



NGO Leadership Workshop

Warsaw, Poland

October 17-21, 2022

Final Report

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Overview. In October 2022, 25 NGO leaders from Georgia, Moldova, Poland, Ukraine, and Romania completed an interactive one-week workshop. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, Ukrainian NGOs, as well as NGOs from Ukraine's neighbors, have received internal and external refugees from besieged territories. The 2022 NGO Leadership Workshop was dedicated to these NGOs supporting Ukrainian refugees and was designed to strengthen their leaders in multiple ways. NGOs have a particularly difficult time navigating this environment to still provide essential services to those who need them. The workshop was spearheaded by two University of Michigan units focused on strengthening civil society in the region: the Weiser Center for Europe & Eurasia and the William Davidson Institute. It was the third workshop held in Poland with the Warsaw-based NGO, FED (Education for Democracy Foundation).

The participants were selected through an open application process and attended at no charge.

Content. Sessions focused on:

1. Networking
2. Digital Security
3. Resilience/Avoiding Burnout/Strategic Planning in Crisis/Working with People with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

These sessions were taught by:

- **Eric Fretz** from the University of Michigan. Dr. Fretz is a professional educator and coach who focuses on personal development, emotional intelligence, and resilience. He teaches full-time at the University of Michigan at the undergraduate and graduate levels and holds multiple graduate degrees in education, psychology, and training.
- **Martyna Bogaczyk** and **Tadeusz Rudzki** from FED. Martyna is the President of the Foundation's Management Board and has extensive experience in leading training programs. In 2014, she was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit by the President of the Republic of Poland for her contribution to promoting the idea of civil society and supporting democratic transformations in the countries of the former USSR. Tadeusz is a project coordinator at FED responsible primarily for educational programs and crowdfunding projects.
- **Wojtek Bogusz** and **Igor Kolchinskii** from Front Line Defenders. Wojtek is the head of digital protection at Front Line Defenders. He has been working as a digital protection trainer for more than 15 years supporting human rights defenders and organizations at risk. Igor has been a digital protection coordinator for Eastern Europe and Central Asia at Front Line Defenders for more than two years. He is providing digital protection support to individual human rights defenders and human rights organizations.



Martyna Bogaczyk leads an interactive ice breaker.

Participants met each other at the opening reception on the eve of the program. They had many more opportunities to network and discuss their work during the week. During daily coffee breaks and lunches, participants continued to engage with each other about their country and NGO's situation with the refugee crisis.

Results. The goals of the workshop were to empower selected civil society representatives working with refugees from Ukraine to strengthen their capacities in resilience building, avoiding burnout, strategic planning in crisis, digital security, and working with people with PTSD.

Professor Eric Fretz said of the program, "From my view at the front of the classroom things went GREAT. Tons of great energy. Great engagement ... super interactive and they discussed topics with each other instead of through me. They have such complex back stories and amazing things that they are doing."



Small group discussion among participants from Georgia.

The workshop received very strong evaluations: from relevance of content to organization; applicability to work; and matching expectations. Nearly all participants reported they would strongly recommend the workshop to others in their field.



Eric Fretz speaking with participants.

"The workshop was very informative and useful. It addressed practical issues in the development of organizational management."

- *Participant from Georgia*

"The workshop was very well organized and each session raised important points that I will consider in my work with my team at our NGO: digital security, how to deal with PTSD and burnout, self care, & strategic planning."

- *Participant from Romania*

"Not only were we left with so many brilliant acquaintances and friendships but we have gathered priceless information which I previously would not have obtained."

- *Participant from Georgia*

Next steps. WCEE and WDI plan to offer two NGO Leadership Workshops in 2023: a spring workshop in Bratislava and a fall workshop in Warsaw.

Further information. Contact Tadeusz Rudzki at tadeusz.rudzki@fed.org.pl or visit: bit.ly/NGOWorkshops.