



BEARR
THE BEARR TRUST

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

2023

IN NUMBERS

Grants

96

Partners funded

47

Total granted in 2023

£191,718

Where we work

10

countries

Armenia

Azerbaijan

Georgia

Kazakhstan

Kyrgyzstan

Moldova

Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Uzbekistan

Ukraine

The BEARR Trust in 2023



In 2023, our emergency aid to Ukraine and Moldova helped us to build on BEARR's unique position as a charity that provides grants, information and networking opportunities to civil society organisations (CSOs) in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Our focus is health and social welfare. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we have sent grants to numerous community-based organisations in Ukraine and Moldova, to provide emergency supplies and mental health support to displaced people and others in need. Between February 2022 and mid-2024 we raised more than £600,000 in donations, pledges and a UK government grant for this purpose. We responded quickly to requests for help, reaching people on the ground faster than the larger international charities – evidence that small and local grant-making plays a part in emergencies.

In addition to funding new approaches to health and welfare issues, we foster partnerships and contacts between civil society organisations. In 2023 we designed our Small Grants Scheme specifically to encourage partnerships. As well as Ukraine and Moldova we have supported organisations in Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

In 2023 we continued to provide information through our website, social media posts and bi-monthly newsletters. One of our patrons, Dr Robert van Voren, gave a public lecture on the long-term consequences for mental health of the war in Ukraine.

BEARR is managed by its trustees, with part-time administrative support. This maximises funds available for our partners. In 2023 and early 2024 we recruited five new trustees from a range of backgrounds, and entered 2024 in good shape. I would like to thank the trusts and foundations and individual donors who have supported us in recent years: I hope that you will be encouraged by BEARR's achievements and potential.

Nicola Ramsden, Chairman 2018-2024

Nicola Ramsden

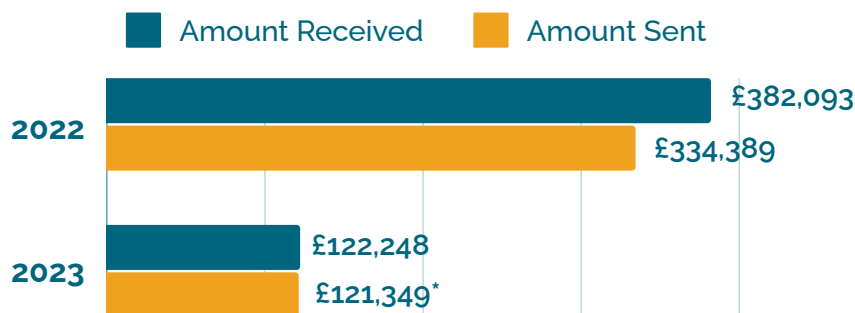
Ukraine Emergency Appeal

Following the full-scale Russian invasion on 24 February 2022 we launched an appeal for funds to provide emergency support to local CSOs in Ukraine and neighbouring Moldova. Since then, we have disbursed 99% of funds received to over 60 voluntary organisations and CSOs. 100% of what we receive is passed on and donations to our appeal reach our partners quickly.

2023

29 partners

£121k in grants



*£8,423 of the total Ukraine appeal expenditure was spent on SGS Strand B for partners in Ukraine and Moldova

In 2023, many partner CSOs used BEARR grants to offer psychological support to those impacted by the war. This included private sessions with psychologists, art therapy workshops, and even gardening activities. These initiatives not only provide mental relief but also foster community and self-sufficiency, offering a healing space and the chance to grow their own food.

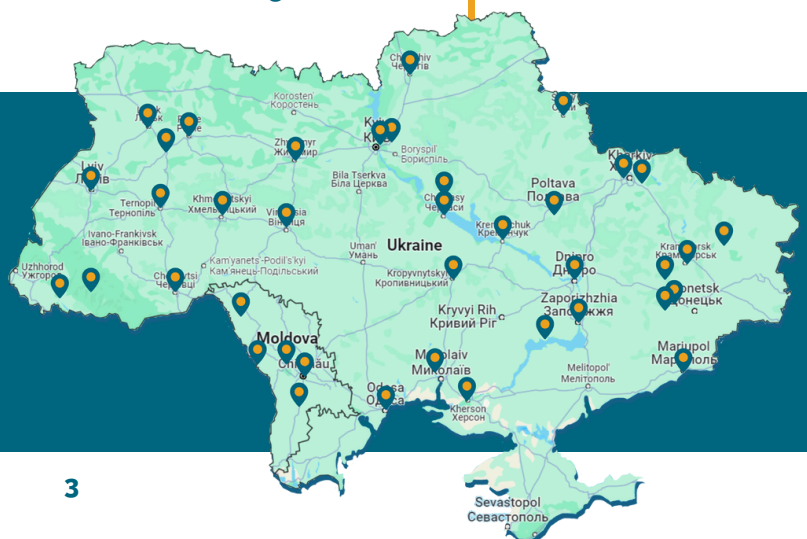
In June 2023, we responded to the appalling news of the dam breach in Nova Kakhovka, near Kherson by re-launching our appeal. Our wonderful friends and supporters stepped up yet again and we were able to help a new wave of displaced people, with no clothes or possessions, and also to fund the purchase of water pumps, equipment for communal laundries and other needs. We also saw the emergence of donors committing to multi-year contributions to BEARR, recognising that our partners, currently providing short-term aid, will need ongoing support.

The Ukraine Appeal continues to make a vital contribution to humanitarian assistance where it is most needed. In the first nine months of 2024, we spent a further £74,885 in grants, and received a further £54,780 in grants and donations.

What our partners in Ukraine and Moldova spent emergency funds on:

- Art therapy classes for children
- Kitting out refugee support centres
- Bedding, torches, clothing, hygiene and sanitary supplies, baby formula, food packs
- Chicks and starter feed
- Hand tools for repairs and gardening, plants and seeds
- Fuel for distribution of aid from warehouses
- Generators
- Hot meals in refugee centres
- Materials for training displaced people in new skills
- Medicines
- Psychological support and trauma counselling

Where BEARR's Emergency Appeal funds have reached since February 2022





Quotes from our Ukraine Appeal partners



People in the dark times of war can be warm in different ways. Thanks to the BEARR Trust, our team have been able to take care of single people of retirement age. The needy received sets of warm blankets, pillows, bedding sets, warm socks and fleece hats.

This help was received with gratitude and joy. Thanks to this, each of the 100 residents will be able to get about 20 kg of meat and many kilos of vegetables, which will help them survive during this difficult period.

Their house no longer exists. Volunteers helped them evacuate to a village further west, where they found a small, almost abandoned house. Thanks to your help, we were able to buy and give them bedding and blankets, a minimum set of dishes and food, hygiene products and detergents, and some other things.

From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion

2023

9
partners

£50k
grant

In July 2023, BEARR launched a programme in Ukraine: "From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion", funded by the British Government through the British Embassy in Kyiv. The aim was to demonstrate how community-based organisations in Ukraine can increase therapeutic support to IDPs and other vulnerable groups whilst also building their own capacity and a skill-sharing network, so as to involve them in municipal and regional decision-making and resource allocation.

The first step involved providing small grants to partner organisations in Ukraine. One partner held pottery workshops for children, another organised a pre-school group for children with special needs, while others offered individual and group therapy sessions or training courses for socio-psychological professionals.



British Embassy
Kyiv



Therapy activities reached approximately 2,000 traumatised children, women and men.

In October 2023, 30 participants from 9 partner organisations joined in a workshop in a remote hostel in the Ukrainian Carpathian mountains, learning new therapeutic techniques, sharing problems, team-building, reflecting and discussing future needs. They reported back to us that the workshop improved the psychological welfare of their staff, their ability to deal with stress, and their stamina to continue work in difficult situations.



BEARR's hope is that, having brought together all these people from a total of 9 organisations geographically spread across the whole country, a genuine network has been established.

Small Grants Scheme

2023

18
projects

£44k
in grants

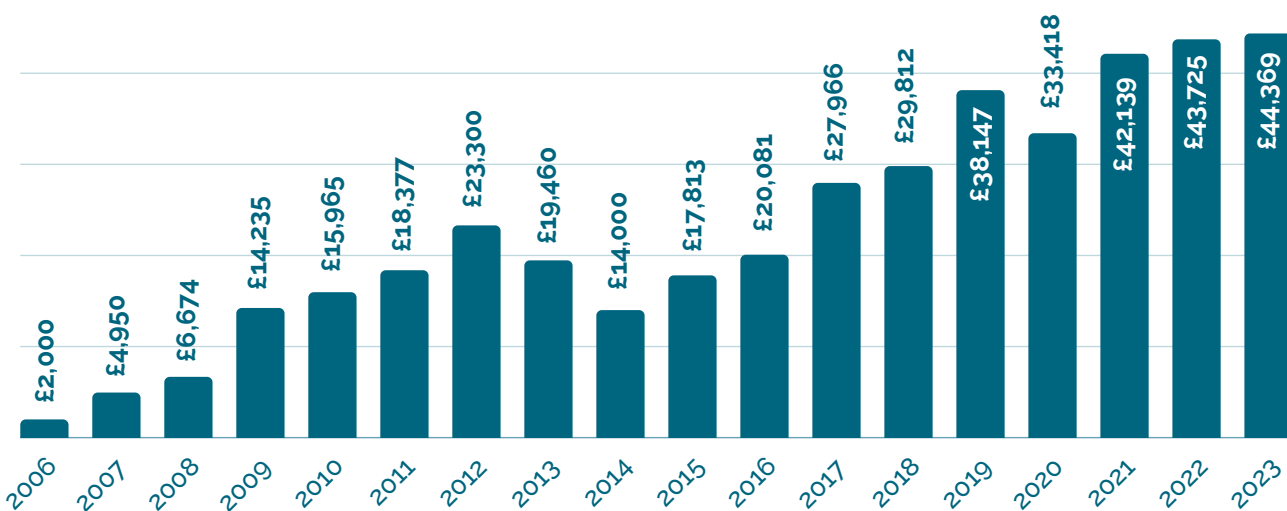
Our principal mean of supporting civil society organisations in the region is through our Small Grants Scheme. Launched in 2006, the Scheme provides essential seed funding to small CSOs working in the field of health and social welfare. Each year, the scheme focuses on a specific theme to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

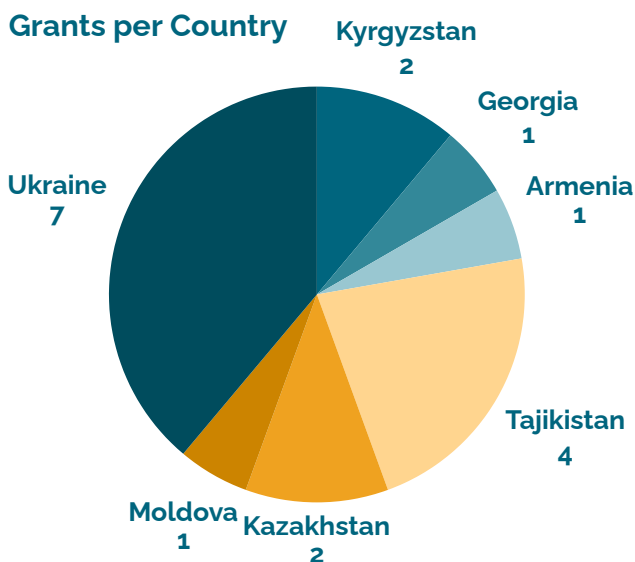
In 2023, our Small Grants Scheme focused on **fostering cooperation and partnerships between CSOs**, reflecting our long-term belief that this is fundamental to the successful operation of the CSO environment. Following on from 2022, when we first began providing grants to CSOs for their core organisational needs, in 2023 we continued this practice under strand B to further strengthen these organisations.

Strand A	Strand B
10 projects, £35,946 in grants	8 projects, £8,423 in grants
We provided grants of up to £4,000 for collaborative projects that foster long-term partnerships between two or more CSOs. These projects focused on supporting vulnerable individuals in any area of health and social welfare. Eligible applicants were CSOs from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.	We offered grants of up to £1,000 to our existing grantees in Ukraine and Moldova. These funds were dedicated to enhancing the welfare of staff and volunteers, as well as bolstering the resilience of these organisations.

In 2023, we awarded a total of £44,369 in grants under the Scheme, maintaining the high level of grant-giving in recent years.

Total Grant Amount per Year





Quotes from Small Grants Scheme grantees



There were many interesting and exciting stories during and after the workshops. One of the disabled participants admitted at the end of the programme that she had not left the house for 10 years and this was the first time she dared to go out. She was very happy that the programme helped her overcome her fears and participate in the workshop.

At least 360 vulnerable young people were reached through information sessions, along with a social media campaign through digital storytelling regarding youth mental health and wellbeing. It was the first time in Georgia that brief info materials on emotional resilience were developed in the Georgian language for local young people with the support of the BEARR Trust.

For me, the most useful aspects of this project were talking to specialists on crossing the border with Russia, the issue of conscription of Tajik citizens, and most importantly, learning that I cannot be compelled to do something I do not wish to do. I consider that this project was very important and timely because in this rural area migrant workers receive a lot of false information and have poor access to reliable information.



Since its inception in 2006, our Small Grants Scheme has supported over 160 projects and disbursed more than £400,000 in grants to the region. Over the years, we have addressed a wide range of social issues, including the welfare of migrant workers, social isolation, the strengthening of women's positions in rural areas, and the employability of young people with mental or physical disabilities. Other themes have included attitudes towards people with disabilities, drug dependency, homelessness, human trafficking, skills training for refugees and displaced people and the prevention of violence against women and children.

Events

2023

FEB 1

**SMALL GRANTS
SCHEME 2023
WEBINAR**

An online event introducing the 2023 round of the SGS, where we outlined key details and application procedures to potential applicants.

MAR 14

**30TH
ANNIVERSARY
LECTURE**

The main fundraising event of the year: Sir Malcolm Rifkind's lecture at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

SEPT 13

AUTUMN LECTURE

Online lecture by Professor Robert van Voren on the impact of the war in Ukraine on mental health.

NOV 17

**ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

Hybrid conference 'Ukraine: community support for mental health, resilience, and recovery' bringing together civil society representatives from the BEARR region.

DEC 20

**SMALL GRANTS
SCHEME 2024
WEBINAR**

An online event presenting the 2024 SGS, with an overview of new features and application details for prospective candidates.

Recordings of the events can be found on BEARR's Youtube channel @thebeartrust

30th Anniversary Lecture

Russia: a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma

The BEARR Trust's 30th Anniversary Lecture, held on 14 March, was given by **Sir Malcolm Rifkind**, former UK Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary, who offered perspectives from his extensive experience of international relations. Hosted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the event was moderated by Sir Roderic Lyne, the former British Ambassador in Moscow, who facilitated a lively discussion.



Autumn Lecture

War in Ukraine and mental health: the long-term consequences

On 13 September the BEARR Trust's Autumn Lecture was given by **Professor Robert van Voren**. The theme of Professor van Voren's online lecture was "War in Ukraine and Mental Health: The Long-Term Consequences," a highly relevant topic and one that aligns with the BEARR Trust's focus in recent years. The lecture was followed by a vibrant discussion and enthusiastic feedback from participants.



Annual Conference

Ukraine: community support for mental health, resilience and recovery

The BEARR Trust's 2023 Annual Conference, held on November 17, was titled "Ukraine: community support for mental health, resilience and recovery" and focused for the second year on civil society responses to the war in Ukraine. The conference highlighted the remarkable efforts of small, local organisations addressing the immense challenges of providing health and social support to millions displaced or affected by the war in Ukraine.



Outreach

Website

Our website, bearr.org, serves as a central hub for information and resources collected by the BEARR Trust. Through our website, we share the latest news, reports, and updates on our initiatives and activities.

Newsletter

Since 2020, BEARR has issued a bi-monthly email newsletter, reaching over 1,200 subscribers. The newsletter covers developments at the BEARR Trust, updates on our fundraising and events, reports from Small Grants Scheme grantees, and regional news relevant to BEARR's work and the situation affecting civil society as a whole in countries of the region.

Social Media

BEARR uses Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter). Facebook is still very popular in the region and has remained our most important social media platform. Follow us on our social media channels to stay updated.



How we're funded and how we spend our money

In 2023, our income was **£244,576**. This included £45,000 from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for the 'From Community Cohesion to Group Therapy' project; £108,734 in grants from charitable trusts; and £84,989 in many smaller donations from members of the public. We are very grateful for the generosity of all our funders.

Total expenditure in 2023 was **£236,620**. Of this, £121,349 was spent from the Ukraine Appeal. The remainder supported the core Strand A of the Small Grants Scheme, our FCDO-funded project, our programme of events and information exchange and running costs.

100% of donations to the Ukraine Appeal go direct to grassroots organisations in Ukraine and Moldova. Between the start of the Appeal in February 2022 and the end of 2023, the Appeal raised £546,600, of which 83% had been spent on the ground.

Find out more at BEARR.org, get involved as a volunteer, or help us and our partners with a donation!



Support the BEARR Trust and our network of partner organisations by donating through the QR code

