida Khalaf was 18 when ISIS invaded her village in Northern Iraq in 2014, killing her father and older brother and abducting her together with the rest of her family. She spent four months in captivity, subjected to physical and mental abuse. Since her escape, she has been a leading advocate for the victims of the Yazidi genocide.

Now living in Germany, Farida and other survivors created the **Farida Global Organisation**. They now travel the world to bring attention to the genocide and ensure that the perpetrators are prosecuted.

"We named the organisation after Farida because we wanted to put at the centre those courageous women who had faced ISIS and survived," says Khalid Qasim, one of the co-founders. "A women-led organisation is the ultimate slap in the face for ISIS."

The team created a travelling photo exhibition, "Women who beat ISIS", which alternates portraits of survivors with texts telling their individual stories and the story of the Yazidi genocide. They use it to spread awareness among

international organisations and the general public about the mass displacement, abduction and slavery faced by the Yazidi people under ISIS.

"The genocide is still ongoing: more than 2,000 women and girls are still missing, and 70 percent of our community still lives in tents in refugee camps. Many bodies found in mass graves haven't been identified yet," relates Khalid. So far, 13 countries have recognised the genocide, and three of the perpetrators have been sentenced, in part thanks to Farida Global's work.

The organisation also contributed to the adoption of the Yazidi Survivor Law, one of the few laws in the Middle East granting reparations to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Through EED's support, the team is helping survivors collect the necessary legal documents to apply for reparations, and it also provides free legal counselling and representation in courts.

"The application process is lengthy and painful for the victims because they have to relive their traumas. It can take two hours just to fill a form. We try to help them every step of the way"



**“We named the organisation after Farida because we wanted to put at the centre those courageous women who had faced ISIS and survived. A women-led organisation is the ultimate slap in the face for ISIS.”**

**- KHALID QASIM**



More than

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## SERBIA:

### BELLA CIAO PRODUCTION – TACKLING GENDER ISSUES

At only 25 years old, Mia Bjelogrić is already a well-known women's rights activist, with experience in journalism and public relations. In 2021, she embarked on a new activist venture, founding her own production company, **Bella Ciao Production**, named after the famous Italian protest song.

With EED's support, Bella Ciao Production created a documentary series, *Ona se budi* (She wakes up), tackling issues of gender inequality in Serbia. Over five episodes, *Ona se budi* tells the stories of women from different walks of life, including those living in rural and urban areas, who belong to ethnic minorities or work as journalists, actresses, entrepreneurs, nurses and historians.

Their stories tackle real-life issues often overlooked by mainstream media in Serbia, such as traditional gender roles, financial inequity, female sexuality and – after a series of public sexual assault cases came to light in the country – gender-based violence.

*Ona se budi* was broadcast on N1, the largest independent cable TV station in Serbia, and later uploaded to YouTube, where the first episode had 45,000 views in one week, sparking an unprecedented large-scale conversation about gender issues in the country. The show will be further distributed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, as the messages are relevant for the whole region.

## ALBANIA:

### GRESA HASA – CHANGING PATRIARCHAL ATTITUDES

**Gresa Hasa** was a first-year political science student in Tirana, when in 2011, four demonstrators were murdered in front of the prime minister's office during a protest. "At the time, I realised that a life in fear is no life," she says. "I was presented with two choices: either speak up and resist or leave the country."

Gresa began her activism work then and was one of the faces of the student protests against reforms in higher education in 2018-2019. For more than ten years now, she has spoken up about the marginalisation of women in the very patriarchal public space of Albania.

"Women's issues cannot be ignored when talking about human rights, democracy or freedom of speech: the reality is complex and interconnected," she says. "There is no future in this country until women are equally free."

In 2020, Gresa was one of the main organisers of the mass protests that erupted in nine cities in the country after the gang rape of a 14-year-old girl.

"We decided to travel to the girl's hometown to demand justice and show solidarity to her and her family by being loud. We wanted to bring our presence in this patriarchal town, where the public space is very male-dominated. We gathered activists and other supporters from different cities, got on buses and made sure that the entire country heard us."

Gresa co-founded the country's first intersectional feminist center, open to all marginalised people, especially to women, LGBTQI+ individuals, the Roma and Egyptian minorities. In a space rented with EED support, they regularly host awareness-raising events. Gresa also co-founded "Shota", Albania's first progressive feminist magazine, a bi-annual production with opinion pieces, translations, interviews, and creative literature pieces, with a section in English to build bridges with feminist collectives in other countries in the region.

"It will take time to achieve deep change, but I already see young women, some of them still in high school, coming to our protests: they're rebellious, outspoken, and fearless. They give me hope."

**"Women's issues cannot be ignored when talking about human rights, democracy or freedom of speech."**

**- GRESA HASA**

## TURKEY:

### **BEN SEÇERİM — ADVOCATING FOR MORE REPRESENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN IN TURKISH POLITICS**

The brainchild of 12 leading Turkish women, including academics, former MPs, a journalist and a political communications expert, **Ben Seçerim** (I Choose) is the country's first pressure-group that aims to increase women's representation and engagement in politics.

It is a timely initiative too, with general elections in Turkey in 2023. Women represent only 17 percent of current serving MPs.

Nilden Bayazit Postalıcı, a founding member and chair of Ben Seçerim and a former candidate of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Turkey's main opposition party, explains that there are many obstacles to women participating in politics in Turkey. These include the requirement for candidates to fund their electoral campaigns and an unwillingness on the part of political parties to nominate women candidates, who are often seen as less likely to be elected.

Ben Seçerim recently commissioned market research on voter preferences, the first such research carried out in Turkey, that clearly demonstrated how many voters, particularly women and younger people, would be more likely to vote for women candidates. Nilden sees this research as an essential advocacy tool when working with opposition political parties to encourage them to nominate more women candidates.

Over the past 18 months, Ben Seçerim has worked with a group of young women civil society activists from throughout Turkey, and it has identified five leaders they consider to be highly electable. Now their objective is to get as many of them as possible nominated for the 2023 elections.

“Our long-term objective is to change the profiles of opposition parties by including more female candidates, and to build female solidarity across the political spectrum,” says Nilden.

© Ben Seçerim







## INCOGNITO STORY:


### KEEP OUR CHILDREN – HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM FOR WOMEN

**Rewan Zaman\*** lives in a conservative society where women's human rights are frequently ignored. Traditional values and a lack of education mean that many women lose access to their children after a spouse's death or divorce.

With EED support, Rewan's organisation **Keep our Children** has produced a research report on this phenomenon, with the objective to both inform women of their rights and advocate for these rights among the public authorities. The report highlights instances where court decisions are ignored, and police fail to action to return children to their mothers.

As part of the research, Rewan interviewed dozens of women who were forcibly separated from their children. She has developed policy recommendations based on this work which have been circulated on social media so that women can be better informed. They have also been communicated to state authorities so that appropriate action can be taken.

\* This partner's name has been changed to protect their identity.



# VI. INCLUSIVE SOCIETY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Discrimination and exclusion on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI) or ethnic identity is a violation of basic human rights, yet it is the reality in many of the countries where EED works.

Nationalistic discourses frame LGBTQI+ people as a threat to traditions and stability and as a symbol of Western degeneration, which accompany Western concepts of democracy and freedom. Such discourses are just as evident in the Western Balkans as they are in Georgia and Lebanon, as well as in authoritarian regimes such as Russia, and in religiously conservative and authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. EED's ability to provide discreet grant support is crucial in such contexts.



## LEBANON:

### BERTHO MAKSO AND PROUD LEBANON — SUPPORTING THE LEBANESE LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY

“Discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals in Lebanon happens on two levels,” explains Bertho Makso, Executive Director of **Proud Lebanon**. “It’s embedded in the penal code, with Article 534 penalising same-sex relations. This gives a legal justification to homophobes and provides a pretext to the authorities to ban events. We are also discriminated against on a societal level, with religious leaders often openly advocating for the prosecution of queer people.”

Since 2013, Proud Lebanon has advocated for the rights of Lebanon’s queer community. This year, to mark International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) on 17 May, it launched a national LGBTQI+ task force to abolish Article 534, the result of years of dialogue building between policymakers and activists.

“Not so long ago, politicians outright refused to engage with us. We took the approach of talking to them in their own language to convince them to support us,” says Bertho.

In addition to its advocacy work, Proud Lebanon also provides medical assistance to the LGBTQI+ community, including endocrinology consultations for transgender individuals and STD tests. It assists over 300 people living with HIV, a community that faces high levels of stigma and discrimination, regularly sending discreetly packaged HIV medicines to those afraid to collect them in public.

Proud Lebanon also provides psychological support and workshops on bullying and stigma and on advocating for LGBTQI+ rights. For IDAHOBIT this year, it hosted a storytelling session where people could share their struggles and fears as well as their stories of resilience and love.

“The road is still long, but we are proud of what we’ve achieved so far, and of the bridge we are building between politicians and our community,” says Bertho.



© Queer.ge

## GEORGIA:

### **QUEER MAGAZINE — A NEW ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR LGBTQI+ PEOPLE**

In 2021, **Equality 17**, an NGO that protects and advocates for LGBTQI+ rights in Georgia, launched a new online platform, **Queer Magazine**, with EED's support. Founded to give a voice to LGBTQI+ people, promote LGBTQI+ activism and increase visibility around issues faced by the community, as it faces an increasingly conservative backlash, *Queer Magazine* is now at the centre of a supportive online network.

Nino Bolkvadze, *Queer Magazine's* founder, is an LGBTQI+ activist and lawyer, who has brought dozens of cases to the European Court of Human Rights. She considers *Queer Magazine* her greatest legacy.

"Unfortunately, the state ignores many court judgements. Over the years, I realised we needed a more effective instrument for our advocacy, and we needed to be more visible in Georgia. With *Queer Magazine*, we now have a platform for our community to tell their stories, to come out, to advocate, and to support each other," she says.

Today, *Queer Magazine* is published in Georgian, Russian and English, and will shortly launch a version for the minority Azerbaijani community. It also has a popular **Facebook page** with readers from more than 100 countries.

The magazine publishes analysis of issues of relevance to the community, including advice on how to come out to their families, on challenges like addiction and homelessness, as well as written testimonies and short videos of people who have come out, many of them for the first time. *Queer Magazine* has now signed agreements with two mainstream Georgian outlets that republish its materials.

**"With Queer Magazine, we now have a platform for our community to tell their stories, to come out, to advocate, and to support each other."**



# EED ALUMNI STORIES



## ARMENIA:

### RIGHTSIDE NGO — ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS OF ARMENIA'S TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

EED provided start-up funding to the **RightSide NGO** in 2017 to assist the organisation to begin its awareness-raising work around the issues faced by the transgender community in Armenia.

Today, RightSide is a prominent player in Armenia. It has helped hundreds of transgender individuals in difficulty, assisted with name changes, and provided legal services to address discrimination, hate speech and crime. Its team accompanies clients to courts and police stations, and collects information on violations of human rights that it uses as part of its advocacy. The NGO works closely with family members to help support transgender people build relationships and become involved in social life, and it provides an important hub for the community for meetings, trainings, mobilisation and advocacy.

Lilit Martirosyan, who leads RightSide, came to international prominence in 2019 as the first transperson to take to the Armenian parliamentary podium, when she condemned discrimination against transgender people at a session of the parliament's Committee of Human Rights. Her speech sparked a violent backlash, forcing Lilit to temporarily leave the country.

Although there are few targeted campaigns against LGBTQI+ people than previously, RightSide's work remains crucial in Armenia, as the community still faces harassment, discrimination and violence. To date, the Armenian criminal code has still not recognised homophobia and transphobia as aggravating criminal circumstances in hate crimes.

# VII. ARTS AND CULTURE

It has long been recognised that the creative power of arts and culture can be a catalyst for action.

Arts and culture tools provide a medium for individuals to express dissent and criticism in subtler and less riskier ways, while also enabling them to reach wider audiences. They are particularly valuable tools for marginalised groups, and those working in more difficult environments. EED supports a variety of arts organisations, from café-style venues and cultural centres to theatres and publications



## LEBANON:

### MINA IMAGE CENTRE — A SPACE FOR ARTISTS WITHOUT SPACE

“Our centre was just fifty metres from the epicentre of the explosion,” says Manal Khader, Artistic Director of the **Mina Image Centre**, recalling the horrific 2020 explosion that destroyed the port of Beirut, tearing down and damaging buildings across the city, killing over 200 people and injuring thousands. “We lost everything that day. We lost the space we had built with love.”

Although it was some time before the team were emotionally and physically ready to reopen the centre they had named after the city’s port — “mina” is Arabic for port — they were determined to continue to provide a space for artists affected by Lebanon’s economic crisis. In March 2022, the centre reopened thanks to an EED grant. While the Mina Image Centre initially was more focused on photography, now it has a wider remit, with a focus on both art activism and “art for art’s sake”.

In 2022, the centre ran a successful festival, “Reels of Beirut”, with movies featuring Beirut prior to 1975. It is now planning an exhibition on the city and another focused on transgender issues. The latter will create the first archive of transgender images from the wider Middle Eastern region. It is also about to launch a Talent Hub, offering co-working spaces to eight talented artists for a one-year period.

“We offer them space, electricity supply and a reliable internet connection. We help artists network and plan for their financial futures, and as a centre, we benefit from their projects”.



**“We lost everything that day.  
We lost the space we had built  
with love.”**

**- MANAL KHADER**

**“We won’t just teach technical skills to students. We want to give them visual thinking skills, and teach them about journalism ethics and values.”**

**- NAZIK ARMENAKYAN**



## **ARMENIA:**

### **4PLUS — A WOMEN-LED COLLECTIVE TRAINING YOUNG VISUAL JOURNALISTS**

“Everyone was affected by the war; I am glad we managed to work throughout those weeks. We supported each other. We felt connected,” says Nazik Armenakyan, head of the Yerevan-based women-led photography collective **4Plus**, recalling the 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020.

It was this sense of connection that inspired Nazik, Anush Babajanyan and Anahit Hayrapetyan to set up 4Plus ten years ago. They have since gathered around them a large community that works on a variety of projects. They have published dozens of works on a wide variety of themes,

ranging from domestic abuse, minorities, the Covid-19 pandemic, the Nagorno-Karabakh war, and HIV-positive people, a taboo subject in Armenia.

Now 4Plus is launching Armenia’s first school of photography to train a new generation of visual journalists and documentary filmmakers. Nazik believes that the school is a timely project in a social media age, where our lives are constantly visualised.

“We won’t just teach technical skills to students. We want to give them visual thinking skills, and teach them about journalism ethics and values.”



# VIII. YOUTH

Educating and enabling young people to take part in civic life can help them become more informed citizens, capable of thinking critically and of having a direct impact on their communities and countries.

Activism gives young people skills they can use in future employment, opening new opportunities for them and helping them feel part of their countries' future. They can become more informed citizens, capable of thinking critically and of valuing democracy, and more likely to question religious or political indoctrination.

**“We teach them that there are opportunities for them to take part in civic life and to push for change in their community. This is particularly important for young women.”**

**- GHITA ELBERRAD**

## MOROCCO:

### **RUWWAD — EMPOWERING YOUTH IN NORTHEASTERN MOROCCO**

Founded in 2014, **Ruwwad – The Pioneers of Change Association for Development and Culture**, is a youth organisation promoting democracy in Jerada, in northeastern Morocco, through culture and education. Over the years, it has built a wide network of volunteers and works closely with many local organisations.

Jerada, once a hub of the coal-mining industry, fell into economic depression after the closure of its largest coal mine in 1998. Nowadays it is one of Morocco's poorest areas, with a largely young population, many of whom are frustrated and disillusioned by the high unemployment rate and the lack of local opportunities.

“We adopt a transversal approach on issues of migration, human rights, culture, and participatory democracy. All these topics are interconnected,” explains Ghita Elberrad, Programme Manager at Ruwwad. “We work a lot on digital freedom of expression.”

When young activists were arrested for protesting about the economic state of the region on social media, EED's funding enabled Ruwwad to launch an awareness campaign to educate citizens and activists about their digital rights and to conduct workshops on digital freedom of expression and safe online activism.

“Young people are more and more interested in our activities. Before, there were no programmes targeting young people, and they felt there was no future for them in Jerada. We teach them that there are opportunities for them to take part in civic life and to push for change in their community. This is particularly important for young women,” says Ghita.

## INCOGNITO STORY:

### A COMMUNITY OF DIGITAL NATIVES

**Building the Future\*** is providing new opportunities for its country's youth, by fostering a community of highly skilled young innovators and technologists, giving them the technical and digital skills they need to succeed in the employment market, and encouraging them to become active citizens.

The NGO aims to fill an important gap in the country's educational landscape, providing young people with the skills they need and helping to link them with potential employers. It has trained hundreds of students on coding and graphic design and has run highly successful start-up weekends for women. It recently launched the country's first Tech Jobs Board, with the team also ensuring a certification vetting process of all candidates on the platform.

Operating in a country with high levels of employment, particularly for women and minorities, Building the Future is encouraging many young people to consider STEM careers for the first time, as well as building their capacity for these careers.

\* This partner's name has been changed to protect their identity.





## INCOGNITO STORY:

### **LET'S TALK – A STUDENT DISCUSSION CLUB THAT IS ENCOURAGING DEBATE**

**Let's talk\*** is a student discussion group that runs both in-person and on-line meetings. It provides a safe place for young people to network and share opinions on issues such as politics, human rights, international relations and journalism, all difficult issues to air in the authoritarian society in which they live. The group encourages young people to develop their debating skills through this discussion.

With EED support, Let's talk has expanded to several regional cities, and the different groups collaborate closely across their regions enabling networks of pro-democratic young people to meet and discuss issues of importance to their country. They hold round-tables, brain-storming sessions, as well as cultural events. EED support has also enabled the development of a training programme and study tours for the group's leaders. Some members of the group have already entered local politics.

\* This partner's name has been changed to protect their identity.





## PALESTINE:

### RASED PALESTINE — INVOLVING YOUTH AND WOMEN IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

In December 2021 and March 2022, Palestinians from the West Bank voted in municipal elections. For many young people, it was the very first time they were able to exercise their democratic right to vote.

**Rased Palestine**, a coalition of 20 organisations working across the West Bank, played an important role in preparing the population, raising awareness among young people and women about the electoral processes and training electoral observers in the pre-electoral period, and now after the elections, monitoring how politicians are delivering on their electoral promises.

“We realised that these elections were a unique opportunity for young people to see democracy in action,” says Rased’s co-ordinator Riad Khanfar.

Rased conducted awareness campaigns on social media and local radio stations and reached out to women and youth in marginalised areas and refugee camps. It also trained a team of young electoral observers, who in turn trained others.

Riad believes the project has been a big success. “Young people felt they were contributing towards the democratic process. They represented the law and defended the law by documenting violations. They felt empowered, and now they are motivated to continue working during the post-election phase,” he says.

“We realised that these elections were a unique opportunity for young people to see democracy in action.”

- RIAD KHANFAR



© Rased Palestine



© Rased Palestine

# UKRAINE SPECIAL

**Ukrainian civil society was already a vibrant and proactive force prior to the full-scale Russian invasion of February 2022, and it played a central role in rolling out the country's reform agenda.**

## **UKRAINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY STANDS STRONG AS A CENTRAL FORCE IN SOCIETY'S RESPONSE TO WAR**

Over the past year, civil society has emerged as a central pillar in Ukrainian society's response to the war. Activists have mobilised to address the most urgent and complex needs of their fellow citizens and to assist those affected by the war. Networks of volunteers from across the country are working together, collaborating closely with government, businesses, media and the wider public, and as all sections of society have mobilised, the war has redefined these partnerships.

EED's partners have been at the forefront of volunteer movements in 2022. They have worked to help evacuate people to safer areas and have provided humanitarian assistance to people living in areas affected by the war. They continue to provide daily support to millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and to refugees who have fled abroad, helping them to adapt to new circumstances. Activists have assisted the purchase and delivery of medical

and food supplies to vulnerable populations and fundraised for other needs. They are protecting the human rights of their fellow citizens in the face of often horrific circumstances and are helping to address their mental health needs. As the war continues, many are collecting evidence of Russian war crimes. They are ensuring ongoing international advocacy, telling the world of these crimes, and continuing to demand support for their country.

EED's media partners immediately stepped up to the challenges of war and provided balanced and credible reporting. Ukrainian journalists were transformed into war correspondents overnight and many continue to risk their lives daily as they carry out their work — those on the frontlines of war and in occupied areas are targets of attack, abduction, and imprisonment at the hands of the Russian forces. Media outlets are not just reporting on the progress of the war, they are also documenting war crimes, gathering testimonies and providing the information their readers need at this time of war, as well as important psychosocial support.








## IMMEDIATE EED RESPONSE TO OUTBREAK OF FULL-SCALE WAR

A day after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, EED's Executive Committee set up a €2.2 million rapid-response mechanism to cover the urgent needs of our Ukrainian partners, such as relocation and security, and to enable organisations to respond to immediate needs within their localities.

EED provided 77 grants during the first two months of the war through this mechanism, with two thirds of these initial grants provided to media organisations. National and regional media outlets have faced significant resourcing challenges in recent months, as advertising revenues collapsed, journalists left to join the army, and others left the country with their families.

The first emergency grant was issued two days after the start of the war, with a fast-track mechanism for grant requests allowing emergency grants to be issued within 24- to 48-hour periods.

In the initial days after the outbreak of war, EED also set up the EED Centre for Ukrainian Activists (CUA), a civil society hub in Przemysł, eastern Poland, near the Ukrainian border. Over the past few months, this hub has run a "Work and Rest" residency programme providing activists and journalists with relief and respite from the stresses of war.

**2/3**   
of initial  
**rapid response**  
**grants were provided**  
**to media organisations**

## SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN ADVOCACY

EED has supported civil society's efforts to be included as an important voice in this process, and has facilitated the visits of Ukrainian activists, journalists and MPs to Brussels and other European capitals to advocate for their most pressing and future needs. In the spring, EED supported visits by Ukrainian women MPs to Strasbourg where they met with members of the European Parliament and representatives of political groups, and spoke at the Council of Europe; and to Brussels, where MPs met with Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament. In November, EED welcomed civil society leaders to the office for a briefing on the volunteer movement and a discussion of civil society's role in the post-war era.

In April, EED supported the visit of Anna-Sophia Puzanova, daughter of Yulia "Tayra" Payevska, the paramedic and national hero of Ukraine who was captured by Russian forces in Mariupol, as part of an urgent campaign for the release of her mother and 500 other captured women civilians. EED was delighted to host Tayra, on her release. Like her daughter before her, she advocated for justice and punishment for Russian crimes when she addressed the European Parliament.

## CIVIL SOCIETY'S CENTRAL ROLE IN REBUILDING UKRAINE

In July 2022, civil society leaders presented the Civil Society Manifesto (Lugano Declaration) on the sidelines of the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC2022) in Lugano. Signed by over 300 prominent NGOs from across the country, this manifesto defines civil society's vision for a post-war Ukraine and sets out the role it must take in the recovery and reconstruction of the country, as well as identifying the potential challenges.

As part of the International Democracy Day Brussels 2022 event, EED organised an online seminar with leading civil society actors on the Lugano Declaration.



## GRANTS PROVIDED UNDER THE EMERGENCY MECHANISM TO CIVIL SOCIETY\*

### LEGAL ADVICE

A team of lawyers provided online legal advice to Ukrainian nationals, including on the legal status of refugees in the EU and IDPs in Ukraine, and how to register life events such as marriages, births, and deaths in Ukraine during this period. The team also documented war crimes.

### CO-ORDINATING IDP RESPONSE

In the western Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi, a local youth organisation managed the co-ordination of the city's humanitarian aid to IDPs. Its youth hub became a volunteer centre distributing food and medicine and assisting with temporary accommodation for IDPs. Another NGO in Chernivtsi that worked with people with disabilities turned its office into an emergency shelter, providing IDPs with food and beds, as well as psychological support.

### ONLINE CO-ORDINATION PLATFORM

An EED partner in western Ukraine launched a new online platform to enable better co-ordination between civil society, businesses, and local government, enabling real-time collection and analysis of IDP needs to ensure that aid is distributed efficiently and effectively.

### HUMANITARIAN AID IN KHERSON

A partner in the Kherson region provided humanitarian aid to people in need, despite operating in highly dangerous conditions in the occupied territory, where activists face persecution, abduction and execution by Russian military and security forces. It distributed aid from centres and ensured that humanitarian supplies reach people with reduced mobility, despite a ban by the Russian occupiers on aid provision.

## GRANTS PROVIDED UNDER THE EMERGENCY MECHANISM TO INDEPENDENT MEDIA\*

### ENABLING PHOTOJOURNALISM

A media outlet collected and recorded stories of the war, helping to ensure that the actions of Ukrainian soldiers, volunteers and civilians are documented and brought to the media's attention. This work is also vital to document and gather evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

### ONLINE MEDIA IN KHERSON

A Kherson-based online media outlet published regular news, including interviews and analysis about Kherson and other occupied territories. Funding enabled the team to update its website to adapt to the new reporting needs of the war and to its increased readership.

### DONETSK REGION RADIO

This local media outlet was able to continue operating its website, and cover the costs of relocating its team. It continued to provide its audience in occupied eastern Ukraine with up-to-date information on developments via its website and social media.



EED Centre for Ukrainian Activists  
©EED

\*These initiatives are anonymised to protect partners.



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**TRANSFORMATION: A DOCUMENTARY FILM THAT PROFILES THE TENACITY OF UKRAINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY, BOTH TODAY AND IN THE RECENT PAST**

Maksym Cherkashyn, head of the Educationally Analytical Centre for Community Development (EACCD) in Ternopil in western Ukraine, explains that that the documentary film “Transformation” was inspired by the circumstances of the war.

“I met so many dynamic, amazing organisations from eastern Ukraine and it was an eyeopener for me. While these activists may focus on different themes to us, we are united by a common approach and a desire to solve our country’s problems. We are creative and resourceful, and we work as teams. Our organisations have been transformed through our work, and our work is transforming our country and our society for the better,” he says.

“Transformation” profiles the work of Ukrainian activists across the country: The Ukrainians from Lviv; Green Leaf from Odesa; Maksym’s own organisation, EACCD; Horizon of Changes from Cherkasy; the All-Ukrainian Organization Automaidan; and the Serhiy Prytula Charity Foundation. All are EED partners.

At a time when civic activists from across Ukraine have come together in solidarity as never before to support each other and society around them, Maksym saw the documentary as a



© Anne Dovie

**“I met so many dynamic, amazing organisations from eastern Ukraine and it was an eyeopener for me.”**

**- MAKSYM CHERKASHYN**

way to showcase the value of this activist work in this time of war, and to document it for the future.

“Together we have built a strong civil society that at our time of greatest need is now defending our country. We have an army of citizens who support each other, who are organised and motivated”.

**LABORATORY OF CULTURAL RESEARCH:**

**TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT DURING THE WAR**

With EED’s support, the Chernivtsi-based NGO Laboratory of Cultural Research, working at the intersection of IT and culture, launched a hub and is organising fast-track training in creative IT tools, virtual reality products, and social entrepreneurship.

The initiative is helping to tackle high rates of unemployment due to the war among both locals and IDPs and is helping IDPs to better integrate into city life. Participants are offered free online and offline courses combined with mentorship support. Scholarships are also provided to students wanting to implement projects that apply modern technologies to promote the city’s cultural heritage.

## GREEN LEAF: ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY DURING A TIME OF WAR

Over the past few years, the NGO **Green Leaf**, headed by Vladyslav Balynskiy, has acted as a watchdog on the local authorities in Odesa, and has worked hard to build a culture of accountability in a city with a reputation for corruption.

With the outbreak of full-scale war, the team continued to monitor how the city council spent taxpayers' money, publishing findings on its website.

Vladyslav and his colleagues are also gathering information about Russian crimes against the local environment — pollution due to explosions, damage to infrastructure, air pollution, toxic pollution of water, and damage to natural ecosystems. They encourage citizens to report instances of environmental crimes directly on their Facebook page.

The team recently published a guide for volunteers on the process for importing humanitarian goods into Ukraine. “Even at this time of war, we can’t ignore legislation. We are trying to help others work better and more effectively,” says Vladyslav.

In April 2022, amid full-scale war, Green Leaf organised its annual tree-planting event for Odesa’s residents as part of the “Gardens of Victory” event held by educational institutions throughout non-occupied Ukrainian cities. Vladyslav notes that this positive initiative was hugely appreciated by citizens.

Green Leaf recently set up a new Crisis Media Centre in Odesa to help support civil society in the region.

“Even at this time of war, we can’t ignore legislation.”

- VLADYSLAV BALINSKYI





### **SLIDSTVO: TAKING AN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST APPROACH TO WAR**

Prior to the war, *Slidstvo* had built a reputation as one of Ukraine’s leading investigative media, with a focus on investigation of corruption, crimes, law enforcement and the judicial system. Working as part of the OCCRP network, the outlet took part in large-scale corruption cases, including those of the Panama and Pandora Papers.

The journalists were ready for the outbreak of war, with various scenarios planned, and a supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) vests and other equipment. Over the past months they have focused on documenting events of the war, always taking an investigative approach to the news.

This work has included documenting the forced mass deportation of Ukrainians from Mariupol, interviewing individuals who had escaped through Russia, as well as the Russian occupation of Kupiansk. The journalists gather testimonies and monitor Russian posts on social media. They are also currently collaborating with Reporters Without Borders for a report on kidnapped journalists.

© Slidstvo



### **ZMIST POLTAVA: JOINING FORCES TO HELP CITIZENS AND THE ARMY AT A TIME OF WAR**

Five local organisations came together in Poltava at the outbreak of full-scale war to form the **Poltava Volunteer Association**, which has emerged as one of the most important centres of assistance in central Ukraine.

The organisation includes EED partner **ZMIST Poltava**, an independent media outlet; the Poltava Battalion to the Indifferent, a large volunteer organisation that assists the army, and is affiliated with EED’s partner, Not Indifferent Team; as well as EED’s partners: City Lab, The Center for Strategic Communications and the volunteer association HelpGroup.

On the first day of the war, the group set up a Telegram channel: “We are ready. Poltava”, where they posted about immediate needs.

“25,000 people signed up to the channel within hours. Citizens quickly responded to every request, and we were able to fundraise large amounts of money... We would write posts about what we needed. People responded immediately – they wanted to help us in any way they could,” says Oleksii Serdyukov, head of ZMIST Poltava.

While the group was initially focused on helping the army, its volunteers are also helping IDPs and others in the region affected by the war. They have set up a volunteer hub in the city’s Dormition Cathedral. The group runs a medical warehouse, providing basic medicines required by the local



© ZMIST Poltava

**“We are ready. Poltava.”**

community. They have also helped many people evacuate from areas of war, including Kharkiv and Sumy.

Oleksii and his team were aware from the beginning that they could not rely on the generosity of businesses and individuals to sustain this work, and they have initiated projects that are helping to finance their work, including “Food bloc” – where restaurants in the city include a dish with an army theme and donate profits to the volunteer effort.



© Union of Responsible Citizens

### UNION OF RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS: AIDING IDPS AND RESPONDING TO REGIONAL NEEDS

A grassroots association in Kryvyi Rih, the **Union of Responsible Citizens**, is working with a network of regional partners to respond to local and national needs. The team evacuated over 500 people with disabilities from the wider region, providing them with specially adapted buses and liaising with partners abroad who could host them. They opened huge warehouses that are providing items needed by IDPs and are helping them to source accommodation. An EED grant enabled the group to expand its team.



© Cukr

### CUKR: REPORTING ON THE WAR AND RESPONDING TO NEEDS

An online journal for active youth, **Cukr** was launched in 2019, in Sumy. With the outbreak of full-scale war, and Russian troops advancing fast towards Sumy, the team chose not to leave their home city. They focused their efforts on providing information on the evolving situation in the region through their social networks, reaching out to 50,000 readers.

They fundraised for the city's needs, co-ordinating with local volunteers who collect and distribute humanitarian aid to people in need. The content, mainly video reports published by the team in the now-liberated Sumy oblast, includes war reporting and aims to support local citizens and help them stay optimistic despite the tragedies of war.



© Cukr









© Liga.net

### **LIGA.NET: A BUSINESS MEDIA NOW REPORTING ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE**

In February 2022, **Liga.net** changed overnight from a business-focused outlet to a media reporting on the war, attracting tens of millions of readers from throughout Ukraine and well beyond the Ukrainian borders.

“Our readers wanted to know what was happening every second, where there were bombings, who was affected, how many victims there were, how to leave the country, how to move their business elsewhere. We were ready at 5am when the war began. We began to work immediately,” says Yulia Bankova, chief editor of Liga.net.

During the first long weeks of war, Liga.net produced short-format live-news updates, publishing a new piece every 15 minutes throughout the day.

Liga.net also publishes explainer articles for the millions of Ukrainians who had to flee their homes but are still in Ukraine, as well as for those who fled abroad, with information on accommodation, where to find help, and on new legislation, as well as publishing articles with a focus on psychological support for those affected by war trauma.

**“We cannot stand by and do nothing. It’s hard not to be led by your emotions, but we try to concentrate on what is important for our society and our citizens. We must help people to survive.”**

**- YULIA BANKOVA**

EED’s grant helped Liga.net cover its operational costs after a collapse in its advertising revenue due to the war.

Yulia admits that war reporting takes its toll on her reporters, but she believes they have no choice.

“We cannot stand by and do nothing. It’s hard not to be led by your emotions, but we try to concentrate on what is important for our society and our citizens. We must help people to survive. We must provide information to help them. It is the knowledge that what we are doing helps others that means we can do our job,” she says.

# RESULTS AND LEARNING

## In 2022, EED continued to strengthen its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system.

### FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Final Assessment Report (FAR) template capturing key results and lessons learned was updated. FAR “lessons learned” sessions were introduced to share and discuss key findings. The team developed new tools and processes for fostering institutional learning and reviewed and updated the approach for coding grants and the definitions used.

### BUILDING MEL CAPACITY

EED continued building staff Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) training and on-the-job assistance.

EED also stepped up its co-operation with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and is co-organising a convening for selected MEL experts from democracy-support grant-makers to explore meaningful ways to evaluate and learn from democracy support.

### INTERNAL EVALUATION IN SERBIA

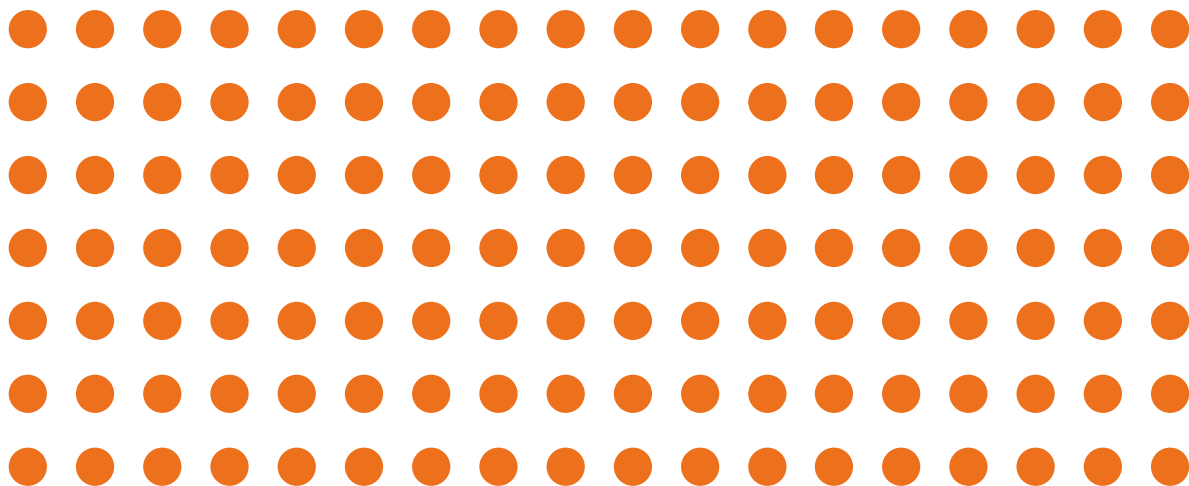
An internal evaluation was undertaken in Serbia, which analysed the relevance and effectiveness of EED’s support to independent media and identified lessons learned. Key findings of this evaluation are that EED’s support has significantly contributed to improving the resilience of independent media in the country.

Many of the supported media actors interviewed were able to increase their audiences, strengthen their reputation and increase their ability to hold power holders to account, especially at a local level. Citizens had access to independent local information and platforms to voice their views and concerns.

Despite important results achieved due to this support, it is still highly challenging for media actors to become financially sustainable in Serbia. Interviewees stressed that if the international community is serious about supporting democratisation and improving the sustainability of independent media, it must put more pressure on the government to improve the environment in which they operate. Media actors do not want to be constantly dependent on international donors; rather they want to be able to do their work in a fair and transparent media environment.

### LEARNING REVIEW IN ARMENIA

A learning review was undertaken in Armenia to identify key lessons that EED can learn about supporting civil society and media in a post-revolutionary context and during war and post-war periods.





Nineveh April 2021. The festival of Charshamba Sur,  
Ezidi New Year, in Sharafaddin Temple in Shingal.  
© KirkukNow







# HUMAN RESOURCES AND BUDGET

EED's 56 staff members have lived and worked extensively in the countries where EED operates, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Palestine, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

Staff members are nationals of 27 countries, including Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

In 2022, 11 trainees benefited from EED's traineeship programme, gaining significant experience in democracy support in the operations and programme teams for one-year periods.

Many former trainees continue to work in the field of democracy support in organisations including: the European Institute of Peace, Open Society Foundations, Prague Civil Society Centre, Democracy Reporting International, Médecins du Monde, ICMPD, the European Parliament, and the European Commission. Former trainees have also obtained scholarships to continue their studies at the College of Europe in Bruges and Natolin.

Twenty-five European countries that are members of the Board of Governors have contributed to EED's programme budget to date, as has Canada through a special grant for Ukraine and Belarus. In 2022, EED also received contributions from Iceland and the Robert Bosch Stiftung and 3DS. EED's operations budget is covered by a European Commission grant. In 2022, EED managed a budget of approximately €45 million.



# FUNDING PARTNERS

To date, 25 European countries that are members of the Board of Governors and the European Commission have contributed to the EED budget.

Canada<sup>a</sup> also contributes through a special grant for Ukraine and Belarus.



Austria



Belgium



Bulgaria



Cyprus



Czech Republic



Denmark



Estonia



Finland



Germany



Hungary



Ireland



Latvia



Lithuania



Luxembourg



The Netherlands



Norway



Poland



Romania



Slovakia



Slovenia



Spain



Sweden



UK



France



Croatia



European  
Commission

In 2022, EED also received contributions from



Iceland





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