

2022-2023

REVIEW

# PROTECTION IN WAR-TORN UKRAINE

INTERSOS



UKRAINE

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

- CFRM** – Complaints Feedback and Response Mechanism
- CM** – Case management
- CP** – Child protection
- GBV** – Gender based violence
- GP** – General Protection
- HNO** – Humanitarian Needs Overview
- IASC** - Inter-Agency Standing Committee
- IDP** – Internally displaced person
- IPA** – Individual protection assistance
- IPA** – Intimate partner violence
- KII** – Key informant interview
- MMU** – Mobile medical unit
- OCHA** – Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- PFA** – Psychological first aid
- PMT** – Protection mobile team
- PSEA** – Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- PSS** – Psychosocial support
- RRM** – Rapid response mechanism
- UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# INTRODUCTION

The February 24, 2022 invasion of Ukraine has drastically worsened the country’s humanitarian situation and caused needs to rise across all sectors. Among these, the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) listed protection (GBV, CP, GP) as the most widespread sectoral need, prevalent in a full 88% of 17.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine. **This paper summarizes protection needs in Ukraine, as well as INTERSOS’ protection interventions, lessons learned, and future plans to address the expected continued protection needs.**

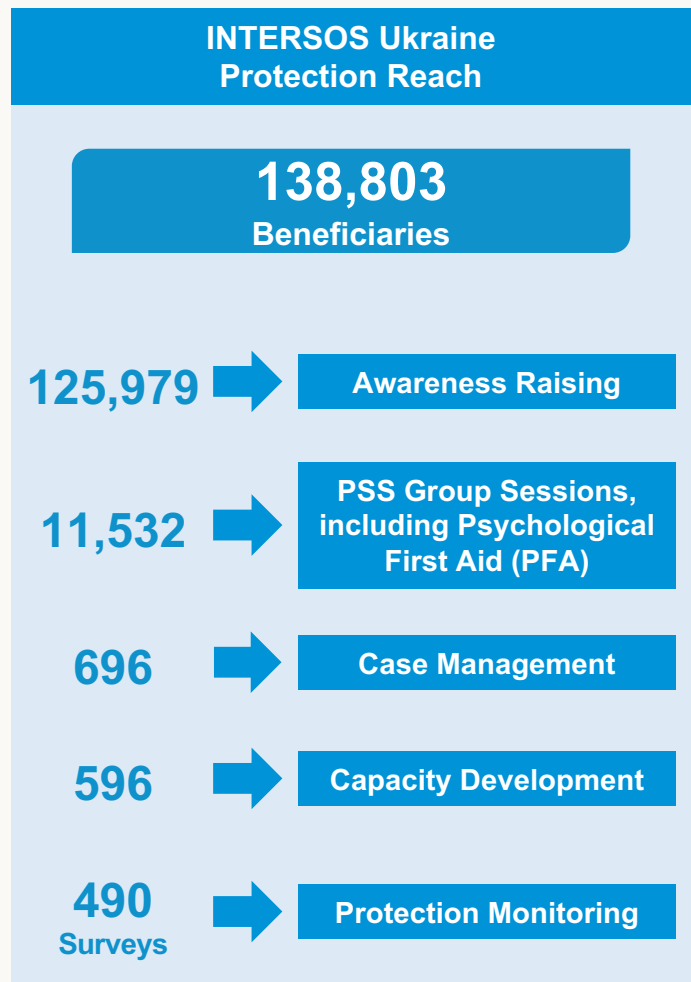
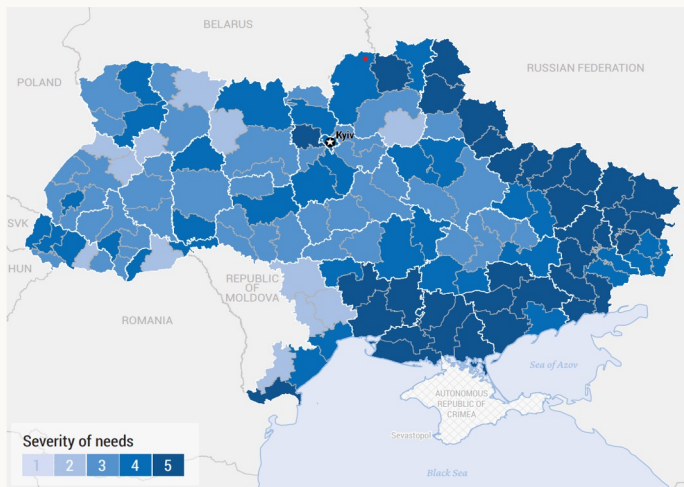
Many pre-existing protection concerns were greatly exacerbated by conditions brought on by the war such as mass population displacement, interruption of basic services, spread of explosive ordnance, heightened risk of gender-based violence, and attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The immediate effects of the war have led to widespread consequences across all demographic groups and geographic areas of Ukraine, as millions suffer from psychological stress and mental health concerns, further strengthening the need for protection assistance.

The Strategic Advisory Group to the Ukraine Protection Cluster, of which INTERSOS is a member, has identified five primary protection concerns in Ukraine:

- 1) Attacks Against Civilians and Civilian Infrastructure
- 2) Impediments and/or restrictions to access Legal Identity, Remedies and Justice
- 3) Risks of Mines & Explosive Ordnance
- 4) Gender-Based Violence (GBV)
- 5) Infliction of Trauma and Distress to Children through Violence, Abuse and Destruction

INTERSOS structures its activities around these concerns, with a particular focus on GBV both through its GBV case management (CM) and GBV awareness raising, and in line with the findings of the 2023 HNO.

## Severity of Protection Needs, HNO 2023, OCHA



# PROTECTION PROGRAMME

INTERSOS' protection activities in Ukraine are pioneered through its protection mobile teams (PMTs), highly localized and flexible structures which enable INTERSOS to respond to a variety of protection concerns. All of INTERSOS' PMTs share the core composition of social workers, protection monitors, psychosocial support counselors, and outreach facilitators (see chart on next page).

Delivering activities as an integrated unit not only places protection at the center of INTERSOS programming but also recognises the contextual sensitivities and intersecting nature of people's needs. INTERSOS and its partners are operating 27 PMTs.

The geographic dispersion of INTERSOS' PMTs allows it to launch activities both in areas along the frontline as well as meet the needs of IDPs displaced further away from active fighting.

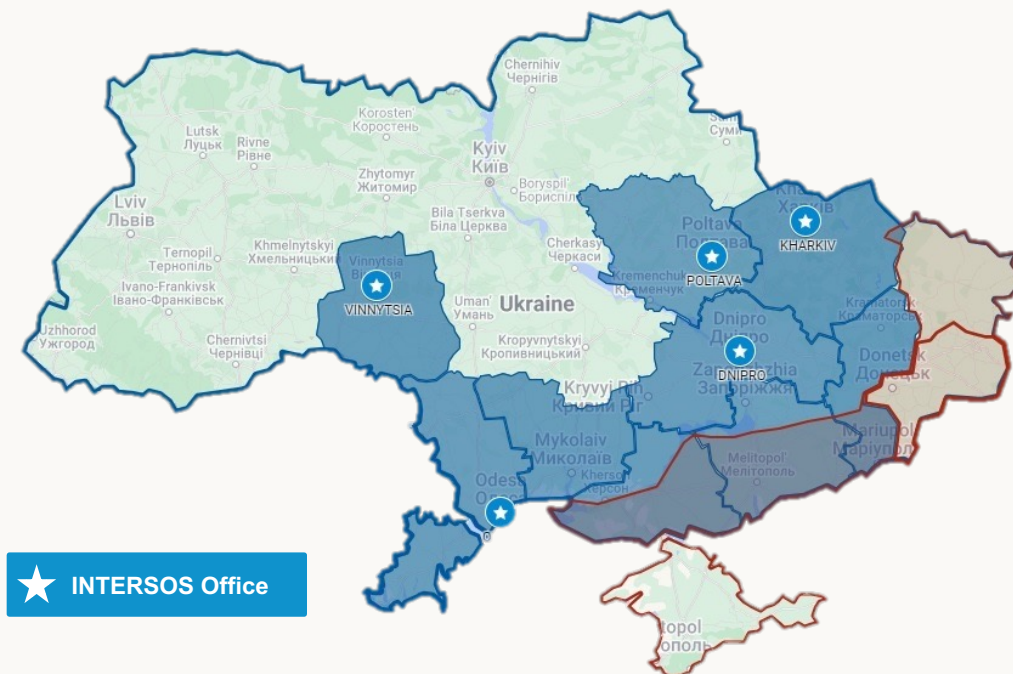
“

I am deeply thankful to all the people from INTERSOS for being there from the very beginning. I obtained tons of kindness, understanding and positive energy from them. Now I can live my life again and feel joy every day. I say Thank you! to all people from your organization. My warm hugs and gratitude to every volunteer, social worker and medical team member.

”

INTERSOS Beneficiary (January 2023)

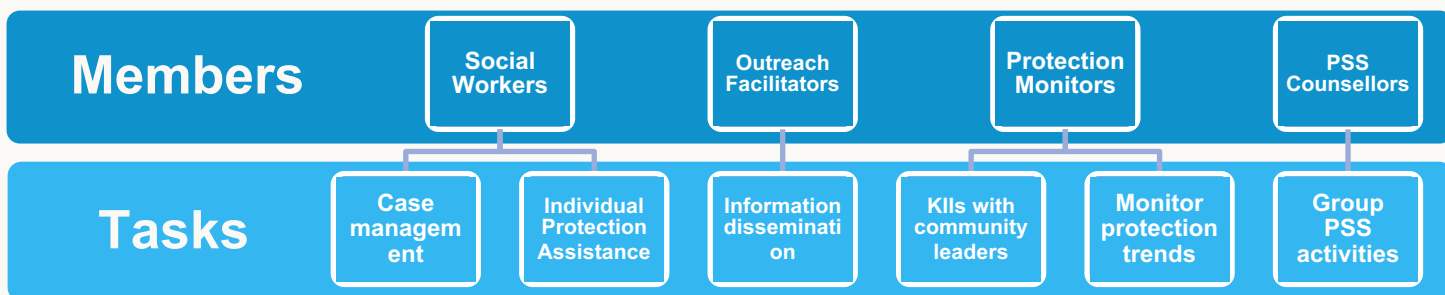
## INTERSOS and its Partners' Protection Coverage



## Structure of PMTs

The current PMT structure allows for outreach facilitators, based in the communities where activities are delivered, to foster and strengthen community-based protection mechanisms. Building on the capacities of the facilitators, the PMTs can then deliver a suite of protection activities at individual or group level and provide entry points to more specialized or structured services such as case management.

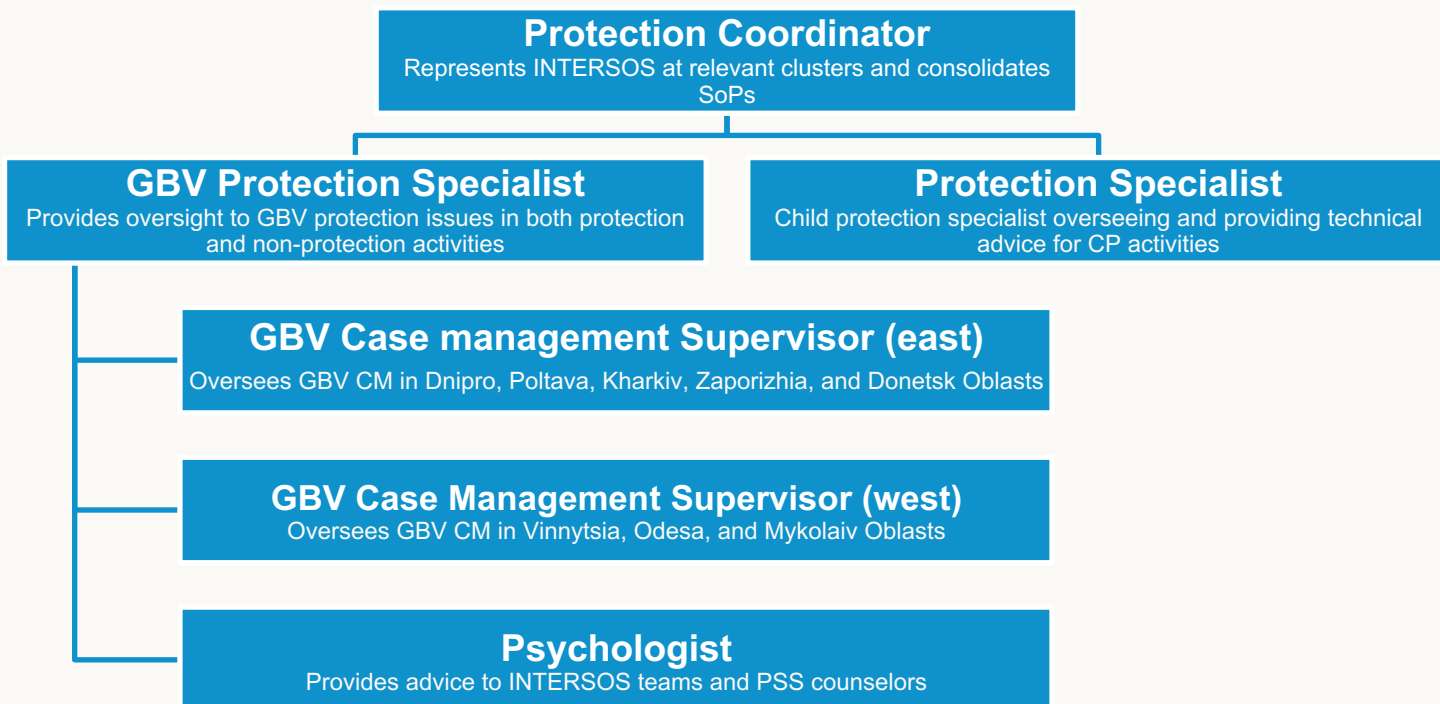
Each PMT member is responsible for implementing different protection activities, always in coordination with the other team members, allowing for mutual referrals and integration of services. The number of team members varies by PMT, but the core setup of all of INTERSOS' PMTs is the following:



## Protection Technical Team

A technical protection team of six people is at the core of INTERSOS' programme in Ukraine, spearheading protection innovations, ensuring quality service provision as well as internal and external harmonisation of interventions.

It is also responsible for the capacity development of INTERSOS colleagues including non-protection teams, local authorities, partner organizations and grassroots organizations.



## Added value of the PMTs

INTEROS' PMTs are **highly localized and flexible structures** enabling INTEROS to respond effectively to a wide range of protection concerns. By focusing on the following key aspects, the PMTs demonstrate their remarkable contributions:

### Making the Invisible Visible: Reaching IDPs Outside of Collective Shelters

One of the significant achievements of INTEROS' PMTs is their ability to reach IDPs who reside outside of collective shelters. In Ukraine, many IDPs do not have access to formal shelter settings. INTEROS brings attention to the often-overlooked population, making their needs visible and addressing them effectively.

### Embedded in Local Structures

An essential characteristic of the PMTs is their integration into local structures. INTEROS leverages existing offices of the social protection department and other relevant local entities, establishing strong partnerships and coordination mechanisms. This embedded approach enhances the effectiveness of protection interventions by fostering collaboration and leveraging local knowledge and resources.

### Community-Based Protection and Accessibility

PMTs, due to their local recruitment strategy, remain deeply rooted within the communities they serve. This includes staff members who are not only from the community but also work within the community such as the Roma and IDPs. This close proximity, which includes the use of vehicles stationed in the community, has two significant effects. Firstly, it promotes community-based protection mechanisms, reducing barriers to identifying and reporting GBV while ensuring that interventions are tailored to specific local needs and dynamics. Secondly, it enables INTEROS to reach even the most remote areas efficiently, as there is no time lost in traveling between locations and INTEROS offices.

### Reaching the Most Vulnerable and Underserved

INTEROS' PMTs excel in their commitment to bringing essential services directly to individuals who face challenges in accessing assistance. They prioritize reaching the most vulnerable groups, including the elderly, people with disabilities, and single-headed households. This approach ensures that those who are most in need receive the necessary support, thereby promoting inclusivity and leaving no one behind.

### Integrated Approach

In high-severity areas, INTEROS and its partners add primary health care to the service package. Integrating a health component in the mobile teams allows INTEROS to meet health needs and ensure continuity of care for conflict-affected populations. Multi-Sectoral Mobile Teams have the advantage to practically implement integration among protection and health and strengthen referral pathways for patients in need of protection assistance and psychosocial support services, using health as an entry door. Vice versa, protection activities are an entry point to identify people in need of medical attention and ensure consultation and referral to specialised health partners.

### Emergency Response Capability

PMTs serve as a specific implementation modality that allows INTEROS to rapidly deploy teams to humanitarian hotspot areas. These hotspots may include areas experiencing a high influx of IDPs or newly accessible areas. The PMTs' flexibility and agility enables an immediate switch from regular programming to emergency programming, ensuring a swift and effective response to new emergencies. The effectiveness of this structure was shown most recently in INTEROS' response to the Kakhovka Dam flooding, where INTEROS deployed PMTs to affected locations within 24 hours to provide PFA and information on water-borne diseases.

## Awareness Raising

125,979 Beneficiaries

INTER SOS conducts awareness raising sessions to provide essential information on a range of protection topics. These sessions aim to increase the awareness of individuals and communities on key issues such as obtaining IDP identification, understanding the consequences of gender-based violence (GBV), compensation schemes for destroyed housing, and accessing available services.

INTER SOS recognizes the challenges individuals face in obtaining proper knowledge and aims to address these challenges by providing information and guidance to individuals with specific information needs as well as during general awareness raising sessions covering the following:

- ☑ Navigating evolving legislation and regulations relevant to their circumstances.
- ☑ Accessing documentation, including IDP certification, which is crucial for obtaining social assistance.
- ☑ Identifying and accessing welfare services that can offer assistance in their current situation.
- ☑ Understanding their rights related to Housing, Land, and Property (HLP), including any available national compensation schemes.

## Protection Monitoring

490 Surveys

Protection Monitoring includes gathering valuable information regarding the protection situation, which aids in the identification of emerging concerns, gaps in services, and trends related to protection issues. By conducting regular monitoring, INTER SOS is able to make informed programmatic decisions and respond promptly to safeguard vulnerable populations. The insights gained from protection monitoring are crucial in adapting and improving interventions, ensuring that the needs of at-risk individuals and communities are effectively addressed. Protection monitoring also allows for safely identifying and referring cases to the INTER SOS case management team.

Protection monitoring takes place utilizing Key Information Interview(s) (KII)s across the country. The KIIs allow a statistical sample to be projected to form a representation of the needs of the population in a particular location using tested questions set at cluster level. Protection Monitoring across the country achieves a granularity of data for activities at a sub-hromada level.

**INTER SOS staff provide information to evacuees from the flood in Kherson  
Odesa, Ukraine | June, 2023**



## Case Management

696 Beneficiaries

INTER SOS implements comprehensive case management services, including specialized support for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), following the guidelines established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and tailored to the local context. This case management process encompasses various stages, namely introduction and engagement, assessment, action planning, implementation, follow-up and review, and case closure. INTER SOS is fully committed to improving its programming by incorporating outcome monitoring into service delivery.

Through case management, INTER SOS aims to empower individuals by restoring their sense of control and assisting them in making informed decisions regarding their lives and well-being. Case Management also includes Individual Protection Assistance, addressing immediate protection concerns such as aid for the elderly or transportation to access services. To ensure effective implementation, locally recruited PMT social workers with a deep understanding of the local context lead the case management process, often in positive collaboration with state services, which refer 34% of INTER SOS' CM cases. Their expertise enables them to provide tailored assistance to survivors, addressing their unique needs and circumstances.

### CASE STUDY

INTER SOS' PMTs provided vital GBV case management to a beneficiary in a small village in the Vinnytsia Oblast in October 2022. The woman and her children were moved to the village by her husband, who physically abused her. She then asked the PMT's social worker (affirming the importance of locally-based PMT members) for assistance. The PMT conducted a joint visit to the family with the local state children's service and police. The PMT provided PFA and ensured the survivor's rights were respected. The PMT members then accompanied her to various state institutions including the hospital for the consequences of domestic violence, the office of children's affairs for further protection of children from the abuser, the bureau of free secondary legal aid to issue a restraining order to the abuser, as well as seek a divorce from the abuser and determine the children's place of residence, and to the police to record the acts of violence.

The beneficiary was able to secure a restraining order on the abuser (who eventually left the area) and acquire custody over her children.

According to the woman, without the support of the PMT, she would have stopped after the first visit to social services and would not have carried through with securing her rights.

INTER SOS staff collect information for case management  
Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine | June, 2023





## Capacity Development

596 People Trained

INTERSOS has established strong relationships, both formal and informal, with local partners throughout Ukraine, especially in hard-to-reach areas. As part of INTERSOS' localization strategy, the organization focuses on promoting and enhancing the capacities of local actors, who are integral in referring cases to the PMTs and vice versa. INTERSOS has provided capacity development training on GBV Case Management and relevant IASC standards to local partners, representatives of local government and international institutions.

Furthermore, INTERSOS is also conducting a programme of capacity development for local authorities and CBOs focusing on Psychological First Aid, to ensure that first line responders are able to respond within a best practice framework such as Self Help+. These trainings are conducted by INTERSOS' Protection Technical Team in coordination with the field knowledge of the PMTs. Capacity development includes ongoing shadowing and coaching, such as through case conferences. This service provided by the Technical Unit is offered to internal and external stakeholders and usually follows trainings sessions.

### CASE STUDY

INTERSOS' Technical Unit delivered a one-week training on GBV Case Management to 7 national protection actors and UN agencies in July 2023. The training aimed to improve understanding of GBV, its causes and consequences, theoretical frameworks, survivor centred approach, and working with particular groups such as LGBTI survivors, as well as survivors who are men and boys. All participants highlighted that the coverage of particular at risk groups was of significant value and also shared that in no other trainings in which they had participated was information of this type and quality shared. The participants also said that they were particularly grateful for the experiences shared from a mix of international and national instructors, and having had the space to exchange best practices between each other.

**INTERSOS protection specialists train hospital staff on PFA**  
Mykolaiv, Ukraine | March, 2023



## PSS Group Sessions

11,532 Beneficiaries

PSS group sessions are delivered by the PMT's PSS counsellors and encourage the strengthening of social bonds and community support mechanisms which experience significant strain in conflict and post-conflict settings. Despite the deployment of significant resources, the first response opportunities are an essential need for those in immediate contact with the affected population. PSS skills, in terms of community resilience, positive coping mechanisms, and PFA are all key elements of ensuring that communities can manage environmental stressors until more specialized support can be mobilized for those who need it. PSS activities play a vital role in strengthen social cohesion, as they are inclusive and unite host and IDP communities to achieve a common goal.

INTEROS also integrates its PMTs into its rapid response mechanism to provide PFA to affected populations in the immediate aftermath of an emergency.

### CASE STUDY

In response to the Kakhovka Dam flooding emergency, INTEROS PMTs deployed to affected areas within 24 hours and started to provide psychological first aid (PFA) and medical consultations at the reception points of evacuees at the Mykolaiv and Odesa Railway station. The importance of such assistance was crucial to help individuals cope with the overwhelming stress and trauma of the flood's damage. INTEROS PMTs promoted emotional resilience through their counselling and attempted to reduce the risk of long-term psychological consequences. By offering compassionate and supportive assistance, the PMT's psychological first aid fosters a sense of safety and connection, enabling survivors to begin the healing process more effectively.

INTEROS staff conduct child PSS activities for children's day  
Poltava, Ukraine | June, 2023



# INTERSONS' GBV APPROACH

INTERSONS recognizes the paramount importance of addressing **gender-based violence (GBV) as a cross-cutting theme** within its humanitarian interventions in Ukraine. By integrating GBV as a fundamental component of its programming, INTERSONS aims to provide holistic support to survivors, challenge harmful norms, and contribute to the protection and empowerment of affected communities.

## GBV Case Management

INTERSONS prioritizes the establishment of robust GBV case management systems to ensure comprehensive support and assistance for survivors. Through its protection mobile teams and highly trained staff, INTERSONS offers a range of essential services tailored to meet survivors' diverse needs. These services include:

**Safety Planning:** Recognizing the importance of ensuring survivor safety, INTERSONS works closely with survivors to develop comprehensive safety plans, which may involve relocation, access to safe spaces, or other protective measures.

**Psychological Support:** INTERSONS provides compassionate and trauma-informed psychological support to survivors, recognizing the emotional toll of GBV. This support aims to help survivors cope with their experiences and promote healing.

**Referrals to Specialized GBV Services:** INTERSONS collaborates with local partners and service providers to facilitate referrals to specialized GBV services, such as legal aid, medical assistance, and counseling. This ensures survivors have access to comprehensive care and support beyond the immediate response.

## GBV Awareness Raising

INTERSONS places a strong emphasis on raising awareness within the communities it serves. Through targeted awareness campaigns, community discussions, and educational initiatives, INTERSONS strives to achieve the following:

**Challenging Harmful Gender Norms:** INTERSONS seeks to challenge traditional gender roles and norms that perpetuate GBV, promoting a culture of equality and respect for all individuals.

**Promoting Gender Equality:** INTERSONS advocates for gender equality, emphasizing the importance of equal rights and opportunities.

**Encouraging Reporting:** By fostering an environment where GBV is openly discussed and understood, INTERSONS aims to encourage survivors and community members to report incidents of violence without fear of stigma.

**Reducing Stigma and Discrimination:** INTERSONS endeavors to eliminate the stigma surrounding GBV survivors, promoting an inclusive and supportive community for those seeking help.

## CFRM and PSEA

INTERSONS strives to be an **open and fully accountable organization**. As a part of this effort, INTERSONS Ukraine maintains a Complaints Feedback and Response Mechanism through which both beneficiaries and members of the affected population may reach the organization via a variety of mediums. This also plays a central role in INTERSONS's policy to maintain strong PSEA standards, as it provides a means through which the affected population can raise SEA concerns.

## LESSONS LEARNED

INTERSON places a high value on learning and continuous improvement, recognizing that **capturing lessons learned is essential for enhancing its programming**. By consistently documenting and analyzing lessons learned from its projects, INTERSON can identify areas for improvement, replicate successful approaches, and adapt strategies to **ensure its humanitarian interventions remain relevant, efficient, and responsive to the evolving needs of the communities it serves**.

1) INTERSON has established a rapid response mechanism (RRM) team which responds to rapid onset emergencies within 72 hours, presenting a **unique opportunity for harmonization and integration of protection in emergency assistance amidst rapid onset crises**. A closer collaboration between INTERSON's protection teams and its RRM team would enable sensitization and training for psychological first aid (PFA), as well as first stage assessments, signposting, identification of GBV, child, and general protection issues. Due to particularly strong stigma regarding GBV and cultural norms preventing the pursuit of help by men, INTERSON's RRM team has the potential to positively introduce GBV programming by developing relationships as well as identifying and referring cases from an early stage.

2) The dynamic development of the context has necessitated that INTERSON Ukraine evolves, adapts, and responds in a rapid manner, and thus there is a need for strengthening the centralized and harmonized MEAL system for informed decision making.

3) INTERSON currently conducts its protection monitoring via KIIs, which have several advantages but also limit the input of disparate community members at household and individual level who may have different opinions and observations than community leaders. INTERSON is currently revising its tools to best capture information from a wider audience and enhance its accountability to affected populations.

4) Collecting accurate and reliable data on GBV during needs assessments in Ukraine is a sensitive and difficult task. Respondents generally deny the occurrence of GBV in their community or the existence of GBV services, yet a poor understanding of GBV and GBV services among respondents is thought to skew the accuracy of the data. The complexity of the terminologies used in such assessment questionnaires hinders the participants' ability to provide reliable information. Therefore there is a heightened need to emphasize asking the proper questions using the right methodology so that GBV assessments become locally comprehensible.

The implementation of standardized GBV IM systems in Ukraine such as GBVIMS will provide for greater harmonization of data, but should be based on assessments that are highly tailored to the context of Ukraine and the issues identified above.

Recognizing the importance of addressing this issue, INTERSON is discussing potential strategies at national level for simplifying terminologies and increasing awareness within the community surrounding available services. By initiating these conversations, INTERSON aims to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of GBV-related data collection and promote the accessibility of crucial services for those affected by GBV.

## LESSONS LEARNED

5) INTERSON recognizes the utmost importance of strengthening capacities through extensive training and ongoing coaching. Our commitment to excellence drives us to invest significant time and resources in equipping our dedicated staff with the necessary skills and expertise to deliver exceptional protection and gender-based violence interventions.

To achieve this, INTERSON's Protection Technical Team developed a comprehensive training plan that targets specific skill sets and competencies required for our protection and GBV work. INTERSON capacity-enhancement sessions are designed to be participatory, interactive, and tailored to the unique needs of different staff roles within the organization. INTERSON believes in fostering a learning environment that encourages open dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and hands-on experience, ensuring our team is prepared to handle even the most complex protection cases with sensitivity and professionalism.

However, learning does not end with the completion of a training session. INTERSON understands that continuous growth is essential for delivering impactful humanitarian assistance. As such, INTERSON places great emphasis on providing ongoing coaching and mentorship to our staff, local organizations, our partners and local authorities. INTERSON's Protection Technical Team plays a pivotal role in this aspect, offering real-time guidance, support, and constructive feedback to enhance staff performance and boost their confidence in handling challenging scenarios.

Regular coaching sessions allow team members to share their experiences, discuss complex cases, and receive expert guidance on best practices and approaches. This continuous support helps our staff navigate the complexities of their roles effectively, develop their skills, and maintain a high standard of performance throughout their professional journey.

The close link between INTERSON's Protection Technical Unit and capacity-enhancement efforts ensures that our training programs remain relevant, responsive, and aligned with our organization's mission and values.

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A person is seen from behind, wearing a white t-shirt with the "INTEROSOS" logo and a globe icon printed on it. The person has dark hair tied back. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with other people and trees.

**INTEROSOS** 