

Solidarity and stamina

How civil society builds and sustains resilience

Speaker biographies



Sergey Babin lives and works in Kharkiv. He worked for over 17 years in the State Tax Service of Ukraine. Since 2014, he has been an individual entrepreneur providing legal and accounting services, organising training courses and supporting community initiatives. He is Vice-President of the Kharkiv Regional Aeronautics Federation and Chairman of the International Bridge NGO, where his team supports people in crisis situations, helping them build better and stronger lives.



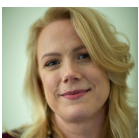
Medea Khmelidze, Executive Director of the Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS (EWNA), holds a Master's degree in Social Work and has over 15 years of experience in sexual and reproductive health and rights. She is a co-founder of the Eurasian Key Population Health Network and has been a member of the Advisory Board of the ASTRA Network since 2018. Medea's research focuses on the medical and social needs of marginalised populations, human rights through the lens of social justice, and access to services, with emphasis on women's and queer rights. She also lectures at the American University in Georgia.



Lana Chkadua began volunteering with the Women's Fund for Development at the age of 14, becoming its chairperson 10 years later. She holds degrees in Law from Abkhaz State University and in International Development Management from Westminster University, UK. Lana advocates for women's rights and youth development. She designs and implements projects promoting women's economic empowerment and youth engagement as agents of positive change.



Nataliia Muzyka is founder and head of the Association of Mothers and Wives of Ukraine's Defenders, a nonprofit uniting and supporting families of military personnel, including the fallen and missing. The organisation operates in 14 regions, has over 3,000 members and holds UN ECOSOC special consultative status. She has led advocacy campaigns reaching 10+ million people and influencing national policies. As a Board Member of Energize STEM (USA), she promotes global tech education. She has raised over \$1M from donors including USAID, the EU, and the UN.



Leonora Meriel is Chair of Trustees of Restart Foundation and has been involved in the charity since its founding in July 2023. Leonora has strong links to Ukraine, and lived in Kyiv for over 10 years, where two of her children grew up. While there, she was President of the International Women's Club (a local charity supporting a range of projects) and also co-founded and ran Ukraine's largest bookshop. She is a novelist whose books often feature Ukraine.



Meerim Osmonalieva has led Oasis, a Public Charitable Foundation, for nearly eight years, working to protect the rights of vulnerable children and women in Kyrgyzstan. She holds a Master's degree in Social Development Practice from University College London and is a graduate of the Council of Europe's School of Political Studies. Her areas of expertise include countering human trafficking, gender-based violence and illegal migration, as well as strengthening democratic institutions.